

Redzonecats need help to rescue lost-and-homeless cats in Christchurch red zone

by Jane Newman

'Bilbo' became homeless because of the earthquakes, and lived for years under an abandoned house in Avonside, including a winter of snow and aftershocks. A kind lady put food out for him at night, which was the only time he felt brave enough to leave his shelter. No one could get near him, and Di had to leave her red-zoned house and garden in early 2013, so Bilbo was trapped and rehabilitated by Dr Jane Newman, who runs redzonecats with her family. Bilbo was Cat No 1. He was adopted by Jane and loves being warm, well fed and no longer afraid.

'Phoebe' was seen on camera in August 2013 after CERA notified redzonecats of a homeless kitten at an abandoned house in Burwood. Phoebe was pestered by tom cats because she was not de-sexed. After she was trapped Phoebe was given a private room for a time, which she defended fiercely from other cats, although human attention was welcomed. Phoebe loved being stroked and brushed from the start. She was recently adopted by a very private older lady living alone, and this has been a match made in heaven. Phoebe has her own special chair and also sleeps on the bed, but she values most of all the loving and playful relationship she has with her new owner. Phoebe was Cat No 18.

'Possum' was surviving in the Dallington redzone when redzonecats put feeding stations and cameras there in early 2014. He settled for the winter at a particular station next to the red zoned home of Annette, and started to show himself at dinner times. He waited patiently at the edge of Annette's garden, but didn't have the confidence to be approached. Camera surveillance suggested that Possum was elderly and had arthritis, so he was trapped and taken to safety



at the Newman home. This is the redzonecats equivalent of a 'shelter', where an office suite and family flat provide accommodation for cats being rehabilitated. Annette came to visit Possum recently and sat with him purring in her lap. She marvelled at how the sad cat she remembers waiting for dinner in her garden is now a magnificent, confident gentleman. Possum was Cat No 55.

Gemma (her original name) had a loving owner who microchipped her, but when this elderly lady died soon after the earthquakes Gemma was somehow left behind. She survived for years by hunting and scavenging, and had to watch the demolition of her old home and those around it. When redzonecats found and trapped Gemma she was so shy she couldn't eat for 4 days. She is now a happy cuddly cat and lives with a kind family in Prebbleton. Gemma was Cat No 58.

Redzonecats have feeding stations and cameras in Dallington and Avonside red zone areas. Cat No 88 was trapped on Friday 10th April (this article was written on 17th April). Thirteen lost cats have been positively identified and eleven of these have been able to return to their delighted families. More than fifty cats have been rehomed or placed in homes for the first time, including thirteen kittens and several tamed feral cats. Twelve cats are currently waiting to be either claimed



Possum in bed

or adopted, including Possum at the time of writing (illustrated).

There is room at 2 Rose Street for twelve cats at a time to be rehabilitated, and dozens more homeless cats are being supported at red zone feeding stations until space is available for them. Adoption is essential to make space for new cats to enter the shelter, and needs to keep up with the rate at which feeding stations are being lost due to red zone demolitions. Some people who are unable to adopt choose instead to sponsor a cat. Detailed biographies of cats needing homes are provided on the Adoption page of the redzonecats.org.nz website. Most new owners first visit the cats at 2 Rose Street. This is followed by a visit to the proposed new home by Jane, with the cat, prior to a final decision on placement. In some cases the home visit is the first

meeting, if the prospective owner has difficulty travelling.

Considerable support is provided during the rehoming stage, including multiple home visits if necessary to build the confidence of cat and owner before final placement. Advice is also provided on getting the new cat safely settled in its new territory. To date all placements have had very happy outcomes. If there are ever any problems redzonecats will be happy for cats to be returned to them. Redzonecats has been a Registered Charitable Trust since January 2015. To adopt, sponsor, donate or take part in our "knit for redzonecats" fundraiser please contact us at 03 339 2491, by post to PO Box 33197 Barrington 8824 Christchurch, or visit our website at redzonecats.org.nz. We are also on facebook at Red Zone Cats.



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