Featured Felines: Cats with special needs 1

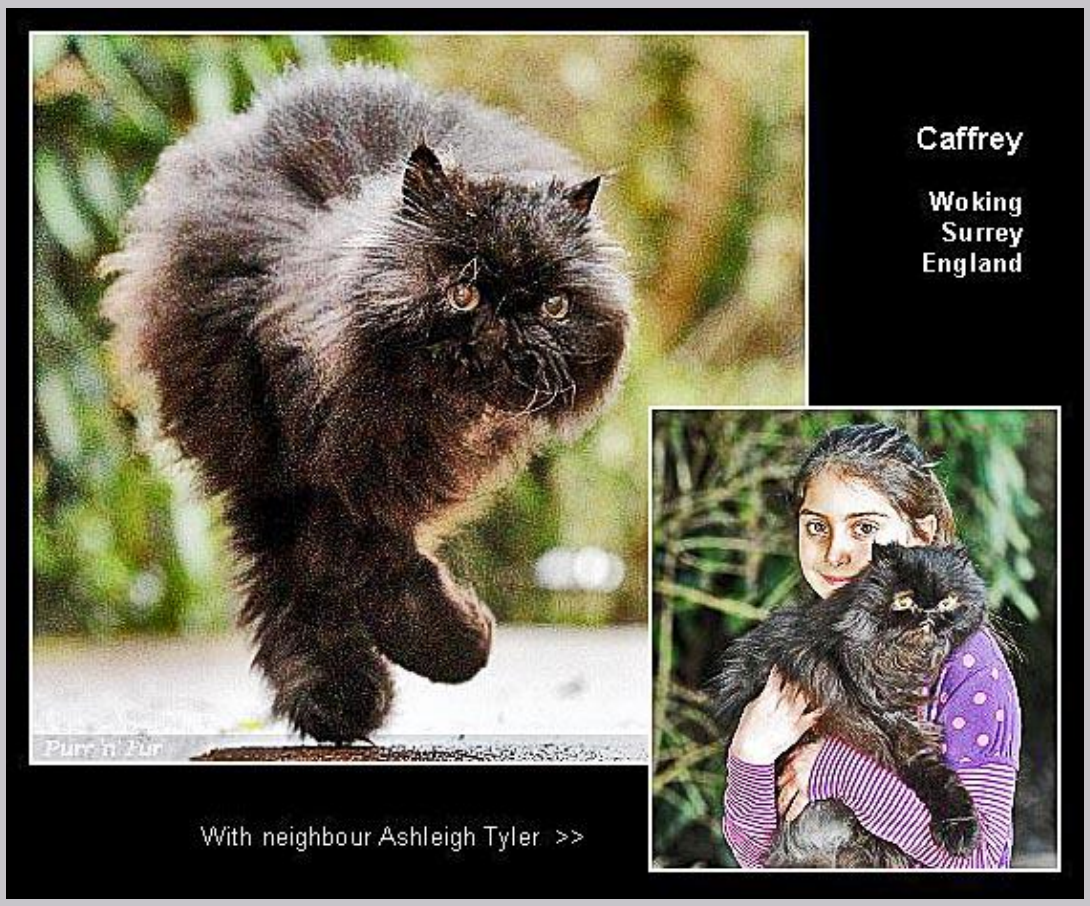
(page checked June 2026)

Caffrey, wfth two legs on one side; Gracie, two-legged kitten
Mog, the swimming cat from Cornwall; Brutiss, wheelchair cat, Boston
See also Nubbins of Boston (Mini Fragments 1)

