

Hogwatch

from The Lancashire Hedgehog Care Trust

Registered Charity No. 1092285

Patron: Nick Park CBE



Providing specialist care, treatment and rehabilitation for sick, injured and orphaned hedgehogs, with the aim to release when fit and healthy back into the wild.



ISSUE 36

Sept

2011

Crisis point reached

The Baby Boom — by Sandra Duckworth

This time of year we always tend to get a steady stream
Of baby hedgehogs brought to us, this year its been extreme.
Each Spring we try to be prepared for endless baby feeds,
With round the clock attention and to deal with all their needs.

But this year it has been full on with one after another,
From newborn ones to a few weeks old, all having lost their mother.
So we'd like to introduce you to a few of these baby hogs,
Some of them are angels, but some are little sods!

Take 'Stroppy' for example, who lives up to his name,
He huffs and puffs with attitude, even now he's just the same!
Then 'Bert' arrived from Lancaster, who wasn't very well,
But a big improvement has been seen, we're very pleased to tell.

Tiny 'Drizzle' was next to arrive, found icy cold and wet,
Out alone in all the rain, brought from the local Vet.
After much intensive care and warmth, she's doing very well
And should make a full recovery, as far as we can tell.

Then three babies all at once, again in such a state,
Their mother too, just skin and bone, for her it was too late.
It's touch and go with these three, they've had their up's and down's,
But fingers crossed they will pull through - at least they're safe and sound.

A week old baby then arrived, found down a country lane,
A grumpy, prickly character, that's how 'Puffball' got his name.
'Preston' and 'Pipsqueak' followed, both found out alone,
Two very 'vocal' hedgehogs making loud, ear-piercing tones.

But none as loud as 'Declan', we found to our dismay,
How a tiny hedgehog makes such noise it's really hard to say.
Never in all the years and years of doing what I do,
Has any other hedgehog caused such a hullabaloo!

Another baby called 'Tennyson' found on a ladies drive,
Squealing and no sign of Mum, picked up and brought inside.
A phone call to us late one night, she sounded quite upset,
We had no choice but collect him, and give him a quick check.

Each has their own personality and funny little ways,
Which makes this job so interesting, and fills up all my days.
The best bit of the job by far, though I hardly see my bed,
And particularly since my accident - all standing on one leg!

So this is just a few of the many babies coming in,
A very expensive time indeed with milk £6 a tin!
So if you think that you could help in any way at all,
Please just phone and let us know, we'd love to get your call.

A lot of people mock our work, but we all really need to care,
As numbers they are dwindling fast, soon no hedgehogs will be there.
So please show some compassion, and help us if you could,
So these beautiful little creatures do not disappear for good.

Now nine months on from the accident and continuing complications with my ankle means I am still hobbling around. I thought I would be able to carry on as normal once the baby season was upon us in April / May — but I was wrong. We were hand feeding 19 babies at one point—six feeds a day every 2-3 hours from 7am in the morning until past midnight. As soon as we had finished it was time to start again. The poem opposite, written once again by the very talented Sandra, contains the names of just a few of the many babies we had in at the time.

On one particular day I admitted three more babies who had severe mange needing weeks of work to get them better—the worst cases I had ever seen. Also three disturbed nests containing six more babies. We had never before had a baby season like this one. There was no choice but to contact the RSPCA for help. I had never needed help before, but now I did and I have to say I don't know what I would have done otherwise.

The following day, David one of the inspectors came armed with boxes and cages. He took all but one—little Helen (she was a sweetie we just couldn't part with). All went to Stapeley Grange in Cheshire and will be returned once all are big enough to go for release. It was really sad to see them all go, but there was no alternative. I was exhausted and I needed to get off my foot which was swelling up every day like a balloon. It did mean though I could take in a few more that needed help, which I would not have been able to do otherwise.

I don't know what the answer to all this is. Even if I was fit and well it would still have been too much. I've also come to realise my idea of having fosterers hand rear a baby in their own home isn't going to work either. Babies need special equipment, special feeds and more often than not will need some form of medical care which a fosterer would not be able to give. I have visions of babies being shuttled back and forth for treatment.— not ideal.

There is a lovely lady who recently contacted me, very keen to set up as a carer. I am more than willing to train her up and give her advice as she will be starting from scratch, but unfortunately she lives in Manchester. If only she was more local, that would be the answer to my problems. But I have to say that in the eighteen years I have been doing this work, I have never come across anyone in this area willing to do my job—first line care straight from the wild. So for now, I'll just keep hobbling on.....

Tales from a Stanah garden—by one of our members.....

