

change started disappearing, along with pens and bottle tops. After a few searches we eventually found the 'stash' of coins under one of the kitten's blankets and the pens hidden under the mat in the dining room, but we couldn't find the bottle tops anywhere.

Then one evening, my husband walked into the living room to find Macavity with his head down the side of the sofa. As soon as he heard someone coming into the room he quickly pulled his head out and casually wandered off as if nothing suspicious was going on at all. However, later on when we took out the cushions and put our hands down the back of the sofa we found a small collection of our missing items, including several bottle tops.

We assumed that once they were old enough to go outside and explore their new surroundings their 'maggie' instincts would simply disappear. And for a few weeks it seemed like we were right; things didn't disappear, toys stayed neatly on the bed and socks stayed in the basket.

Then one day, a few weeks later, Kissa casually walked into the dining

"We would find a trail of toys and socks littered around the house, but we never saw either of them moving anything."

room and placed a sweet packet at my feet. Since then she's brought in a variety of other 'gifts' including receipts, plastic, leaves, feathers and interestingly shaped twigs. The other morning I looked out of the bedroom window and saw Kissa in the neighbour's garden looking with great interest at the washing hanging on their line. I could tell she was trying to work out how she could get her little paws onto the clothes delicately blowing in the wind... Oh well, I guess only time will tell! ■

It happened to me...

We said goodbye to Max

Katie Parkes found a new home better suited to Max so he could have a better life.

Oh no! Max, our huge, beautiful Russian Blue, was bored again. I'd noticed recently that every day when I took him out on his lead he was becoming increasingly peeved. He pulled away from me to have a go at the black and white moggy taunting him in our communal garden. Often I'd look down at Max and share his humiliation. He simply hissed.

Max had lived with my partner Jeremy and I for three years in our city flat. We just couldn't let him roam free; he'd get knocked down on the busy streets – or stolen. What were we to do?

A one-person cat, Max adored Jeremy and the feelings were reciprocated. He often hailed him with a raised front paw, ancient Roman fashion. Sometimes he'd jump to the top of our settee to 'massage' Jeremy's head. We agonized over what was best for our funny, beloved mate.

A dear friend of mine, Daisy, offered to have him live with her in her remote country cottage where he could roam free. So eventually we let poor, cooped-up Max go. He mourned us for days in his splendid new home, refusing to eat. We so wanted to bring him straight back but Daisy refused and rushed him round to a cat behaviourist.

Meanwhile, Jeremy and I cried bitter tears. We realized we'd done the wrong thing – mainly for us. We felt wretched. Daisy's refusal to let us have him back tugged at our decades-long friendship.

But Max became very contented indeed in his spacious home and grand garden, and Daisy sent us videos to prove it. Our friendship soon regained its former strength. My partner and I were delighted to see him so happy.

Months passed and after nearly a year, I knew Jeremy was still missing Max. I believed a new cat – this time

a cat who'd want to stay indoors and not a kitten (who I'd be tempted to take outdoors) – would be very welcome in our household. Through a friend of a friend we ended up with Pumpkin Pie (PP), another Russian Blue.

In many ways PP is the opposite of Max – she is female, small, dainty and loving. She chirrups happily; Max hardly ever made a sound. Our



Max.



Pumpkin Pie.

flat seems big to her. She nuzzles her head against the furniture, she's commandeered the bedroom and adores the myriad perches in her new home. However, she is like Max in one way – Jeremy is her man.

So now, while Max is delightfully trotting around his 'country estate', PP is making his old home hers. There's no way we'd ever part with her. But we do remember Max. ■

True cat tales

The magpie kittens

When things started going missing around the house Jill Stanton-Huxton never suspected her two doe-eyed kittens, until one day she caught them red-pawed. . .

“I really like that one,” my husband said, pointing to the adorable grey tabby Norwegian Forest kitten snuggled up tightly to his mother and sister.

“Oh, right,” I replied, looking at his equally gorgeous sister and secretly wishing we could have her too. But we had already decided we would just have one kitten and we both instinctively felt that ‘he’ was the one for us.

However, when we arrived at the house again the following week, both the kittens were playing hide-and-seek behind the furniture; happy in their own little world. And it soon became obvious (while we were enjoying a cup of tea and a few biscuits) that they had a very special bond, probably made stronger by the fact that they were the only two survivors of the litter – sadly the other kitten had died shortly after birth.

Seeing them so attached to each other was all the evidence I needed that we had to have them both. Fortunately, the little girl was still available, so at that point I simply blurted out (without any regard for my husband’s feelings): “We can’t have the little fellow on his own; look how close he is to his little sister, we will have to have her too!”

When the big day finally arrived we headed off to collect our new kittens, Macavity and Kissa, with a mixture of excitement and nervous anticipation. Surprisingly, the journey home and the next 24 hours went rather smoothly. They both explored their new surroundings, tucked in to a nice bowl

of food and decided the best place to sleep was not in their nice new baskets, but snuggled up between the cuddly toys on our bed.



Early the next morning I woke up to a very loud humming noise in my ear, when I opened my eyes I found two fluffy kittens curled up on my pillow purring away contentedly.

“Time for a cup of tea,” I said to my sleepy husband as I put on my slippers and headed downstairs to the kitchen

– two yawning kittens plodding along happily behind me.

Halfway down the stairs I noticed a few of my cuddly toys and some odd socks scattered across the living room floor, and my favourite ‘Bobby Bunny’ looking rather undignified lying upside-down in the cat basket.

“Ok,” I said, looking down at the kittens, who were now both deeply immersed in a game of tug of war with one of my discarded socks. “What’s all this about then?”

This continued for several days.

We would find a trail of toys and socks littered around the house, but we never saw either of them moving the toys from the bed or taking the socks from the sock basket – until I arrived home early from work one day.

I decided to be sneaky and see if I could catch the culprits ‘red pawed’ – so I didn’t give my usual ‘Mummy is home’ when I opened the door but instead tip-toed through to the living room. Sure enough, my plan had worked – Macavity was busy dragging a woollen pixie across the floor towards the kitchen! As soon as he saw me he stopped in his tracks, dropped the pixie on the floor, looked at me with his large, almond green eyes and rolled over on his back for a tummy tickle.

A little while later I went upstairs to the bedroom to find Kissa with her head in my sock basket, desperately trying to pull out one of my rather fetching multi-coloured socks. “Ah, caught you,” I said, as she gave it one final yank, dragged it across the floor and dropped it at my feet.

But it didn’t stop there. Over the next few weeks my husband’s loose