

Mini Fragments 3 (2019+)

Short news items of feline interest from today and yesteryear
(page checked March 2026)

▣ Hollywood, Los Angeles, California; 1961

Auditions were held for black cats to be featured in a low-budget horror movie, *Tales of Terror*, an adaptation of Edgar Allen Poe stories that was to star Vincent Price. 152 cats attended; any that had white paws or noses were dismissed right away. The others waited patiently – or some not so patiently! – but in the end the main feline role went to a professionally trained cat. However, other cats were still needed for understudies and publicity, so seven of the attendees were chosen – apparently based on 'how mean the look in their eyes was'!

[Mashable](#) (Oct. 2014)



For more details, see [Cinema Cats](#).

▣ Albrighton, Shropshire, England: 2012

Perhaps left behind when personnel moved from a nearby Royal Air Force base, **Cat** wandered into a caravan dealership near Albrighton, Shropshire in England's West Midlands several years ago. They didn't make a big fuss of her, but gave her food and she gradually became part of the 'fixtures and fittings' at Cosford Caravans. She spent nights outside, as the business was closed then.

Her fortunes changed early in 2012; when owner Mervyn Hughes was having a meeting with Mick Howard, the director of another caravan company, Bailey Caravans. 'Cat' was hanging around and Mick asked about her, being told that she slept outside at night somewhere on the site. Mervyn was astonished when, a few weeks later, a 3-foot (about 1 metre) miniature tourer caravan arrived, created by Bailey's engineers especially for Cat! The luxury item was worth about £1,500 and came complete with 'dining facilities' (a model kitchen) and a fleece-lined bed. An accompanying message said, 'Something for the cat to sleep in at night in comfort.' Hughes commented, 'I must admit I was a bit amazed. In my 28 years here, I've never seen anything quite like it.' [Mail Online](#). (Apr. 2012 – archived)



▣ Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, USA: 1992

Born in April 1989, **Aggie** was a sick little kitten, as well as being blind. She was taken home to be cared for by a couple, John and Lynn Seely, who planned to give her away after she'd been nursed back to health – but she captured their hearts and they kept her. She was gentle, sweet-natured and never scratched. All that changed one cold winter night in 1992 when Aggie, sleeping on her humans' bed, was awakened by an unfamiliar sound. She went quietly downstairs to investigate and sensed a strange man entering the house through a window. Aggie jumped up onto her cat tree, waited till the man was walking past her perch – and then launched herself at him, clawing him severely in the face. The man screamed, waking John, but by the time John had got downstairs the man had fled. Aggie lived comfortably for a number of years, with companion cat **Masha**, and in 2004 reached the age of 15. Her exploits had been featured on TV and in magazines, and there was even a book about her. She died in January 2005 after a gradual decline in health. There's a full account of her burglar-chasing [here](#) (undated), and her book, with brief extracts, is described [here](#) (2004 – archived copy).



▣ **Montagnana, near Florence, Italy: 2013**

When Renzo Iozzelli died in 2012, his cat **Toldo** – a 3-year-old grey-and-white tom – followed the funeral procession, and for months afterwards would visit his master's tomb in the cemetery on almost a daily basis. 'Sometimes he comes with me and sometimes he goes on his own,' said widow Ada. 'He takes little twigs, leaves, toothpicks, plastic cups – a bit of everything. He really loved my husband.'

[Rawstory](#) (Jan. 2013 – archived)



▣ **Wrexham, North Wales, UK: April 2004**

A hissing and scratching stray female cat turned up at Wrexham Rugby Football Club in about 1986, living first up on the roof. Gradually she started to trust people and become friendlier, and then took up residence in the office. She was named **Gladys** and became very popular at the club; some fans would send extra money when buying tickets for games so that the cat could have some extra treats. She became a fixture and an unofficial mascot, and in 2002 reached the final six in Cats Protection's 'Rescue Cat of the Year' awards. In April 2004, at the age of about 20, she became ill and her vet recommended that she be put to sleep. Her ashes were scattered on the Racecourse ground, and although she was very much missed it was decided not to take on another cat.

