



## Spring/Summer Update 2010



### Chair's Report

Hello and welcome to ARC's spring/summer newsletter.

In this edition are stories of animals we have helped since our last newsletter.

The last few months have been very busy with the increasing amount of stray and pregnant cats that we have taken in. We believe the increase in people re-homing their cats and strays is due to the financial climate and families expecting babies. Read our story on 'The Ealing Seven' on page three.

On the rabbit side, we've had to take in fewer rabbits, partly due to the economic climate and partly as we've changed our homing process. This has also resulted in rabbits staying with ARC for longer.

We want to highlight the need to provide the right environment and commitment for rabbits. This can only be done by making the homing process more detailed and more thorough.

The new homing process is also being applied to our guinea pigs as they, too, need the right environment and commitment.

A big thank you to everyone who helps and supports ARC. Your support enables ARC to continue helping and assisting the many animals that come into our care. Thank you.

**Best wishes,**

**Rachael Bower, Chair**



## Three Stories With Happy Endings

By Karen Hide

### Bella and Prince

Two years ago ARC took in a group of four very large female bunnies and one tiny male bunny. The rabbits had been kept in awful conditions and were very thin. They were seen by Christabel, our vet. She was particularly troubled by the condition of the small, white albino rabbit who had been named Prince by his rescuer. This poor rabbit was so thin that Christabel felt he was suffering from a very serious underlying condition. She warned me that she wouldn't be surprised if he didn't survive.

However, with plenty of good food, the rabbits began to put on weight and take more interest in life. Prince was paired with one of the girls, Bella, and the two were lucky enough to be chosen by a lady from the Isle of Wight.

Their new owner, Bev, and her husband, Les, came to collect the bunnies that Bev had fallen in love with on the ARC website. Straight away, I knew they were going to a wonderful home. Bev had come prepared with a cool bag of fresh veggies for the rabbits to enjoy. The back of the car had a huge cage full of hay so that they would have space and comfort on the journey to their new home.

Bev has been kind enough to update me annually on Bella and Prince's progress. Both rabbits enjoy a lovely lifestyle and Prince has grown into a huge, healthy looking boy. It's wonderful to see two rabbits who had been so neglected at the beginning of their lives loved and well cared for now.

### Colin the Collar (Now Charlie)

At the beginning of January, the South East was experiencing one of the worst spells of winter weather for many years. I took a call from a young boy, Tom, in Strawberry Hill. He reported that a stray cat was living in a small gap between his house and that of his neighbour. The cat had been there for several weeks.

When he didn't go home in all the bad weather, Tom realised that the cat needed some help and called ARC. I asked the family to make sure that the cat had plenty of food and was sheltered from the weather. First thing the next morning I braved the snow-covered roads to go and collect the trap from the ARC garage and then went on to Tom's house.

As they had said, the cat was lying in a gap between the houses. If you approached the cat, it only retreated further into the gap which was too narrow for me to follow. The only way to get to him was to use the trap. I put the trap down and began to bait it with some tasty tuna. The poor cat was so hungry that he began to move towards the trap immediately. So as not to frighten him, the family and I moved away to give him time to go into the trap. He so did without hesitation.

Returning to the trap, I noticed a terrible smell. On a closer inspection I saw that it looked as though the poor cat had a collar embedded under one of his front legs. I rushed the cat straight to Twickenham Veterinary Surgery where I left him to be treated.

Sadly, the cat wasn't neutered. He also had a very serious collar injury which he must have been suffering from for some time. The flesh around the wound was terribly infected and in some places had begun to heal over the collar. By the time Christabel, our vet, had finished operating, Colin had 27 stitches.

Colin stayed at the surgery for a few weeks so that the vets could keep an eye on the wound while he recovered.

When he was almost completely recovered, Colin went straight to a loving new home to become the partner of another ARC cat called Ruby. Now renamed Charlie, he's a very lucky cat having been adopted by a lovely couple in Walton. His new owners have elderly parents living with them. Colin has the choice of 4 laps to sit on, a new feline companion to play with and a lovely safe back garden to enjoy as the weather improves.

## The Ealing Seven

At the beginning of February I took a call from a gentleman in Ealing who told me he had seven cats to re-home. Two were black males, two were ginger females and three were 'torti' females. On further investigation, they were a mummy cat of about two years old and her six offspring from two litters she'd had the previous summer.

