



# The Sunbeam

## Newsletter

ISSUE 31 - JANUARY 2020

Happy New Year to all *Sunshine* volunteers and supporters. It's a new year and a new decade. Here's hoping 2020 brings everyone (human and cat alike) lots of happiness, health and fulfilment. As always, please enjoy this edition of the *Sunbeam* and pass it along to your friends.

*Jessica Wilson, Editor*

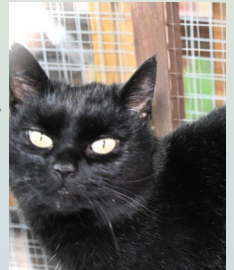


### Please Don't Pass Me By: Why Some Cats Are Overlooked for Adoption

There's hardly a person around that can resist a cute little kitten with their adorable little faces and baby-soft fur. They tend to get snapped up by adopters looking for a new feline companion. Equally younger cats, particularly grey, ginger and tabby cats are top of a lot of people's wanted list. However, like all other rescues in the UK and around the world, *Sunshine* often takes into care cats that can be much harder to rehome. There are a number of reasons why some cats may be waiting for a loving forever home for a little, or much, longer than others.

#### Black Cats

Statistically, black cats are the hardest cats to rehome. Speculative reasons for this range from the fact that black cats are often seen as bad luck, they don't photograph well, they can't be easily distinguished between other black cats and they're not as colourful as other cats. Of course anyone who has a black cat knows that this is ridiculous as every cat, like every human, has a unique face and personality, and there are plenty of gorgeous photos available of ebony kitties wherever anyone would care to look.



Delilah would love a home with her brother Samson.

#### Elderly Cats

Despite the fact that elderly cats are usually less demanding, housetrained and more sedate, they are often overlooked for adoption. These days it is not uncommon for cats to live well into their late teens and even 20s, so cats aged 10 or even 12 can be considered middle aged. One of the best things about elderly cats is that they like to spend more time indoors on a warm lap or in a comfy bed beside you on the sofa thus you get more one-on-one feline company than a young cat who may be more interested in exploring the great outdoors. That being said, don't let a cat's age fool you because there are plenty of OAP (old adorable pussycats) who still have plenty of energy to chase around a toy or even catch a mouse! Surely these older kitties are just as deserving of a loving family in their golden years.



Woody is a nervous cat looking for his forever home.

#### Shy or Nervous Cats

Very shy cats often get overlooked, yet they can be the most loyal and lovable pets once you have gained their trust. These cats will flourish in a calm, caring home, with loving, patient people, who are willing to let the cat take their time in getting comfortable with their new home and family. They may start out hiding under the bed, but helping them gain confidence is so worthwhile. Winning the trust and love of a nervous cat could be the most rewarding thing you ever do!

#### Special Needs Cats

There are some special needs cats that need extra care and commitment such as those who require daily medicine or trips to the vet. However, most special needs cats are very adaptable and cope well with their disability. Even those who require a little extra care are little trouble when a routine is established. Along with support from the rescue organisation, there are many websites and forums that exist which are great resources and help to owners of cats with special needs.



Dexter is hoping for a family to help him recover from his eye illness.

#### Feral or Farm Cats

In many cases it would be unfair and even cruel to try to rehome a feral cat into a family home setting. However, these cats deserve a safe place to live too. In return they will help keep the rodent population down in a willing owner's barn or outbuilding.

Whatever the issue, every cat deserves a home where they are loved and cared for and appreciated for who they are. After all, isn't that what everyone wants? 🐾 *Some info sourced from catchat.org.uk*

## Gus the Swimming Cat

A plucky Tonkinese cat and his owner have joined a traditional Christmas Eve swimming race near Sydney, Australia. The race is normally open to dogs, but this year Gus will be going whisker to snout against dozens of dogs in an attempt to win the title. Some dog owners are worried about him entering the race. "However great a story this is I don't think it's in the best interest of any of the animals," one person says. "There are roughly 70 dogs in an excited state and I can only think that bringing a cat along would be cruel to the cat. It definitely could be attacked. It could also cause owners to lose control of their dogs." Yet, Gus's owner disagrees and says he'll be swimming right next to him and if there is any hint of danger Gus can climb onto his shoulder. He is adamant Gus's safety is paramount. No one expects that Gus will win, but then again who would have thought he would take part in the race in the first place! 🐾