▣ **Dybvad, Denmark: 1995**

Cats come in many colours, but we don't usually expect them to be green! In late 1995 it was reported that a Manx-blend kitten had been born in a hayloft in the north-western Danish town, and had fur of a distinct greenish hue. At first suspected to be the result of a prank, researchers found that **Miss Greeny**'s fur and even the follicles were tinted, as well as her claws, and the green colour couldn't be washed out.

Scientists were very excited by the discovery, thinking it might be a genetic mutation – but in fact it was found to be caused by high copper content in the water the kitten had been drinking. After a brief period of fame, Miss Greeny moulted and the green tint grew out. She turned into a normal and perfectly healthy grey cat.



[Scotcats](#) (undated)



▣ **Ludlow, Shropshire, England: 2012**

Two-year-old **George** – full name George Washington Richardson – was the 'cat about town' in Ludlow; he had a loving home, but made it his business to go visiting and was often to be found dozing in shop windows or checking in at pubs and churches. One of his favourite haunts was Poyner's the drapers, an old-established family business, so when it was threatened with closure because of increased business rates, George and his human wrote an open letter to the local newspaper, the *Shropshire Star*. In it George said: ' My home is in Broad Street, but I feel it's my duty to visit most of the establishments up and down the street. My favourite place is Poyner's, which is my home away from home. I have my own bed in that marvellous, unique and timeless emporium. I have recently been appointed Poyner's official mascot, and would be lost without the place. Please take steps to ensure that this wonderful Ludlow institution remains in business.'

Whether or not George's letter had any effect, the community rallied round and the shop survived, celebrating in 2018 a century in business. [Poyner's faces closure](#) (Nov. 2012) | [Celebrates 100 years in business](#) (May 2018)

For other 'cats about town' see Featuring /Adventures & Travels 21 to 25; Famous – Hamish McHamish.

▣ **Brasilia, Brazil: 2019**

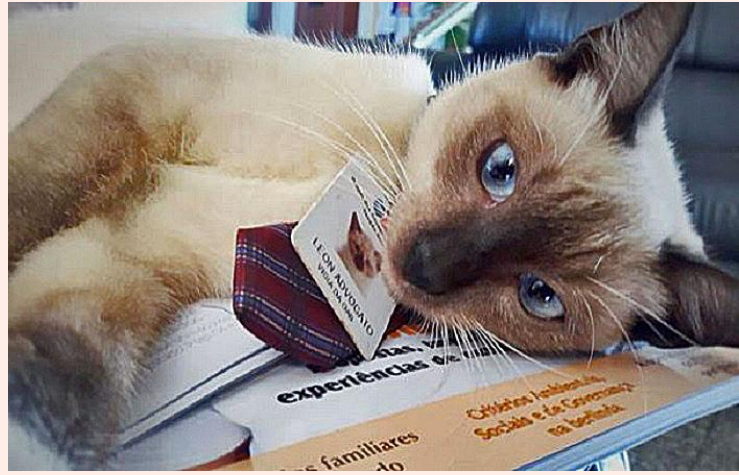
A stray kitten wandering the streets of the city after a heavy rainstorm found his way into the offices of the Order of Attorneys of Brazil (OAB). Employees took him under their wing, named him **Leon**, found him a box and started feeding him. They let him hang out in the reception area, but there were some complaints from people when he tried to make friends, while others feared he could get trampled on as he was quite small. The company's solution: they hired him as an employee! When this news was posted on Facebook, the post quickly went viral; as a reward for all the publicity the company gained, Leon was promoted to lawyer, with his own ID card! He became a valued employee, known as 'Dr Leon', in charge of hugs and cuddles, and with his own Instagram account! *(no longer available Mar. 2026)*

[Australasian Lawyer](#) (Oct. 2019) | [Facebook page](#) (Portuguese; last used Nov. 2020)
Many other links available.



Update: Very sadly, it seems that after a short tenure of just a year or so, in June 2020 Dr Leon was found lifeless one morning at one of the OAB offices. A eulogy from his employers expressed their dismay, great sadness and deep regret; it appeared that he'd ingested poison from an unknown source, possibly some animal or insect he'd been in contact with.

[Above The Law](#) (Dec. 2020)



There hadn't been any intention to take on a replacement for Leon – who had left 'a huge void and a great longing'; however, in October 2020 a little female kitten was found near the offices, with some injuries that might have been caused by being struck by a car. She was taken to the vet for treatment, and she was going to be looked after while she took her medication and until she had recovered. But 'in a few days she conquered our hearts and our workspace'! So **Dr Leona** she became (*below*), and a worthy successor to Dr Leon. There's no later news, as the Facebook page hasn't been used since late 2020.



