

Meet the real star of Cannes: Midge the one-eyed cat from Yorkshire with a passion for sprinting

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In the village of Wrose, it's not unusual to see parish councilor Martin Humphreys racing back from the shop each day with his cat Midge.

But however fast he runs, the one-eyed rescue cat will never let him past.

Their battle for supremacy began after Midge, now 12, began following him to the shop and waiting outside on a wall. 'Sometimes she would run back,' said Mr. Humphreys.



Cat that'll give Disney a run for its money: Martin Humphreys and his pet Midge race to the shops

'One time I decided to run with her. I tried to overtake her and this most astonishing thing happened. She accelerated - and wouldn't let me beat her.

'We race most days. I don't want to give too much away but she does always beat me.'

Assuming it was a one-off, Mr. Humphreys tried again. And again. Now they race most days. 'She always beats me,' he said.

Their daily sprint might have simply passed into West Yorkshire legend.



Racing adventures: The film is about Martin Humphreys racing his 12-year-old one-eyed cat in the village of Wrose in Shipley



Down time: Mr. Humphreys says Midge is always trying to beat him

But Mr. Humphreys believed the story was something special.



Unlikely star: Midge in *The Great Race*, a film set to become a hit at the Cannes Film Festival despite being made on a budget of just £1,000

When he won £1,000 in a work contest, he turned Midge's story into a short film, wrote a soundtrack and asked a children's choir to sing.

Now, The Great Race will be screened at the Cannes Film Festival.

The parish councilor picked out Midge as a kitten from a rescue centre in Bradford.

He said: 'When I saw her, she still had both eyes but one was really badly damaged - no one at the shelter knew why but she had to have an operation to remove it.

'The thing is she has always been full of spirit and for some reason her disability has made her even more popular with the local children.'

Mr Humphreys is hoping for a Hollywood ending for Midge.

With Disney onboard, and perhaps 100m champion Usain Bolt, a full-length version 'could be one of the greatest children's films of all time', he said.



Run Midge, run: Mr. Humphreys said the racing started about five years ago when Midge followed him to the local shops



Fulfilling a dream: The parish councilor turned his experiences into a film after winning O2's Dreamcatcher competition



Mr. Humphreys is heading to Cannes tonight, but had to leave Midge behind
'I want Disney or Twentieth Century Fox to come and take a look at the film.

'Ideally, I would like them to come to Wrose and make a full-length feature film about her. I have in mind the outline of a children's adventure, in which Midge would face all sorts of challenges.

It would involve car chases, explosions, and a lot of fun. I also have an idea that in the end Midge would take on the Olympic 100m champion Usain Bolt while hundreds of kids cheered on.

'She would make a great heroine and I really think it could be one of the greatest children's films of all time,' he added.

The Great Escape cost just £1,000 to develop, making it one of the lowest budget films at Cannes.

By contrast, Pixar's animation Up had a budget of more than £100million.

Mr. Humphreys, who works for O2's business support centre, made the film with Leeds producers Motus TV and wrote the soundtrack himself, which was then sung by a local children's choir.

He flew to Cannes tonight but Midge is being looked after at home by friends.