

# THE MIJ CHRONICLES





# THE MIJ CHRONICLES



*A Book of Memories*



*2013*

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# **In memory of Mij**

**21st July 2012 - 24th September 2013**

**A very special cat.**

**A cat in a million.**





## **Foreword**

Soon after he came to live with my wife and I, Mij – a very special cat – began to keep a diary; a record of his life, in photographs and anecdotes, explaining in his own inimitable way some of the positives and negatives of being a cat. These notes, which became known as the Mij Chronicles, proved very popular with many members of the family, and friends who knew him, and so were distributed from Mij’s own e-mail address. And he made friends easily; he was that sort of cat. After a while, as Mij became increasingly busy with his various other feline duties, he found less time to devote to his diary, and then, suddenly and tragically, at the very young age of just fourteen months, the last of his “nine lives” ran out.

To us he was indeed a cat in a million; in his all-too-short life he had wormed his way into our affections to an extent that none of our other cats ever achieved. It is as a memorial to Mij that I have collected together his diary notes and his photographs, taken the liberty of doing a little editing where necessary, and added (as far as possible, in Mij’s own style) some additional notes to accompany recent photographs.

I trust that Mij himself would have approved of this little book.

Kit Thornton

*Derbyshire*  
*October 2013*



## **Introduction**

Hello, I'm Mij. And these are the first known pictures of me, so gently held in a pair of lovely caring hands...



Those hands belong to my first owner; my first human, that is. At that time, of course, I was too young to take on the responsibility of selecting and managing my own humans. This kind lady was there for me when I was born, and she nursed me lovingly back to health when I got sick with feline flu.

Here I am a little older, and that's my brother Jesse curled up behind me...



We were friends (mostly), and when we weren't sleeping we were usually charging around the house annoying whichever humans we could find. Even at that young age I was learning that it is so easy to wind humans up, and so much fun!

However, a cat cannot remain a kitten forever, as much as we would like to pretend; and so the time came eventually when we had to go to our new homes – and, at last, to take charge of our own new humans. I was sad to be parted from my brother, but I was determined to make it on my own, and so, once I was safely established in my new home in Derbyshire, I began to write my diary – a personal blog, if you like – and that was how *The Mij Chronicles* came into existence.

So here we are at last, with...

## **The Mij Chronicles**

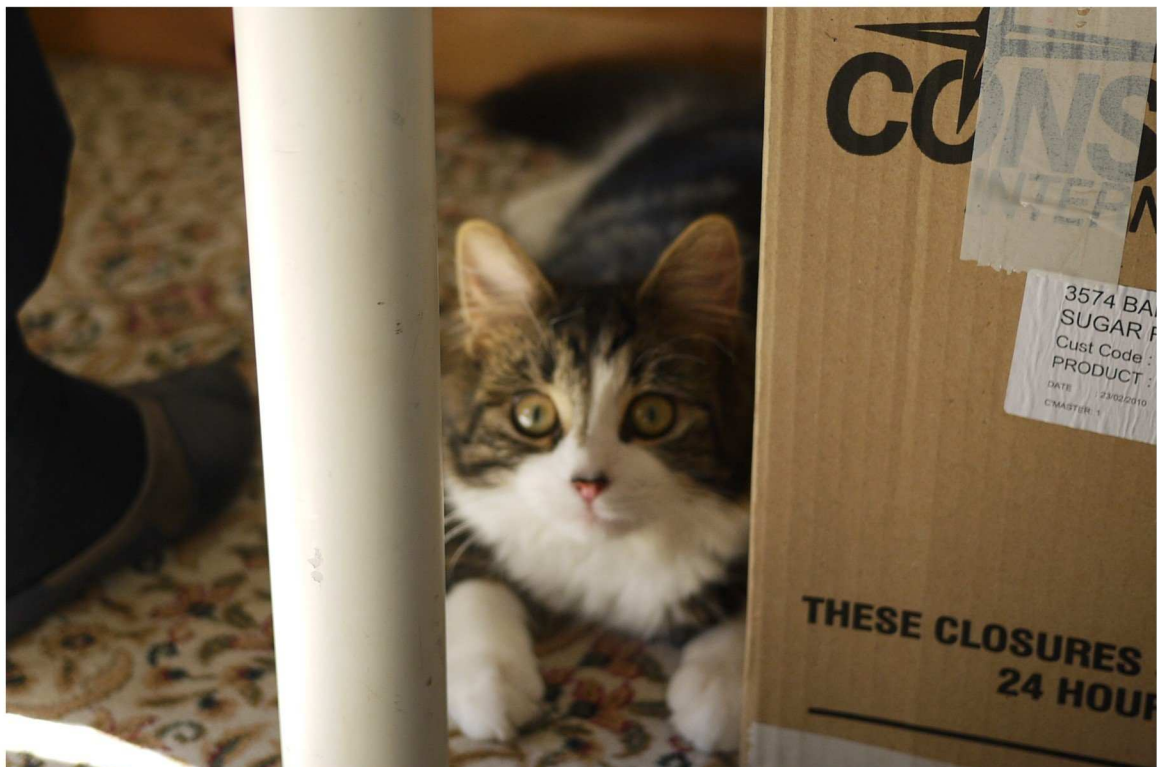
*15th March 2013*

Hello Everyone.

You might like to see some more pictures of me in my new home. (Yes, I think I might stay here after all, because my attempt to escape was not a great success!)

My new name is Mij. Not Midge, because I'm not an irritating insect, in spite of what my humans might tell you. I think I'm named Mij after that other lovely friendly, furry animal in "Ring of Bright Water". And Mij is so much better than my old name; "Fluffy" (or Fluffy II, actually, because my mother was also Fluffy). Fluffy II... really! So undignified, and quite unsuitable for a cat like me.

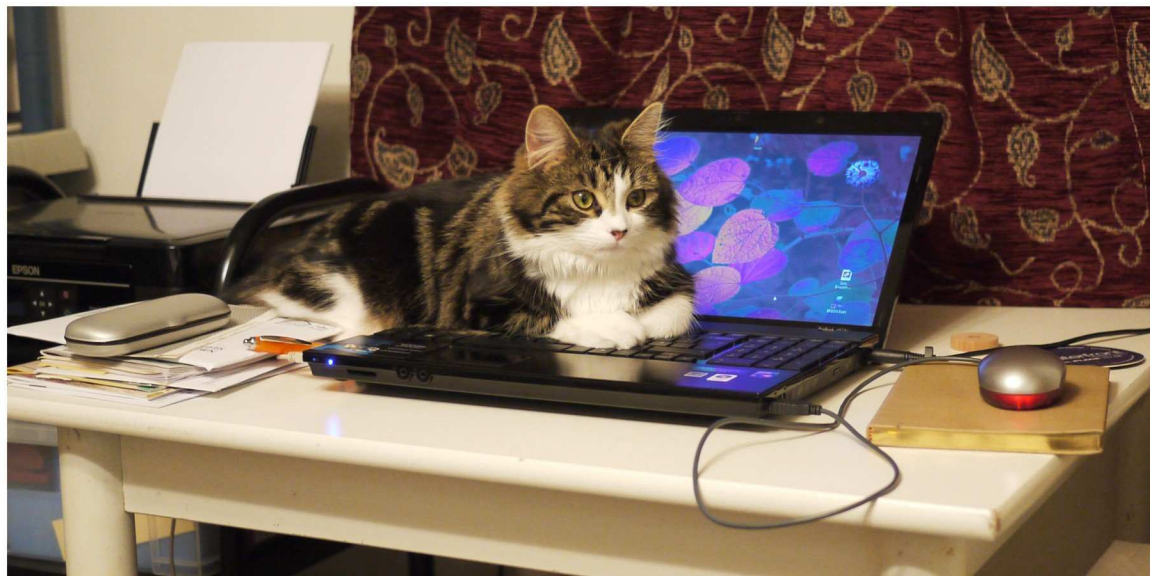
When my new human – Granny Human, as I like to call her – is working in her study I often keep her company by hiding under her desk...



.. but if she ignores me for too long I have to remind her that I'm important and that I'm always ready if she needs my help...



... and actually, although my humans do not know it, I can manage this computer stuff purrfectly well on my own. (I'm sure there is a mouse around here somewhere!)



Well, that's me, and it's my supper time. Bye for now — oh! I nearly forgot; you will

be wondering about my failed escape attempt. Actually, I must admit that this was not one of my most sensible ideas as it was my very first night in my new home. I saw a chance to slip out where my humans had not barricaded my cat-flap properly... so off I went. Well, I can tell you that adventure was no fun at all! I wasn't sure where I lived, and I didn't see any humans that I knew, and I was cold and I was hungry. So I hid during the day and only came out after dark when it was very quiet. I did find some food in a bowl so I wasn't really starving, but I was still quite glad when, three days later and after a bit of a chase around the gardens, I allowed myself to be caught and shut in a box. I think it was my new humans who caught me, but anyway, they seemed to be friendly and manageable so, as I said earlier, I decided to stay with them. Now, I'm getting very hungry again, so where's my supper...?

*24th March 2013.*

Good morning, it's time for some more photographs.

As you might expect, I'm a very tidy cat and I do like to help my humans to keep my home neat and well-organised. So, I sometimes put myself away after playing...

Naturally I'm being helpful, so I wasn't very pleased to overhear my human's comment, *"and after he has done his best to destroy my study I think that this is the best place for him. Trouble is, he will not stay there."* That wasn't a very nice thing to say was it? I can see I'm going to have trouble bringing him into line.





One of the best places from which I can keep an eye on my humans is right here, on the landing, because whether they're upstairs or downstairs they cannot get up to too much mischief without me seeing them. These bannisters around the

stairwell also serve as my climbing frame so that I can take some exercise, even when it is too wet for me to go outside. My humans don't really understand; they think I'm being silly when I jump and swing and do other exciting gymnastics on my climbing frame, but it's important for me to keep fit..

At other times I need to find more subtle, secret hiding places to spy on my humans. I admit I have always liked boxes and bags and other cosy places. Here is a nice picture of me as a kitten-in-a-box. As you can see, it was



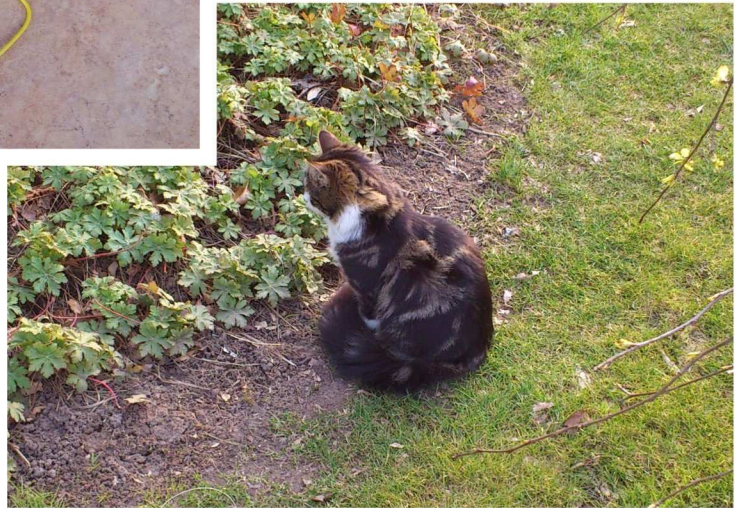
taken a long time ago, when I was very little, and it's not only me who likes hiding!

