

Featured Felines: Cats' Adventures & Travels 29 (2026)

(page checked July 2026)

Cats about Town 8

Tommy of Lerwick; Riley of Ambleside; Polo of Tavistock

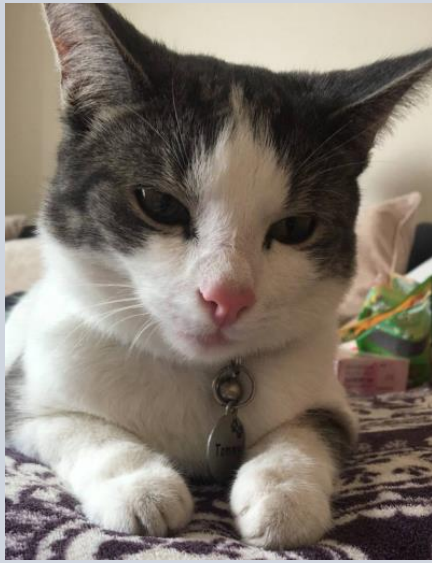
Tommy
Lerwick, Shetland Islands, Scotland



Born in 2017, Tommy arrived in Lerwick when his human, Emma Mackay, moved there for work. A friendly cat who loves exploring, he soon set about making his presence known in the town! Harry's department store, Boots the chemist, the Thule pub – where he has his own bed – and Specsavers are among his favourites, but he's also visited the police station, the sheriff's court, other pubs and cafés and a hairdresser's; he's even ventured onto the ferry to the nearby island of Bressay, although he was taken off before it sailed. Noted for wearing colourful bandanas round his neck, Tommy has become a familiar and much loved sight to the folk of Lerwick. Emma started a [Facebook](#) page to help keep track of his movements, and it's well used. There's also an [Instagram](#) account, but it's private and you'd have to follow it to see the posts.

Tommy has a brother called Kevin, but he's much less adventurous and prefers to stay at home. In 2019 Emma's work meant she was going to have to move to Fort William, so she faced the dilemma of whether to take Tommy or not. She decided he wouldn't be able to enjoy the same lifestyle there, so advertised for a suitable person to give him a new home in Lerwick. That clearly worked out well, and so Tommy continues to enjoy his life around the town. I don't know what became of Kevin but I imagine he probably did move with Emma.

A 2024 calendar featuring photos of Tommy sold worldwide and raised the sum of around 4000 for local island charities, notably the food bank. See [this link](#). A 2025 calendar raised a similar amount.



[Shetland News 1](#) (Oct. 2018) | [Shetland News 2](#) (Nov. 2019)

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Riley (2026) Ambleside, Cumbria, England



Riley showed up in the Lake District village of Ambleside as a kitten during a snowstorm in 2011. She was taken in by a restaurant owner, but rather than having a single home she seemed to prefer to belong, as it were, to the whole village. She made it her mission to wander between shops and businesses, and to greet tourists at one of her favourite spots near Millans Park.

Owned by no one but known to everyone, as seemed to be her lifestyle of choice, Riley lived like that for 13 years. She died in January 2024, I think from being hit by a car. The community grieved, and there was soon an initiative to raise funds for a statue by which to remember her. That was successful, and in June the same year a bronze sculpture was unveiled at a well-attended ceremony. It stands at the spot in Millans Park where Riley liked to spend a lot of her time snoozing in sunny weather. A QR code was due to be installed nearby so that visitors could hear her story, and a fund was to be set up in her memory to aid other animals.



[BBC News](#) | [ITV News](#) (both June 2024) | [Instagram](#)

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Sir Polo (2026) Tavistock, Devon, England

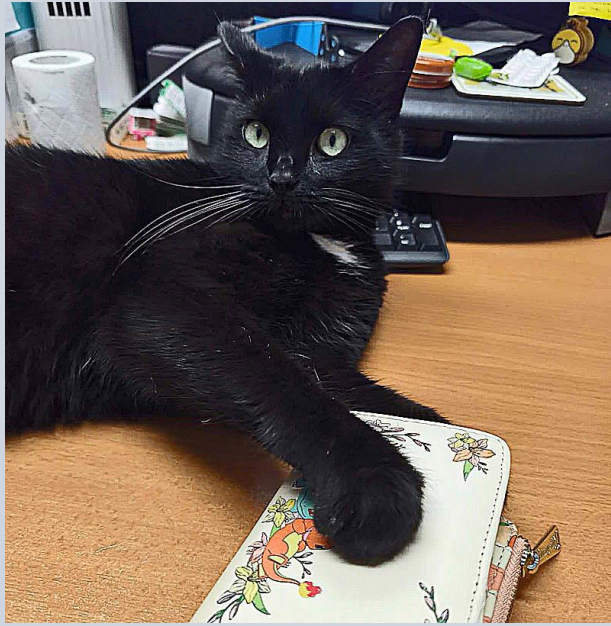


The whole town seems to be **Sir Polo's** beat, as he regularly visits shops, pubs, the library, the town hall, the surgery, a museum, a pet shop – where he likes playing nwithn the toys! – and the Co-op supermarket; he even gate-crashed a wedding at the Bedford Hotel on one occasion! His name came from a nine-year-old child who thought the white patch on the cat's chest resembled the shape of a Polo mint sweet.

In order to help keep track of him a [Facebook](#) page operates, and has many followers. He's well-known and loved in the community and people keep an eye out for him on his wanderings. On one occasion he disappeared for several days; after a search he was found shut in a rowing-club shed in Calstock, across the river Tamar in Cornwall, seven miles from his home town.



In October 2025 Sir Polo was officially declared an 'Esteemed Cat-izen of Tavistock' by the town mayor, at a special ceremony attended by a hundred or so people at the Meadows Park bandstand in the town. He received va cat bandana to mark the occasion.



[BBC News](#) | [Tavistock Today](#) (both Oct. 2025)

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