

Mini Fragments 2 (2012+)

Short news items of feline interest from today and yesteryear

(page checked March 2026)

▣ Paris, France: April 2014

As well as *Le Café des Chats*, Parisians have a new luxury cat hotel offering everything a discerning feline could ever need while his/her owner is away. There are luxury rooms, a special 'gourmet' *à la carte* menu and a communal games room for the more sociable visitors. Guests at the 20-room 'Aristide' hotel (named after owner and founder Gauthier Berdeaux's cat) recline in a 4-square-metre room 'enriched with loft beds and platforms on which they can jump, climb, play and scratch; and they can take long siestas on soft pillows'. Rates range from €26 for a standard room up to €65 for a luxury suite, per night.

[Website](#), (in French) [blog](#) (July 2015) and [Facebook](#); see also article at [HausPanther](#) (May 2014).



▣ Location unknown: August 1949

Ed Creagh, writing a humorous piece in the *Southeast Missourian* about animals making it into the news at the time, briefly mentioned a cat named **Kiki** who, as he put it, got himself 'bottled up'. The extract continued:

'[He] came in on the liner *Atlantic* reeking of strong drink, walking with unsteady dignity, hiccupping as he purred. "Kiki just loves cocktails," confided his proprietor, Mrs. Winifred Hunter of the U.S. embassy at Madrid. "He'll go for a Manhattan, a Martini, anything. Carries it like a gentleman, too. He has never had but one hangover." '

[Note: While Kiki's port of arrival is not named, it's likely to have been New York.]

▣ Lakenheath, Suffolk, England: 2013

Billy was a tabby-and-white cat living in 2013 in Elveden, a small village a few miles from the Royal Air Force base at Lakenheath, Suffolk in eastern England, also home to the USAF 48th Fighter Wing. Billy was a rescue cat, said to be 'proud to be a "moggy", and very proud of his country and its heritage'. He had a presence as 'British Billy' on the Lakenheath/USAF website for the benefit of his many American friends who asked about things they found puzzling about British life and culture, with two pages of [informative articles](#) where he explained all manner of customs, phrases and aspects of that culture. These ranged from the significance of various saints' days and holidays, the royal family and the

weather, to fish and chips, bangers and mash and even TV programmes. He was a very well-informed feline! Billy had his own e-mail address, and Lakenheath base is on [Facebook](#).



▣ San Francisco Bay cats, USA: 2004–2020

Along the rocks and among the many recreation trails bordering the picturesque San Francisco Bay there lived a colony of cats, about 70 in all. Many years ago some felines were abandoned there, became feral and of course bred feral kittens. In 2004 animal lovers came across the cats, of which there were by then about 175; that was the beginning of Project Bay Cat. The cats were fed, looked after, medically treated when necessary and 'TNR-ed' (trapped–neutered–returned), and whenever suitable and possible were adopted into loving homes. A group of dedicated volunteers provided daily food and water, there were shelters and feeding stations, and all the cats were given names. Most of them became more or less socialised and, tails waving, came to greet the volunteers when they did their daily rounds.

Gradually, as no more kittens were born, no new cats were abandoned and old age took its toll, the numbers reduced further, until the day when Project Bay Cat would no longer be needed; till then the volunteers ensured that those remaining in the colony got the care, love, and kindness they deserved, so they could live out their lives in peace and relative comfort. For more about this remarkable project, and a good selection of images, see [LoveMeow](#) (Feb. 2014). There was a superb video of about 5 minutes summarising life in the colony over the year 2013 at [Life with Cats \(Dec. 2013 – archived copy, but unfortunately not the video\)](#) and the project had a [Facebook page](#), enabling people all over the world to follow the fortunes of the cats.

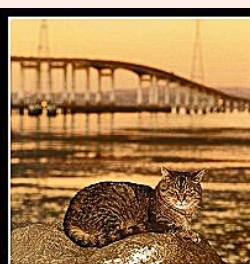
(Feb. 2014) | [Wikipedia](#)

By October 2018 just 10 cats remained – and by September 2020 just ONE cat, Shamu, had yet to decide he was ready for an indoor home! Obviously many cats died over the 16 years of the project, but also a number of older cats were given homes – a happy ending for them! After 16 years the project was thus nearing its close, although an eye would be kept on the site to ensure no new cats arrived.