To my horror the cats weren't neutered. Fortunately, ARC had enjoyed a very successful weekend of re-homing and I agreed to take the cats. It was obvious they needed neutering as soon as possible.

The cats arrived late one evening a week later. They were loose in the car and the owner carried in the terrified cats one by one. I

grabbed cat carriers from my garage to secure them!

The owner admitted that he thought one of the cats might be pregnant. I released them into the cat house where they were to stay until they had seen a vet and I'd arranged foster homes already. It was clear that more than one of the females was possibly pregnant. The cats were also quite nervous.

When the cats were examined by Laura, the new vet at Twickenham Veterinary Surgery, she thought that four out of the five females were pregnant and Christabel confirmed her diagnosis. I left the two males to be castrated and the female who was not pregnant to be spayed. I took the pregnant females home.

With thanks, I was able to place five of the cats into our wonderful foster homes while two of the pregnant females remained with me. Eventually, we found a foster space for Ruby and Emma moved into my daughter's bedroom.

Postscript: To date, the three younger cats had their kittens in the week beginning 6 March; each had three kittens but sadly one kitten out of each litter died within the first 48 hours. As I write, our kittens are only 12 hours old so we can only wait and see if they are healthy and will survive.



One of the Ealing Seven's kittens



## Warning: Cat Collars By Christabel Moseley

People put collars on cats for identification purposes or flea control but few are aware of the danger that cat collars pose. In the last year I've seen two beautiful cats killed by their collars. One was hanged when his collar got caught on the branch of a tree and the other drowned when his collar got caught in the netting of a pond.

One cat was extremely frightened. He had a serious infection from a very deep wound caused by his right forelimb being caught in his collar. We anaesthetised him in order to cut away the collar and treat his horrific wound. It took nearly two hours to clear all the necrotic (dead) tissue away from the wound and close it with 27 stitches. The collar had the same effect as a cheese-wire cutting through skin and muscle, almost down to the joint. I'm convinced that if this poor cat (named Colin the Collar by my nurses) had been left any longer, he would have died.

Colin made a speedy recovery from his ordeal. He came round from his anaesthetic and immediately started eating and drinking – he was famished! He's learnt to trust us and loves his cuddles and head butts. We took the opportunity to castrate and microchip him whilst he was under the anesthetic to avoid having to do further procedures.

The collar Colin had on was made of rigid plastic with a small elasticated section. These collars are plentiful on the market and can cause serious injury or even death if they are allowed to become slightly loose. No more than two fingers between the cat's neck and the collar is safe. Any more space allows the

cat to get the collar caught around the mouth or even a leg.

Please fit your cat with a safety collar if a bell is needed to warn birds of the cat's presence. This collar will break open when a certain amount of pressure is exerted on the clasp. If your cat gets caught on a branch, or gets a leg caught in the collar, the clasp will break open preventing any harm to your cat. These safety collars are the only collars that I would ever recommend using on cats if a collar has to be used. Personally, I would never put a collar on any of my four cats especially as recent research has shown that cats with bells on their collars make better hunters. They have to adapt their hunting technique to enable them to catch their prey without setting off the bell on their collar!



**An example of the damage that can be done by collars**

There is no need for collars. Micro-chipping is a safer alternative for identification. This involves implanting a tiny microchip into the back of the cat's neck. Each microchip has a unique number registered to the owner through a central database. Vets and rescue centers have 24-hour access to this database in case of stray or lost animals. There are microchip cat-flaps available which can be

programmed to allow only your cat in by using a 'sensor' to detect the microchip. ARC does an amazing job with all the animals in their care. They have all their cats vet-checked, neutered, micro-chipped and vaccinated. They never put a healthy cat to sleep. Last year they re-homed 146 cats, 108 rabbits and 20 guinea pigs. The task is never ending.

ARC have more animals who are looking for permanent homes and many who are on a waiting list to come into their care because of the current economic climate. If you would like to learn more about the work of ARC, or would like to make a donation to their invaluable work, please visit their website at [www.animalrescueandcare.org.uk](http://www.animalrescueandcare.org.uk).

