

Featured Felines: Cats' Adventures & Travels 1 (2009)

Public Transport — Rail, Trains, Trams, etc.

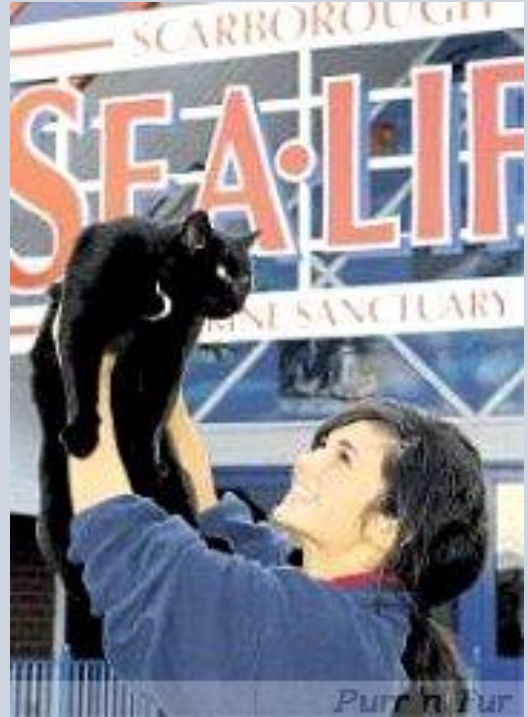
(page checked April 2026)

Percy

The Train Rider from Scarborough, North Yorkshire

The North Bay Railway is a miniature line running at Scarborough, a well-known holiday and seaside resort on Britain's North Yorkshire coast, and one terminus is by the town's Sea Life Centre, a marine sanctuary. **Percy**, a large and friendly black cat, liked to take the train, especially in summer, from near his home in Peasholm Park to ride the 3/4 of a mile (just over a kilometre) to the Centre.

His owners, Anne and Yale Michael, were astonished when in October 2009 they read in their local newspaper, the *Scarborough News*, of their 7-year-old cat's travels — especially when they found he'd been making his trips for about three years! He was so well-known at the station that he'd been provided with his own piece of carpet for snoozing on. Phil Hart, a guard on the railway, said, 'Percy just hops on and off the trains and knows exactly what times they run. The passengers love him and make a fuss of him. He's a lovely cat.' His owners said he revelled in the attention!



When he reached the Sea Life Centre Percy liked to sit on a wall by the entrance and sneak in along with the visitors, according to manager Tamsin Mutton-McKnight. She said he was never any trouble — in fact, was better behaved than some visitors. He particularly liked to watch the penguins — although that scared them a bit and they didn't like him very much — and the fish in tanks. 'He just plonks himself down and watches them,' said Tamsin. 'He never tries to get in any of the tanks, even though some have open tops, and we never have any problems with him.'

When he'd seen enough Percy just hopped on a train for the return journey and went back home. In winter he stayed at home more and 'spends most of his time asleep on my bed, preparing for the next season,' said Mrs Michael. 'He came from a farm and has always been something of a free spirit. He loves to get out and about and is always losing the tags with our phone number on. But he always makes it home in the end.'

After 2009 there was nothing more for several years about Percy, apart from a short comment from his owner in 2013 ([see video clip links below](#)) from which it seemed this handsome black cat was still riding the train.

However, in August 2017 there came the sad news that Percy had passed away. The North Bay Railway Facebook page said: 'Anyone that knew Percy knew that he was a larger-than-life character who part-adopted us and spent a huge part of his life at Scalby Mills station. He will be fondly remembered for demanding milk, pinching chicken sandwiches and sneaking into boxes in the office, as well as hanging around the platform greeting passengers and giving a few dogs a run for their money!'

'He was sought out by several film crews from America and even Japan for documentaries about animals, as they thought the story of him riding the train was priceless. He even had a book written in which he starred.**

'Percy was sorely missed by staff and customers alike at the railway, especially Mura the ticket lady at Scalby who treated him as one of her own. His owner Yale is devastated. We shall be placing a plaque at Scalby Mills for him.'

[** *Percy the Cat at North Bay Railway*, fifth in a series of 'North Bay Tales' by Joe Coates.]

This is the plaque subsequently erected to remember Percy.



(There seems to be an error on the plaque, as on the NBR Facebook page it was announced that he died on 8th August 2017.)