Source: [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)



## Bionic Moggy

A six-year-old cat has become an internet "superstar" as the first in Italy to receive two prosthetic hind legs following a serious road accident. Vito had both rear legs amputated after they were crushed by a vehicle in Milan, Italy. His surgery to attach two prostheses by inserting them directly into his remaining upper leg bones has reportedly never before been achieved successfully in Italy. In the accident, Vito lost one paw and was at risk of losing another so the only option was to have prosthetics fitted. The subsequent operation was a success, and after months of coming to terms with being a "bionic cat", Vito appeared to be getting on comfortably. One year on, the now famous feline can be seen in videos walking the streets again and enjoying life. 🐾 Source: [www.bbc.co.uk/news](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news)



## Microchip Moggy Management

The UK government is currently in consultation about whether to make it law for cat owners to have their cats microchipped. The proposal is to have legislation which mirrors the current dog microchipping law which has resulted in a 15% drop in dogs being handed in to local authorities. Part of the proposal is that councils will be able to pick up unchipped cats, have them chipped and then returned to owners with a fine of £25 to cover the cost of the chipping. However, as with dog microchipping, the microchip is only useful if the owner keeps their details up to date on the microchip database and 69% of dogs found have struggled with reunification with their owners due to out of date microchip information. Yet, hopefully if the law is passed it will help owners have an easier time finding their missing kitties. 🐾

Source: [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)



## Volunteers Desperately Needed



Can you help? SCR are always in need of extra pairs of hands. We have several specific roles that will need to be filled in 2020:

**Fundraising Assistant** - Helping to source and book events, planning the charity's own fundraising events, working with the Fundraising Officer, Volunteer Co-Ordinator and Treasurer.

**Tin Shake Co-Ordinator** - Sourcing, contacting and booking suitable venues, working with the Volunteer Co-Ordinator.

**Fosterers** - Providing a temporary home for cats and kittens that come into our care before they find their forever home.

**Home Visitors** - Visiting potential new owners and helping to find the right cat for their environment, working with the Homing Officer.

We always need help setting up for events - loading/unloading the van, setting up the gazebo and stall, manning the stall. Just a couple of hours during the day makes a big difference.

Please contact us if you are interested in any of these roles, or just for more information about other ways in which you can help on [purplesharon@btinternet.com](mailto:purplesharon@btinternet.com) Thank you!

## Facing Facts: Can You Read Cat Facial Expressions?

Science has finally confirmed what humans have suspected for centuries: Cats are inscrutable creatures prone to peculiar behaviour. Some of us, however, are still capable of picking up on their subtle emotional cues, including facial expressions, without relying on clues like tails, ears, or whiskers.

This new evidence of a cat's slightly malleable face comes from a study in the journal *Animal Welfare*. Researchers at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, recruited 6329 participants to watch a series of 20 video clips featuring cats reacting to either a positive or negative event. A positive interaction was defined as a feline approaching a human for a treat or an owner-identified action the cat traditionally found pleasant, like climbing into a favourite spot. A negative response was when a cat was confronted with something it wanted to avoid, was prevented from going into an area or outside, or was displaying an obvious sign of distress, like growling. (Sounds were edited out.) Most clips were from YouTube, though some were submitted by veterinarians and university colleagues. Breeds with long hair that might obscure facial changes were omitted. Most respondents were cat owners, and 74 percent were women 18 to 44 years old.



Using these brief clips, the researchers asked subjects to classify the cats as exhibiting positive or negative behaviour by relying only on closely cropped footage of a cat's face. They couldn't rely on the tail or any other body language. The result? The average score was just 59 percent correct, accurately identifying a cat's mood in an average of 12 out of the 20 clips. These humans, in other words, had little idea what a cat was experiencing based solely on their faces.

So why do researchers think they have any expression at all? Roughly 13 percent of subjects scored well on the test, getting at least 15 of the 20 questions correct. Those that did well were generally people who had extensive experience with cats, like veterinarians. That led researchers to conclude that people can become more attuned to the subtle flickers of emotion that may pass over a cat's face.

"They could be naturally brilliant, and that's why they become veterinarians," Georgia Mason, a behavioural biologist and the study's senior author, told *The Washington Post*. "But they also have a lot of opportunity to learn, and they've got a motivation to learn, because they're constantly deciding: Is this cat better? Do we need to change the treatment? Does this cat need to go home? Is this cat about to take a chunk out of my throat?"

