

# Celebrating 60 purrfect years



Emily Fowler discovers more about the work of International Cat Care and why this feline charity has been at the forefront of animal welfare for 60 years supporting owners and professionals.

International Cat Care Celebrates 60 Years of Helping Cats 2018 is a special year for the leading feline welfare charity International Cat Care as it marks its 60th anniversary. Established in 1958 as the Feline Advisory Bureau (FAB), the charity has done such incredible work in the decades since, and each year it continues to be at the forefront of improving the lives of cats all over the world. Its mission is:

'To engage, educate and empower people throughout the world to improve the health and welfare of cats by sharing advice, training, and passion.' To list all of the inspirational campaigns and projects we've seen from them over the years would probably take up a whole issue, so instead here's an overview of the charity's history, insight from someone who was involved in FAB in the early days, and how you as a pet business can make the most of the support available to cat owners and cat professionals alike.

## History and campaigns

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the formation of FAB, standards (even in the UK) weren't always as high as you would expect.

If you take a look into the history of feline medicine you realise just how little was known about it in the early part of the 20th century. Not that many vets were interested in what we now call companion animals, and cats in particular were given particularly poor treatment, in part because they were seen as 'women's pets'. There was a startling lack of knowledge of feline diseases, and sadly also a lack of interest in researching the diseases, and dog medicines were routinely given to cats (often with disastrous consequences). By the 1950s letters from concerned cat breeders were regularly appearing in breeding magazines criticising the state of affairs, but still nothing changed.



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### History and campaigns

Today, International Cat Care's welfare advisory panel, expert feline behaviour team, and panel of feline veterinary medicine experts work with and support owners and veterinary/welfare professionals all over the world. The International Society of Feline Medicine (the charity's veterinary division) is recognised for the valuable work it does in providing progressive support and information in terms of feline veterinary care, but before

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That was until 1958, when cat lover and breeder Joan Judd decided something needed to be done to improve the care and knowledge of cats, after discovering a poorly farm kitten she took to the vet was going to be euthanised in a horrific and painful way using prussic acid (hydrogen cyanide). At the opening meeting of FAB, Joan said, 'This Feline Advisory Bureau sets

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out to assist people to solve their problems, and only through a central body can the cat owner and breeder be sure of obtaining the latest information and advice and so keep abreast of the times and so ensure a safer healthier place for their cats.'

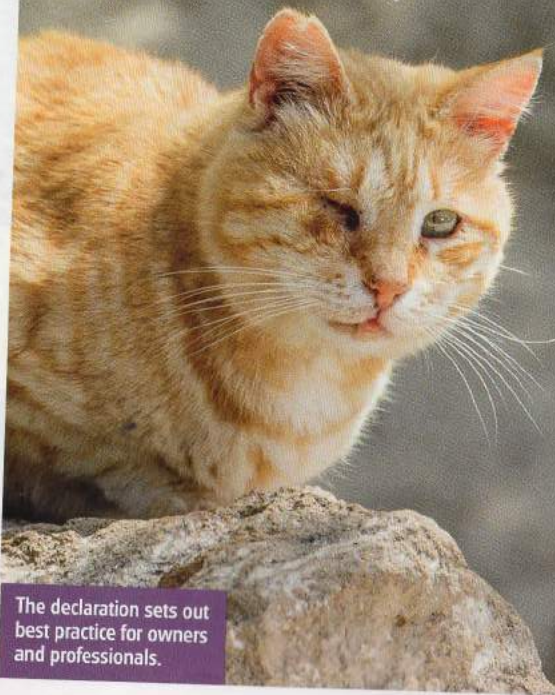
FAB began as a group of ordinary people who wanted to make a difference to the lives of cats by raising their status and pushing for further research into feline diseases,

nutrition, and husbandry. As well as conducting surveys, answering members' questions, publishing the FAB Bulletin, and more, it held several conferences for breeders which were also well-attended by vets – a great result for the time.

One of the early areas for discussion at the conferences was the potential issues caused by breeding brachycephalic cats, something which is still a problem today for cats, dogs and rabbits, and

I've just signed the Declaration because:

I believe that every cat, owned or unowned, matters



The declaration sets out best practice for owners and professionals.