Links

- Yorkshire Post, Oct 2009: [Meet Percy - the cat who travels by train to watch the fish at marine life centre.](#) *(archived copy)*
- Scarborough News, Oct 2009: [Percy the Scarborough rail passenger has always been a wanderer.](#) *(archived copy)*
- Daily Telegraph, Oct 2009: [Cat which catches \[train\] to watch fish 'enjoying his fame'.](#) *(archived copy)*
- [North Bay Railway](#), and also at [Facebook](#).
- [Scarborough Sea Life Sanctuary](#) *(paste link in rowser)* and also at [Facebook](#)

Video clips

- At YouTube is a short (silent) clip from 2009 of Percy at the rail terminus near the Sea Life Centre: [Percy - The Scarborough Station Cat](#). In the comments Percy's owner responded in about Feb/Mar 2013 to an enquiry about how he was doing:
 - '... he is OK, he still visits the Sealife Centre and hops on the train for a ride, he is a bit more grumpy these days!! '

(NOTE April 2026: The clip is still available at YouTube, but earlier comments appear to have been deleted, including the one quoted here from Percy's owners in 2013.).



Scarborough Sea Life Sanctuary



Percy with Amy McFarlane
from Sea Life, 2009



Checking out
the tanks



Fascinated...

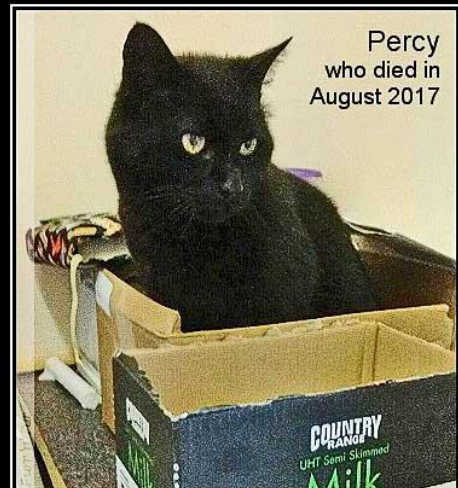


Travelling home...

At the penguin enclosure



Percy
who died in
August 2017



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Jasper, Metro rider **Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England**



In around 2014/2015, 18-month-old cat **Jasper** made the local headlines by riding the Newcastle Metro, unaccompanied. His home was close to North Shields station, and he liked to go and meet people – and join them on the trains, often sitting on complete strangers' knees. His owner, Steph Keenan, said, 'He's a real monkey. The first time he disappeared he went to Meadow Well and was gone for a week.' Other trips have taken him to Jesmond and to Four Lane End, 'I'm thinking of buying him an annual travelcard so he avoids fines, prosecution and being in trouble for trespassing!' said Steph.

Jasper's longest trip took him away for six weeks and a day. He disappeared on Bonfire Night in early November, and didn't return until not long before Christmas, when a kind lady from Heaton took him to a vet, where his microchip was scanned.

The young rascal has had other adventures too, having been stuck up the chimney at his home, been trapped in a neighbour's house when he ventured through an open window, and been stranded in a derelict garage. In 2022 I'm wondering whether he's managed to survive!



Jasper with Steph and daughter Freya

[Chronicle Live](#) (Jan. 2014) | [Metro](#) (June 2015 – archived copy) | [Facebook](#) (from 2014)

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Lilou, Irish train rider (2022) Dublin, Irish Republic



It was in August 2010 that Dublin cat **Lilou** opted for a taste of adventure and boarded a DART (Dublin Area Rapid Transport) train at Malahide station, bound for the city centre. However, at Pearse Street station a passenger picked her up and handed her to rail staff. It took three days of appeals on Twitter and through the media for her owner to be found, but eventually she was reunited with Parisian chef Eric Biec, who lived in Dublin. Corporate Communications Manager Barry Kenny of Iarnród Éireann said, 'Just on the off-chance that she does travel again with us, we are going to issue her with her own smart railcard for the future, so that if she does decide to take the DART again she'll have a valid ticket.'