## Guinea Pig Update By Janice Newbury

The Animal Rescue and Care Guinea Pig adoption has been quiet since June 2009 with few enquiries coming from people who genuinely want guinea pigs re-homing. Some of these have been turned down because they were unable to buy suitable accommodation. The worst example was when someone brought in two guinea pigs he'd bought as Christmas presents for his children and thought it was acceptable to keep them living in a cardboard box.

We've been asked to take in a number of guinea pigs this year. The numbers are only slightly up on previous years. However, due to the decline in enquires to adopt, we have had to commence a waiting list as the numbers being re-homed are down. The ages of the guinea pigs we've been asked to help are older than in previous years and no young piggies have been offered to us in the past year.



As in previous years, the numbers of females remains at approximately 10% of guinea pigs being offered. The majority of people looking to adopt guinea pigs request females or babies and don't want to re-home a pair of boars.

Having spoken to other rescues across the country, nearly all rescues have had a large reduction in enquires to adopt and a large increase in the number of rabbits and guinea pigs they have been asked to take in.



**Two of our guinea pigs needing homes,  
Hugh and Daphne**



## Make Mine Chocolate



Rabbits are a familiar symbol of the Easter holiday. In the days leading up to it, they appear on television commercials and packages of candy, and stores are filled with stuffed rabbits. It's no surprise that children beg their parents for a bunny of their own. Ill-prepared to care for these unique creatures, their owners often quickly tire of them.

In the months following Easter, local humane societies and rabbit rescues are flooded with rabbits, former Easter gifts whose owners no longer want them. The unlucky ones are dumped outside where predators, cars, illness, and injury virtually guarantee an early death.

In 2002, in an attempt to address the problem, the Columbus House Rabbit Society began a campaign to educate the public on the realities of living with a rabbit, and to discourage giving live rabbits as Easter gifts. Using ceramic pins in the form of chocolate bunnies as the symbol, the campaign's goal is to spread the message that rabbits should not be casually acquired and to educate the public about the special needs of these often fragile creatures.

The pins serve as conversation starters. Comments about the pin provide the wearer the opportunity to share the message with the general public. These informal conversations are supported by a card that is distributed with each pin, and by business cards that can be handed out to interested parties. Both the pin card and the business card list important facts that should be

considered before bringing a rabbit into the home.

The aim is to educate the public of the challenges of properly caring for rabbits and to encourage them to purchase chocolate Easter bunnies (or stuffed toy animals) rather than live rabbits. For more information about Make Mine Chocolate in the UK, please visit [www.makeminechocolate.co.uk](http://www.makeminechocolate.co.uk).

## Rabbit Accommodation Today By Helen Halliday

When people think about keeping rabbits, the majority would picture a small wooden hutch sitting in the corner of the garden. In years gone by this is what most bunnies would be living in and possibly with no exercise given. There wouldn't be any real understanding of what rabbits actually need to have a happy, healthy and fulfilled life.

Recently things have changed as people start to understand what is needed to care for rabbits properly and how to give them a really happy existence. We know that rabbits need the opportunity to demonstrate their natural behaviour. The best way for them to do this is to give them access to a large hutch or even a Wendy house or shed. They need a secure run with access 24/7 if living outside, or to be allowed to free range under supervision if living as house rabbits.

Although pet shops and online retailers still sell ridiculously small hutches, some do stock the recommended 6 x 2 x 2'. The owner who thinks outside the box will come up with ways of using and adapting things they might already have.

Hutches can offer a nice, safe and secure home. The amount of work going into

manufacturing a decent hutch makes them expensive. It can be more cost effective to convert the kids' old wooden Wendy house or empty dad's old shed. Why not add some bunny shelves, a ramp or two and maybe an old undersized hutch for a comfy sleeping area. Add some fun rabbit toys and hey presto, happy rabbits!

Whilst home-checking for ARC, it's been clear to see that many folk are being very creative and have provided some lovely homes for their new adopted bunnies. When a hutch has been considered too small, folk have embraced the ideas offered. They've used what they have and made it work for them and the rabbits. They've added extra weather proofing, a new, bigger run or a hutch extension.

People who've had rabbits for some time are normally very keen to share helpful tips about setting up a new home. Some tips will be amazing time savers and some lengthen the life of the housing. Other tips give more hours of pleasure for the parents and younger family members.