Before I get into a box I always check for creatures or other strange things that



might be lurking there. I found this funny thing in one of the boxes. I don't know what it is, but it does need to be handled with caution because if I attack one end the other end twists round and tries to bite me! Unfortunately, before I could kill it my human came and took it away from me.

But now I'm getting hungry again so I must go outside and try to find a snack; there must be a nice juicy one hiding around here somewhere. I am very patient (sometimes)...



*26th March 2013*

Hello Everyone,

I know you have had pictures of me recently, but I think you need to be aware that I used up another of my "nine lives" yesterday, or so my humans say.

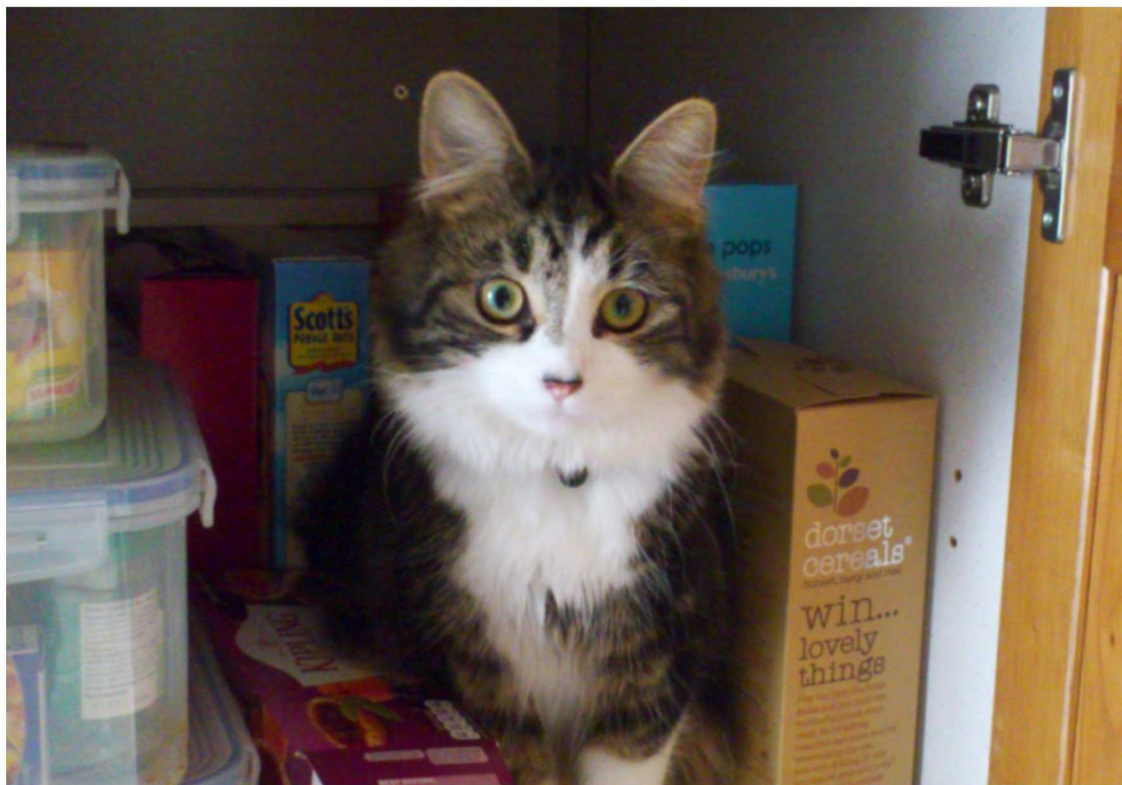
I did survive, and I still like my boxes...



And I am still able to do my housework; such as checking that the dishwasher is clean...



... and making sure that my humans have got the cereal cupboard properly stocked...



But, back to yesterday... (no photographs of me then, it was too scary and happened too fast!) In the corner of the utility room in my house there is a big hot-water cylinder; about five feet high and fitted right in the corner so that there is a small triangular space between the cylinder and the two walls. Well, I was just patrolling, you know, to check that there were no mice in the utility room, when somehow I found myself stuck at the bottom of this five-foot deep triangular hole! I'm sorry to say that I really lost my usual kitty-calm. Panic! I was howling, and jumping up and down, and scrabbling frantically... but the walls and cylinder were all so smooth that I could not get a grip. My humans (so they told me afterwards) had visions of calling an emergency plumber to move the cylinder, or even knocking a hole through from the other side of the wall. But then they had a bright idea. (Humans can be quite clever on rare occasions!) They found a big towel and lowered it down from the top of the hole; that gave me some grip so I clambered and clung on to the towel and my humans hauled me out. What a relief! I can tell you, I won't be doing that again... at least, not until the next time...

*10th April 2013*

Hello again; it's me, Mij.

Sorry to be complaining, but it's my humans – they're so unpredictable. One minute they are pleased with me and the next minute they are so cross that they say they might send me back where I came from! This is me getting packed up...



And I was only trying to help! I was sitting on the window sill in the conservatory when I noticed that my human's three cacti needed re-potting, so I carefully (very carefully because they are prickly) tipped them out of their pots. Oops! One rolled off the window sill onto the floor; it's amazing how far the compost scattered! My human was not pleased when he saw the mess (as he called it). He explained, in quite a loud voice, that the cactus on the floor was more than thirty years old, and had survived three previous cats, a dog, and several house moves before I came along. Really! I was only trying to help.

This week has been quite traumatic for me in other ways. My humans took me along to the vet to be chipped. (I think that's what they said, but I'm sure they meant clipped, because my hair is quite long.) The vet was a young lady human, very nice and friendly, I thought. But looks can be deceiving, and suddenly she stuck this great needle in my neck; it hurt a lot so I don't want to see her again! And she never did clip my hair.

The next thing that my humans did was to open the door and tell me to go for a walk in the garden. As I said, they're so unpredictable! They made such a fuss the last time I got into the garden and now they're telling me to go out; a cat doesn't know whether he's coming or going! Anyway, I did go out, but it was quite scary and every time I heard a strange noise I scuttled back indoors. I was becoming more confident when I suddenly noticed this huge bird in my garden, a pheasant I think it's called. It noticed me and started running, but I could run faster; hah! I nearly caught it, but it cheated and flew over the hedge with a great squawking!

While I was outside I did make a start on checking my human's part of the garden. Obviously there's some work to be done here...

That's me under a gooseberry bush. (Where I came from, if these funny human ideas are to be believed?)



And here I am thinking that I might be able to help by re-arranging the plant labels...



When I've become a bit more familiar with my garden I plan to help by doing some digging. I'm sure my humans will be pleased. Or maybe not, because they do have funny ideas about what cats should and shouldn't do.

I must go because I'm getting hungry, but did I tell you about the time I was caught in the bedroom? I know that the bedroom is out of bounds for me (although I don't know why, and "because you're a cat" and "because I say so" are not really good answers!). Well, one day my favourite human opened the door and came into the bedroom, and there I was, curled up on the bed. How did I get through a closed door? Well, unfortunately she is quite intelligent (for a human) and she soon worked out my secret method. I had managed to open a door of one of the eaves cupboards, clamber along past all the clutter that my humans keep in there, and exit from another cupboard inside the bedroom. Very clever, though I say it myself, but now these cupboard doors are kept securely fastened so I shall have work out something different.

Oh! I forgot; I said I was hungry, so please excuse me...

*12th April 2013*

Hello again, it's Mij.

I've told you all before how annoying my humans can be. Well, it's really getting too much when I'm not allowed to sleep where I want. They don't seem to understand that the comfortable swivel chair in the study is my chair. If I'm busy in some other part of my house and I suddenly realise that my human is going to work on his computer I have to be very quick. Sometimes it's a race between us! I've even managed to surprise him when he thinks I'm settled somewhere else and he goes to sit in my chair, only to find that he's sitting on me! He gets quite cross and tips me onto the floor!!! It's so unfair when I was there first. So, of course, I make him feel bad by squeezing into a corner and trying to look very uncomfortable, like this...



Actually it's not too bad at all – no nasty drafts – and this morning I was curled up here fast asleep for an hour or so!

*19th April 2013*

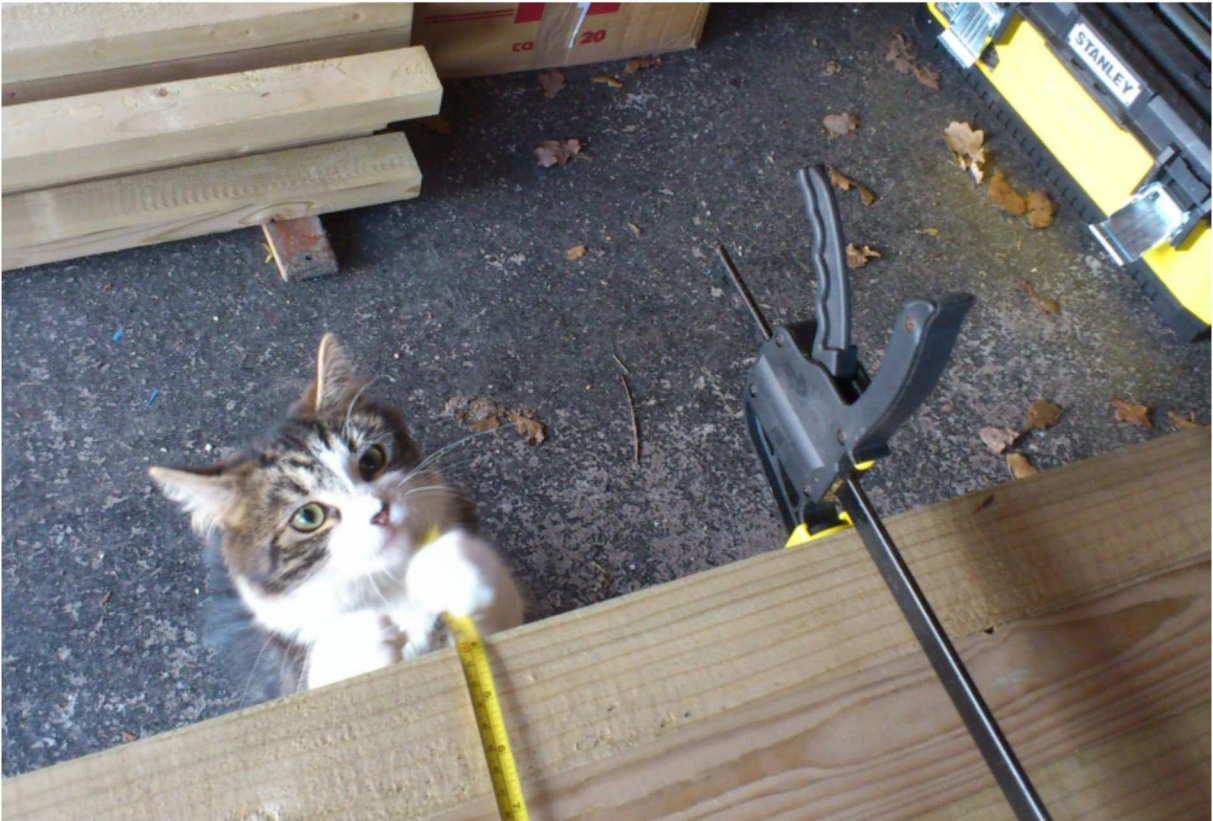
Hello again, it's Mij.