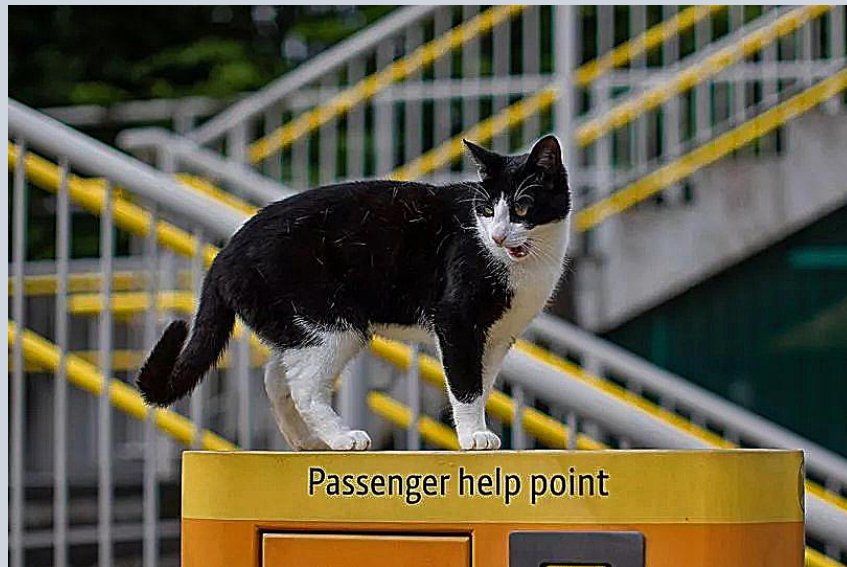
A short [YouTube video](#) was made in which Lilou and Eric re-enacted her journey (with some enhancements), 'with the aid of food bribery, long pieces of invisible string, and downright begging'!

[RTE archives](#) (Aug. 2010: article also includes a video)

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Two tram-stop cats

Chorlton tram cat, aka Batman (2024) Chorlton, Greater Manchester, England



Although I don't think he actually rides the trams, black-and-white **Batman**, also known as the Chorlton tram cat, deserves a mention here, as he has been frequenting the Metrolink station in the south Manchester suburb since around 2019. He was adopted by Nico Cuff and her son in 2017, when he turned up at their house as a stray; the plan was to rehome him, as they already had three cats, but he was so friendly that he charmed his way into staying!

He began to spend his days down at the tram stop, leaving early to get plenty of attention from commuters before going home for breakfast and then returning to the station. More recently he began also to spend time at the nearby Morrisons car park. He has many fans at both places – and followers on Facebook.



There's an older Facebook page [here](#), begun in January 2019 and with regular posts until the end of 2020; but a later page seems to be [this one](#), apparently run at the same time as the older one to begin with (*last used June 2025*). An [Instagram](#) page was last used in 2022.

A mural has been unveiled at the tram stop as a tribute to Batman; see [this link](#) (May 2023)

[Manchester Evening News](#) (June 2019: a number of photos)

