



Bad cattitude. Photo by Joseph Brown

Do you have cattitude?

By Ken Carter

Cats are known as stand-offish creatures but in fact they are communicating with us all the time, according to feline expert Jane Ehrlich.

Cat counsellor Jane lives in Arizona but maintains family contacts here in East Finchley. She visited the Black Gull Bookshop, High Road, on Thursday 9 September to talk about cattitude, sitting comfortably in a Windsor chair at the rear of the shop.

Jane specialises in cat behaviour problems. With an outgoing, welcoming manner she engaged with us directly, much as one might salute a fellow cat, enthusing her audience into discovering their own insights and exchanging their experiences of living with cats.

Jane said humans have a mix of attitudes towards cats, usually either ignoring them, treating them as toys or meeting them as sentient beings with their own legitimate concerns. Likewise, cats have attitudes

towards humans. Sometimes these attitudes coincide with what people expect from them; at other times, humans find cats' attitudes unexpected, even painful. People may then "misread" the cat.

Jane's supple guidance begins here. Cats' attitudes, she declared, are not unclear or enigmatic, though they may occasionally be complex, for instance being defensive through fear. We can understand cats well after learning to read their body language.

Reading the signs

She had a pile of photos and a few cartoon depictions ready, passing them round one at a time, asking us what cattitude we saw in the picture, and where. Are the pupils wide or dilated, are the ears perked up or flat, or swivelled in different directions? Are the whiskers lying flat, and how about the tail, the most eloquent communicator of all: up, down, straight or curled?

Jane helped us see more clearly what cats told us about themselves. We could understand better when they were alert, wary, relaxed, trusting, apprehensive, ready to scratch or ready to flee (not flea). Quite an evening. For more information, visit www.cattitude.vpweb.com.

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Find the cat at colourful new restaurant

By Diana Cormack

It is not only the menu that's attracting compliments in Mydonos Chargrill Meze Restaurant at 7 Fortis Green. After months of work put in by its joint partners, the premises has emerged as a smart modern dining establishment. But some of the new look is due to one of their friends who has painted a large part of the inside wall with a colourful representation of Istanbul.

Manager Medet Gozukara told *THE ARCHER* that, because he used to own the grocery store on the corner of High Road and Baronsmere Road, he knows many people in the area. One of these, a retired accountant who paints as a hobby, came to check on their progress and subsequently offered to do the mural. It is signed simply Jamal and, if you look closely, you should be able to spot his cat somewhere in the picture.

Mydonos is available for parties of up to 40 people and is open from 11am to 11pm Monday to Saturday and 11am to 10pm on Sundays. Reservation and telephone orders are welcome on: 020 8815 9777.

Walk in good company

The Finchley and Hornsey Group Ramblers Association has a programme of walks lined up for the autumn and early winter. October walks include a ramble along the London Loop from Cockfosters, a circular walk of Epping, a walk through several London parks from Warren Street, and a circular walk around Berkhamsted to celebrate 75 years of the Ramblers Association.

Later in November and December, walks will be based around Hampstead, Amersham, Chesham and Barnet. Newcomers are always welcome to come along for free and, if they enjoy the outings, are encouraged to join the association. For more information, contact Vivien Mallindine on 020 8883 8190.

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Road signs crowd the entrance to East Finchley Station. Photo by David Tupman

Call to cut the clutter

Many readers may be delighted to learn that government ministers Eric Pickles and Philip Hammond have written to council leaders calling on them to reduce the number of signs and other 'street clutter'.

They say that "we are being overrun by scruffy signs, bossy bollards, patchwork paving and railed-off roads - wasting taxpayers' money that could be better spent on fixing potholes or keeping council tax down."

They add: "We don't need all this clutter confusing motorists, obstructing pedestrians and hindering those with disabilities who are trying to navigate our streets. Common sense tells us uncluttered streets have a

fresher, freer, authentic feel, which are safer and easier to maintain."

East Finchley has its fair share of so-called "street furniture" and crowded signage, most notably the plethora of signs outside the tube station. Is it a waste of space or a necessary evil? Send your views to the council or us, at the-archer@lineone.net or The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA.

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