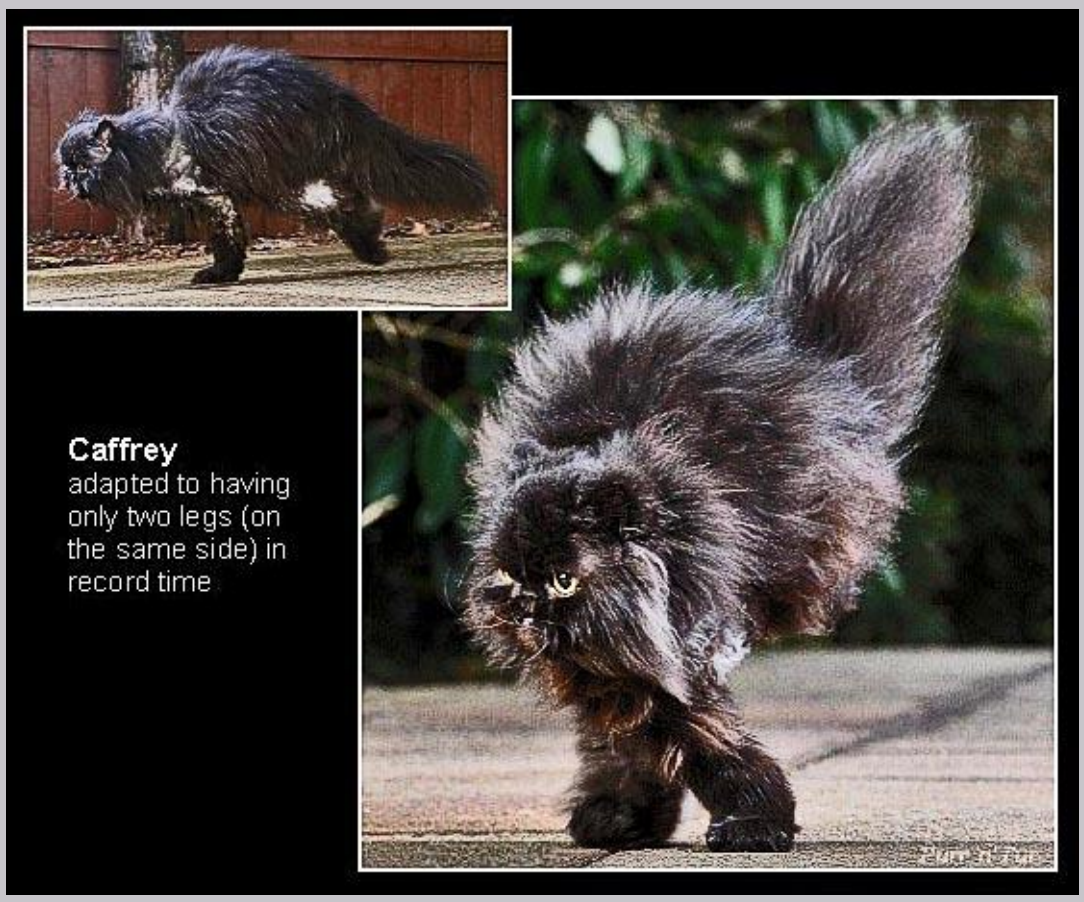
Caffrey
Surrey, England *(2013)*

While Oscar has bionic back paws, and Anakin was born without back legs, **Caffrey** of Woking, in Surrey, England, had a different problem. And a very unusual one — he lost two legs, but both on the *same side*! The black Persian, aged about 13 in 2013, lost his left back leg to a car accident ten years earlier that also caused some damage to the front leg on that side. However, after operations costing around £3500 (more than 5000 US dollars at the time), he recovered well and lived a full life with just the three legs.

But then early in 2013 Caffrey developed a malignant growth on the damaged front left leg; owner Sue Greaves faced the choice of putting him down, which she couldn't bear, or subjecting him to chemotherapy and all its unpleasantness, with no guarantee of success. Or — was there a third possibility? Against the advice of several vets, who felt he would be unable to walk and would have little quality of life, the offending leg was amputated, leaving the cat with just his two right legs. Expected to spend weeks recovering after the £4000 operation, Caffrey amazed everyone by cracking the balance problem in just a few days; and then there was no stopping him! LoveMeow *(Feb. 2013 – archived copy)* has a short video showing him in action, and the same one is at the Catster link below.