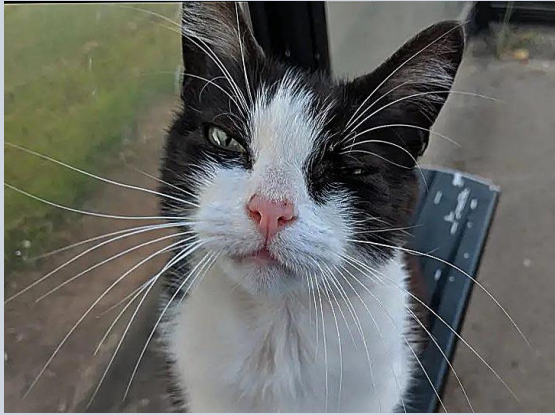


Benton (2026)
Chilwell, Nottinghamshire, England

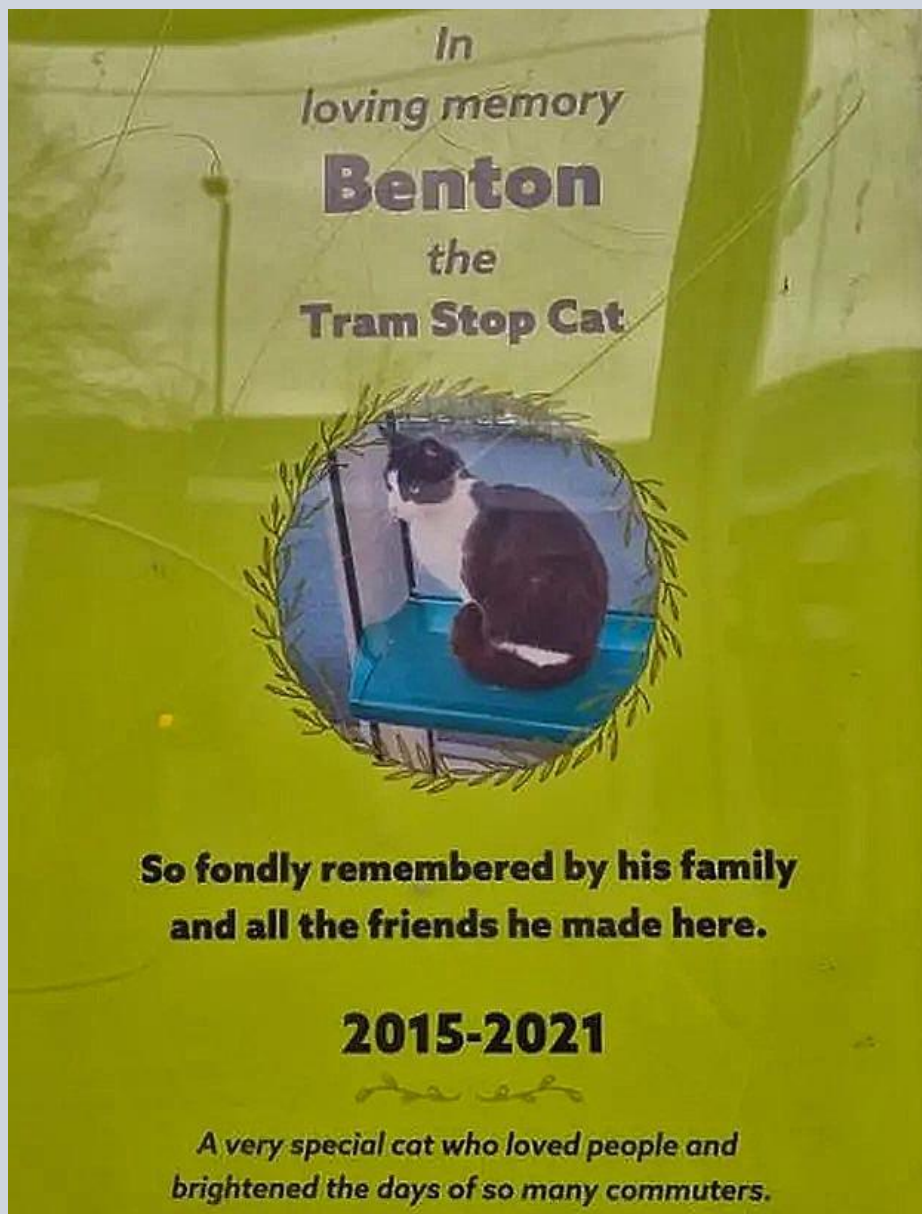


Rescued from the road when he was a four-month-old stray in 2014. **Benton** started to make his way from his nearby home to the tram stop at Inham Road in Chilwell when it was installed in 2016. He loved greeting people and receiving plenty of attention! Passengers enjoyed having the friendly cat around, and he became something of a local celebrity. It wasn't until around 2019, though, when his human Ginny Hicks posted about his adventures on a local Facebook page, that his fame began to spread.

For six years Benton made his visits to the tram stop, but in late July he died; it's thought that, ironically, he was hit by a tram. His friendly presence was much missed; As one comment put it, 'He had become a much loved, furry institution.'



To remember Benton, a handsome poster was made and in December 2021 was placed on the information board at the tram stop he loved to frequent – although I don't know how permanent a memorial that would be.



[BBC News](#) (Dec. 2021) | [Nottingham Post](#) (Aug. 2021) | [BBC News](#) (Dec. 2019)

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Bus Riders (2009)

(page checked April 2026)

including

Dodger from Bridport, Dorset
Macavity from Walsall, West Midlands
Casper from Plymouth, Devon

'Artful Dodger' Bridport, Dorset, England

Dodger, an elderly ginger cat from Bridport, a town in west Dorset in the south of England, came to fame in late 2011 when he was found to be riding the local buses and it turned out that he was well-known at the local bus station. In his previous residence, his human Mrs Fee Jeanes said, he hardly went anywhere, but when they moved to Bridport in 2010, to a house on the main road but backing onto the bus station, he began to visit there every day — although he went home every evening.