Well really! I don't know what to think of this! My ex-humans sent my new humans a couple of rather silly pictures of some unknown stranger playing "Spot the Cat" and then pretending to be clever by changing a light bulb. Of course I can do those things, no sweat. Here's me doing spot the cat...



Actually, I wasn't playing; this was serious work as I had to check that there were no bats or birds' nests up in the garage roof. So I explored all around the roof, and fortunately I can say that it was all clear – no problems – although it did take me quite a long time and it wasn't always easy. One time I fell off the ladder; that's a silly red ladder you can't quite see in the picture. Well, the rungs were round and smooth and I lost my footing. I tried to make it look like an elegant twirl and back-flip dismount, but it didn't really work and my human thought it was very funny. He was annoyed that he missed the photo opportunity (thank goodness; I was so embarrassed!)

I did get my own back though. I strolled to and fro amongst the beams pretending I was going to jump on my human's head. He was trying to work but he couldn't concentrate and so he made me come down to the floor. Actually that was no bad thing because he clearly needed help with the woodwork that he was doing. I told you about the clever-clogs cat pretending to change a light bulb. Cats changing light bulbs? Hah! Just look at this...



That unknown cat was only an electrician; I'm Mij and I'm a carpenter! Not sure why but my human wasn't awfully impressed. Every time he went to use the tape rule I went to help, and then suddenly he grabbed hold of me and muttering something like "now I've got your measure" he marched me back to the house and shut me in.

Some humans simply don't appreciate being owned by such a helpful cat! Anyway, there was nothing for it but to grab something to eat and then find a nice comfy place to go to sleep...

Good night!

*20th April 2013*

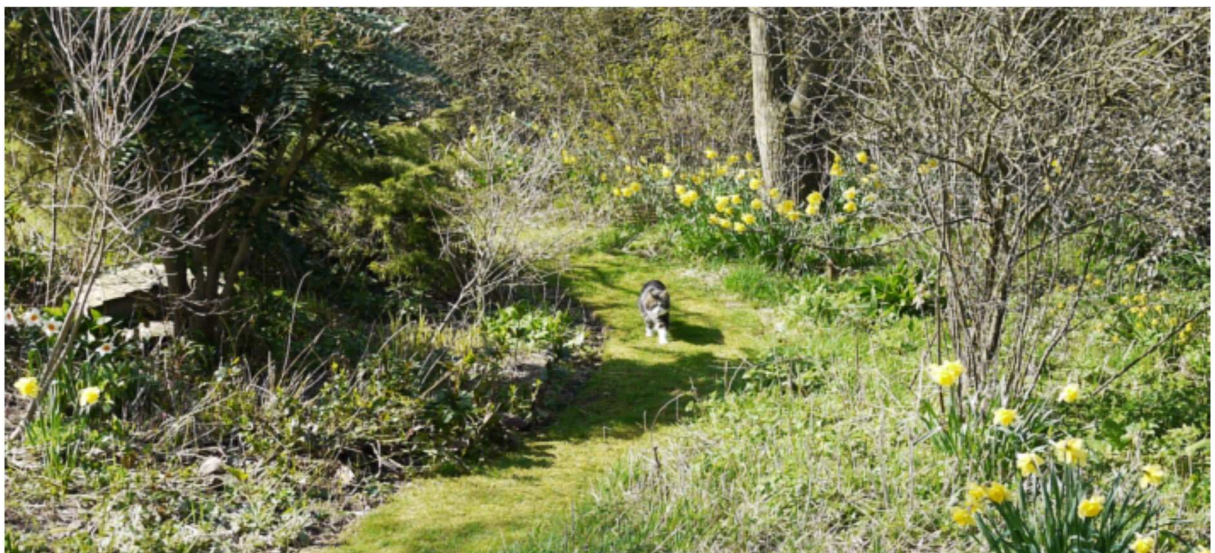
Hello...again!

Sorry that this is so soon after my previous notes, but I had to tell you about my exciting day in my garden. And all the photos are really me; no imposters, it's me, the one and only, the omijinal!

It has been a lovely sunny day here in my garden so I wanted to get out, but I felt I should wait until my human was ready because he's a bit slow and he does need my help. First I had to check the equipment...



... and then I had to do a quick tour of my domain...



Well, as you can see, there is a lot of work to be done here. I'll get to it, when I have time, although I admit I might have to ask for a little help from my human. Not today because I have another important task and that is to practice my tree-climbing skills.

Naturally it is sensible to begin with a small tree...



This was fun, especially when my human wanted to take an action photo of me. No chance, I thought; he has this fancy camera thing, but it's still not fast enough to catch me...

***GOING...***



***GOING...***

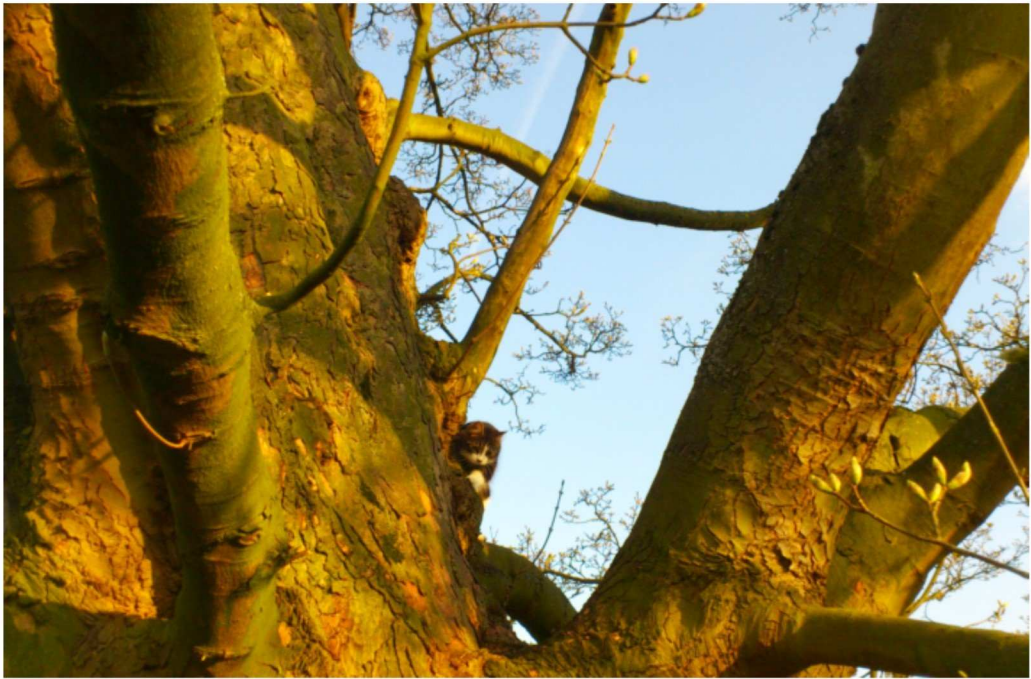


***GONE!***

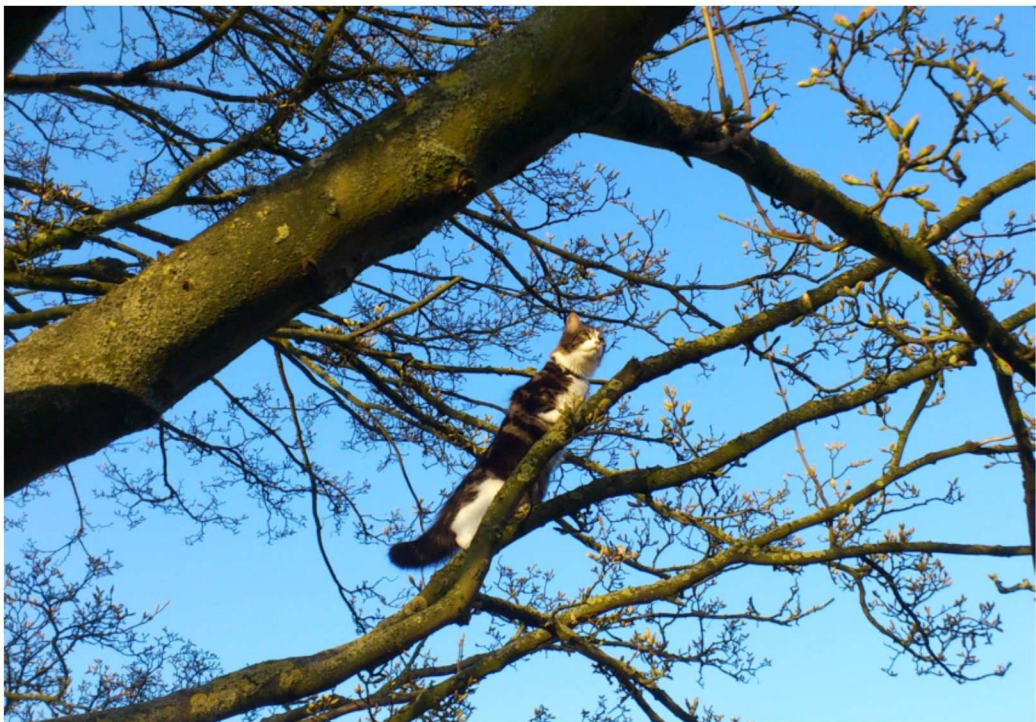


Hah! Missed me! I knew I was too quick for him.

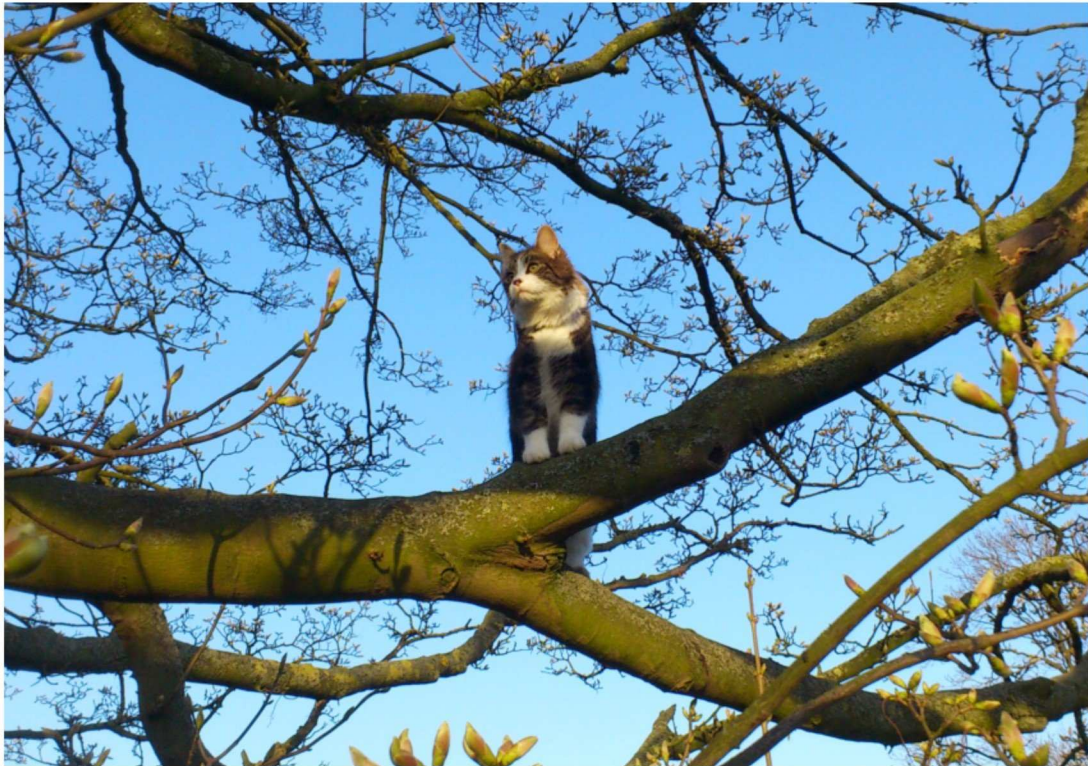
Anyway, that little tree was kitten's-play; and I'm nearly grown up so I was ready to tackle a proper tree. I could be playing "Spot the Cat" again, because this is a seriously big proper tree...



