

JODAERIN RINGO'S STARR

His story and why he is so special to us

On the 10th October 2008 Annilese surprised us all by giving birth to 6 beautiful kittens, 2 Blue males, 3 Tawny males and a Tawny female. All I thought was: well, Anni was an exceptional mother the kittens grew and progressed well, just as they should. Five of them went off to their new homes, while the last one, Ringo's Starr, was due to go to his new home with my dear friend and mentor Jan Fuller, who had picked him out very early on. He was a beautiful kitten, who



Ringo at 12 Weeks

just captured everyone's hearts; there was something about him..

Ringo was in our back games room with his mum, it was a hot day and I left the door open to our outside run, and headed off to work. I had only been at work for an hour or so when I had a phone call from my children saying something was wrong with Ringo — he was shaking uncontrollably. My son took him straight to the vet, and it was a while before they called me. The first words were "Helen, we don't think this kitten is going to make it". Those words took so long to register: What on earth could of happened in an hour? They first thought he had been bitten by a snake and was given anti-venom. There was still no improvement by the time I got to the vets, and it was obvious he was in a bad way. We got him out on the table, and then saw his

left rear leg was held up high, he was sedated and an x-ray was taken, which showed a nasty folded fracture of his femur. I remember sitting at the vets thinking "Oh good, they can just put a pin in it tomorrow, and he'll be home, easy, just like it was with Armani" only it wasn't quite that simple..

He stayed at the vets on pain relief, he was re x-rayed 48 hours later; the fracture had deteriorated, and my vet decided to speak to Tim Caporn at the Perth Vet Specialist Centre. The decision was made that he would go there, as it looked complicated. On Monday morning Jan and I picked up Ringo and went to meet Tim. He looked at his x-rays, asked plenty of questions about mum and her diet, and explained that Ringo would need three pins to stabilize the fracture and complete isolation in a cage for 6 weeks. Great, I thought, in 6 weeks he'll be fighting fit again.

Surgery was booked for Monday lunch time, I went to work waiting anxiously for the call to say everything had gone well. By the time I got home at 7pm, I was a nervous wreck.

Tim called me; he had been in surgery for 4 hours with Ringo, his bones were so soft, the pins had just pushed through wherever he placed them, so he tried placing the pins in the bone and then wiring them, only to find the wire cut straight through his bones, he said it was the first time he had been so challenged in years and he wasn't prepared to give up, or let it beat him, so he finally, spent hours painstakingly knitting Ringo's fractured leg bones around the three pins with dissolving suture thread as it was all he could think of that would not cut through his bones.



After the operation

Ringo had a serious calcium deficiency, as we found out after he was tested by Murdoch Haematology. Tim had never in 30 years seen bones so soft. It was decided; that Ringo would be placed on a calcium rich diet, rather than getting calcium supplementation, to ensure that calcium/phosphorus balance would not be upset. So Hills Science Kitten biscuits and Hills Science Wet AD were to be his diet for the next six months. Strictly no red meat, I was not allowed to feed him anything else. And I didn't!

48 hours after his surgery, Ringo was home, living in single show cage in the lounge room, Tim told us to treat him like "A porcelain doll — he was so fragile".

He coped OK for the first few days, although he was so vocal when he saw us, we both spent time with him, encouraging him to eat, and rubbing his belly. On day 7 the support bandages came off; on day 10 the main pin in his femur exposed itself. My vet thought it could just be knocked back down, as this can be common, Tim Caporn was consulted and worried, Ringo went back to him the following morning, and went straight into surgery, his femur just wasn't strong enough to hold the main pin, it was removed, again Tim spent the next two hours knitting together what he could of his femur. Two of the smaller pins remained in place.

Then came the news Ringo would live for the next four weeks in a "high rise apartment" as we called it, a tiny space at the top of a cage that they had designed for him, just enough room for him to get up and use the litter tray that was it. And visiting rights were denied, I begged and pleaded and was allowed two, in the first week he knew my voice and the noise he made when I left, tore at everyone's hearts, he took a long time to settle, so I was not allowed back, I rang everyday and he was so spoiled by all the staff who all

adored him. By the middle of the four weeks, my vet had constructed his own high rise for him, we could now move him closer to home, and finally I could visit, which I did everyday for the next two weeks.

Finally he came home, having been away from us for six weeks, again to the cage, but this was freedom compared to what he had been used to. All he wanted was constant touch; he just loved to be stroked and talked to.

The last step, two weeks later, was a pin removal; one still remains as his femur had outgrown it. It was a straightforward removal, and he was home the same day, still in his cage, my vet having suggested gradual time out, strictly supervised.

is breakfast and he bolted, like an Aby does. I remember sitting on the floor where I was crying, thinking oh no, it's all going to fall apart! He charged around the house, black Aby eyes, his energy finally unleashed, until he came and collapsed at my feet; his leg was ok, he was just exhausted.

From that day on we didn't look back. He went from strength to strength and we spent a lot of time with him, helping him regain his muscle tone and energy levels. Every evening his favourite position was sitting with my husband Nicholas on the couch, snuggled over his shoulder — 16 months on it still is. And every morning he comes into bed with us, and after our good morning strokes and purrs he laps the last tiny bit of my coffee from a little tray on my bedside. He doesn't spray, he still lives in the house with us, he loves any cat or kitten in his presence, and we think he is truly a special little boy.

Today I think his leg is fairly self-regulating, if he overdoes his play, he will have a slight limp and then he will rest as needed. He has just started to adjust to some time outside, he seems to have taken this all in his stride, he doesn't much like the girls yet, (the ones that are in season) he much prefers to wash and snuggle with them.

He started his show career quite late in the year; we took him to the ACF National in Adelaide, where he was Reserve Group 3 Kitten (out of 103) in one Ring, and third in another. He was Supreme Exhibit, at the Perth 2009 Royal Show, and he finished the year, as the 5th Best Exhibit with the Abyssinian Breeder, we are so proud of his efforts, for a young cat that had such a painful start to his life.

a high commercial kitten food wet diet, with very little raw food.



Ringo recuperating

Ringo at 12 months showed normal bone density.

Jan thankyou again from the bottom of our hearts for your wonderful support, it was a year ago now, and I do hope you have forgiven us; we just couldn't let him go ♥

P.S. The first litter sired by Ringo is due in July 2010.

Helen Norwood

Jodaerin Abyssinians, Perth



In his favourite position