

My recent columns have been quite political so this week I thought I'd write about something completely different... the much maligned black cat population! This week saw the charity Cats Protection run National Black Cat Day to raise awareness of the growing problem of black cats being left to languish in rehoming centres, often the last to be adopted. Animal charities say that nearly three quarters of cats in care are black or mostly black with a touch of white.

Folk lore about our dark furry friends varies from culture to culture. As we celebrate Halloween in western communities the black cat is seen to bring evil omens, particularly when accompanied by a witch. Gamblers believe they should not head to a casino if a black cat crosses their path but in Japan or on a ship they are seen as bringing good luck. Superstition has therefore played a large part in the fortunes of the black cat community over many centuries.

However there has been a worrying increase in the number of black cats who are not being adopted or being given up for adoption. I personally don't understand why. My two black furballs are adorable (albeit slightly mad at times) but they were born in a cats home and stayed there until I came along and fell in love with them more than two years later.

The sad thing is that one reason being cited for this trend is our desire for posting pictures on social media of our pets and apparently black cats are less photogenic than other cats. I find this extraordinary. It is sad that pets have become social media accessories, when most black cats are loving, friendly animals.

I hate to think what would have happened to Mungo & Basil if I had not come along and taken them home with me. I hope that if anyone is thinking of adopting a cat they won't just walk past the darker felines. They are the ones who will probably need you most.