Wow! Miaow-wow! How brave am I? At first I was more comfortable staying close to the trunk, but then I thought, I'm no scaredy-cat, and I set off... onwards and upwards!



Well, that was quite an adventure. I can tell you, I was very pleased with myself. In fact, it's worth another picture...



It's good to be a cat when you can survey your domain like this. My humans didn't seem to think so much of it; made some snide comment about Lord High and Mighty. The cheek of it! I'd like to see them standing on this branch.

Anyway, I will admit that I was glad to be back on the ground again after this adventure. (Oh, yes, my human missed his action shot again; he'll have to be a lot quicker to catch the Mij.)

Bye for now.

*23rd April 2013*

Hello Fans; Mij here.

No photographs today, but I just wanted to tell you quickly about how I dealt with a trespasser in my garden.

I was busy with my morning duties, helping my lady human go round the house opening up all the curtains. (Mostly she does this very well, but I do need to check that she doesn't miss any and that all the tie-backs are neat and tidy.) Anyway, we were attending to the curtains at the big windows in the lounge when we noticed the trespasser. He was trying to get at the food we put out on the lawn for the birds. I don't know what he was; funny little grey rat-like thing with a big bushy tail, much like mine but not nearly as elegant. Well, as you might expect, I was getting quite agitated because he should not have been in my garden. As soon as my human opened the door I was off like an Exocet missile, and with the same purpose – lock-on and destroy! Unfortunately the rat-thing saw me coming and he took off at a great rate. He was much smaller than me (so no worries there) and he was fast, but I was gaining on him until he did something surprising; he was heading for my big tree, but instead of running round it as I had expected, he went straight up it, like a rat up a drain-pipe you might say. Now as you know, I'm good at climbing trees but this rat-thing was amazing, it was as if he was born in the trees. I got to a good height but I still lost him; so I waited for a time at the bottom of the tree for him to come down. I've no idea where he went and I needed to go back indoors for my breakfast, but I'll be looking out for the little trespasser in my garden in future...

Bye-bye, and au-revoir-miaow for now.

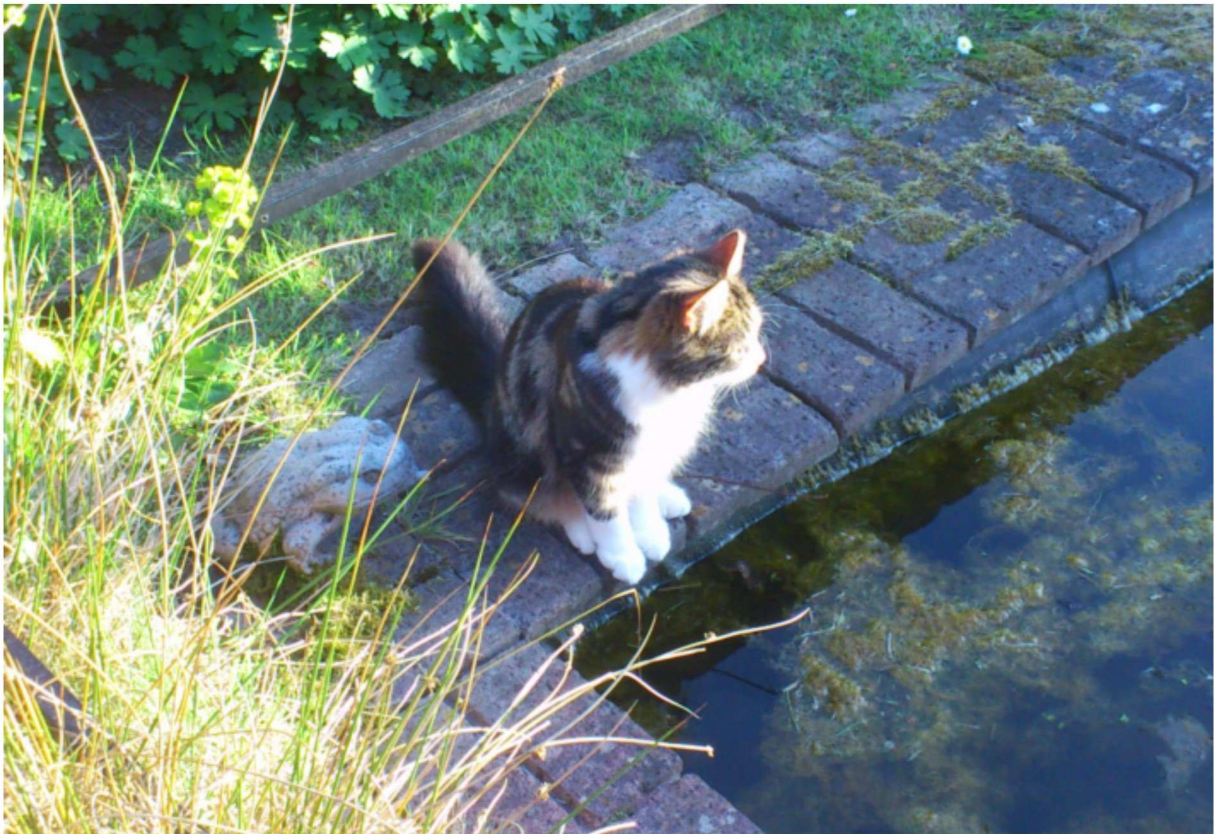
*27th April 2013*

Hello again, it's Mij.

Time to tell you how I'm developing my hunting skills. This morning I surprised my humans by bringing into the house a small mouse-thing; a shrew, I think it was. (I say "was" because it isn't any more!) I thought that my humans would be pleased, but they didn't really seem to be; they just said something like "poor little thing", which was nice until I realised that they weren't talking about me. Anyway, they stopped me from playing with the remains, which was quite mean because I was only trying to help them by keeping strange creatures out of my garden. Can you imagine, they even try to stop me catching those big buzzy bumble bees in my garden and the fierce little wasps that sometimes come into my house.

And then last night I was very brave. My humans were sitting watching some silly stuff on the TV when I saw a nasty white rat-thing on the sofa between them. So, of course, I jumped up and grabbed it, and I bit it, and I shook it, but its tail kept

flicking in my eyes and it made me quite cross. I must admit that I'm not sure what happened then; I think some primal instinct overcame me because my ears went flat and I shook the white rat-thing some more and rushed off with it through the kitchen and into the study. And then I rushed back again; I wanted to take the rat-thing into the garden but the doors were shut, so I just ran to and fro shaking it. I don't understand my humans at all; they should have been frightened but they just laughed at me! I won't bother to help them next time I see a fierce creature in the house... *[Editor's note: The white rat-thing was actually a cylindrical pack of cotton wool pads, with a draw-string closure, which Mij seemed to think was its tail.]*



Did I tell you about the time I went hunting around the garden pond? Well, I was doing my rounds, as usual, when I noticed something moving in the pond. It looked like some kind of fish-thing, but it had legs and a long, thin tail. A fish with legs? Very strange! It went and hid under this pile of weeds, and I needed to get closer, so I quickly jumped onto the weeds. Oh! Oh! Then it was me who was surprised because my legs went through the weeds and I began to sink up to my tummy. I didn't like it

one bit; I was so embarrassed! I scrambled out of the pond even quicker than I had jumped in, and then I had to shake myself dry and clean myself up before anyone noticed what I had done. What a silly cat I am! But I had to pretend that it was exactly what I had meant to do in case anyone had been watching me. I still see these fish-with-legs in the pond, but now I just sit and watch them, sometimes patting the water with my paw to remind them that I'm dangerous. *[Editor's note: readers have probably worked out that Mij's "fish-with-legs" are newts.]*

That's all for now, but I will be back when I have more adventures to tell you about.

*30th April 2013*

Hello, it's Mij again.

If you like, you can play Spot-the-Cat with this photograph... but I'm not easy to see, and not where you would expect a cat to be.

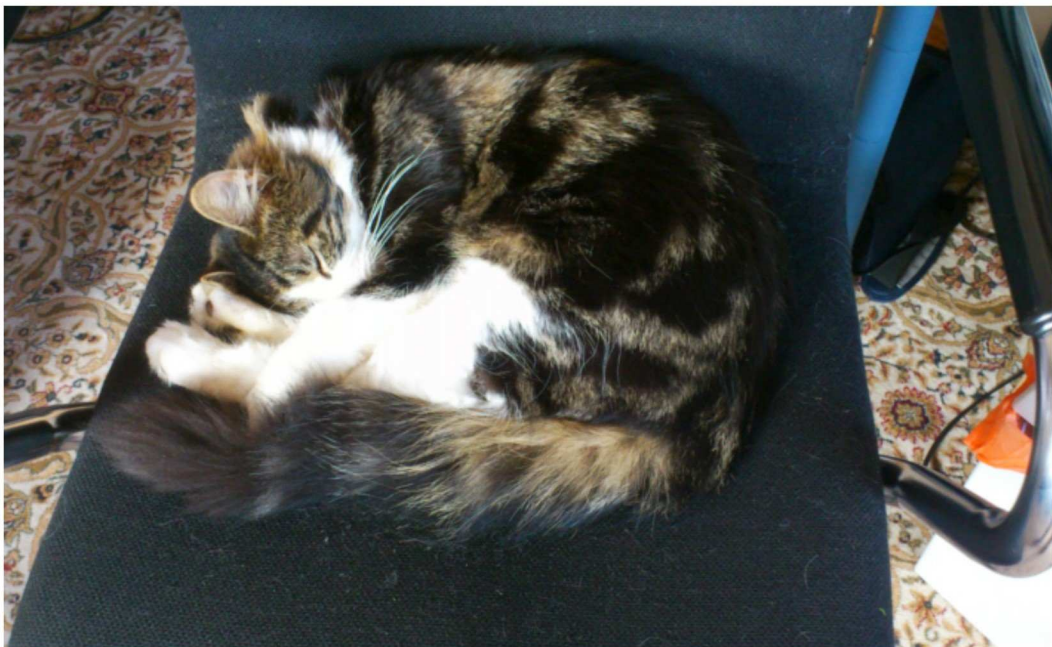


Well, did you see me? Did you manage to spot me in that tall tree? Here I am in close-up... a bit fuzzy, but at least you can see that it is me and not some imposter-cat.

