



Echo deputy editor Karen Steel undergoes a reiki treatment with Brenda Oakley-Carter. H0708-06-02 Picture by Ben Carmichael



Brenda with her cat Changers, in 2002, who first inspired her to give pets reiki. H02\_06\_179

# Brenda's helping hands

by Karen Steel

karen.steel@haverhillecho.com

DESPITE Richard Dawkins this week declaring war on complementary therapies, interest in them is greater than ever.

And one Haverhill woman has decided to combine her skills in the art of one of these therapies – reiki – with the British public's greatest love – pets.

Brenda Oakley-Carter, of Haverhill, first thought of practising on animals when her cat Changers developed a tumour in 2002.

Reiki, meaning 'universal life energy' was developed in the early 19th century by Dr Mikao Usui and is a hands-on healing technique, which involves channelling energy through the practitioner's hands to and from different parts of the patient's body.

Brenda had attended Rumwood centre in Horseheath to be 'given' her reiki skills, and was looking for a way to use

her new energy.

Changers had been taken to a regular and a homeopathic vet, and Brenda had been warned he would probably need to be put down after the weekend.

But she said when the cat sat on her lap that night, she suddenly thought of giving him reiki and he stayed for two hours.

When she took him to the vet on the Monday, they couldn't believe it was the same cat.

The pus from the tumour had gone, as had a sore on his leg, and Changers lived for another year before age finally got the better of him.

After that, animals seemed to find their way to Brenda's hands.

A client, Caroline Oakley, asked Brenda to look at her labrador after an operation.

Caroline said: "As the treatment proceeded Ellie just fell into this deep sleep and the noises that dog was making, I have never even heard to this day.

"She was sighing and snoring very heavily and if Brenda attempted to stop the treatment, Ellie would look up at her and

whimper and use her paws to push Brenda's hands into her body."

Brenda approached Carol Harris at Jaybeth about offering reiki to the animals at the Barnardiston animal sanctuary for free and performs regular treatments – with permission from a vet.

Reiki is often used in hospices and Brenda said while it's important to stress it is not proven to cure or reverse cancers, it can help provide a lot of relief from conditions.

She said: "It gives you time out, time for breathing space."

And she said when treating people with serious conditions: "Sometimes the energy almost pushes you away."

Brenda said: "I feel so passionately about reiki and the good it can do for both animals and people.

"I really hope the day comes soon when doctors and vets give out the name and number of a reiki practitioner along with prescriptions."

Brenda is setting up a website, [www.theresalwaysreiki.com](http://www.theresalwaysreiki.com) and can be contacted on

I HAD been looking forward to the reiki treatment, being someone who is open to all sorts of complementary therapies.

As someone who practises meditation and yoga, I understand the business of energy transfer and chakras, even if I find it difficult to excel at opening mine!

I decided I was going to have to force myself to relax and put myself, quite literally, in Brenda's hands.

As Brenda lightly placed her hands on my face, over my eyes I felt something akin to a small electric shock in my cheekbones.

One might expect it to feel intrusive having a stranger's hands over your eyes, but it wasn't.

The strange thing was while Brenda's hands were over my eyes it was as if a force was tugging my eyelids and making

me want to tip my head back.

From here, she placed her hands so my head was cradled resting in them and this was when I first really felt the energy.

The best description is a vibration in the back of my head – but not unpleasant or uncomfortable – almost like waves between my head and her hands.

As she worked I was amazed how much heat came from her hands.

In some parts I felt little but in others there was again the sense that energy was being drawn from my body and something else streaming from her hands.

When she finished, I felt like a different person having left all the stress I'd gone into the room with behind – hopefully, for her sake, not in Brenda's hands!



New arrival to Jaybeth, Spangles, was depressed before he came to the sanctuary but has received reiki. Sadly he is not available for re-homing.



Ellie, belongs to Caroline Oakley (no relation) of Wrating Road, Haverhill. Caroline said reiki helped Ellie recover from an operation.



Bootsie's hooves receive weekly blacksmith treatment, but his condition is improving, Brenda believes, due to regular reiki.



Lynne and Barry Gibbins, from Wisbech, said their boisterous Irish wolfhounds 'were calm and slept for many hours' following reiki.