▣ **Alexandria, Indiana, USA: 2006**

Black Persian cat **Sebastian**, 1 year old, had an underbite, rather like a bulldog, which meant that his lower canines stuck out from his lips. His owner – dentist David Steele – was concerned that they could quite easily become damaged. So he had gold crowns made, and fitted them himself while Sebastian was anaesthetised; the operation took only about 15 minutes. The crowns cost \$900 each. Following the procedure, Sebastian's 'new look' got plenty of attention but, said David, 'He's normally around me all the time, but he wouldn't speak to me for two days.'

[NBC News](#) (*archived copy – undated*).



▣ New York City: December 1884

One day a beautiful grey Maltese cat disappeared from Sharkey's, a wine room and saloon bar on the corner of 4th Avenue and 13th Street. Her beauty and intelligence had long delighted the customers, it was said, and bar receipts fell as they went out to search for her. After several days had elapsed Patrick Sharkey, the owner, offered a \$10 reward for her safe return, increased after a week to \$20 – a considerable sum in those days. But on 26 December a mournful meowing was heard coming from the basement, where the liquor bottles were stored. Maybe the cat had decided to take a week off! – but she didn't seem hungry, having been successfully hunting mice, and evidently decided to come up to see what all the fuss was about!

▣ Langebaan, Western Cape, South Africa: October 2019

After she had kittens, **Kathryn** and her offspring were abandoned and ended up in Langebaan animal shelter – but unfortunately the kittens died. She was distraught, became reclusive and was constantly crying and looking for her lost family. Then four young puppies, also abandoned, came to the shelter, and were introduced to Kathryn. She immediately began to groom and protect them; they were initially wary of this strange creature, but soon responded and even began to nurse, as she was still lactating. They all cuddled up together, and Kathryn stopped crying and settled to the task of looking after her charges! [The Dodo](#) (Apr. 2019)



▣ Swansea, South Wales, UK: October 2020

Black cat **Mo** surpassed Biscuit (*below*) by going missing from his home for EIGHT years! In 2012, aged 3, he was put into a cattery while his humans went on holiday, but he escaped, and in spite of extensive searches, posters, advertisements and so on, no trace of him was found. Fast forward to 2020 when the RSPCA called his former owner Izzy Harris to say that he'd been found and, thanks to his microchip, could be returned to her. It turned out that he'd been found at the home of an old lady who'd died, so she must have taken him in and looked after him; he seemed in good health. 'We honestly never thought we'd see him again,' said Izzy. 'Miracles do happen!' [Express & Star](#) (Oct. 2020)

▣ March, Cambridgeshire, England: 2020

Ginger-and-white cat **Biscuit**, known by his family as 'Bikkit', disappeared from his home early in the morning of 1st December 2017, and despite extensive and lengthy searches was not found. Eleven years old, he had been a feral cat and his humans, Keith and Su Bigland, wondered whether he'd returned to his former life and had given up hope of seeing him again. So they were amazed when, nearly three years later in October 2020, a phone call from a local vet said Biscuit had been handed in, having been found less than a mile from their home! Then 14, he wasn't in great shape, with some breathing and heart problems requiring treatment, but he seemed pleased to be home, recognised his humans and hardly stopped purring! [BBC News](#) (Oct. 2020)



▣ **Male tortoiseshell cats: Scotland, California, Wales, England**

Male tortoiseshell cats are very uncommon, with more than 99.9% of tortoiseshells being female. Males usually have one X and one Y chromosome and are either black or ginger, but about 1 in 3000 will be born with two X and one Y chromosomes; they are usually infertile. Several have been reported in recent years. **Harry** (*below*) was taken in by Lothian Cat Rescue in Midlothian, Scotland in late 2014, after his owners suffered extreme allergic reaction to him. He was the first male tortie the centre had seen in its 35 years, and had a tuxedo brother called **Dennis**.

[Harry article](#) (Jan. 2015 – archived copy)



Sherman (*below*) came into the care of the Humane Society Silicon Valley from another shelter that was over-full; he was a calico cat (tortoiseshell and white), and was being made available for adoption.

