

## Chips for everything?

It's a fact of life that when you get to the front of the queue in a chip shop they have always just run out of chips! While waiting for more to be cooked the other night I was reminded of a strange case of a chipped cat. I am, of course, referring to a microchip rather than the fried variety!

It was a cold and wet Sunday evening in February when my phone rang and I was informed that someone had found an injured, equally cold and wet, cat in their garden. They did not know who owned it, it had no collar and they were unsure what to do with it. On arrival at the surgery I opened the cat basket to reveal a sweet little ginger cat, who looked up at me, and gave a pitiful miaow. On careful examination I found that she had a broken back leg and other minor wounds. The people who had found the cat needed to get home as they had young children with them so we carefully moved the cat into a warm padded kennel. After they had left, I gave the cat some painkillers, and with crossed fingers reached for the microchip scanner. Bingo! The cat had a microchip! For those of you that don't know a microchip is a silicon chip, the size of a grain of rice, that is injected between your pet's shoulder blades. When scanned, it emits a number, that leads, via a computer, back to the owner's name and phone number.

I immediately rang the 24 hour helpline and was given the name and telephone number of the registered owner. I rang them to give them the mixed news that their cat was safe but had a broken leg. I was in for a great surprise, because on speaking to a lady I was told, 'It's not my cat, mine is sitting on my lap!'

I was not sure what to make of this but thanked her for her help and went back to treating the cat. I could not understand how the microchip could have been registered to the wrong owner. I looked at the cat again; it was middle aged, maybe 9 or 10 years old. The lady I had spoken to had sounded like an older citizen. I wondered that maybe, just maybe, she might know who the cat belonged to. Perhaps it was a relative's cat and perhaps she had forgotten about it! I took a photo of the cat and decided to pop round and see the lady to see if she could shed any light on it.

On arriving at her house I apologized for disturbing her, but asked her she would kindly look at the photo I had, to see if she recognised the cat. She readily agreed to do this then gasped in astonishment on seeing the photo. 'That's Pumpkin' she said, 'she disappeared 8 years ago'!

The cat she had had on her lap had been her new cat Malkin. She had never dreamt Pumpkin would turn up again after all that time. After Pumpkin had had an operation to repair her leg, she was as good as new, and went home to meet Malkin. Fortunately they got on like a house on fire. The lady was over the moon.

So in this month of Halloween make sure your pet's like 'Pumpkin'. One day you may be glad you had it chipped. All pets can be micro-chipped. Make an appointment at your Veterinary Surgeon now!