Daily Mail *(Feb. 2013 – archived copy)* | Life with Cats (Feb. 2013) | Catster *(Feb. 2013 – archived copy)*


Caffrey
adapted to having only two legs (on the same side) in record time

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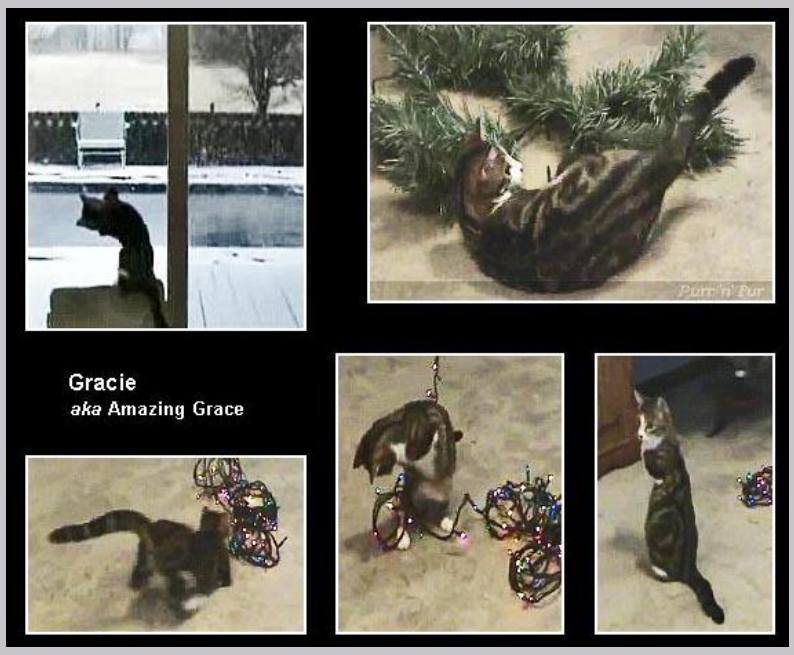
Gracie *aka* 'Amazing Grace'

Two-legged kitten from Kansas *(2013)*

Gracie was born on a Kansas farm, where normally the cats live outdoors and in the barns and catch rodents for their food: but that would have been impossible for Gracie, who was born without front legs. She was noticed, rescued and adopted by Ken and Karen Warnken. Like the other so-called 'deformed' cats described, Gracie of course didn't realise she was disabled; she hopped around like a little kangaroo, or perhaps a rabbit, and was able to climb to some extent — she went up and down stairs — and played and chased around just like any other kitten, often using her front 'nubs' for balance, although she found carpets easier to cope with than linoleum. In early 2012 Karen said that Gracie was 'a beautiful, loving cat', did 'almost anything any other cat does', that she 'never had pain from her handicap' and was 'healthy and happy'. And this was plain to see! — see the videos linked below.

In March 2013, however, Karen announced that Gracie, who I think was then about 6 years old, had been diagnosed with incurable liver disease. Her family hoped for a miracle and that she'd be with them for a while longer. For a few months it seemed Gracie was holding her own and doing well, but then she had a relapse and sadly lost her battle towards the end of September 2013.



Links

The only details known about Gracie come from three video clips available at YouTube and comments made there by her owners, and the images used in this account are stills from those clips as no other photos could be found.

- Amazing Grace: The Two-Legged kitten — a Fox4News report uploaded in April 2008, but it's not entirely clear whether it dates from then or a little earlier.
- Amazing Grace - two legged kitten's first Christmas — uploaded in March 2013, this is a charming clip from several years earlier showing Gracie considerably grown and looking forward to her first Christmas by very actively 'helping' to decorate the tree!
- Amazing Grace the two legged kitten - snow – here Gracie, fascinated by snowflakes falling outside, is described as 'about 1 year old', although the clip wasn't published until shortly before she died.