I've been outdoors again practising my tree climbing skills. I'm not going to admit that I was trying to catch birds, although there were several in the tree when I began to climb it. I didn't manage to catch any birds and I did get down safely, although I think that my humans were a bit concerned.



And speaking of humans, I have to tell you that they've been mean to me again. You know that I don't like telling tales, (nobody likes tale-tellers, or whistle-blowers as I believe they are now called, as if that makes it all right!) but really this was too bad. I brought in another trophy this morning – a big fat shrew that I found trespassing in my garden – and I was playing with it on the kitchen floor when my human came in and took it away from me. I thought he would be pleased with me, but he said something about blood on the floor, and unhygienic (whatever that means), and cruel to wildlife, and he definitely wasn't pleased. It's so unfair!



Oh yes, my human is mean to me about my chair too! He's really quite naughty about it, racing me into the study and trying to sit in my chair before I do.

As you can see, this chair is obviously made for a cat, not for a human. But often when I'm relaxing and comfortable like this he will come in and tell me to get off his chair. His chair? It's my chair; and so naturally I ignore him and pretend that I'm fast asleep. He's so mean to me because he spins the chair round and round and it reminds me of the Mijic Roundabout, and then he tips me onto the floor. Somebody should tell him that that's no way to treat a cat, especially one as handsome as me!



I must say, I do like this picture of me. Am I an aristocat? Or a sophisticat? Certainly a very superior cat as I gaze out proudly over my new domain!

*6th May 2013*

Hello, it's Mij.

Firstly, some very sad news; my friend the pheasant is dead. My humans called this pheasant "His Lordship" because he always looked so important strutting around the place. The first time I saw him I thought he was a trespasser and I chased him out of my garden, but after that we just accepted each other and I left him alone whenever he came visiting with his two or three wives. I don't know how my friend died but I will miss him.

Now, on to happier things. As you know, I like to check the garage roof whenever I can to make sure that there are no trespassers up there. Here I am above the up-and-over door...



Well, the other day when the door was fully open I was sitting on it, just minding my own business, as one does. Suddenly my human, who didn't know I was there, closed the door. I don't know which of us was more surprised... I skidded down the sloping door and almost knocked him over as I jumped off! I suppose that anyone watching might have thought it was funny, but I can tell you we were not amused. My human seemed to think it was my fault, but he really should check that there are no cats around before he closes these doors.

This morning I had another embarrassing mishap. Often I sit beside my pond watching for the fish-with-legs, and I was there today when my human came by. I could see that he was in one of his silly moods and wanted to play, so I decided to humour him a little...



He was wagging a thin stick around and I was pretending to chase it. Then he waggled it above my head and... well... I sort of forgot where I was. I performed this spectacular jump and back flip, piked with half-twist, and splash!!! And there I was in the water right up to my oxters. But not for long; those fish-with-legs might bite and I was taking no chances. I was very wet, and very embarrassed. I have to say that my human was really quite nice about it, sympathetic almost, but I still have a suspicion that he was trying not to laugh. Fortunately it was a nice warm sunny day and I soon dried off.

Then it was back to business and my normal afternoon routine of checking my garden for trespassers. This time I was inspecting my big tree. (I must tell my human that he needs to be more careful with my photographs; this one makes me look like a Manx cat – not flattering at all!)



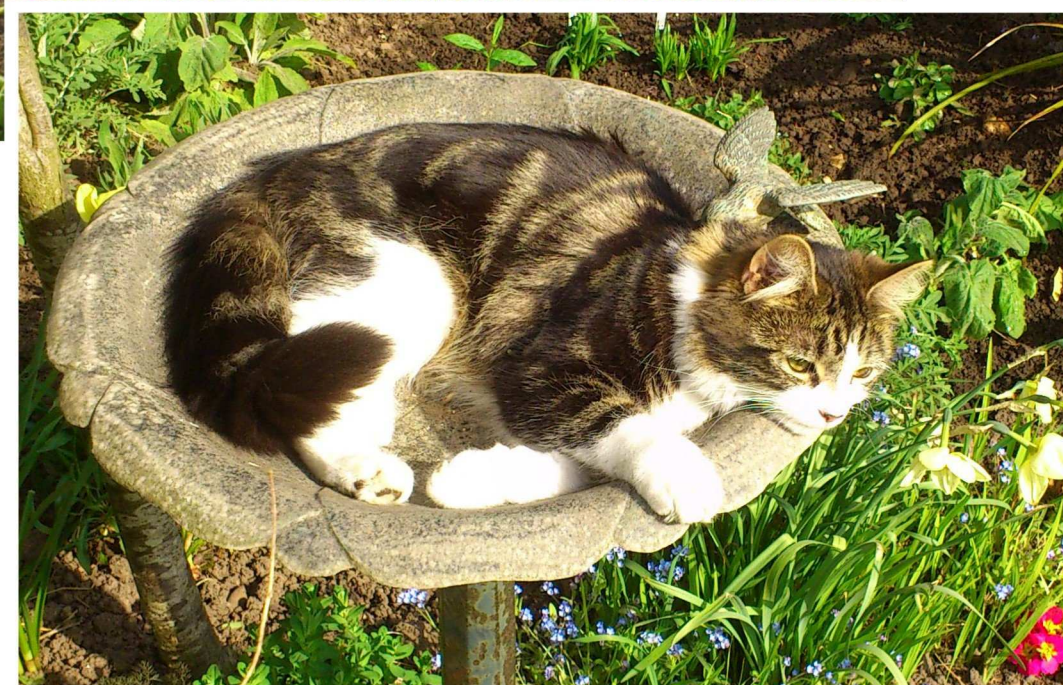
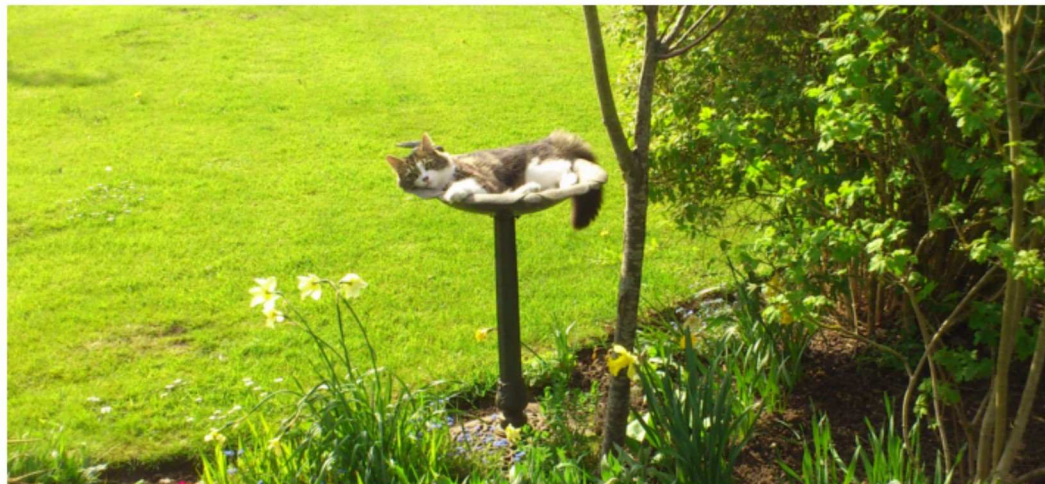
Anyway, today I ran into a spot of bother. There were these two or three strange birds... I don't know what they thought they were playing at but they set up a huge chattering racket and they kept dive-bombing me! There was so much noise that my human even came to see what was going on. Well, I must admit I didn't like it much because the birds were quite close when they zoomed at me. Cheek! It was as if the birds didn't want me climbing my tree! And discretion being the better part of valour, I made a hasty exit...

That's it for today; bye-bye everyone.

*7th May 2013*

Hello fans!

This has now become one of my favourite places to relax while I'm supervising my human at work in my garden...



I have heard him say that this place should be filled with water for the little birds. Just let him try it! I would be very cross indeed...

*13th May 2013*

Hello Everyone,

As you know, I am quite careful about security around my house so I'm always on the lookout for trespassers. This is one of my favourite places to sit when I'm doing security duty.



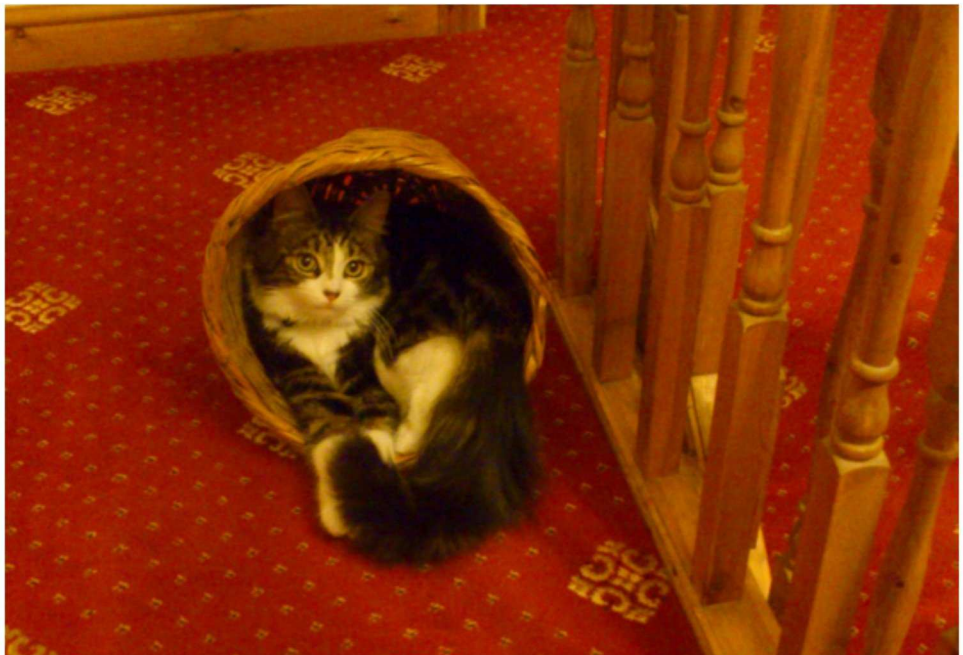
I can really keep an eye on who's coming and going so that I can tell my humans if I see anyone who shouldn't be in my neighbourhood. This is very important on Mondays and Tuesdays because these are the days when the refuse and re-cycle lorries come. The humans who come with them might be friendly, but to be sure I would need to ask the cats who own them and so I cannot take any chances.

An essential job for my human on a Monday evening is to empty all the waste bins and baskets around my house, and if I'm not too tired I follow him to make sure that he does it properly. I need to look inside the bins and baskets to check that they are empty. Of course, I don't want to upset my human so I try to be very discreet about it, although sometimes I think I leave a bit of a clue as to what I am doing...