[Sherman article](#) (Jan. 2015).



In North Wales in 2019 a male tortoiseshell about five months old was found by the RSPCA on the streets of Colwyn Bay. Named **Cresta** (*below left*), he was transferred to Cats Protection in Wrexham, from where he quickly found a loving new home.

[Cresta article](#) (Oct. 2019)



And just to round off the register of male tortoiseshells, **Eddie** (*above centre & right*) came into a vet's practice in Hertfordshire, England in 2009 with his three tortoiseshell sisters, and vet Karen Horne was amazed to find he was a male. She adopted him into her large family of children, cats and dogs and he went to live happily with them all in Markyate.

[Watford Observer](#) (Aug. 2009)

▣ **Laplace, Louisiana, USA: 2011**



Cajun Pride Swamp Tours is a wildlife refuge on the east bank of the Mississippi, about 40 km (25 miles) west of New Orleans. In 2011 a stray tabby cat found his way to the refuge and quickly made it his home, among a number of other former strays. The owners called him **Mugsy**, as he 'ran the park like a little gangster'. He protected his territory and became famous for defending it against alligators who would try to muscle in; he would stare them out, lunge at them, and if that didn't work would go for them with his claws. They always retreated!

By 2014 Mugsy had retired from alligator chasing and was at his forever home. He and his humans have a [Facebook](#) page (*last used 2016*) and they seem to deal with many homeless and rescued cats; I wasn't able to establish whether or not Mugsy himself was still alive in 2023. Mugsy's alligator exploits are recorded on [YouTube](#). [Country Rebel](#) (Feb. 2022)



▣ **Milnrow, Greater Manchester, England: June 2009**

Finding the body of a ginger cat by the roadside, hit by a car, the Petrillo family buried it and were convinced it was their cat **Alfie**, who had gone missing from home. Not long afterwards the family moved to another house, about a mile away. Nine months later their former neighbour phoned to say a ginger cat had been hanging round their old house and trying to get in; and next day he rang again saying that the cat had been outside all night, meowing pitifully. A trip back to the former dwelling established that it was definitely the 'dead' Alfie! He'd put on a bit of weight and seemed to have been cared for, but it was undoubtedly him. He returned with them to their new house, where his brother Freddie – another ginger – wasn't too thrilled to see him.

And of course the question that remained unanswered was: whose cat had they buried?

[Manchester Evening News](#) (Jan. 2013)

▣ **Portscatho, Cornwall, England: 2013**

Finding a dusty, cat-shaped 'pile of rags' in his attic, where it had lain for some 50 years, Robert Gray thought it was a stuffed cat and took it to a vet to be X-rayed. But it turned out to be a 2000-year-old Egyptian mummified cat, perfectly preserved with its face, ears, spine and brain intact. Mr Gray said, 'My late father – an Egyptologist – was given it in the 1970s by a museum as a token of thanks for some work he'd done; he thought it was a fake.' The completeness of the mummy suggests that it was a prized pet rather than a sacrifice.

The mummy could have sold for up to £2000, but Mr Gray said he'd probably donate it to a museum. [BBC News](#) (Feb. 2013: includes short video)



▣ College Station, Texas, USA: December 2001

Ground-breaking work by Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine resulted in the birth of **Copy Cat**, or 'CC', on 22 December 2001 – the first-ever successful cloning of a cat. Six months later she was adopted by Dr Duane Kraemer, senior professor at the college's Reproductive Sciences Laboratory, and his wife. CC became a beloved pet and also one of the first cloned cats to become a mother, giving birth to three healthy kittens that lived with her for the rest of her life.

Regardless of all the worldwide publicity and interest surrounding the circumstances of her birth, CC lived a long, normal and happy life. She died aged 18 on 3 March 2020, much mourned by the Kraemers, the staff at Texas A&M and all her many followers. 'CC was a great cat and a real joy,' said Dr Kraemer. 'She was part of the family and very special to us. We'll miss her every day.'

