



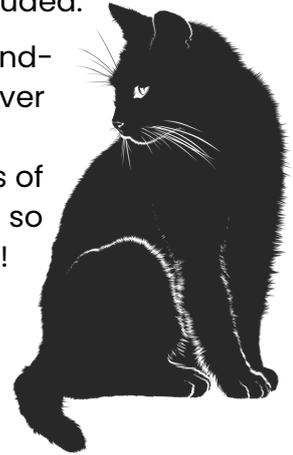
The 'Bristol Cats' study is a pioneering study of cat health, welfare and behaviour run by vets, behaviourists and epidemiologists at the University of Bristol. The aim is to improve knowledge of common diseases and behaviour problems of cats, for example, overgrooming, aggressive behaviour, obesity and diabetes mellitus. Findings from the study may be used by veterinary practitioners, cat breeders, owners and the cat community to improve the health and welfare of cats in the future.

Study news

As the leaves fall and the nights get cosy, we're busy planning the 2025 Bristol Cats Christmas card! Would you like your Bristol Cat to star in it? You'll find all the details on page 3 about how to share your cat's photo for a chance to be included.

In this newsletter, we're excited to share a round-up of the research our study has generated over the past year - we hope you'll find it both interesting and inspiring. We also have details of new projects you might like to get involved in so watch this space for an invitation to take part!

We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks for your ongoing support; these achievements simply wouldn't be possible without your commitment each year.



Research news

Our vet nursing students, Emily Taylor and Natalia Montana, have finished their final year projects!

Emily explored the potential signs of Feline Cognitive Dysfunction (FCD) - a condition similar to dementia in humans - which can affect older cats and sometimes is unrecognised. She found: 75% of cats in her sample showed at least one behavioural change, despite having no known health issues; 66% of the cats showed between 3 and 6 of these signs over a 12-month period; among cats aged 15 and older, more than 50% showed 6 or more signs; changes in interactions with owners were reported in 90% of cats over the 12-month period. These results suggest that age-related behaviour changes (and possibly FCD) may be more common than we realise, especially in older cats.

Natalia Montana examined how good owners are at recognising the emotion behind a cat's meow! When she compared the age, gender, cat owning experience and educational achievement level of the 72 participants in her study she found no differences in their ability to recognise the underlying emotions behind the cat vocalisations. All participants seemed to find it easier to identify vocalisations associated with contentment and distress than those made by frustrated or attention-seeking cats.

This summer we also welcomed Alicia Shiner, who recently graduated in Veterinary Science from the University of Bristol. Over the summer, Alicia worked with our team on a project looking at conjunctivitis (eye infections) in cats. She has been studying how common it is in our Bristol cat cohort and what might put cats at risk. So far, she's found 264 cats whose owners have reported conjunctivitis. The next step in this project will be bringing together the information from owners with the cats' veterinary records.



Stay up to date with us on X: @UniofBristolCat, or Facebook:
www.facebook.com/bristolcats.study

Full details of the research described can be accessed via the study website:
www.bristol.ac.uk/vetscience/cats



Does timing of neutering surgery affect recovery in cats?



Evidence is emerging that the timing of a stressful challenge in relation to the individual's natural rhythm of hormone secretion, could influence the animal's response to stress, and resultant stress coping ability. Lizzie Youens is researching whether the background level of stress hormones at the time of neutering influences a cat's ability to recover from the surgery. The first stage of this project is currently underway (see below). Lizzie will then investigate the clinical veterinary records of the Bristol Cat Study cats to examine whether time of day has an impact on the recovery of cats from routine neutering surgery.



Feline hormones project

Dr Karen Mifsud is currently testing a new way of collecting saliva from cats. After a long search for the right kind of swabs, she has now begun gathering samples. So far, she has received samples from the owners of five cats and is awaiting samples from a further fourteen cat owners. Her study is looking at whether it is possible to sample cortisol (a stress hormone) from cats' saliva in an owner-led, non-stressful manner, such as through play. Sampling saliva in a gentle and non-invasive way that does not require restraint of the cat could potentially allow us to use these methods in a larger scale study.



Hot off the press

For those of you who like to delve into the science behind our research, we have four new publications on our website!

Aimee Taylor's research identified that the most common causes of mortality in young adult cats (aged 1-6 years) were road traffic accidents (49.6%), non-specified (14.4%), renal disease (6.5%) and cardiovascular disease (6.5%).

Jenna Elliot found caring for a cat with a chronic disease has impacts on the care giver too. 99% of owners experienced anxiety regarding caring for their cat, while 37% said that caring for the cat had negatively impacted or restricted their own lives as their daily routine had been altered.