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Mog, the swimming cat *(2013)*

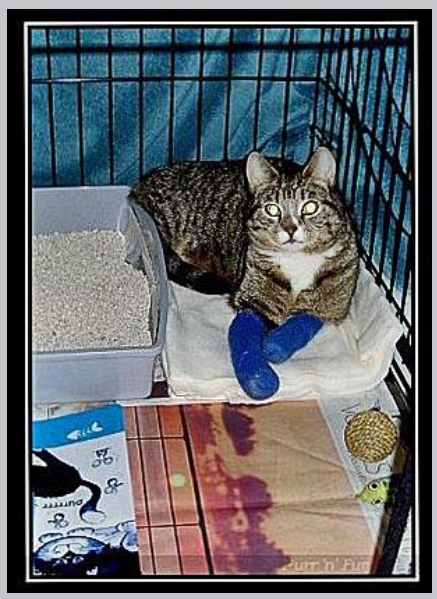
Lostwithiel, Cornwall, England

Mog was a young, friendly, tabby cat about town in Lostwithiel, Cornwall, the most south-westerly English county. Described by his owner, Veronica Ashworth, as an 'escape artist' who loved to follow people, he was well-known in the town, and time after time was being brought home from shops and cafés. He attended band practice, accompanied a town guided walk, and spent much of his time in the waiting room of the local dental surgery enjoying the attentions of patients and staff.

However in November 2010 Mog's life was changed for ever. His home was flooded and his humans had to move into temporary accommodation, with no garden, so he was taken for walks twice a day on a harness and lead. On returning to their own home in February 2011 he became confused, tried to return to the temporary home, and on the way was hit by a car which drove off and left him for dead. Fortunately the local policewoman saw the incident and rushed him to the vet's, but having suffered internal bleeding he was not expected to survive.

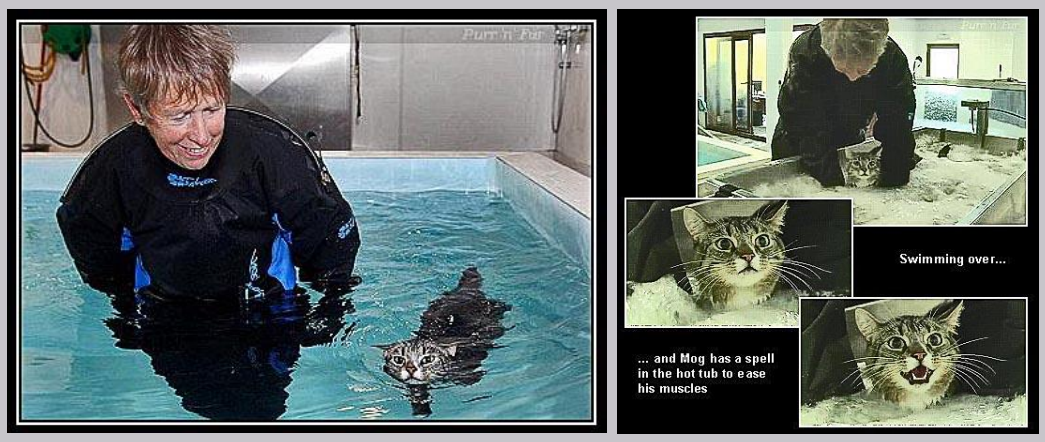
Against the odds and after some time on a drip, he pulled through. But there had also been serious nerve damage to his front legs: paralysed and with no sense of feeling, they wouldn't bear his weight, he was unable to walk, and Veronica was warned it was unlikely this would change.

But slowly Mog learned to move around again by walking on his 'elbows' — he could also sit up on his hind legs, like a meerkat. Sensing Mog's determination to overcome his difficulties, the vet suggested hydrotherapy to regain strength in the leg muscles, and Mog began attending weekly swimming sessions at a canine hydrotherapy pool.



At first this horrified him — most cats aren't noted for their love of water! — but after Veronica joined him in the pool and encouraged him to swim towards her, Mog settled down to the job in hand. He was very vocal while doing so! — Veronica said, 'He makes a lot of noise about it, but he does it.'

As time went on he astonished everyone by swimming laps of the pool, and after ten sessions of stretching his legs in the water there had been some improvement: the left was still bent, but he was able to put some weight on the other. At this point the story reached the media, and Mog appeared on local TV and in local, national and international newspapers and magazines.