How about using lino on the floor secured with wooden battens to prevent rotting from the repeatedly missed litter tray? What about adding some lining to the shed sides to offer some insulation and stop your little darlings from chewing the uprights? Ever thought of using an old shower curtain pinned to the hutch front to keep the rain out? It's been known for some 'bunny-mad owners' to give their rabbits curtains. Whatever next!

There is a wide variety of purpose-made caging available for the lucky house-rabbit. Most caging is too small if the rabbits are to be confined for some time. These are

fine as an oversized litter tray. How about using a large dog crate with an attached puppy pen for a rabbit that can't roam at home in all of the rooms? This combination can give the owner peace of mind knowing that their furrries are secure and safe. It also means that they get some extra run-around space without running a mock in the newly decorated living room! Rabbit housing is truly coming of age and that can only be good news for rabbits!

### What makes a good rabbit home?

- Enough space to hop around freely at will and enough to be able to stand up on the hind legs and 'periscope'
- A good rabbit home is a place to relax and lie down comfortably in all weathers
- Nice secure caging using weld mesh, strong fixings and preferably easy-to-use bolts to keep the buns safe and secure
- An attached run space to be able to run around and get some much needed exercise, which the rabbit/s can access 24/7
- Somewhere that is protected from the elements providing shade and warmth in the extremes of the great British weather

A good rabbit home offers an enriched environment with things to do, things to chew, and a fun and stimulating place to play. Very busy bunnies keep their minds active and their bodies fit and healthy.





**Maggie with her new family**

## **It's a Dogs Life by Lucy Albani**

The end of 2009 saw a sudden increase in the number of dogs that ARC was asked to re-home. First was Pixie, a gorgeous 18-month-old Yorkshire Terrier. She was being rehomed because her owner was pregnant and had two other dogs. Pixie was not yet house trained so her owner felt unable to cope with her. But she is the sweetest little dog that I have ever met with none of the usual terrier characteristics.

I was tempted to keep her myself but was overwhelmed with enquiries for her. She now lives with a lovely family including two other Yorkies and she spends her weekends by the sea in a caravan. I could not offer her so much fun!

Next came Maggie and Molly, who were being re-homed as a result of a marriage break up. Their owner was heartbroken to lose them but she had no home of her own and she knew that this was best for the dogs.

Their owner decided that the dogs could be homed separately and I agreed to foster one, Molly a Cavalier King Charles cross. Once again I was very tempted to adopt her. In the

end, she went to live with a lovely grown up family and Ruby a Westie who had recently lost her companion and was feeling 'blue'. I have seen Molly several times recently and am delighted to report that Molly and Ruby are best of friends and very happy indeed. I don't regret letting her go even though I do miss her.

Maggie, a sweet natured 7-year-old terrier cross, now lives with a lovely young family, she is their first dog as a family and she has been a wonderful introduction to living with Man's Best Friend! I am sure you will agree that judging by the photo, Maggie is truly adored.

Then came Snap, another terrier cross, tiny but with a huge character. Snap had already been rescued once by his owners, from living in the boot of a car. But they were sadly not in a position to keep him. ARC paid for his castration, vaccinations and micro chip and found a great home for him where he is the centre of attention. Snap is now called Brian and spoilt rotten!

It was a hectic few weeks, but very rewarding to find these lovely dogs their ideal forever homes.

## **Happy Kitten By Karen Hide**

My last black kitten found a lovely home today with a family that Amy baby-sits for. They have a 1-year-old cat already and he is going on January 3rd.



## Something to Prove

### By Elizabeth Adele Lockwood

Well, it's done. As of 5pm last Thursday, I'm officially one of four mad souls about to attempt the climb of Mount Kilimanjaro from 9th to 18th September 2010. Thanks to a moment of madness, this lunacy was brought about when I decided to push myself well and truly out of my 30-something comfort zone. Training for a 5k and 10k charity race just wasn't enough. Nothing could be further from my lovely comfort zone than climbing a mountain or wearing the same clothes and not washing for a week. Yep, that's about as anti-comfort zone as one can get.