We used to have a cat, Bernie. Fortunately as he grew older he gave up trying to catch birds and took to mousing. Whenever he saw movement amongst the plants he would sit motionless for hours waiting to pounce. Occasionally he would catch a mouse but most times he caught nothing. Gradually more birds came into the garden and then moorhens took up residence on the pond. He was curious about these at first and tried to get a closer look by climbing along a branch of an overhanging tree, only for it to give way and he fell unceremoniously into the pond. He never did that again! We retired about this time and were able to spend more time gardening. We grew more trees and flowers that were attractive to insects and butterflies and put up bird and bat boxes. We then noticed more birds, frogs, newts and dragonflies and at night bats and hedgehogs, came into the garden. Everything seemed a perfect balance. Then poor old Bernie died and we decided not to have another cat because really wildlife and cats don't mix.

But the inevitable happened, and a local cat Woody started visiting the garden. Of course we don't encourage him, but he's been around for the last ten years. In the last few days however, the blackbirds and a robin have been sending out a lot of alarm calls. Then I saw the reason why, a new cat had ventured into the garden. A few cat fights have since broken out and it looks like Woody has been overthrown. I do hope the 'new' cat will leave the moorhens alone, there are only three out of four babies left now. Yesterday a sparrowhawk, who at first had not seen me, came swooping down to grab one but at the last minute saw me, turned and splashed into the water, did a lot of flapping and took off, emptied clawed – thank goodness. Seeing the piles of pigeon and collared dove feathers around the garden, he has had plenty to eat. So Sparrowhawk, keep to the doves and pigeons, we have lots of them. Sounds cruel I know, but he and his family eat them, cats only play with them!

Congratulations to Elaine one of our members who has had a baby girl—Eva Elizabeth. Her work colleagues had bets on the weight and sex of the baby, and the monies raised (£14) was very kindly donated to our charity. Thank you Elaine.

For those of you lucky enough to have hedgehogs visiting your garden, please help them by putting out meat based cat food for them in the evening. This is a critical time of the year when hedgehogs need to put on as much weight as possible in order for them to hibernate successfully. If the food is hidden underneath a washing up bowl (or similar) with a 4" square cut out of the side, it will deter the neighbourhood cats. If the food is gone in the morning you know a hedgehog has eaten it. This picture shows a similar setup and if you use a see-through box you will be able to see the hedgehog when feeding!



A big thank you to the children of Baines School in Poulton for their collection of £93.50 kindly donated to us. Well done to all the children and a special thank you to Anne!

Baby albino hedgehog rescued!



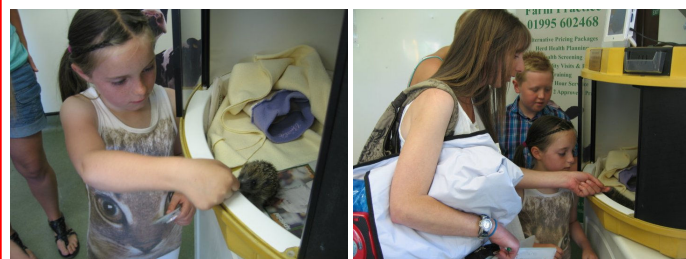
This is 'Wicksey' our newest arrival found wandering around Wickes car park in Marton. She had taken shelter underneath a parked car and was about to disappear down a drainage grid when she was rescued. Wicksey is about seven weeks old and is a rare baby blonde albino. She was half starved and icy cold but

following treatment she is now recovering well. Her progress can be followed as she is in one of the ICU's on HogCam2 on the website.

A huge thank you to Janet in her new found role of 'release organiser'. She is doing a fantastic job delivering leaflets and sourcing potential gardens suitable for releasing hedgehogs in her area. She then collects any hedgehogs from me that are ready to go and transports them to the new fosterers. This is such a help and it takes a lot of pressure off me. Janet sounds like she is really enjoying it too. Each hedgehog benefits from being released into a safe area and in a garden which is providing backup (food and shelter) for however long they need it, while they get themselves established. Well done and thank you Janet for doing this. You're a star!

Bracewell Vets Open Day

We were very fortunate to be one of three charities nominated to receive funds raised at this event which was held on 3rd July. Thank you to all the staff for the time spent organising the event and for giving up their day off to run it. £312 was donated to our charity for which we are very grateful. Everyone was delighted to see little 'Helen' the baby hedgehog we took along. She had been brought to us for care by one of the vet nurses the week before.



Welcome to our new members: Ms C. Roberts, Max Ormrod, Nick Bough and L. Burt.

Jewellery for sale now in our Wildlife World online shop

Courtesy of Sue, we now have hand made jewellery for sale in our online shop. With Xmas around the corner they will make wonderful gifts, so please take a look!

Thank you to Direct Tyre Management Ltd, Whitehills Business Park in Blackpool for nominating our charity to receive their kind donation of £62. This was raised by staff holding a dress down day. Thanks to all who took part.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to vote for our charity on the Viovet 'Focus on Animals' competition on Facebook during the month of August. We just missed out on a donation from Viovet finishing in fifth position, which was very good considering the bigger charities we were up against, so thank you everyone.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

If your copy of "Hogwatch" has a cross below, it means that your membership subscription is due for renewal. Your continuing support is vital to enable us to provide care and treatment for many future hedgehog casualties that will need our help. Thank you.

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