See the foot of this page for further photos of some of the Bay Cats. Shamu was still out there and being cared for in January 2023, but I haven't found any later news.



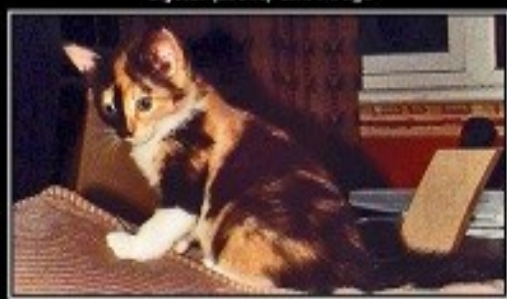
San Francisco Bay colony, cared for by Project Bay Cat



San Francisco Bay cats



Crystal (above) and Fudge



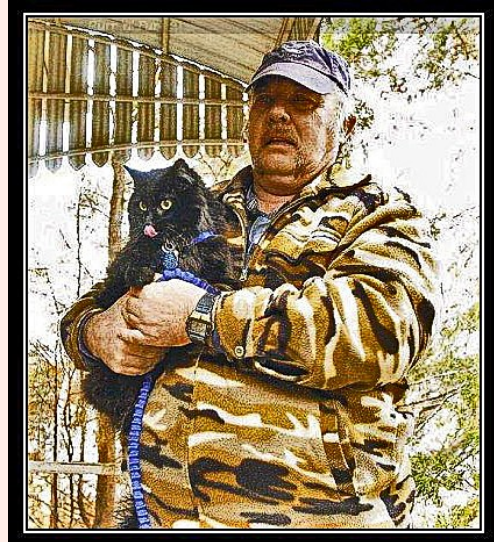
Timperley, Cheshire, England: May 2013

Businessman Victor Bywater was sleeping soundly at 5.30 a.m. one morning as fire, thought to have been caused by an electrical fault, began to engulf his house, where he lived on his own. He woke only when one of his cats, **Crystal**, leapt on his bed, bouncing and meowing frantically. Thus alerted, Mr Bywater fled through the flames and smoke to safety — but tragically the black-and-white kitten who saved his life perished in the blaze. His other cat, **Fudge**, escaped the inferno, but fled. Mr Bywater was taken to hospital in a serious condition with burns to his head and damage to his lungs from smoke inhalation, and was said to be devastated by the loss of his cats. The house was badly damaged and was expected to have to be demolished.

[Mail Online](#) (May 2013 – archived copy)

▣ **Great Falls, Montana, USA: April 2007**

Greg and Trudy Guy were fostering 6-month-old kitten **Schnautzie** for a local pet shelter when, one night, the cat came to sit on Trudy's chest while she was asleep in bed, patted her on the nose to wake her up and started to sniff the air like a dog. Feeling that Schnautzie was trying to convey a message, Trudy got up to investigate. She heard a 'roaring' sound in the bathroom, and quickly found that the gas pipe outside the bedroom had broken about three inches (7.6 cm) above the shut-off valve, causing gas to flow out, without being regulated, down into the basement. Trudy said, 'I went into the bathroom and opened the window and the gas was just fuming. Our house was saturated in a short time.' Had the furnace switched on automatically on what was a very cold night, the house could easily have blown up, according to firefighters who were called to the scene. Naturally, after Schnautzie's potentially life-saving intervention, the Guys adopted her permanently. A couple of years later in 2010, her story gained her a Purple Paw award from the Great Falls Animal Foundation.