He was seen hopping on and off buses, sitting on passengers' laps as they waited, and devouring discarded sandwiches and bits of pork pie; some of the drivers even bought cat food for him. He seemed to love being around lots of people. He took a trip to Charmouth and back one day, a 10-mile (16 km) round trip, and had been seen on longer-distance buses, too. Sometimes he would just sit in the road and wait for a bus to turn up! He liked buses because they were warm inside, and he would sit on a warm seat vacated by a passenger. All the regular passengers and drivers knew Dodger, and children liked to stroke him. The drivers knew where he lived and would let him off at the right stop!

A spokesman for bus company First said they didn't mind Dodger on their buses, but didn't actively encourage him. He said: 'The drivers have been asked not to feed him, because we recognise that the cat has an owner and we don't want to discourage him from returning home for food and shelter, but in principle we don't have a problem with him being around the bus station. Given that this cat is elderly, we suspect he would be eligible for free travel, perhaps a puss pass, if such a thing existed.'

Dodger's fame spread via the internet and he was featured on radio, TV and in *Chat* magazine. Pet-food company Whiskas even sent him a box of goodies! Sadly, though, Dodger's new-found fame didn't last long; he

became ill and was found to have an inoperable tumour in his stomach. His owner Fee was also concerned that he might be losing his mental faculties, as she was getting phone calls reporting him in other parts of town, and she was worried he could either be run over himself or could cause an accident. Thus, in February 2012, the family eventually took the heart-breaking decision — after cancelling it twice — to have him put to sleep to prevent further suffering. He was 15 years old. She and her three children were in tears. 'But he had a good life,' said Fee. 'He was a brilliant cat, and he was spoilt rotten!'

Dodger is buried in a special part of the Jeanes' garden, where his memory will be treasured; and Fee put up a notice in the bus station. 'He made a lot of people happy,' she said. 'The response to him has been amazing.'

Links

- *Daily Mail*, Dec 2011: [Pay? No, I've got a puss pass](#) — includes video clip. *(archived copy)-*
- *Dorset Echo*, Dec 2011: [West Dorset bus puss cat-apulted to worldwide fame.](#) *(archived copy)-*



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Macavity

Walsall, West Midlands, England

In early 2007 bus drivers on an urban bus route between Walsall and Wolverhampton, in the English West Midlands, noted an unusual passenger: A beautiful white cat wearing a purple collar, and with odd-coloured eyes — one blue, one green — started using the no. 331 bus several mornings a week. Drivers nicknamed him **Macavity**, after the mystery cat in T.S. Eliot's poem (and Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical).



He always boarded at a certain stop, in front of a row of 1950s-era semi-detached houses, and then left the bus again at the next stop 400 metres down the road — by a row of shops that included a fish-and-chip shop! One driver said he first noticed the cat getting off the bus with a couple of passengers, not having seen him get on, but the next day Macavity jumped on the bus when it stopped to pick up passengers by the houses, getting off at the next stop as before. He appeared two or three times a week; no one knew why, or who he belonged to.

He didn't occupy a seat, but sat on the floor at the front of the bus, waiting patiently for the next stop. 'It was quite strange at first, but after a while it just seemed normal,' said another passenger who caught the 331 service to work each day. 'I suppose he's the perfect passenger really — he sits quietly, minds his own business and then gets off.'

The story was picked up by the national press and then reached the internet, and at the time it was thought the owner might have read the story and come forward to claim and name the cat, but as far as is known no one did. Then in April 2010 the no. 331 service that Macavity used to ride on was withdrawn and no longer operated. I wasn't able to find out whether he used an alternative service or stopped riding the buses!

[Blogspot](#) | [Physics Forums](#) (both April 2007)



Casper the Commuting Cat

St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devonshire, England

Just like Macavity above, another English cat was found to be riding the buses and did so for some four years, this time near the south-western naval city of Plymouth, Devon. **Casper**, a 12-year-old rescue cat, regularly took a ride on the number 3 service run by the First UK Bus Company. There was a bus stop close to his home in the Barnes Barton area of St Budeaux near Plymouth, and he liked to hop on around mid-morning and ride the whole 11-mile (17.5 km) route before making his way home.



