



## Wonderful Long Service Recognised

We are very proud that our **Chairman, Bryan Moyle** and **Secretary, Hilary Boswell** were both presented with the RSPCA's Silver Medal at our Annual General Meeting in June. This outstanding award was made in recognition of their many years of service and the invaluable contribution they have made to the North Somerset Branch of the RSPCA. We are all very aware that it is because of their foresight and tenacity that we now have our wonderful Animal Centre at Brent Knoll so **Thank You** both again!

**Congratulations** also go to two members of the Brent Knoll staff. Kennel Supervisor, Andy Cook received the RSPCA's award for Training Achievement and our artistic Cattery Supervisor, Katy Freeman was the winner of one of the major categories in the RSPCA's National Photography Competition for 2010. So **very well done** to both of them

## No Room at the Inn?

Summer always brings its challenges when the 'kitten season' really gets underway but 2010 has been the worst one that many Rescue Centres have experienced. Not only were there numerous kittens needing homes, but 'dumping' of cats and kittens became an almost daily event. Over a six-week period during the summer, some thirty animals came into our care that had been heartlessly abandoned in the surrounding area. The locations have varied but the theme has sadly always been the same –

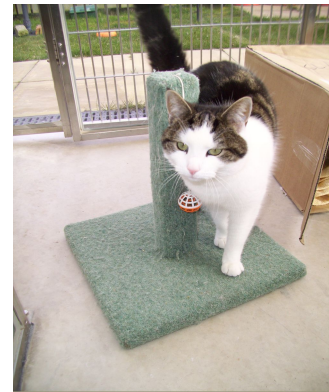
*cats or kittens taped up in cardboard boxes and often left in hot weather and dangerous situations. Like three adult cats – christened Rodrigo, Roberto and the very heavily pregnant Romona. These cats were all large adults but were never-the-less squashed into a small box in 25°C weather and left in full sunlight next to heavy traffic. As you can imagine, they were stressed beyond belief by the time we got them into our care. Happily they all recovered but they were just the beginning... .. In the 18 day period that followed, we took in another 14 cats/kittens, 8 hamsters, and one dog, ALL of which had been abandoned, either at the Centre or locally. The cattery at the Brent Knoll Animal Centre works to capacity all the year round and pressure on space became critical at times and put a massive strain on an already full Animal Centre, and meant that we were unable to help anybody that was on our waiting list for animal space.*

*The majority of abandoned animals were either the result of unintended breeding (i.e. the hamsters and pregnant cats), or illnesses that had not been dealt with (i.e. the kittens with bad eyes or sneezes). It would seem that part of the problem is that the 'credit crunch' has resulted in pet owners being forced to re-locate and finding that landlords would not allow them to bring their animals. In addition, many people seem unaware how early a female cat can become pregnant or had simply not considered what neutering or other veterinary care would cost.*

*A very big 'thank you' goes to the dedicated group of fosterers who came to our help again and again to care for our mums and kittens until they were ready to be rehomed and there was space in the cattery.*

## On a Happier Note..... Star's Story

*Star the cat came to the Animal Centre in November 2009 because her owners were unable to keep her. Her dislike of other cats became a real problem over the months, which in turn her caused her to become very frustrated with people.*



Star at Brent Knoll

*Her rather unfriendly behaviour was resulting in her being very difficult to re-home! However, our cattery Supervisor Katy was determined not to be beaten by Star's 'attitude' and the patience and loving care she gave her gradually began pay off. As a result, Star began to relax and enjoy cattery life and, as our longest stay resident, she became a great favourite with all the staff and volunteers.*

*At last her new family found her in July 2010. They had seen her as 'Cat of the Month' on our website and, even more important, had previously owned a cat with a character very much like Star's. When they met her it was a clear that it was a match made in heaven and Star's eight long months in our care proved that 'Everything Comes to Those That Wait'!*