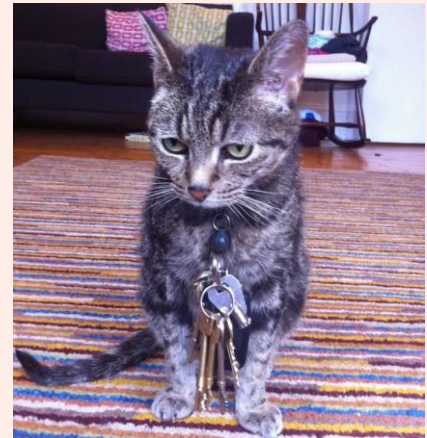
Today a cloned cat can be bought for around US\$35,000.
See CC's [obituary](#) (March 2020). *Photos below as a kitten and an adult.*



▣ Stoke Newington, London, England: 2012

Kirsten Alexander of Stoke Newington in north-east London had no idea what her cat **Milo** was getting up to on her wanderings while she was at work. Then one day she saw Milo coming in with a bunch of keys dangling from her collar – a magnetic collar that activated the cat flap and stopped other cats from going in and eating her food. Kirsty then found 12 more sets of keys in her garden, 8 around her house and 6 in neighbours' gardens – as well as an assortment of dozens of other small metal items scattered around the house! Milo had been visiting other houses and her collar had collected all these items. The keys were returned to their owners, and fortunately the neighbours saw the funny side of it.

[Mail Online](#) (Dec. 2012 – archived copy)



▣ Plymouth, England: 2015

In December 2014 Tuppence was thought to be 27 years old, making her one of the oldest cats in the UK at the time. What was perhaps even more remarkable, though, was how she'd survived that long! Born into a rough life as a dockyard kitten, she was rescued and lived with Raymond Dillon until he died in early 2014, when his daughter Pam took over her care. While living with Raymond, Tuppence was said to have suffered an astonishing 25 road accidents, one of which cost her half her tail, and another that broke both her back legs. She also lost an eye in a fight with a dog. Hardly surprising that the accident-prone cat spent most of her old age sleeping, safely inside the house!

[Life with Cats](#) (Jan. 2015)

▣ West Palm Beach, Florida, USA: 2008



A strange set of circumstances brought Dan Somers together with a tiny kitten in around 2000. His nephew Tony, staying with him at the time, was at an incident in West Palm Beach where a homeless man had been knocked off his bicycle in a traffic accident and died; Tony noticed a tiny kitten peering out of the dead man's pocket and brought him back to Dan, who was used to cats. The man had apparently picked him up as a stray, from an unknown location, but he wasn't weaned and was too young to have left his mother. Dan bottle-fed him and brought him up, forming a strong bond in the process. He named the youngster **Rambo**, and trained him to obey simple commands.

Dan was a taxi-driver, and so eventually started to take the cat with him at nights. He adapted almost straight away and seemed to love it – except for big dogs, trucks, trains and drunken fares, the latter making him stay under the seat. Most passengers enjoyed seeing him, and Rambo loved to stick his head and front paws out of the window, even at quite high speeds, with his ears, fur and whiskers blowing in the breeze! The last I heard of him was in 2011, when he was still going strong and enjoying his unusual lifestyle.

There's a full account, including from Dan Somers, [here](#) and [here](#) (both June 2008).

▣ Geelong, Australia: 2014

Paula Adams saw a rather sorry-looking black-and-white cat in her garden and, thinking it was quite young, took it to the vet to get some help. To her surprise the vet said it was quite an old cat – which set Paula wondering: could it possibly be **Shelby**, her cat who'd disappeared 13 years earlier, in 2001? She took a photo and posted on Facebook, but no one claimed the cat. Searching through old photos at home, she finally found one of Shelby and returned with it to the vet. After a careful comparison of the photos and the cat, it was concluded that it was indeed Shelby. Where he'd been for 13 years remained a mystery, but Paula was delighted to have him back. The only family member not so pleased was the other resident cat!

