

TALES OF THE RIVERMAN 99 JAN 2022

Cats and water. My experience is that they don't mix.



Over the years I have had a few Cats around the house and boatsheds. They have proved to be great companions. They have all lived happily outdoors and I suppose they would come under the term "feral" Interesting to watch cats. They would come across the St Andrews Bridge, but they would not walk on the pathway, but would walk along the outside girders of the bridge. Cats are normally very sure footed, but one day while I was watching a cat doing its clever "saunter" along the outside girder, I saw it slip, and fall towards the river. First thing I did was grab a pair of welder's gloves, as anyone who has had the experience of a cat in water, knows that they do not like water and that their claws will grab at anything around them. So it was that when I swung the boat alongside the struggling cat, I was able to lift it from the water without my hands being ripped apart. Mark you. I would also wear gloves to lift a seagull as their beaks can be vicious.



"Toulouse Le Puss"

The cat that I kept in the art studio, had to be given an arty name, so it was called "Toulouse Le Puss"



"Toulouse Le Puss" got along with the dog that I had in the house and they played together.



George, dog "Candy" and "Toulouse Le Puss" with mum Sarah. The animals made her smile.



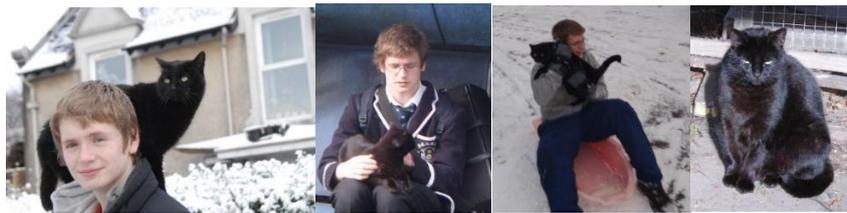
Of course my sister Ann loved the cat, and we had "Toulouse Le Puss" for about 16 years.



Several times we had cats come into the garden to give birth, and we had kittens running around until they were old enough to be given to friends, to homes of their own. One of the cats that came into the garden, we called "Tabbix". We decided to keep one of her kittens ourselves, and it became known as "Wee Tabbix" which quickly changed to "Weetabix". This cat was a real hunter and frequently brought us presents of mice. She became known as "Weetabix the cereal killer"



Then we adopted "Blackie" for a few years.



After that we had "Lucky Trainspotter" so called because before he came to us, he was to be seen sitting for hours on a railway embankment, watching trains roll by. "Lucky" had an upstairs and downstairs house in the back garden where he lived in luxury. Holes were made in the gates to give him access at all times. "Lucky" came down to the boats with us and even came out in a boat. He did not seem to be scared of water, but I would not have wished to be the one to fish him out had he fallen in. Dogs used to try to chase "Lucky" but he would stand his ground, and amazingly the dogs always came off worse. On the side of his hut, he had painted, several rottweilers, a bulldog, a doberman and others (fancied himself as a fighter pilot). Dogs soon learned to leave him alone and not run and bark at him if he was sitting in the front drive of the house. "Lucky" was certainly the wildest cat we ever had. But our boys could do anything with him, he even went sledging. We do in many ways miss our cats and dogs, but we have so much other wildlife in the garden and around the boathouses. Swans, Geese, mink, ducks, dozens of different birds, deer, foxes, moorhens. Seals, and even a kingfisher - the list could go on.



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