The paper appears to offer encouraging evidence that "cat whisperers" really do exist. If you're curious whether you could be one of them, you can take a shortened version of the video test online at <https://catdogwelfare.wixsite.com/catfaces/cat-faces-interactive-quiz> 🐾 By Jake Rossen, [Mentalfloss.com](https://www.mentalfloss.com)



## Why Do Cats Love Boxes, Bags and Paper So Much?

Whether it's a standard plastic bag or a cardboard box, cats are quick to pounce on these items as new toys, homes or even snacks. Scientists and cat lovers alike have several suggestions on why kitties go crazy for these containers.

### Bags of Fun

Plastic bags are especially alluring to cats. One of the most obvious explanations is that these bags or boxes were previously carrying food. Cats have an acute sense of smell, much stronger than any human's, so it's no wonder they're rubbing their whiskers all over a grocery bag that was carrying frozen salmon filets an hour ago. Additionally, many of those bags are coated in substances like corn-starch or salty acids, or even made out of an animal by-product like gelatine, making them extra tasty. As far as the crinkling sound a bag makes, these carnivorous mammals might also find that extra-titillating, as it could mimic the noise rodents make when they scamper through the fields.



### Bonkers for Boxes

When it comes to cardboard boxes, there's a multitude of explanations for why your cat loves Amazon deliveries even more than you do. For starters, a box is an ideal hidey-hole while hunting possible prey. It can also shield the cat from danger or other predators. A scientist at Utrecht University in the Netherlands studied the benefits of boxes on two groups of newly arrived cats in an animal shelter. One group had the option to hide out in their own personal boxes while the other group did not. To no one's surprise, the group of cats with boxes to chill out in were far less stressed out, quickly grew more comfortable in their surroundings, and were more interested in meeting their humans than the box-less cats. Boxes also provide warmth when the outside air is too chilly for their liking. Cats can't simply throw on a sweater when the temperature drops, and with a body temperature 20 degrees higher than ours, it's no wonder cats seek warmth in unusual places. Cardboard is an excellent insulator, and curling up in a tight crevice creates additional body heat. Whether your cat is stressed, cold, or just looking for a place to hide that's safe from predators (the neighbour's dog, perhaps), a box provides all that.

### Mad for paper

Numerous theories abound on the Internet about why cats are drawn to paper, but the simplest answer is that it just feels good. Or that it gets your attention, or perhaps they want to mark their territory, or maybe it's a new item in the house that needs investigating. There is no end to the speculations on why your cat loves to curl up on newspapers or our most important documents!

🐾 By Lyndsey Reynolds, [mnn.com](https://www.mnn.com)

# Loving Homes Needed



Please don't let **Dexter's** apparent scowl put you off. He's actually a real sweetheart! Sadly Dexter came into care in a very neglected state, with infections in his eyes. Treatment is now finished but his new owner would need to monitor this. Dexter is very compliant with medicine, he just needs someone who is loving and willing to help him recover fully. Dexter is a chilled out boy who would love a home as an only cat and with older children. Could you offer this sweet, special boy the loving home he deserves?



**Samson and Delilah** are around 6 years old and have just come to us. They are very friendly indeed and love lots of fuss. Samson is ginger and Delilah is an ebony beauty. They're quite attached to each other. It would be nice if they could be re-homed together but could go separately. Both kitties are neutered, microchipped and vaccinated. They would love a new home to start off the new year right.



**Woody** is a handsome 8-month-old, black and white boy. He was born outside and was semi-feral. However he has settled down well with people. He is quite nervous till he gets to know you, but when he does know you he purrs like a train! He still doesn't like being picked up, but responds well to voices and affection.






Woody will be rewarding for someone who's got the time and patience to draw him out of his shell - someone who understands cats and their behaviour. Could you give a home to this lovely boy who's had an unfortunate start in life? He's been neutered, microchipped, has had his first vaccination, has been wormed and flea-ed. He needs to be an only cat, and better without children, unless they're quiet.

**If you would like more information on any of these beautiful cats, please phone 01993 831 279 or email [homing@sunshinecatrescue.org.uk](mailto:homing@sunshinecatrescue.org.uk)**

## CONTACT US!!!



For more information on our work, to rehome a cat, donate, volunteer or seek advice on cat

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