Rae Foreman-Worsley compared Body Condition Score and bodyweight for kittens neutered at the recommended age of four months and under, five and six months. She found no differences for cats in adulthood into their senior years, suggesting that cats neutered prepubertally are at no greater risk of obesity in adult life than those neutered at six months.

Axel Montout has been working hard to develop a way of predicting early signs of degenerative joint disease in cats, using accelerometry data and machine learning techniques.



For more details of these and previous publications please go to our website: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/vet-school/research/projects/cats/>

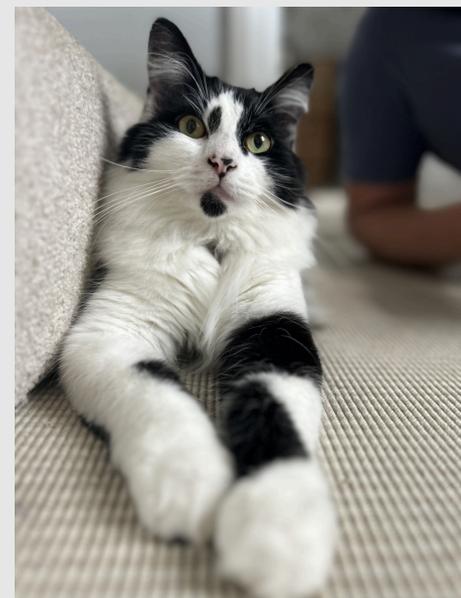


Zoetis Funded PhD into Kidney Disease and Dementia in Cats

Hello, my name is Sara, and I have recently started a PhD at Bristol Vet School. My project is trying to improve the diagnosis of both kidney disease and dementia in cats. My PhD is funded by Zoetis; I will be based in Langford Vet School working closely with the Bristol Cats team.

I have a cat myself, she was a stray bought into work. Her name is Asha which means 'life' in Swahilli, and she really is full of life! She keeps us very entertained with her playful loving nature. I'm also a vet and studied at Bristol Vet School, graduating in 2019. I'm delighted to return to Bristol and work with incredible feline focused minds!

For the last four years I've worked at The Royal Veterinary College training in anaesthesia and analgesia (pain management). You may see me pop up in the newsletter again as I will be looking for cats that aren't enrolled in the Bristol Cats study to help develop cognitive assessments so keep your eyes peeled!





Calling all Bristol Cats!

A new three-part TV series with David Baddiel is celebrating all things feline, from meeting extraordinary cats and their owners who share David's obsession, to carrying out cat-related experiments. David Baddiel is on a mission to claim the 'man's best friend' crown for all of Catdom.

If you love the idea of your Bristol Cat being featured, get in touch with the production team at catman@expectationtv.com

DAVID BADDIEL
CAT MAN

David Baddiel and Expectation TV are working on a new TV series about cats.

Do you have a special relationship with your cat? How many do you have? Does your feline have a unique skill, an incredible tale, or star in a hilarious video or photo?

If so, we want to hear from you! Please email: catman@expectationtv.com and tell us all about it.

Privacy notice: www.expectationtv.com/privacy



Call for photos for our Christmas card!

With only **12 weeks** until Christmas we are asking for photos of your lovely Bristol cats to adorn our Christmas card.



If you would like a photo of your Bristol cat(s) to feature on our 2025 'Bristol Cats' Christmas Card then please email us your photo by **3rd November** to cat-study@bristol.ac.uk.

We try to feature as many cats as possible, but space is limited! Please try to send us clear photos of a high resolution as this will increase the chance of your cat featuring on the card.

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing all of your photos!



If you haven't heard from us recently and were expecting a questionnaire, please check your Spam/Junk folder!



Thank you for your help – the Bristol Cat owners and cats are helping to make a difference to our knowledge of factors affecting feline welfare. We would also like to thank

WALTHAM® Petcare Science Institute and Cats Protection for funding the study.

Keeping cats safe during firework season

- Keep your cats in at dusk (with a litter tray available)
- Create a safe space like a cozy box lined with blankets
- Play music or the radio to muffle the sound of the fireworks
- Close curtains to block out lights and bright flashes
- Use a pheromone plug-in if you have one
- Keep calm and avoid checking on them often. They will seek reassurance from you if they need this.



Moving house / changed your email address / need to contact us?

If you have changed email address, moved house or have a new contact number it is easy to update these on your annual questionnaire. Alternatively, you can get in touch using our contact details below:

Telephone: 0117 394 0850

Email: cat-study@bristol.ac.uk

Freepost: RSHR-AGRJ-UABZ Bristol Cats, Dr Emily Blackwell, University of Bristol, Langford House, BRISTOL BS40 5DU