[People](#) | [ABC7 Chicago](#) (both Apr. 2010)

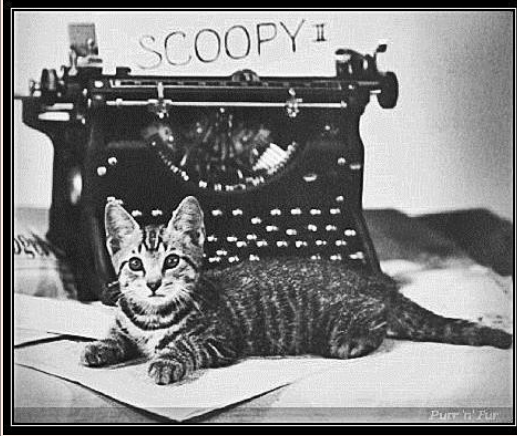
▣ **Linton, Cambridgeshire, England: January 2013**

Arnie was a stray ginger cat who wandered into the grounds of [Linton Zoo](#), in the English county of Cambridgeshire, in 2000. He soon worked his way into the hearts of the zoo staff and was named after Arnold Schwarzenegger, gaining fame after photos of him with a lion cub made international headlines. But he never let fame go to his head; he continued in his role as a friend to all, greeting zoo guests — especially those who were carrying tasty treats! — controlling pests and cheering up anyone who was feeling down. But his unique and extraordinary talent lay in 'babysitting' abandoned new-born animals, of which there were many over the years. Arnie's favourite creatures were lion cubs; he babysat all four of the zoo's adult lions, as well as some of their cubs. This cat with the outstanding personality passed away peacefully in January 2013, to be much missed by the many, people and animals alike, who loved him. See [BBC News](#) article (Jan. 2013), and there's a tribute page to him at [Facebook](#).



▣ **New York, USA: August 1949**

In 1935 a tiger-striped kitten entered the Greenwich Village, Manhattan's offices of *The Villager*, a prosperous country-style weekly of the time that's still in existence today. After 3 months the office was free from rats, and **Scoopy**, as he was named, had made his home and his own office in a box on publisher Isabel Bryan's desk. For the next 14 years his photo and byline graced *Scoopy Mewses*, a widely read column of jottings and musings, and his fan mail was the magazine's biggest. When he died in 1949, there appeared a sentimental eulogy of this star columnist: 'I shall always think of him,' wrote reader Katherine Caldwell, 'as one of the greats ... He had the lofty detachment of a genius and the warm friendliness of a child. When he stared me down with a frigid hauteur, as he sometimes did, I could



have been swept up in a teaspoon. But when he moved in on me grandly and condescended to occupy my lap, I felt as though I'd made the Social Register.'

After interviewing numerous applicants, Bryan announced that she had taken on another young tomcat with the same tiger markings and haunting eyes as her late staffer. His name: **Scoopy II** (pictured above). Later there were Scoopys III, IV and V, although none had a very long tenure and the last one died in 1965; however, their columns continue today as *Scoopy's Notebook*. The original Scoopy's obituary is in [Time](#) (Aug. 1949 – [archived copy](#)), but I haven't been able to locate a photo of him. Image source, *Scoopy II*: The Villager.



📍 Azumino, Japan: 2000s

I'm not sure when **Mikè** was living, but his story was posted in February 2013. He was that unusual beast, a male tortoiseshell cat, and he would go hill-walking with his humans Mr and Mrs Okada of Azumino. That's a town at the foot of Japan's Northern Alps and is twinned with Grindelwald in Switzerland. While Mikè's achievements were perhaps modest compared with those of, say, [Tomba](#), he became quite well-known, and he lived to be at least 15 years old. A very short video clip from one of his walks at [YouTube](#), posted in 2010, is unfortunately no longer available.