By 2012, after about a year of therapy and then aged 2, Mog had made incredible progress and largely recovered the use of his right front leg, although there'd been less improvement to the left and he'll probably never walk completely normally. He was said to be very agile and happy, but unfortunately had to be confined to the house and couldn't resume his town wanderings. But he did become a 'PAT cat' — Pets as Therapy cat. As such he made regular visits to two local care homes for the elderly, where his friendliness and love of people meant that he enjoyed his visits while bringing pleasure to the residents.

Links

- This is Cornwall, June 2011: Doggy paddle? Not for this swimming feline *(archived copy)*
- *Daily Mail,* June 2011: Cat left paralysed after car crash learns to walk again by taking swimming lessons. *(archived copy)*
- ITV news clip, June 2011: Paralysed cat takes swimming lessons
- *(various other links available by searching for 'Mog swimming cat')*

Update: (2017)
Five years on, Mog still had a bit of a limp, but he was managing really well. He had given up swimming, being much too busy with his new role – as a PAT cat. He spends time as part of the Pets as Therapy team, sharing his love and attention with people in need. He would love any other cats or dogs out there who enjoy people to sign up to their scheme – check their website.

No later updates have been found.

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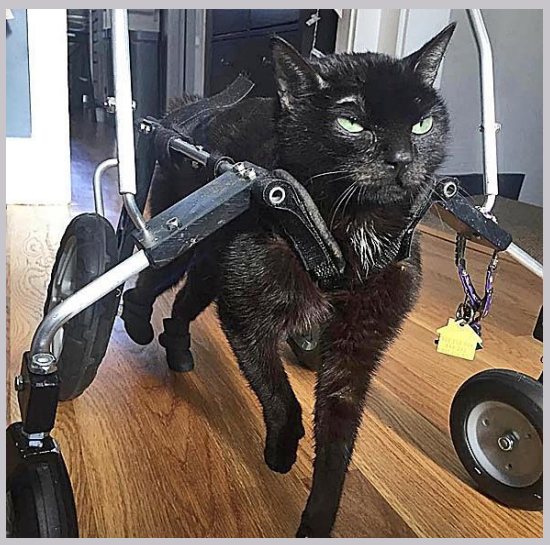
Brutiss, the wheelchair cat

Boston, Massachusetts, USA



Abandoned by their mother at just three days old in a garden in Boston, Massachusetts, **Brutiss** and her sister didn't have the best start in life. Fortunately a kind person found them and took them to local vet and small-animal specialist Shanna Egan. To give them their best chance, Shanna decided to foster the little mites herself – but despite her tireless efforts Brutiss's sister died after only about a week.

Brutiss herself had a strong will to live and thrived on the treatment she received – but then Shanna noticed that the kitten suffered from tremors and had difficulty keeping her balance. Tests showed that she had cerebellar hypoplasia, probably because her mother had had feline panleukopenia virus while pregnant, leaving her babies with neurological issues. She wasn't in pain ad was otherwise healthy. Shanna continued caring for her and treating her for several weeks, during which time she became so attached to the kitten that she decided to adopt her herself, instead of putting her up for adoption

When Shanna's parents heard about Brutiss and her difficulties with balance, they made her a little customised wheelchair, with a harness to keep her secure, and gave her little booties to provide a better grip on the floor. It didn't take long for the youngster to get the hang of the device, and before long she was exploring her surroundings. Since that first effort the design has been modified and improved and now at around 7 years old (in 2023) Brutiss leads a healthy and active life with the aid of her 'stroller'. She also has swimming sessions in a shallow pool, with the help of a flotation device, and this activity helps her neurological condition.

She also dues a little painting! Using her front paws sand non-toxic paints, she seems to enjoy making her creations on canvas. At least one of them has been sold at auction, with the proceeds going towards helping other special-needs cats.

It seems that in spite of her disability, Brutiss has a great quality of life, and she certainly hasn't let her problems stand in her way. She has an active Instagram account *(active in mid-2026).*

When the weather's fine, she likes nothing better than getting out of her harness and sitting outside on the grass *(below right).*

National Kitty (Oct. 2021) | Cole and Marmalade (Aug. 2021)

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