

Dot to the Rescue

My best friend Genie stayed round at ours one weekend last month. Her parents are both doctors and had to go away for a conference so mum said she could sleep over.

On Sunday morning we wrapped up warm and set off for a long walk in the woods with my dog Wizard – I call him Wizzie for short. Dad kept him on the lead until we reached the stile – that's a funny gate-like thing that you have to climb over at the edge of the woods – and then he was off, chasing about trying to find rabbits (he never does!).

Wizzie had rushed ahead and started barking and scratching at the ground. We thought he'd found a rabbit burrow, but as we got closer we saw he was standing next to a big brown cardboard box.

'Leave it alone Wiz,' said Dad, 'it's just some rubbish someone's left.' But Wizzie wouldn't budge. He just kept barking and whining.

Then we heard a noise – the faintest little meow. Dad lifted the lid – and inside were three tiny kittens, two black and white and one ginger.

'Someone must have dumped them here. Thank goodness we found them,' said Dad.

'Why would anyone do something so mean? They could have died if Wizzie hadn't sniffed them out,' I said.

Dad explained that sadly people often abandoned unwanted animals, especially puppies and kittens, because they

couldn't afford to keep them or just simply didn't want them.

'Can we keep them then? They need looking after. We can't just leave them here,' I said.

Dad said there were special places that looked after unwanted animals and found them new homes.

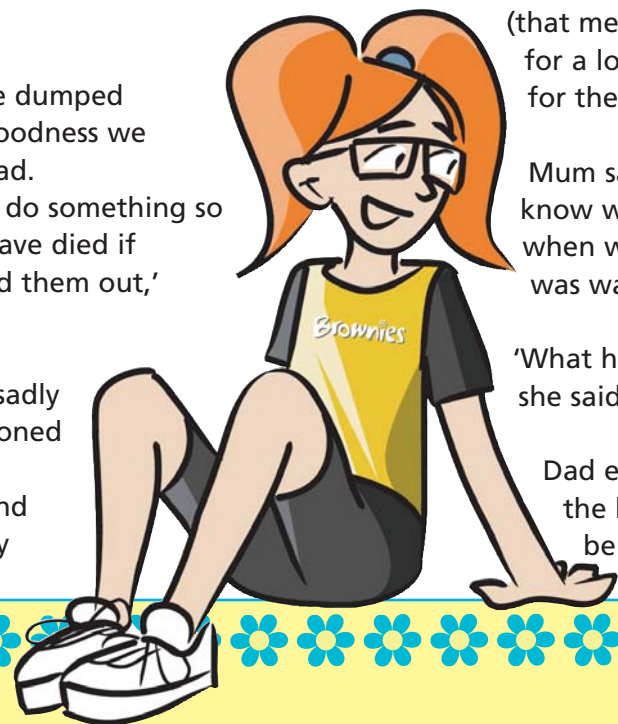
'Remember Dot, we went to the open day at the Cats' Protection League shelter last year and saw all those cats and kittens in their pens? It's a charity that cares for them until a good home can be found. We should take them there,' he said.

We put Wizzie back on his lead and Dad carefully carried the box home and put it on the back seat of his car. Mum brought out a bowl of water because she said the kittens were in danger of being dehydrated (that means they hadn't had a drink for a long while) and we set off for the shelter.

Mum said she'd call to let them know we were on our way and when we arrived a lady called Sue was waiting for us on the drive.

'What have we got here then?' she said.

Dad explained where we'd found the kittens and Sue said they'd be checked over by a vet,



given something to eat and then given a home at the shelter until someone wanted them.

'They'll be microchipped too,' said Sue, 'so that if they ever get lost they can be identified and they'll be neutered so they won't be able to have kittens in the future. People often think it would be lovely to have kittens until they've got them and have to buy food and pay the vet's bills and find homes for them.'

Sue said we could go back and see the kittens whenever we wanted and she promised to let us know if homes were found for them.

When we got home Genie and I went to the Cats' Protection League website to find out more about its work. There are lots of shelters all over the country and nearly all its staff are volunteers. They rely on donations to keep running – and that gave Genie and me an idea.

'Why don't we do something to raise money for them? We could get sponsors and then take all the money up to the shelter to give to Sue,' Genie said.

Mum thought it was a great idea and we decided on a sponsored walk. Dad agreed to do it with us and we took Wizzie along too. We planned a three-mile route from our house and back, and managed to raise £48 between us.

When we went back to the shelter Sue was really pleased with our donation. She asked if we'd like to see the kittens again.

'We've already found homes for them. They'll be leaving this weekend,' she said.

And she had one more surprise for us...

'Do you know what we decided to call them?' she said, 'Dot, Genie and Wizard!'

Find out more about Dot's adventures – visit her at www.missdorothy.com.



Did you know?

- Cats can be left – or right-pawed, just like humans can be left – or right-handed.
- Cats spend about 16 hours a day sleeping. A 15-year-old cat will have spent ten years of its life asleep.
- A group of kittens is called a kindle and a group of adult cats is a clowder.
- Cats can make more than 100 vocal sounds, dogs can make only about ten.
- Every breed of dog has a pink tongue except the chow, which has a black one.
- Cats rarely meow at each other – the meow is the sound they use for humans.
- The German government came up with the idea for guide dogs for the blind. They trained dogs to help blind war veterans after the First World War.
- Dogs have excellent hearing and can pick up sounds too faint for humans to hear.
- Cats see six times better than humans in the dark.
- A cat has 230 bones in its body – a human has only 206.