Acknowledgements to [One Hundred Mountains](#). (Feb. 2013)

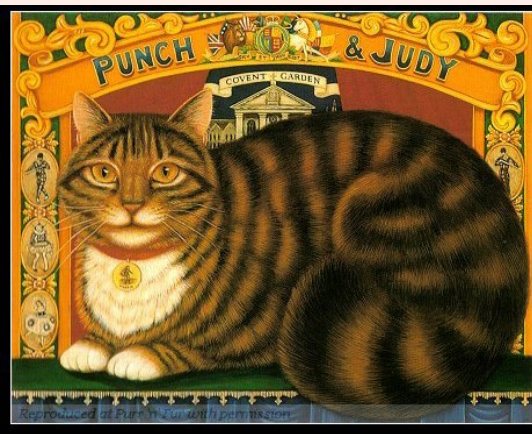
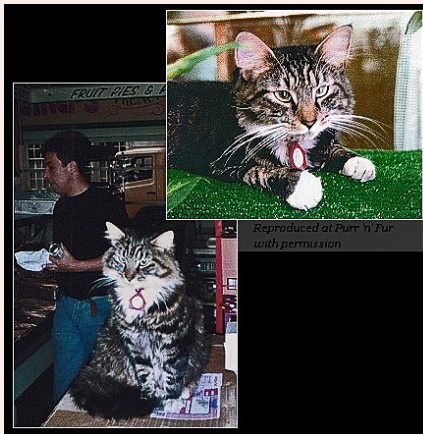
📍 Central Park, New York, USA: June 2008

Many Manhattan folk walk their dogs in Central Park; few, however, do as Court Hassinger did and take their cat walking on a lead. **Radar**, a sleek brown Abyssinian who was three when the story was reported by the *New York Times*, walked well and nearly at heel most of the time, although on an off-day he might tug or squirm, said Court. The cat had a striking bright yellow harness (extra small), and of course got plenty of attention from astonished passers-by. He did slip his harness once, when he was a kitten, but was rescued by three elderly ladies who caught up with him. Back at home after their constitutional, his owner ran a vacuum cleaner over Radar. One by one, he dipped the cat's paws into the hose, and then his tail. Radar closed his eyes in pleasure. Their rapport was unique. 'I let him be what he is,' Court said. For a full account see [here](#) (June 2008 – [archived copy](#)).



Covent Garden, London, England: 1990s

This is **Muffin**, a cat with very fine whiskers who used to live at 'Billy Bunter's Bakery', in the Jubilee Market at London's famous Covent Garden. He was quite shy and loved to hide among the flowers on the flower stalls. We don't have any other information about him, but we're indebted to artist Frances Broomfield, who managed to take a couple of photos of him prior to the delightful painting of him that she also made (*below right*).



Rome, Italy: December 2011

When 94-year-old Maria Assunta died late in 2011 she left her entire fortune, worth over 13 million dollars (in excess of £8 million at the time), to her beloved 4-year-old black cat **Tommaso** (Tommasino in some reports), a stray she had rescued from the streets. Maria was the widow of a wealthy Italian property tycoon, and left the cat her fortune because of her 'love of animals', according to her lawyers, and because she had no living relatives. By Italian law Tommaso couldn't directly inherit the money, but Maria's nurse Stefania — who looked after the old lady until the day she died — administered it and made sure Tommaso was well cared for. Tommaso and Stefania, along with another cat, lived outside Rome at an undisclosed address to avoid con artists and potential kidnappers. (*both Dec. 2011*).

[ABC News](#) | [Guardian](#)



▣ **West Richland, Washington State, USA: December 2012**

Sable, a 15-year-old black cat who lived with a family in West Richland, became known as the 'crossing guard cat'. Every weekday during school terms, morning and evening and whatever the weather, he walked to a nearby street corner, positioned himself near the pedestrian crossing and 'supervised' children as they crossed the road to and from Enterprise Middle School. He was equipped with an orange safety jacket to give him the professional look, and the school's principal and the safety adviser awarded him an 'Honorary Safety Patrol Member' certificate. He usually arrived about five minutes before the children began to cross — and he knew when it was a weekend and didn't go out then. One of the students said that many teachers had Sable's picture as wallpaper on their computers; and he became quite well-known on the internet. He also had many friends among the children, who regarded him as their mascot and 'one of the team'. There are short video clips at [YouTube](#) (Sept. 2013) and [here](#) (Dec. 2012).