Oops – how very careless of me – I’m not quite as invisible as I had thought!

But actually I am coming to think that this waste basket could be quite a comfortable place to take a nap, if my humans would let me.



Well, that's it for now. There's not much to report from my garden because the weather has been wet and windy for several days and, as all of you with long hair will understand, outside is no place for a cat to be when it's wet and windy!

Bye-bye.

*21st May 2013*

Hello from Mij, once again.

I think I'm getting on quite well with the people next door, despite the fact that they're humans. They are friendly and they don't seem to mind too much that what they think is their garden has now become my territory. There is a sign on their gate that says PRIVATE, but that means nothing to me; for a cat is a free spirit and knows no boundaries! I go where I please, but at first I tried to be discreet, and cautious, blending into the undergrowth. Oh-oh, I've been seen...



I do like to spend time here, on my own, doing my own thing. When I'm sure no-one is watching me I chase the ducks and the moorhens that live amongst the big rushes on the pond. And sometimes there are chickens around here too, but I ignore them because they are silly, boring creatures. The ducks aren't much fun either, but the moorhens... well, they are quick, and fierce, but maybe I will catch one someday. Of course, they always make a dash for the water, and that's not fair; I do hate getting wet and I have to be very careful not to fall in. But there are plenty of other things to do, or not do, around here.



This is so peaceful; I love it here. Just to sit and contemplate, and plan what I'm going to do next...

Maybe I can practise my climbing skills so that I can show off without too much risk of falling and embarrassing myself...



And there is plenty of open space to wander, and feel free... but I do wish you humans wouldn't keep watching me!

23rd May 2013

Hello, it's me - Mij.

I really must complain about my humans; I'm very cross with them because they just do not understand the needs of a cat! I might be forced to move next door where my new human friends are nice to me. You see, I keep catching little trespassers in my garden, and my humans keep making me let them go! Yesterday I found a mouse-thing in my garden [*editor's note – it was actually a vole*] but when I took it to show my human he was quite cross and he chased me. I didn't want my human to hurt himself so, after a while, I let him catch me, but then he tried to make me let go of the wriggling mouse-thing. Of course I was very angry and I growled loudly and I squirmed and I tried to scratch, but my human held me tightly and he even used his finger and thumb to force my mouth open so that I dropped the mouse-thing. It ran off under the shed and I lost it. I found a good place to watch in case it came out again...



... but it didn't, so I had to go off and find another one. And would you believe it, when I showed this second mouse-thing to my human he used the sneaky finger-and-thumb trick again to make me let it go, and then he shut me indoors, to cool off, he said!

Next time I was outside I was still cross and so I ignored my human and went next

door to see if I could help there. I checked the big tent that they have put up for a party in their garden; I went carefully all around the inside of it but I could not find anything wrong. So then I examined the inside of their garage to check that there were no trespassers lurking. The next-door human had been working and he was just shutting the garage door when he dropped a blue duster. It drifted away on the wind but quick as lightning I pounced on it and shook it and carried it off. Another trophy! The next-door human was quite surprised that I had run away with his blue duster, but I needed to show it to my own humans so I took it home.

I do like to find high vantage points in my garden so that I can see what's going on. The shed roof is one place; and then there's my climbing frame in the vegetable garden...



... although I have to be careful not to get tangled up in the prickly roses. From here I can keep an eye on my human to check that he is working properly, although I must say that he doesn't seem to be growing anything that would taste nice. Sometimes he disappears and I suspect that he is hiding in the shed, so in case he needs waking up I go and tap on the window, like this...



Anyway, mostly he does what he should around the garden, with my help of course, and in the summer it might be quite pretty, in a human sort of way.

That's it for today.

*1st June 2013*

Hello Everyone, it's Mij again.

We had a funny little visitor to my house recently – a baby human, I think it was. It had a head, and arms and legs, just like a human, but it was about the same size as me; and it made these strange squeaky noises when it wanted to be fed. My lady human seemed to like unwrapping the baby human, and then wrapping it up again. It was all very odd... and I just watched...



This week has been nice and warm and sunny, so I spent a lot of time in my garden. Sometimes I helped my human with his work. Yesterday he was putting some plants in the ground, and because this is quite difficult I needed to keep a close watch to make sure that he did it right. The first thing is to dig a hole, and then select the plant to go in it, like this...



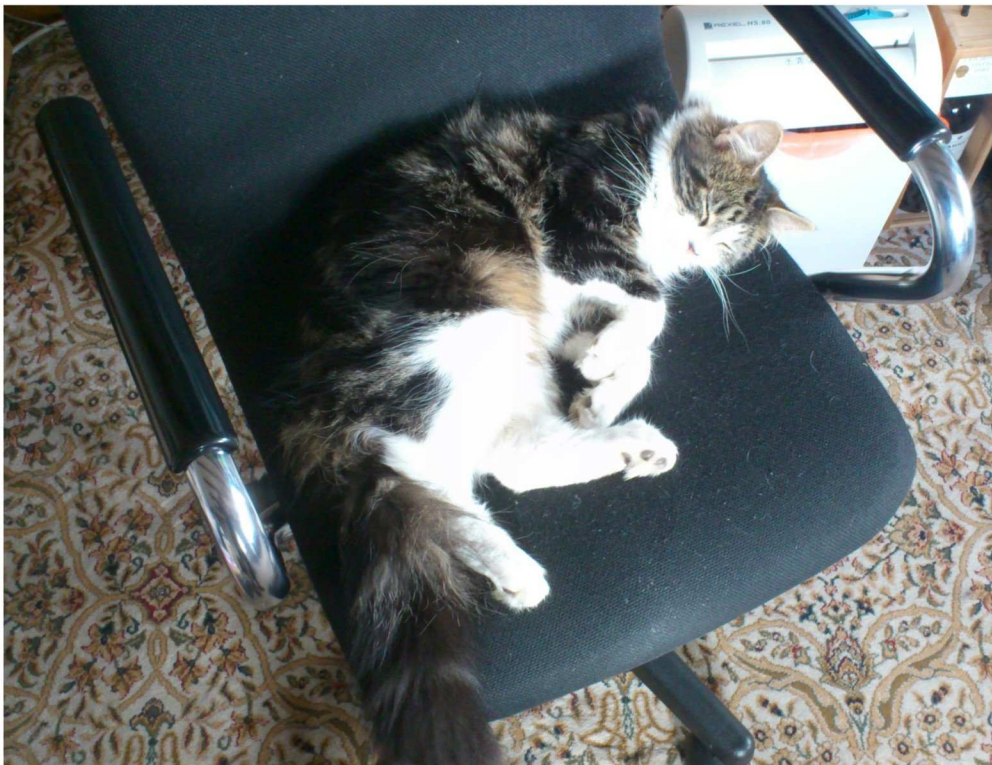
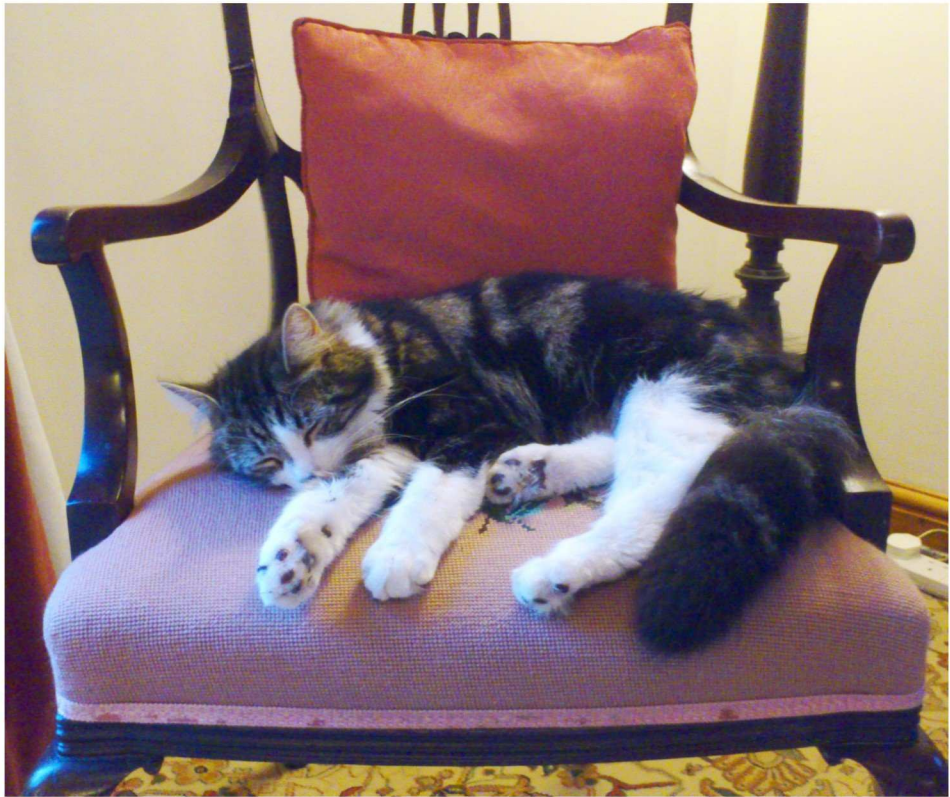
Of course, it is really important that the hole is big enough, so I helped my human by trying it for size...

Well, I'm pleased to say that it was just fine, and we planted the hollyhock that I had selected. And so, with me continuing to supervise, we finished the job and all the plants were planted!

This gardening business is really tiring, so I needed to go into my house for a nap. It's getting to be a problem deciding which of my chairs is the most comfortable. If my

humans are watching their television I really need to be with them and so I often settle down in this chair...

Ahhh! That's nice; and while we're on the subject of places to snooze, perhaps I could show you a few other good spots?



I think that my favourite chair in the whole house is still this one...

... at least, it was my favourite until now. My humans have very kindly bought me a new chair. It is in the study, and sometimes my lady human seems to think it is her chair, which is really very annoying because it is comfortable, as you can see.



I hope you can all understand that I have quite a difficult time here; often my two humans are sitting in both of my favourite chairs at the same time and I have to sleep on the floor. (They still don't really seem to understand the pecking order here.) Or I suppose I could go back into my garden and relax there...

... but I cannot even relax in this chair any more because it is now full of water. It is so unfair. Oh well, I suppose life could have been worse; I might have been born a dog!

*17th June 2013.*

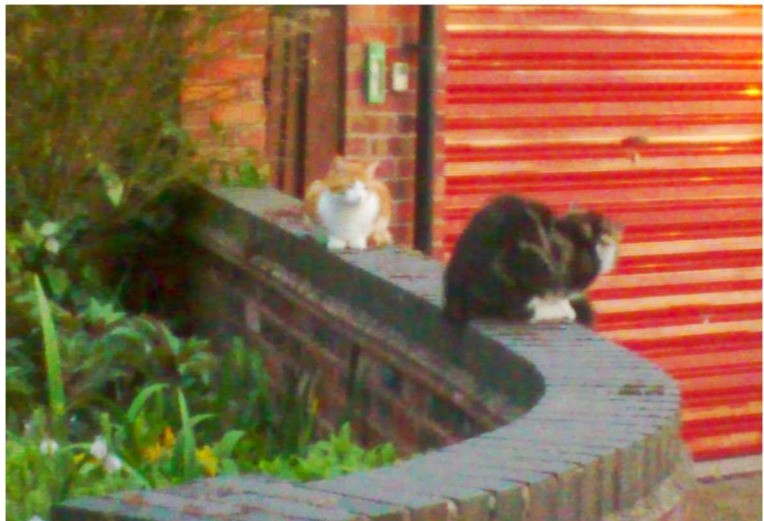
Hello, it's a cross Mij again.

