



Pawesome Pets



CARED FOR: Finn's cat Angel.

'Fostering cats is a rewarding challenge'

By The Chronicle's Finn Smith

I'VE been fostering cats for about six months now but the latest has easily been the most challenging.

Little Angel came to us just after Christmas after she was found living in a rabbit hole in Wombwell Woods on Christmas Eve.

A feral kitten, she took a long time to adjust to living in a home, fiercely protecting her food - even growling as I dished it up for her - and finding secluded locations to sleep in.

For weeks I was covered in more scratches and bites than I could count and had to adjust to being hissed at whenever I walked into my own home. But it was clear she had a warm heart underneath and slowly but surely she began to approach me, enjoying a brief cuddle at night and learning how to purr - though this would always end with the expected hisses and bites.

Joanne Holmes, from foster agency Save a Stray, told the Chronicle: "It's

emotionally very difficult, you've got to have patience to see a cat through to the end. They're all so different and all have their own character.

"So you need to give them time and have patience with them - Angel's very complex, so it's about having that patience when you're thinking 'why does she hate me today?'"

Fostering isn't always easy, there's a lot of challenges getting these abandoned cats to a point where they're comfortable living around others, and after all that work and toil you have to let them go. Angel has been more difficult than most, but the joy I feel now when she comes for a cuddle, rolling in her favourite blanket and purring, is more than I could've imagined.

She's still living with me, and recovering from some needed surgeries, but we'll be looking for a new home for her soon - it'll be sad to let her go, but I'm happy to see just how far she's come.

Could you give a home to Carrie or black cat siblings

THE RSPCA staff care for and help re-home thousands of pets across the country every single year - and it's no different here in Barnsley.

There are currently three pets the charitable organisation are helping find their forever homes.

Carrie, a tabby cat aged two, loves spending time with her foster carer.

But she's not had the easiest start to life.

A spokesperson from the RSPCA said: "To watch Carrie snuggle and play now, you'd never believe what a difficult life she's had.

"Inspectors found her in a home with aggressive dogs, where she'd tried to protect her five very young kittens. "She was terrified, and spent weeks hiding in a box with her nose in the corner, caring for her kittens.

"After lots of careful and loving attention from her foster mum, Carrie has come out of her shell, and grown in confidence and curiosity.

"We're looking for a quiet home, without dogs - although she will tolerate another cat.

"Carrie needs an adopter who is patient and can give her the time that she needs.

"In return she'll be a loving and beautiful companion.

"Carrie is neutered and vaccinated, and we're thrilled that she's ready for her new home now."

Brother and sister duo Polly and Basil are also searching for their new home.

The pair of black cats, aged ten, come from a loving home but have found themselves in need of a new one.

And Basil has some rather unique traits.

"They've always lived together and we don't want to separate them," the RSPCA added.

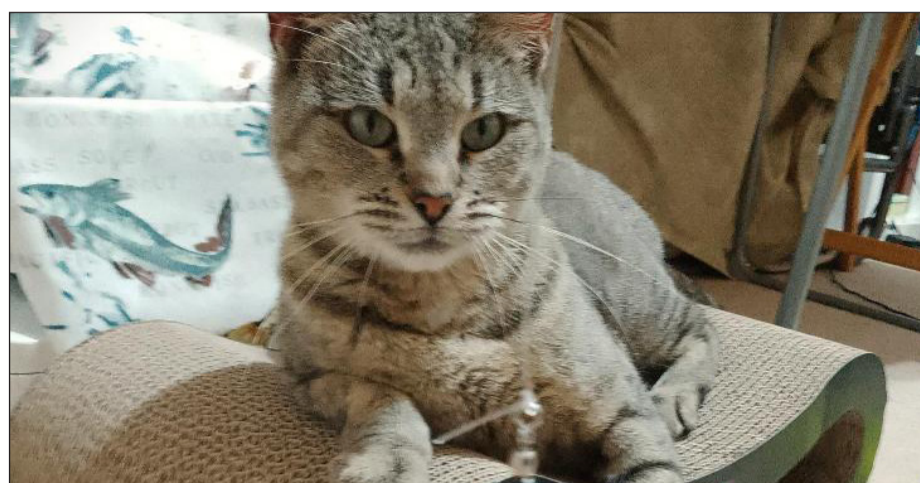
"Basil is the boss, but he's a lovely boy - and very unusual. "He's a polydactyl - meaning he has extra claws and big feet.

"These cats are quiet and friendly and will be a relaxed addition to your family.

"Basil and Polly would be very suitable for an older person, or for people who want calm and settled cats to fill their home.

"They are currently living with a foster carer who will be happy to tell you more about these sweet cats."

To find out more, visit the RSPCA Barnsley Branch's website online.



