

Jolie, who led rescuers to her kittens



In October 2011 a young black cat was heartlessly thrown from a car in the town of March, in Cambridgeshire in the east of England — but fortunately someone saw the incident and was able both to alert the RSPCA and to monitor the cat. The 'good Samaritan' started to feed her, and after a couple of weeks was able to catch her and take her to an RSPCA surgery. Although thin, needing treatment for fleas and worms and having a grazed face from her ordeal, she was otherwise quite healthy, but it was clear she'd recently had kittens (possibly the reason she was 'dumped'). So it was necessary to take her back to the place where she'd been found, in order that she'd be able to return to her kits.

Now named **Jolie**, when she was returned to the spot by RSPCA Inspector Jon Knight the young mother began to call out. At first he thought she was calling to her kittens, but then he realised she was meowing at him, wanting him to follow her. It was a rural area, and she took him across country, through gardens, over a ploughed field and into a farmyard. She entered a farm machinery barn and went straight to a stack of old wood — and behind it were her four kittens, still with their eyes closed. 'There is absolutely no way I would have found these kittens without the cat's help,' said Inspector Knight. 'She was a huge distance away from the garden she had first been found in, and was clearly doing all she could to lead me to her kittens.'

The family was taken to the local RSPCA Animal Centre, where they would stay until fit, healthy and old enough to be rehomed. Jolie also needed to put on some weight, but that probably wouldn't happen until she'd weaned the youngsters. All's well that ends well, thanks to the young mother's determination and love for her kittens. As for thoughts on the people who threw her out of the car — well, we'd better not go there.

The full article about Jolie's adventure can be seen at the [Ely Weekly News](#) (Oct. 2011 – *archived copy*).



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(page checked March 2026)

Two cats who helped youngsters to learn

Billy

The stray who befriended an autistic boy



Fraser, of Balmoral in Scotland, who was four years old at the time, was an autistic boy who was finding everyday life difficult, with even simple tasks often ending in tears and temper tantrums — until **Billy** the cat came along. Billy himself hadn't had the easiest start in life, having been abandoned by his owner and rescued by the charity Cats Protection from a boarded-up house. Then, during 2011, the family went along to the CP shelter to look for a cat — and the first time he saw Fraser Billy went straight to him. The boy sat on the floor of Billy's pen, and Billy laid across him with his paws on his legs and just started purring. Fraser said, 'This is our cat — he can come and live with us.' And so it was decided.

The pair became inseparable, and whether it was playtime, story-time or bedtime Billy was always there to give the little boy reassurance; he seemed to sense when Fraser was becoming frustrated, and calmed him down by purring or asking for a cuddle. 'If Fraser is around or playing in the garden, Billy is never far away,' said Mrs Booth. 'It's as though he's watching Fraser and calming his behaviour. He always appears when Fraser is getting upset and offers his head close to Fraser's to reassure him and recently, when the boy was poorly, Billy sat on his bed all day. They say animals can sense things, but Billy seemed to know before anybody else if Fraser was going to get upset.'



It was almost as though Billy were Fraser's guardian. 'Billy has made a complete difference to our family life; he's taken away the stress, he's added happiness and an air of calm — he's just been amazing,' said Mrs Booth. The full story, and more great pictures of Fraser with Billy, can be seen at the [Daily Mail](#) (June 2012 — archived copy).



There's a further, longer article from *The Scotsman* in 2014, a couple of years later than the above, about Fraser and Billy's progress; see [here](#) (archived copy – February 2014). It tells how Fraser's younger sister Pippa had acquired her own cat, Percy, and Fraser himself – with Billy's help and companionship – had made amazing progress and was attending mainstream school, against the experts' predictions. There is a book, *When Fraser met Billy*, written by Louise Booth and published by Hodder & Stoughton.

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Jessi-Cat

The Birman who helped a boy with selective mutism



Lorcan Dillon from Manchester, England, seven years old in 2012, had selective mutism, an anxiety disorder not widely known about that made it difficult – even impossible – for him to speak to adults in social situations, or at school, or to express emotions such as love for his family. At home he seemed to be a normal and very vocal little boy, but not in the presence of other adults. All that began to change in

2010 when beautiful **Jessi-cat**, a cream Birman, became Lorcan's best friend and helped him to deal with and gradually overcome his difficulties.

Jessi-Cat was entered into Cats Protection's 2012 National Cat Awards, won the 'Best Friends category and then – to the family's delight and amazement – was voted 'National Cat of the Year'. Lorcan was able to be at the ceremony with his mother Jayne, and collected the trophies himself. The two friends and mum Jayne appeared on [BBC Breakfast](#) (Aug. 2012) (with Jessi and Lorcan's older brother Luke), and also on [Granada TV](#) (2012); and there's more on the story at the [Daily Mail](#) (Nov. 2012 – [archived copy](#)) and in the [Guardian](#) (Aug. 2013). In 2013 also a book was published, written by Jayne Dillon: *Jessi-Cat: The Cat that Unlocked a Boy's Heart* (Michael O'Mara Books, ISBN 978-1-78243-124-4).

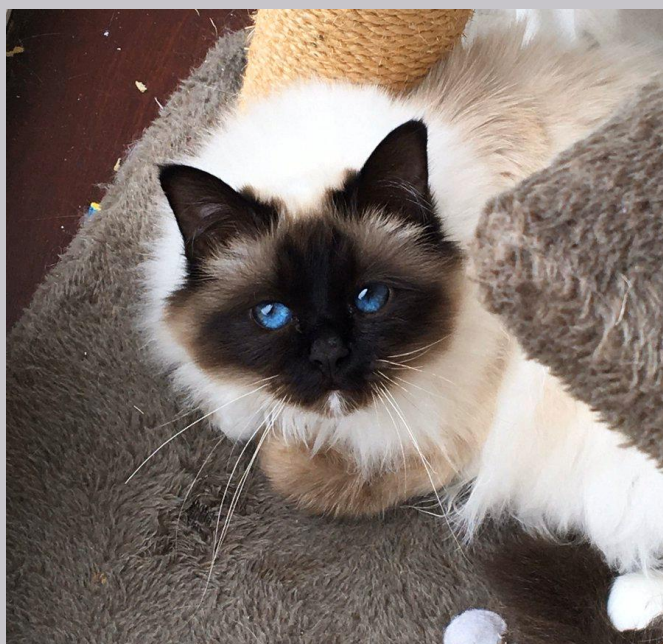


Update:

Jessi-Cat became ill and died in June 2019, leaving Lorcan and the family heartbroken. There is a green plaque in her honour!



A few months later, though, they welcomed a new kitten, Jolene Angel, born in April 2019, as well as a new puppy, Dobby; see Twitter [here](#).*(last used Dec. 2021)*



Jolene Angel

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