### Notable events in the history of International Cat Care

- 1958** – Cat lover and breeder Joan Judd founded the Feline Advisory Bureau
- 1959** – First issue of FAB Bulletin published
- 1964** – FAB's first conference (which made it to the pages of the Daily Telegraph!)
- FAB's boarding cattery inspection scheme began
- 1967** – FAB's Boarding Cattery Information Service was set up
- Vet Charles Povey was employed by FAB
- 1971** – FAB was re-structured
- 1974** – FAB funded Chris Gaskell as the Bureau's first in Clinical Research in Feline Medicine
- 1988** – FAB had its first study day for vets at BSAVA Congress
- 1996** – FAB launched the European

- Society of Feline Medicine (ESFM)
- 1999** – The first Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery was launched by ESFM at BSAVA Congress
- 2002** – ESFM held its first conference in Stockholm, Sweden
- 2008** – In its 50th year, FAB launched its WellCat for Life programme, aimed at vet professionals and owners, as well as the book 'Essential Cattitude'
- 2012** – FAB launched its welfare award, as well as the Cat Friendly Clinic accreditation programme
- 2013** – The charity's name was changed to International Cat Care
- 2014** – International Cat Care launched its free nurse membership
- 2018** – In its 60th anniversary year, International Cat Care release the ground-breaking International Declaration of Responsibilities to Cats

something that has recently been at the forefront of animal welfare news thanks to media attention and International Cat Care's stance on it. It shows that even back then FAB was a trailblazer in terms of cat welfare, and here are a few more current issues that were highlighted in those early days:

**Handling** – 'All animals should be handled with gentleness and common sense,' FAB advised in 1964, as well as recommending against 'scruffing' cats as a form of handling.

**Neutering** – Recently, early neutering (at 4 months) has become recognised best practice, and 50 years ago FAB were already championing it! In 1964 they recommended the best age to neuter would be between 3.5 and 4 months for female kittens and a month older for male kittens. Another cause for concern at the time was the neutering of male kittens specifically, because if they were under 6 months, there was no legal requirement to use anaesthetic! This changed with the Protection of Animals (anaesthetics) Act 1964, but before the act came in FAB encouraged owners to insist that anaesthetic be used whether it was legally required or not.

**Declawing** – Something which is now banned in the UK under the Animal Welfare Act and considered, quite rightly, as animal cruelty, FAB wrote a number of articles condemning the practice and declared itself 'Utterly opposed to declawing' in 1967.

Joan Judd sadly died in 2013, but she had been delighted at how the charity had grown and progressed since she started FAB all those years ago. Thanks to her initial blood, sweat and tears, the lives of millions

of cats all over the world have been changed for the better.

### International Declaration of Responsibilities to Cats

Following on from campaigns to raise awareness about issues such as the toxicity of certain plants and household products, permethrin poisoning, early neutering, and more, International Cat Care's latest campaign launched this year is incredibly vital in terms of cat welfare; the International Declaration of Responsibilities to Cats.

Providing a well-defined framework in terms of feline welfare, it's designed to support anyone and everyone who has an impact on cats' lives, and help them protect and improve feline health and welfare. The people and organisations it covers include:

- Central governments setting welfare law and tone
- Local and central government authorities implementing law and population management
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals undertaking cat welfare work including population management
- Individuals owning cats
- Those living alongside street and community cats
- Individuals breeding and selling cats
- Veterinary professionals treating cats

Anyone with an interest in feline welfare (either personal or professional) is encouraged to read and sign up to the declaration. (More info: [www.icatcare.org/declaration](http://www.icatcare.org/declaration))

The International Cat Care



The charity's HQ is located in Wiltshire.

website is a mine of information covering all aspects of feline care and welfare, from information for owners to details of the charity's many educational opportunities and events.

If you aren't already using the website as a resource for cat knowledge and best practice, please do check it out – and the charity will always be delighted to support retailers and, in turn, their customers, so you can contact them with any queries or requests for literature you might have. (More info: [www.icatcare.org](http://www.icatcare.org) or [info@icatcare.org](mailto:info@icatcare.org))

### A spotlight on one of the people involved in FAB's early days

Charles (Chas) Povey, BVSc, PhD, FRCVS, was the first FAB Research Fellow from 1967-1969, and FAB's chairman from 1972-1974. He was appointed in 1967 (for the princely sum of £800 per year!), and began a project on feline viral rhinotracheitis at Bristol Veterinary School. The initial intention was to focus on the involvement of viruses with feline reproductive failure, but the focus shifted to the 'cat flu' complex, something which as well as causing unpleasant symptoms like breathing difficulties

and runny eyes and nose, also had a particularly high death rate. Not only that, but even when cats recovered, they would often be left with ongoing upper respiratory disease. This Fellowship was able to explain the causes of cat flu, prove that cats remained carriers and were capable of infecting other cats and kittens, recommend ways to prevent the spread of infection, and ultimately develop the prototype vaccines that led to the current success of vaccinating against viruses that cause cat flu.

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Charles Povey's involvement in FAB would lead to many positive changes and advancements in the late 60s and early 70s, and he remains an ardent supporter of International Cat Care.

As he says himself, "In 1974 I moved to Canada to join the faculty of the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph and regrettably had to resign as Chair of FAB, but of course have watched with great pride the growing reputation and influence of the Bureau and its evolution as International Cat Care." 🐾



ICC has been investing in feline welfare globally for 60 years.



The charity works internationally with vets and cat professionals.