Had it not been for this newfound guilt at never having pushed myself really far, I would still be sitting on my sofa. And only this after trotting off for lunch in my red soles, accompanied by a cat and a coffee rather than hitting the treadmill four times a week and reading up on altitude sickness! Before you wonder whether I'm overcome by lunacy, there are a couple of incentives. My climbing buddies consist of an old school friend who I love dearly, and my ex-boss/hero. For a moment I entertained having my pick of travelling companions - namely, my Norwegian Forest Cat descendant, Nougat. She is, after all, a cold-weather cat. She has snowshoes built-in and is about as malleable as they come, not to mention very warm should my thermals let me down. But sadly, Nougat won't be climbing Mount Kilimanjaro!

Having completed the first of my challenges - the Dr Barnardo's Big 5km on 28th February and a 10k at the end of May - the training regime for the climb starts now.

And so that all of this madness does not go to waste, I am going to be training for and making the climb as a way of raising money for Animal Rescue and Care. Please sponsor me by going to my Just Giving page at [www.justgiving.com/farewell-louboutins-hello-kili](http://www.justgiving.com/farewell-louboutins-hello-kili). If you want to follow my training diary, please visit [www.lockylocks.com](http://www.lockylocks.com).

## Intrepid Pet Cat Travels 70 Miles – from Isleworth to Brighton

### By Ian Mason

A winter trip to Brighton's seaside wouldn't be the first choice for most holiday makers, but 10-year-old Ben the cat isn't your average beach-bum. Julia Romp, from Isleworth, spent three months searching for her beloved moggie when he disappeared from her home on September 21. She put up missing posters, rang animal charities, and produced 4,000 leaflets to promote her hunt. Three months later Ms Romp received a phone call informing her that Ben had travelled 70 miles to vacation on the south coast.

Ms Romp said: "This is a miracle - he's back home for Christmas. My son and I walked the streets calling for him but he was never going to hear us in Brighton."

Beach-loving Ben was found by a family living in the seaside town and was traced back to Isleworth using a microchip identity tag. As soon as she was given the good news Ms Romp jumped into her car and spent six hours driving through snowfall and icy roads to be reunited with her pet.

Ms Romp thanked those who helped and supported her during the search for Ben and urged all pet owners to get their animals implanted with an ID chip.



## My Arc Bunnies By Donna McGinty

I had two unhappy bunnies – Pickle, a 3-year-old Lionhead cross, and Twinkle, a 3-year-old Nethie cross. Twinkle was stressed from living with Pickle and had a messy bottom. I tried Twinkle with diet and dentals and had him checked by the vet but found nothing. They were separated making them 'single' buns and immediately Twinkle became a clean bunny for the first time! I had to work full time as winter approached and spent less time in the garden with the bunnies. I decided to try and find new partners for them both.

I met Donna in Kent and discussed what sort of bunnies would be appropriate for my two. We decided on a confident girl for Pickle who tended to be a bit of a handful, and a quiet boy for Twinkle so she wouldn't be scared.

Jilly (now Pootle) and Foxy (now Sparkle) seemed to be good pairings. We all travelled by car to Janice's who agreed to bond them. Janice had the bunnies all weekend and I took them home on Sunday evening. All has worked out well.

### Pootle and Pickle



### Twinkle and Sparkle

The bunnies live in the garden. Pickle and Pootle are in a Happy Hutch 6 x 2 x 2' with a 6 x 4' run under, and Twinkle and Sparkle live in a double-storey 4' hutch with 7 x 4' run under. All have 24/7 access. I also have a run for the grass when the weather is good.

Pickle was a little excited in his new hutch. It took a couple of days for him to settle down with Pootle but she put up with his frisky attempts! Twinkle and Sparkle took a few extra days to feel confident in each other's company in a larger area. Twinkle kept running away in the run every time Sparkle moved and he would get annoyed and nip her! They have now both calmed down and feel comfortable in each other's company and are very happy together.

Both pairs love their veggies in the morning and race to me in their runs to get the best bits. They are good hay eaters and love pellets in the evening before being covered up at night. Pootle and Pickle are a mad, daft pair who are full of mischief and have fun running around together. Sparkle is slowly growing more confident. He was very down in rescue and seemed so sad but now he has Twinkle who is a very pretty lady to share his life with.