New homes sought: Carrie (left). Below: Polly and Basil.



Wath site celebrates 20 years as headquarters for call centre

A LOT of people will be unaware that the RSPCA's call centre is based in locally - and they've received more than 20 million potentially lifesaving reports over the last two decades.

The centre, based in Wath-upon-Dearne, celebrated its 20th anniversary in December.

Every year, around a million calls are made from across England and Wales to the Barnsley centre, which is the first point of contact for people reporting animal cruelty and neglect.

Around 150 people are on hand day and night to support those who come across the heartbreaking cases and they're continuing to help animals despite the charity facing more chal-

lenges than ever before.

Jill Smith, RSPCA specialist manager who started at the call centre from the first day it opened, said: "Over the last year in excess of 20 million calls have come through to us and it can be stressful at times with some of the horrific cruelty we have reported to us along with harrowing videos and photographs which people send in as part of their evidence. But we do have a real sense of family here within the workforce and the staff have unwavering dedication towards the RSPCA and in helping to stop animal cruelty.

"We are fully supporting the RSPCA's Join the Winter Rescue and

have been fundraising and are also encouraging others to make a donation to help rescue teams reach the thousands of animals who desperately need them."

To celebrate their anniversary, animals and their new owners who were helped by the service visited the call centre to issue their heartfelt thanks.

Buddy was adopted by 23-year-old Abbey Leese, who lives in Wath and works at the centre. He was initially rescued by the charity and once Abbey saw Buddy's case, she said she 'instantly fell in love' with him.

She said: "During a phone call to an inspector he told me he had a rescue dog which he was fostering because

his owner could no longer cope with caring for his needs.

"He said how he needed to find him a permanent home and once he sent me a photograph of Buddy I fell in love and we adopted him.

"He is aged about 18 months now and lives with my parents dog called Oscar and they love to snuggle up and play together.

"Buddy is loving family life and has a cheeky streak - but he has settled so well and we are delighted to have him as an addition to the family.

"He comes to work with me sometimes and it is great because all the call centre staff can see the result of their efforts in helping save animals."



Almost party time...

DO you have a dachshund? Are you free on April 13? Then remember the date.

A pawesome party is being held at Horntull Hound Haven Dog Park on Knabbs Lane in Silkstone Common.

A spokesperson for organisers Pawesome Parties said: "If you're a fan of the fun-loving, family friendly and big floppy ears of a dachshund then have we got news for you, there's a party coming to the town next month with as many as 150 of the special sausages in attendance.

"Dachshunds are welcome to as many treats as they can eat, unlimited free 'puppuccino' drinks and prizes for best dressed dog.

"There's also going to be dog-related stalls, ball pits, tunnels, toys and props for pups to play with. There'll be a photographer there too, to snap your doggy looking dapper with their new pals."

The events help to raise cash for the DMT Dachshund Rescue charity and close to £2,000 has been raised in three months.

The events are held across Scotland and the north of England, celebrating breeds like cockapoos, dachshunds as well as spaniels.

Dog owners are asked to book an hour slot in advance.

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Bonnie with Milo the chocolate Lab

"The fact that Copper only really likes about 5 people and Jenny is one of them is the only proof I need that I chose the right dog walker! His bond with Jenny is a true testament to just how well Jenny interacts with the dogs and cares for them"
Emma with Copper the rescue dog

"Both Oscar and I look forward to his adventure days. I can plan my working week around Jenny's well organised, completely reliable walking schedule and Oscar has the best time a dog can possibly have. I am always confident that he is able to exercise, play and socialise as a large dog should, with a walker who understands how to get the best from him in her safe and experienced hands."
Susi with Oscar the Golden Doodle.

Meet Jenny!
I'm Jenny Heslington. With over 20 years experience in veterinary practice, I am in a unique position to be able to provide the ultimate in safe, fun dog exercise. I focus solely on creating the most fulfilling exercise experience for your specific dogs needs. This varies from a short and slow group walks, great for socialisation; through countryside with the focus being on sniffing to a 90 minute Pet Fit adventure full of exploring and playing games.

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Our main aim is pet rescue; helping cats and dogs in need from Barnsley, the surrounding South Yorkshire area, and beyond and then finding them loving new homes. The success of Royston Animal Welfare depends on our whole team of volunteers who give their time with no reward, other than being safe in the knowledge that they have helped to give an animal a better life.

We also have a charity shop where there are lots of bargains to be had. We are always in need of donations at our shop. 56 Derwent Road, Athersley South, Barnsley, S71 3QT. Opening hours 9 a.m to 1.30 p.m Tuesday to Saturday.

Our website: www.roystonanimalwelfare.org
Telephone 07874945689 or email: equiries@roystonanimalwelfare.org