▣ **Holyhead, North Wales, UK: December 2012**

A nearly blind dog could get around again — thanks to his feline guide. Eight-year-old Terfel kept bumping into things and spent most of his time stuck in his basket, after being diagnosed with cataracts. That was until a stray cat arrived, and Terfel's owner Judy Godfrey-Brown took her in. Much to Judy's surprise, the cat — named **Pwditat** (a Welsh spelling of 'Puddy Tat') — took to the dog straight away, and they became almost inseparable. She led him out of his basket and into the garden and ever since then helped him to find his way around.

Retired civil servant Judy said: 'I've never seen anything like it — most cats and dogs hate each other. But Pwditat immediately seemed to know that Terfel is blind, and she uses her

paws to help guide him. They are glued to each other and even sleep together now.'

Later, because of declining health, Judy became no longer able to look after the pair, and they were taken in by her friend Anne Cragg.

[Wales Online](#) (March 2014) | [Daily Post](#) (Apr.2013).*(pay walls)*



▣ Peterborough, England: April 2012

Royal Mail postal staff in Peterborough, a city in eastern England, refused to deliver mail to a house where three-year-old cat **Snowball** lived, claiming that she was a health-and-safety risk! They said she had attacked three postmen, leaving one with 'quite deep' cuts to a finger, and so they suspended services because of the 'unacceptably high level of risk'. Snowball's owner Ian Wilkinson said, 'It's utterly ridiculous. A postman would have to struggle to even poke a hand to the other side of the letterbox.' He added: 'Although I acknowledge that my cat is a very intelligent animal, she is not able to lift up a spring-loaded flap, keep it open, push her paw through a double brush guard and maul an unsuspecting delivery person, in the time it takes to deliver a letter.' Still, having received no letters for a week, Mr Wilkinson fitted a cage around his letterbox, and Royal Mail then agreed that deliveries could resume. The full story is at the [Mail Online](#) (April 2012 – archived copy).

Images by Ben Davis/Johnston Press.



Southampton, England: June 2012

Millie, a feisty Bengal feline, was thought to be the world's first-ever feline security guard after taking up a security post at a large toy warehouse in the southern English city of Southampton, being hired to guard some of the UK's best-selling toy ranges. Bandai UK's warehouse was on the lookout for a new security guard when workers spotted the attentive moggie roaming the factory floor. Her excellent climbing abilities and loud purr made her a prime candidate for the role. Bengal cats possess similar sentry qualities to dogs, and Millie's human said, 'She has always had a very vigilant personality and doesn't mind long hours alone. I'm not surprised she took up a career as a security guard — the toys are lucky to have such an attentive guardian.' Millie appeared to be at home in her new and very responsible job, as toy stocks were being built up for Christmas 2012, and she was going to be paid in cat food and fish at the factory. Larger-sized and further images can be seen in Bandai UK's [photo album for Millie](#) at Facebook (June 2012). Also [Metro](#) (*archived copy*), [Evening Standard](#) (both June 2013).





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Project Bay Cat photos (see article near the top of this article)





Bashful



Captain



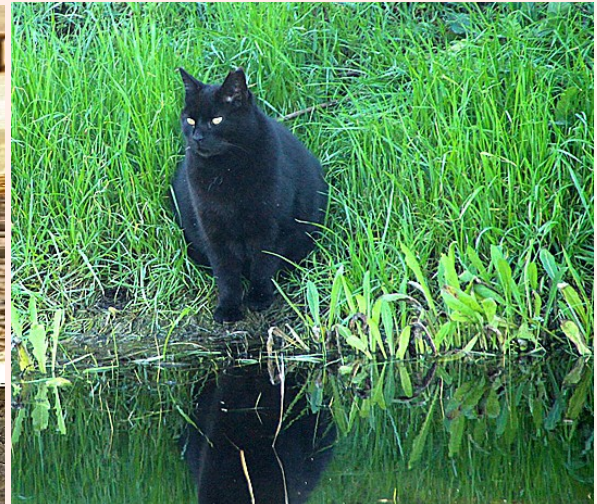
Forrest the Great



Sea Captain



Tommy



Funny Girl

Slinky



Sham, the last of the Bay Cats to take up a home as at January 2023

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