I'm cross with my humans, and with myself for getting caught! You see, I try to be very discreet when it comes to my friendships with other cats, but last night I was spotted.



Fortunately it was quite dark and so the photographs that my sneaky human tried to take are not good. Anyway, this is my little ginger-and-white friend. (No-one has ever seen me with my black friend, so please don't tell.)

My humans don't know this, of course, but I meet these two friends quite regularly, usually in the evenings when the sneaky photographers are safely indoors. I'm not sure where my friends live, but I think it is on a farm away across the fields. Perhaps I shall be able to go and visit them one day.



24th June 2013.

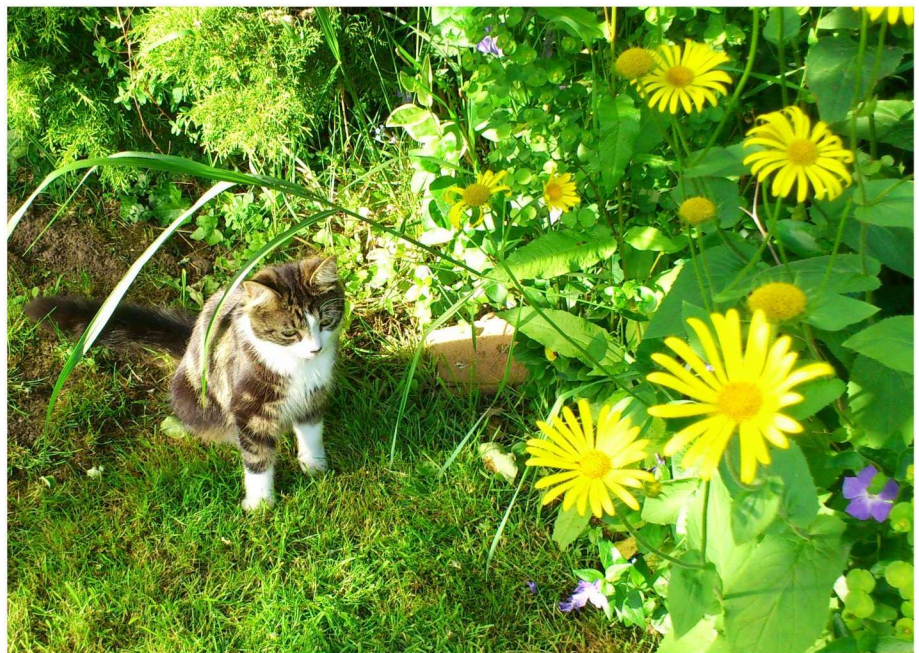
It's me again, already, with some more photographs.



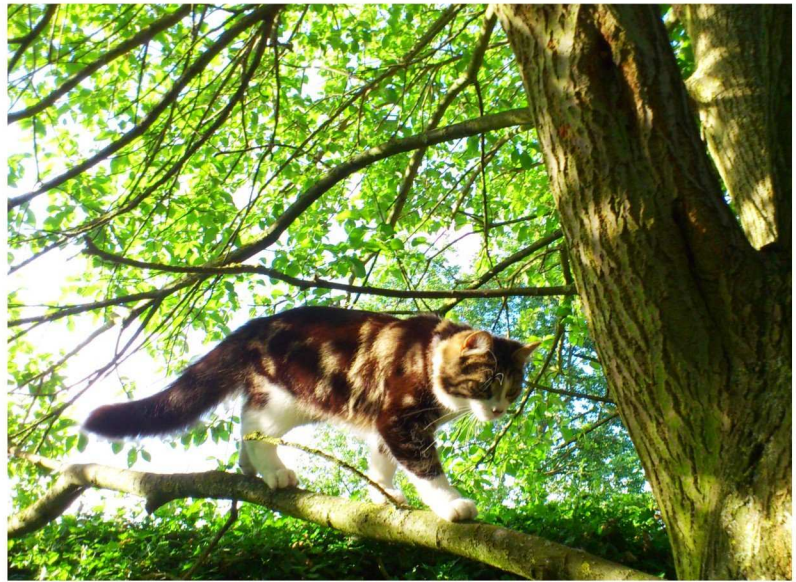
Here I am in my garden, inspecting my plants and making sure that this bee is not doing any damage. *Aquilegia vulgaris* "Pink Barlow" this flower is called. Hah! I bet you didn't think a cat would know that, but it is one of my favourites and I really like resting in this spot.

And here's another photo of me in my garden. I must say that my human has worked quite hard, and my garden is just beginning to look nice.

I do like climbing my trees, and there are lots of them in my gardens. Of course I am very careful not to fall



and embarrass myself, but I have been known to make a slight error of judgement. One time I slipped when my human was watching. I was hanging on by two paws and I could see that he was thinking about rushing to catch me... but I hit the ground before he could move! Humans are so slow, but I didn't really hurt myself, although I admit I was a bit shaken up.



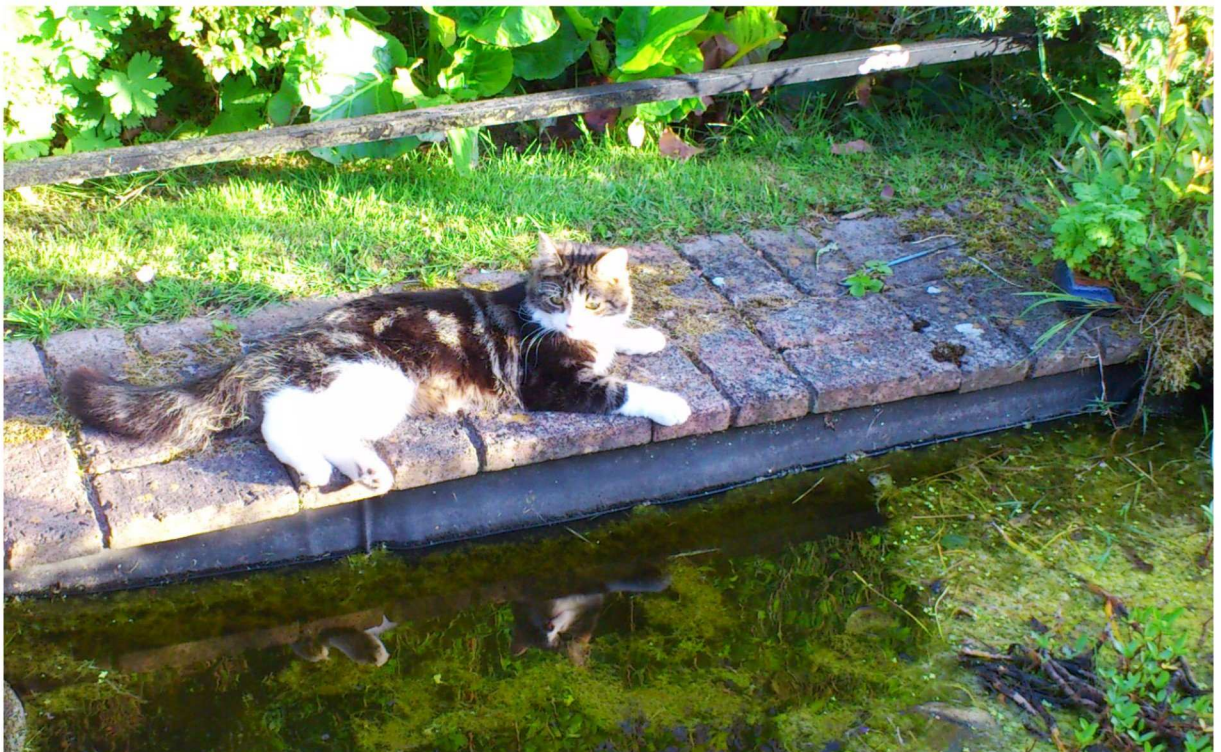
I've told you before that home security is important to me, and one of the best places for me to be on the lookout for trespassers is on the front gatepost. Nobody can sneak past me without being seen, and I could (if I wanted to) rush in and tell my humans that there are strangers around.





Sometimes it's better that I mount a covert security operation, and I'm good at that too, as you can see. On the ground or up amongst the branches, it makes no difference to an agile cat like me. Tresspassers of all sizes, beware; Mij is watching you!

And at the end of the day, when a busy cat's tasks are completed, there is no better place to relax than beside my pool...



*12th July 2013.*

Hello, Mij here with the latest bulletin.

Sometimes (not very often, fortunately) humans can be really really sneaky; and I do mean sneaky with a capital “S”. I was patrolling my large garden – you know, the one that the neighbour-humans like to think is theirs – when I noticed this small box-thing that hadn’t been there the last time I checked. Obviously I had to take a closer look, but it didn’t seem important so I carried on with my work...



Little did I know that the box-thing was a spy-camera! The neighbour-human had set it up to spy on the local wildlife; it’s quite clever, I suppose, taking photographs automatically when a creature comes within range, and I had walked straight into the trap. Well, a cat has to learn by his mistakes and I won’t be caught like that again; and I’ll tell my friends to stay away from any suspicious-looking little boxes in this part of my garden.

21st July 2013.

Hello, it's a very humble Mij today to tell you a secret...

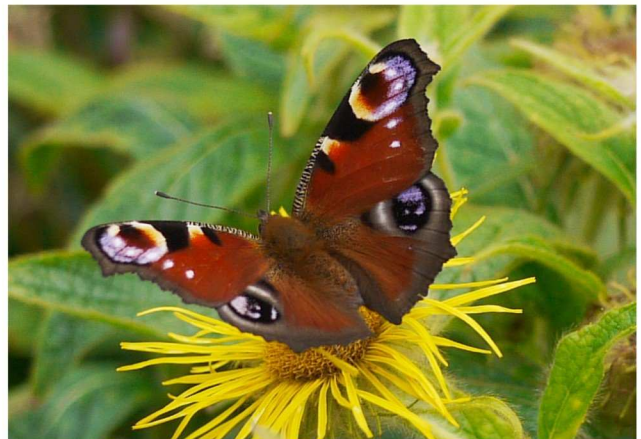
My humans have been away on holiday for a few days. It's another of those strange things that humans do. Every cat knows that it's much better to stay at home and so I persuaded my humans to leave me behind while they went off to some other place. But they did insist on arranging for a special human, called a "cat-sitter", to call in regularly to feed me and check that I was well. I must say that my cat-sitter was very nice and so I was on my best behaviour and did what I could to make her feel wanted. And the secret? Well, I shouldn't really tell you this because I am a very modest cat, but this is what she wrote about me – *"Mij has been fine; he was in when I arrived and came out with me while I watered the plants. He then came in and had his tea and fuss; Mij just loves being picked up and playing with my feet!! He is an adorable boy and I could spend hours with him."* And I overheard her telling my humans that I left her little furry presents every day. Why do humans think these are "presents"? It's just that I need somewhere safe and secure to play with my trophies so I bring them home; and then I get bored and leave them lying around. Oh well; if it pleases them to think that I'm bringing them presents, I suppose it's OK with me.