[Life with Cats](#) (June 2014 – archived copy)



▣ Los Angeles, California, USA: January 2020

Eight-year-old rescue cat **Max** used up a couple of his nine lives when three coyotes cornered him in his backyard and tried to attack him – and no doubt make a meal of him. But Max was having none of it; he parried their attacks, continually lunging at them and driving one of them off. Alerted by the commotion, Max's owner came out and the coyotes scurried off. 'Max has always been crazy,' she said. 'He didn't seem fazed at all.' Nevertheless he was then being kept inside until a safe enclosure could be built outside for him. [Mail Online](#) (includes video)

(Jan. 2020 – archived copy)

▣ Oswiecim, Poland, 2010



It isn't clear exactly when a female cat – known for some reason as either **Bruno** or **Rudolf** – first appeared at the former concentration-camp site, better known by its German name of Auschwitz, but by February 2010 she'd been there at least six months and maybe longer. Despite extremely cold winter temperatures as low as -34 degrees Celsius, she preferred to be outside, either by a guard's hut or near the notorious 'Arbeit macht frei' sign at the entrance, where she would greet visitors. An animal-care group asked the authorities running the museum site to provide a shelter for her, but they refused, saying they weren't responsible for her and their priority was visitors. An employee took her in and tried to give her a home, but she hated being indoors and he had to let her out – whereupon she returned straight to her usual haunts! What became of her I haven't been able to find out for certain, but some information suggested she went to a shelter and then accepted a real home.

[The Yeshiva World](#) | [Worldwide Whiskers](#) (both Feb. 2010). | [Reddit](#) (with a short video)

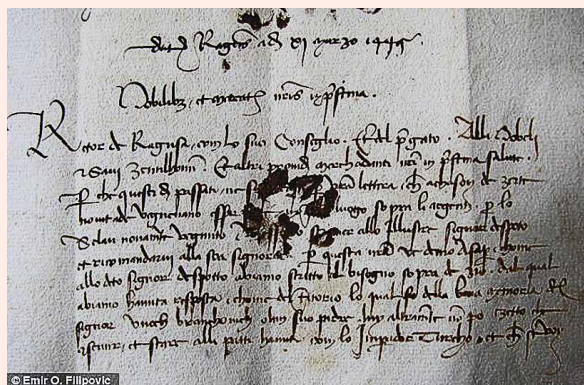
▣ Stratham, New Hampshire, USA: date unknown

'Ugly Bat Boy', affectionately known as **Uggs**, was left as a kitten with three siblings at the Exeter Veterinary Hospital in Stratham. He was hairless, apart from a patch of fur on his chest and around his neck, giving him quite an unusual look and resembling a lion's mane. His sister, one of the siblings, had a similar feature, but she died in infancy. Uggs, looked after by Dr Stephen Basset, lived permanently at the hospital for at least 8 years, along with three other cats retrieved from various situations. He was a calm and friendly cat, and visitors to the hospital were fond of him. He died in September 2013.



[Sea Coast online](#) (undated: need to copy & paste link) | [New York Times](#) (Dec. 2013 – with other stories)

▣ Dubrovnik, Croatia: 15th century



Many people will be familiar with their cat 'helping' them by sitting or walking on their keyboard while they're trying to work on their computer. The equivalent was happening centuries ago! A medieval manuscript from the 15th century, preserved in the state archives of the Croatian city of Dubrovnik, bears clear evidence of feline 'assistance' in the form of paw-prints. The cat seems to have stepped in some ink before walking over the pages and leaving four clear prints. These days the document would simply be scrapped and a new, clean one produced, but in those days writing was an elaborate and expensive process, and so the writer would have had no choice but to turn over and continue on a new page. Cats were often kept in monasteries and other places where writing was done, as they kept away the mice that liked to nibble the manuscripts. [Mail Online](#) (March 2013 – archived copy)



▣ Sweden: 2020

A Sphynx cat named **Cooper** is obsessed with water, absolutely loves splashing around in it and enjoys baths. His antics are described in a charming [YouTube](#) video by his human Niklas Lundstrom. Born in 2012, Cooper has a Cornish Rex playmate called **Kira**.

See also [Sphynxnille](#) (undated) | [Katzenworld](#) (Aug. 2021) [Instagram](#) (still active March 2026)

▣ Nördlingen, Germany: 2023



Nördlingen is a walled town in Bavaria, Germany that boasts a number of medieval buildings. One such is St George's church, which has a fine tower known as the Daniel tower – and a cat lives there! Known I believe as **Frau Wendelstein**, she is based in the warden's office and has lived there since 2010. As far as I can ascertain she was still there late in 2023 and was regarded as a town employee, tasked with helping to keep birds away from the tower. <https://www.facebook.com/profile/100069828194810/search/?q=cat> (copy & paste) [YouTube](#) (2023 – in German)





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