Owner Susan Finden, who took him on in 2002 and also has a number of other older cats, had noticed that Casper sometimes went missing for a while, but had no idea where he went. Then one day when she was going to take the bus herself, he followed her to the stop. The bus driver told her that the cat was a frequent passenger! 'I couldn't believe it,' she told local newspaper the *Plymouth Herald*. She wrote a letter asking the bus company if they would request drivers to look after Casper if he boarded and not to put him off the bus in the city centre, where he would be a long way from home.

The company put up a poster about him in the depot, but it turned out many of the drivers on the route were already well-acquainted with the travelling cat. 'We can't really stop him getting on or off,' said one. 'When there's a group of passengers waiting at a stop, they are the first priority, and you can't look at the floor to check for cats!' Casper joined the queue with other passengers and just quietly padded his way on and off. Drivers said he liked to curl up on the back seat for the trip, and never caused any trouble.





The First Bus Company was quite relaxed about Casper's travels. Public-relations manager Karen Baxter said, 'In the UK people over the age of 65 travel for free on the buses. We worked out that the cat was over 100 in cat years, so that's fine — he could travel free.' It's estimated he could have travelled several thousand miles all told since he started using the service. A large image of the cat was even painted on the side of one of the company's buses (*next page, top left, with another taken later when a book was published*).

His story was followed with interest in many countries.

It was Casper's wanderings that gained him his name, after Casper the Friendly Ghost, because he was always disappearing. 'He was always a free spirit,' said owner Susan. 'He did like people, and I don't know what the attraction was, but he also seemed to love big vehicles like lorries and buses.' One idea was that perhaps in his earlier life he had lived somewhere like a haulage yard, where he became used to people coming and going, and to large vehicles.

Tragically, and perhaps ironically, it was a vehicle that ended Casper's life on 14 January 2010, when he was killed by a hit-and-run driver on the road outside his home. The car, thought maybe to have been a taxi, did not stop. Susan was devastated, as were his many fans in the city, at the bus company and around the world. 'I doubt I shall find a cat like him again,' she said. 'I had been trying to stop him travelling so much, but it was difficult and he loved meeting people. Unfortunately, though, he had no road sense whatsoever.'



Tributes and condolences were received from many places, including Germany, the Netherlands, the USA, Canada and even as far afield as Australia. Susan put up a notice at Casper's bus stop, reading: *Many local people knew Casper, who loved everyone — he also enjoyed the bus journeys. Sadly a motorist hit him and did not stop. Casper died from his injuries. He will be greatly missed ... he was a much loved pet who had so much character. Thank you to all those who befriended him.* The bus company said that in Casper's memory it would be retaining his image on the bus for a time. One correspondent wrote, 'I'm sure he already knows

the bus schedules to Rainbow Bridge.'



In August 2010 Susan Finden's account of the travelling cat's adventures was published in the book *Casper the Commuting Cat*.

In April 2013 the *Plymouth Herald* [reported](#) ([archived copy](#)) that a film was to be made about Casper's life, because of his fame in many parts of the world and the translating of Susan Finden's book into nine languages, and a search was being instigated for a suitable feline to play the lead role. It would need to be a cat that could board buses, get on with the public and not be put off by being filmed. A 'Hollywood blockbuster' was probably not planned, but a more modest production that would be shot mainly in the city of Plymouth. The following month the same newspaper reported that Mark Collicott of Whitechapel Films would be producer and director, that there had been a large number of applicants to play Casper, that the script for the film was ready and that filming could take place during summer 2013.

But nothing further was heard, so presumably the film project didn't come to fruition.

Links

- Jul 2009, *Plymouth Herald*: [Cat rides bus so often it gets picture on side](#) - ([archived copy](#)): did include slideshow with images of Casper, his owner and one of the bus drivers, but no longer available in April 2024. And (images no longer full-sized since the article was archived by the newspaper.
- Jul 2009, BBC News: [Commuter cat is star of bus route](#) - includes video of the adventurous cat on his travels in happier days ([video no longer available](#))
- Jan 2010, *Plymouth Herald*: [Celebrity cat killed in hit and run](#) ([archived copy](#))
- Jan 2010, *The Guardian*: [Casper the commuting cat killed by hit-and-run driver](#)
- Aug 2010, BBC Devon: [Tales of Casper the commuting cat from Plymouth](#) - news of book release and includes further video ([video no longer available](#))
- Wikipedia: [Casper](#)



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