## Yet Another Long Stay Resident.....

### Our Lovely Collie Jess

*Just before Christmas 2009, a Collie bitch called Jess was signed over to our care through one of the RSPCA Inspectors. She was in a very sorry state when she arrived. She had been kept in a shed for almost all her life and had been used for breeding. She was emaciated and had injuries round her neck, which had been caused by a very tight collar that had got even tighter as she grew older. Her bodily condition was so poor that she was given a snug red jacket to wear in the very cold weather that was to come.*

*As you can imagine, she was very traumatised when she came to the Animal Centre. Because she had virtually no experience of the wide world, life in kennels was a really stressful experience for her after her solitary existence.*

*Her bodily condition improved massively over time, the wounds round her neck healed and the hair began to grow back again.*



Jess at Brent Knoll

*However, it is often a very lengthy process before all the legal details surrounding a case are concluded. This means that animals often have to wait months before they can be re-homed. This was the situation with Jess - her protracted stay in kennels had taken its toll and she became more and more stressed by the noise of the other dogs. The staff did their best to reduce this by moving her to a quieter part of the*

*kennels and she started to become more relaxed.*

*We knew she would need a home that could give her lots of exercise and mental stimulation and one of our dedicated dog walkers fell for her in a big way. It seemed like the perfect solution for her until Jess made it clear that she really was not going to get on with her other dogs! Her lack of basic socialisation was proving a real problem and it was clear from the findings of the Behavioural advisor that she could be mixed with other dogs, but only on her own terms and it began to seem that finding a home that met her very special needs was going to be difficult.*

*Months went by and we began to wonder if we would ever find the right home for her. Then, one day we had a visit from someone who was looking for an active dog and who had lots of time to give. Jess loved him straight away and he felt she was just the dog for him. Then came a slight set-back - his brother had a dog called Muppet that Jess would meet regularly and would need to get on with. Almost miraculously, when Muppet came to meet her at Brent Knoll they got on straight away and to see them hit it off from the start was quite a 'lump in the throat' moment! The home visit went well and Jess finally left us in July 2010.*

*Her new owner tells us that Jess is doing very well. So after her very unhappy start, she has finally got the happy, contented life that she so deserved.*

## The Courage of 'Jones', the Rescue Dog

*Jones, a German Shepherd cross, came to us from the Cornwall RSPCA Centre because no one had taken an interest in adopting him there. The poor chap had very little confidence and was anxious when faced with new situations. However, he had not been with us long before Les and Jo Parsons fell for him. He settled in with them well and not long after that they got Ellie, a German Shepherd bitch, that he became best friends*

*with. Both Les and Jo are type one diabetics and recently Jones and Ellie saved Les' life when he collapsed in a diabetic coma during a country walk by launching a real-life Lassie rescue operation. The dogs began their rescue with Ellie licking Les' face to try and keep him conscious while Jones ran for help. He sprinted a quarter-of-a-mile home to alert Les' wife Jo and stepdaughter Fiona and then led them back to the spot where he was lying.*



Jones, Les and Ellie

*They rushed him to hospital and Les was released later that day after treatment. Jo said: "Jones alerted me and my daughter that something was seriously wrong. He tends to be agoraphobic so for him to come back alone we knew it was for a really good reason. I ran out and found Les collapsed on the floor with Ellie by his side. I think the dogs saved his life. The dogs mean the world to me and I'm so proud of them. If Jones hadn't have come home, Les could have died."*

## Fund Raising Events 2011

### Fun Dog Shows and Fetes

We have three planned for this year:

**Sunday 22 May at Clevedon**

**Sunday 10 July at Burnham on Sea**

**Sunday 21 August at Weston super Mare**

### A Sponsored 'Mutt Strutt'

on Sunday 4 September starting from the Apex Park in Burnham on Sea

A very big thank you goes to our President, Richard Nightingale, who has arranged a **Day out with the Red Arrows** as a Draw prize again in 2011. We hope we will be able to match the wonderful £1040 we raised from the Draw in 2010



