

PRODEAN CAT NEUTERING TRIP

2nd October – 10th October 2010

161 cats later - exhausted but happy!

It is my favourite time of year when another successful charity trip is under our belt and I can write a thank you letter to all of you lovely supporters!

Fundraising for this year's trip started fantastically at Toachim House's open day with a lucky dip and guess the name of the cat. All our wonderful clients were very generous and we raised over £100. Next was the pub quiz at The Anchor. With the additional surprise donation of £300 from **Lifestyle Kent Ltd** (brilliant builders), we raised £580. We followed this with the **Help for Heroes** car boot sale (thanks to the Tarrants for the last minute space) where we sold an enormous amount of cakes! Everyone from Toachim vets pitched in and as usual the lions share was done by Margaret and Sylvia. The result was lots of delectable cakes enjoyed by Faversham supporters and £400 more towards our charity.

Huge thanks to **Dechra** this year for supplying several hundred pounds worth of drugs, Adam from Walkabout travel insurance and to Clive from Boehringer. The Worldwide Veterinary Service generously donated some new operating equipment too!

This year's trip cost £1400 in total so we're hoping to hold another pub quiz to help the bank balance.

Our team extraordinaire this year comprised of Emma, one of our very experienced Veterinary Nurses, and Vicky who qualifies this year, having just taken her second year exams. Sharon Magnier was the veterinarian in charge. Sharon is a super relaxed Irish vet – the perfect vet for such an under pressure job.

This year, Dom very kindly took on taxi duty at 3am in the morning and ferried the team to Gatwick and one plane journey later, they had arrived!

Here are some of the thoughts and experiences from their week of hard work...

"Our week in La Linea already seems so distant that I might have dreamt it! I am proud to have been part of a brilliant trio who worked as hard as we possibly could to improve a pretty immense problem. Once we had set up our operating theatre (a shed!) all the days blurred into one as we ploughed our way through an amazing number of operations. One of the most rewarding was saving the life of a critically injured kitten-who we named "Little Sharon". She had a terribly crushed front leg which needed amputation. Within hours of the surgery she was up, eating and purring- all her pain having gone. When I arrived home I was greeted by my gorgeous cat Charlie and reminded him what a lucky lucky cat he is."

Vicky, newly qualified Veterinary Nurse



"Wow, an experience of a lifetime! It is not very often that the opportunity comes along to really make a difference, so I'm immensely lucky I had this chance! Certainly wouldn't have been possible without the support & organisation of Emily, Richard & the Prodean Sanctuary volunteers at the Spanish end. They gave us the workspace to use at the sanctuary & kept us steadily supplied with cats all week long. Emily was one of the hard-working trappers out on the streets into the small hours, catching the cats from the colonies & bringing them in to us, then re-releasing them once they were treated. Richard was our chaperone wherever we went & organised a sumptuous restaurant meal for us every night to keep up our stamina. They also kindly supplied a course of antibiotics after a cat badly bit my hand on the first afternoon. Without them we were worried I could develop a bad infection and not be able to work, so we were grateful they brought them so promptly. As well as this the girls at the sanctuary repeatedly brought us trays of tasty Spanish cakes, so we were certainly well looked after!

And so many other memorable parts of the week, both highs & lows. We came to know many of the resident cats at the sanctuary that we saw every day, as well as the friendly pack of dogs in the kennel next to our neutering hut. We spent hot days sweating in our little hut and humorous times using a trusty bucket as a toilet (no WC at the sanctuary)! We also became pro at using our basic supply of materials to invent special dressings for some of the injured. This included Little Sharon the amputee kitten and a stray Siamese with a horrendous neck wound, the probable result of a collar that had been put on too tight.



Unfortunately we lost two poorly cats on the trip due to very poor health - although we try very hard, we are sad when we cannot save them all! But on the good side, along with all the spays and castrations, treated dozens more for bad teeth, flea infestations, worm burdens, eye infections & signs of flu. Without a doubt one of the most exhausting and yet at the same time most satisfying weeks of my life!"

Emma, RVN

"Everything went really well. Emma and Vicky were fab and Richard and Emily couldn't do enough for us. We were really worried however, that they fed us *so much* the airline would charge us for the extra weight on the flight home!!"

Sharon, Vet

The team did us proud and worked so very hard. They treated 161 cats over the week which is an incredible achievement.

Emma has also created a huge artwork of all the patients they treated and it is currently being displayed in our reception at Toachim House Veterinary Surgery. Feel free to pop in and have a look- it is awesome!



Thanks once again to everyone who helped make this trip happen. We have now successfully stabilised nearly fifty percent of the colonies in La Linea which means in reality that there are less cats roaming, starving and suffering. It is a huge undertaking but the fact that we are making a difference makes it all so worthwhile.

Watch this space for more news!

Sarah