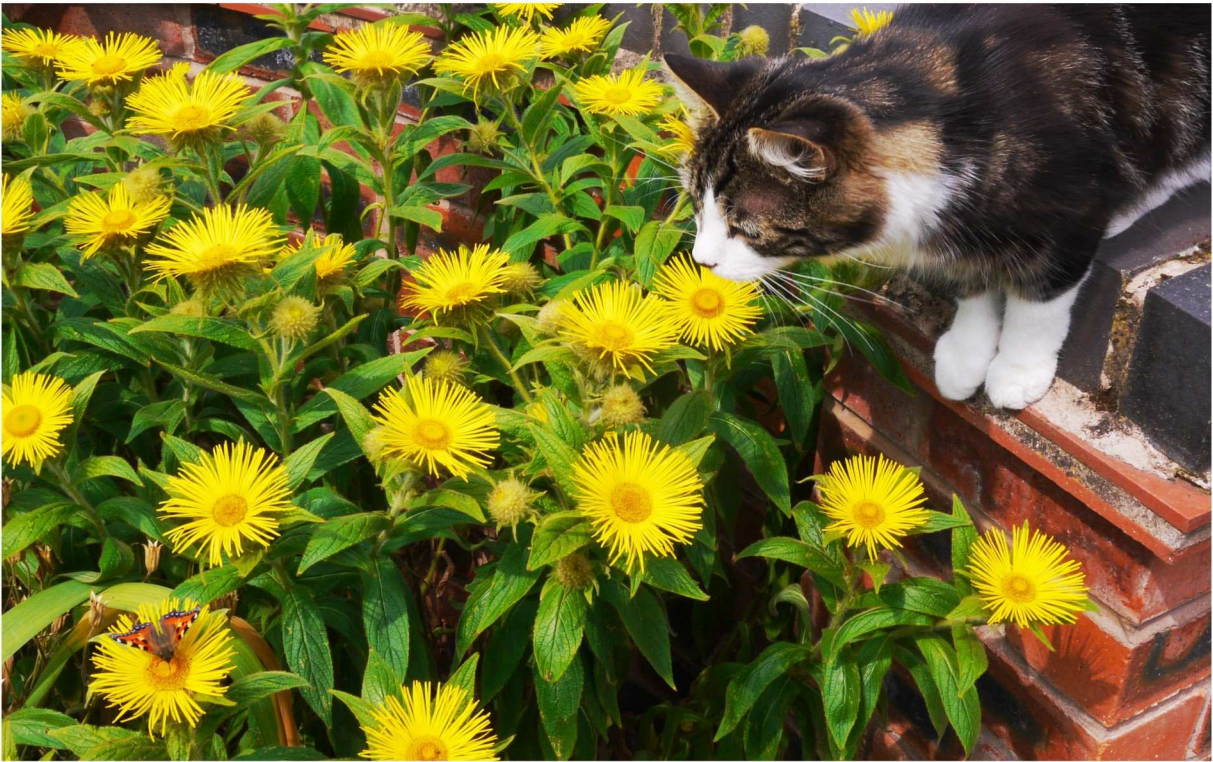
22nd July 2013.

Hello everyone, it's butterfly time!

I do like to see the butterflies in my garden. There lots of them now, all different colours, and they flutter just out of reach. Of course I chase them, and jump, and try to grab them, but I keep missing – it's very frustrating. I hear my humans calling the butterflies by funny names; peacock, comma, large white, small tortoiseshell, orange tip, red admiral, and more. I don't understand it; they are only coloured butterflies.

Of course I shall keep on stalking the butterflies. I am getting better at it and one day I shall catch one, like this...





Yes, I know that I'm stalking a small tortoiseshell, not a peacock; but one day I shall catch it, you'll see!

*30th July 2013.*

Hello, it's Mij again; and in trouble again!

Yesterday I really upset my humans, and the neighbour-humans next door, because I was very clever and caught a baby moorhen beside the neighbour-humans' pond. Have you ever seen the feet on those moorhens? Tiny little wings and the most enormous feet! Anyway, as I've said before, my humans like to think I'm bringing them presents (even though they pretend to be cross) and so I carried the moorhen chick home. Well, sure enough my humans were not pleased; they chased me off and put the little moorhen in a box. It was all limp and floppy, pretending to be dead, but as soon as it was sure I was not around it lifted its head and tried to sit up. For some reason my humans then became quite excited and they took the chick to a bird-expert-human who, apparently, helped it to make a full recovery. So I shall be on the lookout in case this little moorhen returns to trespass on my domain.

*1st August 2013.*

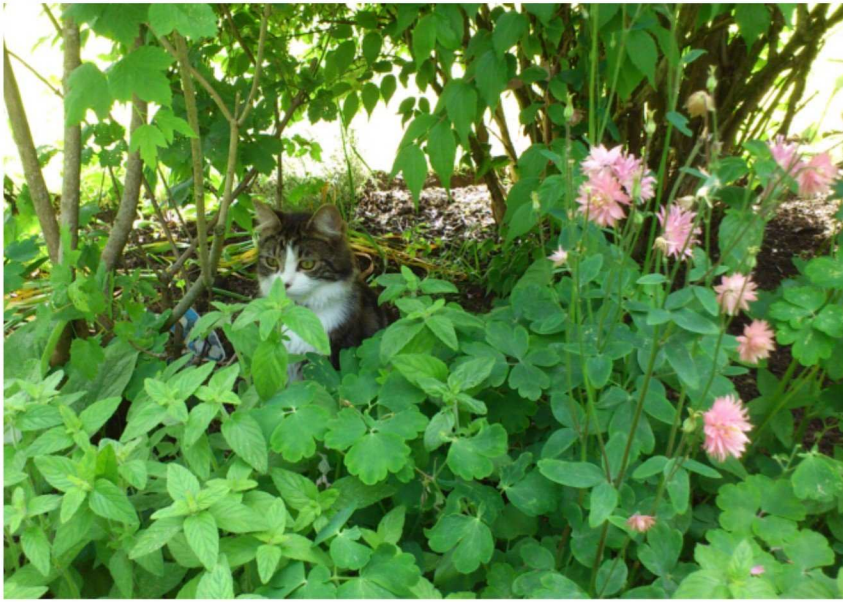
Hello, Mij here.

I've told you about some of my hiding places; not all of them, of course, because I must keep some secrets! Unfortunately my human accidently discovered one of my best hiding places when he came out into the garden and surprised me. I kept very still, but he saw me. I'm not sure how because obviously a bird-table is the last place any human would expect a cat to be.

This might surprise you but it's quite comfortable here, and if it happened to be raining I should not get too wet. (I really, really do not like getting wet!) And this is a good lookout place from which to keep an eye on my humans. Unfortunately the bird-table is not designed for



cats as I found out when I rolled over, stretched luxuriously, and unbalanced the stupid contraption! My human was standing nearby and he caught the bird-table so it didn't fall on top of me, but I landed in a most undignified heap on the grass. I'm not going to try relaxing there again...



More often I hide in the undergrowth, amongst the plants, because then I can keep a close watch for trespassers in my garden. Also I can make sure that my human is doing the gardening as he should. I can have some fun too; if I'm feeling a bit naughty I creep through the plants towards where my human is working, and then leap

out at him! I'm getting quite good at this game; he doesn't hear me coming and so I always make him jump. He then pretends to be cross with me, but I think really that he likes me to play with him in this way.

My garden is great for hiding in, but it's also great for playing and for relaxing. (Except when it's raining!) Usually, of course, I'm working — patrolling to make sure that there are no trespassers about, or just keeping a watchful eye on my human — but on a nice warm summer day I like to find a nice quiet corner to relax, snooze and peacefully contemplate on the ways of the world...



24th August 2013.

Hello, from a very embarrassed Mij.

Yes, that's right, I am feeling quite humbled because I did something rather silly. My humans think that I was chasing the moorhens again, but of course I'm not going to admit to that, am I? Anyway, the first they were aware of anything wrong was when they caught me slinking into my house looking like the proverbial drowned rat.



I do so HATE being wet! It is extremely undignified for any cat to be wet, especially one as sophisticated as me. I shake my legs and flick my tail but it doesn't seem to make any difference. My humans try to help by rubbing me down with a towel because they can see

how cross I am. I spend ages trying to lick the wetness off me and that seems to work eventually. I don't understand why those stupid moorhens and ducks like the water so much but I shall be very, very careful in future when I'm chasing them.



*27th August 2013.*

Hello from Mij, and hello from my friend Ruby.



As you might have guessed, Ruby is a dog; well, a baby dog really because she's even younger than me. I used to see a dog often when I lived at my previous home so I'm quite familiar with these silly creatures and their funny ways, and I'm not bothered about them at all. Look at me; do I look bothered?

Ruby is very friendly, but rather too bouncy

for my liking. She wants to play all the time and I am really too grown up and sophisticated for that. Naturally I don't try to run away; that would not be a wise thing for a cat to do. So I have developed my own form of dog-deterrent. I hide behind the gate post and say "BOO!"; and off she goes...!



Dogs can be very annoying, a bit like humans I suppose, and Ruby is no exception. She is my friend, but sometimes she is quite persistent, not really understanding that I would prefer to be left alone to get on with the serious business of patrolling my domain.



Even when I try to ignore her she insists on following me, determined to get me to play.



So it is necessary for me then to resort to the tactic that always works — I quickly turn around and say “BOO!”; and off she goes again...



*31st August 2013.*

Hello everyone,

Today I thought you might like to see a nice contrast in the Mij personality. First there is Mij the fearsome predator. You can see how I would strike terror into the hearts of any small furry trespassers who might venture into my domain.

And then there is Mij the cuddly pussy-cat (although I must tell you that I don't really approve of that term as it is quite demeaning). Be that as it may, I do like to relax with Granny-Human, sitting quietly in the evening together to watch something soppy on the TV.

These moments of relaxation for me are very important because with the daylight I shall revert to that fearsome predator...



*23rd September 2013.*

Hello to all my fans.

As you have seen from many photographs, I do like my boxes. So when a new box appeared in the hall at my home I assumed it was for me and settled down for a snooze. That's when my human came by and started being silly with a piece of string. I know he wanted me to play with him but I didn't feel in the mood, so eventually he gave up and went back to fiddling with his computer-thing; and I went back to sleep.



*[Editor's note: This is the last ever photograph of Mij. He seemed a little subdued at the time, not really wanting to play. Did he have some kind of feline premonition? Who can tell? But twenty-four hours later he was dead; struck down, we assume, by a speeding car while he was patrolling the lane near his home.]*





*Mij, our beautiful, friendly and oh-so-lovable young cat, is now enjoying his final rest in the garden that he had made his own. He lies in the shade of one of his favourite trees – a nice specimen of *Robinia ambigua* (as he would probably have known) – and not far from the massive sycamore amongst the branches of which he would so frequently demonstrate his climbing skills.*

*Rest in peace, Mij; you are greatly missed. You have left your paw-prints on our hearts and you will not be forgotten.*