## ARC's Request for Help

Animal Rescue and Care would like to thank Nicholas Ashworth for his generosity. Instead of requesting birthday presents, he asked family and friends to donate money which he has split between ARC and The Born Free Foundation.

ARC was especially touched by this young boy's desire to forgo his birthday presents and donate the money he received to charity. A remarkable act of generosity for a young boy - thank you Nicholas.

As a small local charity we continually struggle to raise money to cover the work we do. Our vets, Christabel, Wendy and Laura at Twickenham Veterinary Surgery and Tim at PG Andre's Surgery are fabulous. They work very closely with us and are always happy and willing to support ARC and to accommodate the unexpected.

During the last few months we have noticed an increase in stray cats. The majority of these have obviously been abandoned by their owners as they all needed neutering. In the present climate that expense is not at the top of people's priorities. Another problem we have come across is people being evicted and being moved into accommodation where they can't take their beloved pets, or where their pet has developed health problems and the owners can no longer afford the treatments.

On the rabbit side of ARC, we continually struggle to assist the rabbits that come into our care. The main reasons for people handing in their rabbits is because they were sold a 'wrongly sexed' pair by a pet shop or the

children have become bored of looking after the rabbits.

ARC always has a huge waiting list of rabbits and cats that are waiting to come into our care. But due to the continuous demand from the public, it's with regret that the list is never ending. In the last year alone, we have re-homed 146 cats, 108 rabbits and 20 guinea pigs. We still have 15 cats, 47 rabbits and 2 guinea pigs in our care waiting for their 'forever' homes, and 40+ rabbits and 12 cats waiting to be taken in for re-homing. We have all of our animals vet-checked. The cats are all micro-chipped and neutered if they are old enough. Our rabbits are vaccinated and neutered. Giving a 'forever' home to a rescue animal is a very rewarding and satisfying experience.

Every animal ARC fosters has to be paid for and this is why donations are so important.

ARC values all the work our volunteers give to us and it's with thanks to the continued support of our foster homes, our homing co-ordinators, our vets and their staff and the donations we receive that ARC is able to continue to help so many animals. Thank you.

Animal Rescue and Care has lots of cats and rabbits that are in need of new permanent new homes.

If you would like to give a home to one of our rabbits, cats or guinea pigs, please visit our website at [www.animalrescueandcare.org.uk](http://www.animalrescueandcare.org.uk) or call 020 8894 4508.



## Thank You's

ARC would like to thank the following people for their help and support over the past year. We could not do the work we do without you!

- Lucy Alboni for running the dog side of ARC
- Pat Alboni for managing our membership database and day-to-day administration
- Gill Manning for taking on the rabbits outgoing
- Helen Halliday for all she has done in improving rabbit standards for ARC
- Janice Newbury for running the Guinea Pig section, updating the website, and bonding rabbits for ARC
- Stuart for maintaining the website and helping with all things techie
- Gill, Lorraine and everyone on the new Fundraising Team
- Liz Edwards for compiling our newsletter
- Holly Spice of Spiced Media for designing our newsletter
- Jonathan Bower of Kall Kwik for printing all our stationery and supplies
- Christabel and her team at Twickenham Veterinary Surgery
- Tim and his team at Richmond Veterinary Surgery
- Charlie and his team at Companion Care in Raynes Park
- All our cat, rabbit, dog and small animal fosterers
- All our supporters, volunteers and members
- All the people who help clean rabbits regularly each week
- All the people who take time to home check potential new homes
- Everyone who has taken part in fundraising events for ARC
- And finally a big thank you to everyone who has helped and continues to support ARC



## New Fundraising Team

This year, ARC has seen the formation of a new and much-needed fundraising team which is being headed up by Gill Manning and Lorraine Want. The fundraising team have been super-busy organising and attending the Whitton Fair in April, the Richmond May Fair in May, and the Hands Fair also in May. So far this year, our fundraisers have collected £1650.55 from the three fairs, with more events to come later in the summer including the Ham Fair in June. If you would like to get involved in fundraising for ARC, then we would love to hear from you. Please email [arc@animalrescueandcare.org.uk](mailto:arc@animalrescueandcare.org.uk) or call 020 8894 4508 and your message will be passed to the appropriate person.



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