



## MESSAGE FROM YVONNE

As autumn approaches, It's time to reflect on this summer... and what a disappointing summer it was! Very little sun and a lot of rain. If you are a hedgehog, it's not such a bad thing, there was plenty of water and the earth was soft enough to dig to find food. But not so great if you are a bee, butterfly or moth who rely much more on the sunnier warmer weather - a bit like me perhaps?

Did you do the butterfly count? What were your findings? I had a poor turn-out with a couple of Peacocks, Commas, Speckled Wood and Red Admirals. You may wonder why I am talking about butterflies in a hedgehog newsletter, but they make up a ¼ of a hedgehog's diet, well caterpillars do, and apparently hedgehogs jump for tasty moths!

We have had a busy season with lots of hoglets and several births in the hospital too. All our big pens are full with mums and hoglets. The new Elvira annexe has helped enormously as we have managed to squeeze in 15 hutches. This has allowed us to have a mini hospital operating alongside our main hospital. (See main article).

We are also helped hugely by the volunteers that foster the healthier hogs for us as this frees up space to allow us to take in more poorly ones.

And so, to Autumn... it's not so far away, the nights are already drawing in, the leaves will soon turn to all those beautiful colours before falling in time for the hedgehogs, insects and reptiles to start collecting to make their winter nests or 'hibernaculums'. (See our article).

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS WEEKEND? SHOUT OUT FOR VOLUNTEERS!

We rely heavily on volunteers here at HR and with many of our student placement volunteers starting back at university and various staff departures, we are noticing the effects of a full hospital and a skeleton team.

**We especially run short on Saturdays and weekends.**

Do you have some time to spare during the week or on a weekend to help out, either permanently on the rota or through being on our 'bank' so we can call on you with short notice? If so, we would love to hear from you, so please get in touch with Yvonne.



Gin, with her hoglets Peanut, Oakley, Pepper and Conker

If you leave your grass long, hedgehogs will cut it with their teeth and take this in to their nests too. The nest will be bigger than a dinner plate and can be found under a hedgerow, a shed, summer house, children's playhouse, even under the tarpaulin covering your BBQ!

So, when will they hibernate I hear you ask? The consensus is hedgehogs hibernate when the night-time temperature drops to 4°C, but this varies depending on whether you are a nice fat male or a female with young or an autumn juvenile. If you are a well-rounded male hedgehog and have put enough brown fat under your skin you are quite likely to hibernate a bit earlier.

What is brown fat? Brown fat is laid down between the shoulder blades and feeds hedgehogs through the winter period and kick starts them off in the spring when they wake up. They need plenty of this to see them through and that's why we don't feed bread because brown fat is made eating a high protein diet.

A female will stay with her young as long as she feels she can, but she will also need that brown fat to see her through and after suckling 4 or 5 babies she may have depleted her reserves too. Then come those pesky autumn juveniles that are just not up to weight and desperate to find food that is becoming harder to find as the bugs crawl deeper into the soil or die off for the winter.

At this time of year there are often lots of slugs and snails around so hedgehogs fill up on these, but eating too many can cause lungworm too.

*Yvonne*



## COURIER CORNER: STORIES FROM OUR COURIERS

### DILL

Dill was collected and later released by our courier and hospital volunteer Ami, who named him Dill after finding him circulating the Spring Daffodils of Victoria Park, Bedminster. Dill was one of several hedgehogs found in this park suffering from suspected dog attacks within consecutive days.

The request for Dill's collection came with preparation to take him to a nearby vet to be put to sleep due to suspecting he was blind from his injuries (running in circles can be a sign of blindness or eye damage) and the severity of his reported injuries. Ami felt that Dill had 'some life in him' so took him back to HR on 4th April for triage and treatment.

Dill received a course of medication, a holistic approach to healthcare, lots of TLC (Ami was particularly fond of Dill so was very invested in his rescue, rehab and release full circle) and further medicated treatment when he contracted ringworm in HR. Dill came into HR very weak, underweight and lifeless, with suspected blindness, and it was very 'touch and go' if he would make it.

But Dill made a fantastic recovery, regained the use of one eye, put on so much weight that he had to be put on a diet pre-release and was released by Ami into the garden of a nature-loving family near Victoria Park on 12th July. Dill did lose an eye but was full of character and suitable for release within 3 months of admission. Good luck Dill!



### THE KINDNESS OF ASHTON PARK STUDENTS

A request for a hedgehog courier came into HR at 4pm on Friday 19th May from 3 students of Ashton Park Secondary School who had found a very small hedgehog looking 'limp and lifeless' in Greville Smyth Park, Ashton, on their way home from school. With hedgehogs being nocturnal the time of sighting was a concern too.

Our nearest available courier was based in Fishponds so with rush-hour Friday traffic to contend with it took them an hour to get to the students who were waiting in the park with the hedgehog.

Although the hedgehog, which the students chose to name 'Charles' (HR later renamed Sir Charles as we were on 'S' week in the alphabetic admission system), didn't sadly make it through the night in HR, their efforts to call HR for help and to stay with Sir Charles for well over an hour after school is to be commended. It's the efforts and actions taken by the public to report, stay with until a courier arrives or to bring sick and injured hedgehogs into HR that makes the literal difference between life and death for a hedgehog needing help.

Our courier sent a thank you letter and a small gift of appreciation to the year 9 students and was delighted to be sent this picture of the proud students Poppy, Meg and Melissa with Headteacher Mr Uffendell after receiving the letter and gift.

Thank you once again to Meg, Poppy and Melissa and to everyone who supports our work and the hedgehogs who need help.

*continued overleaf...*



## HEDGEHOG HEAVY LOAD

We caught up with our couriers Tom and Ellis who had a busy summer collecting many babies and mums in need of help at HR.

One day proved particularly demanding, as summer months often do, with Tom's van fit to bursting from responding to several requests for hedgehog rescues in short succession! We liked this picture that summed up the demand we can see on our couriers and the vital role they play at HR. Tom and Ellis even had to fashion a box seeing as their on-board carriers were all occupied.

**Would you like to be a hedgehog courier?  
Please contact Yvonne for more information or to join our Whatsapp group of available couriers.**

*Ami*



*A bootful of hogs*

## IRIS - a story from a hedgehog-loving member of the public

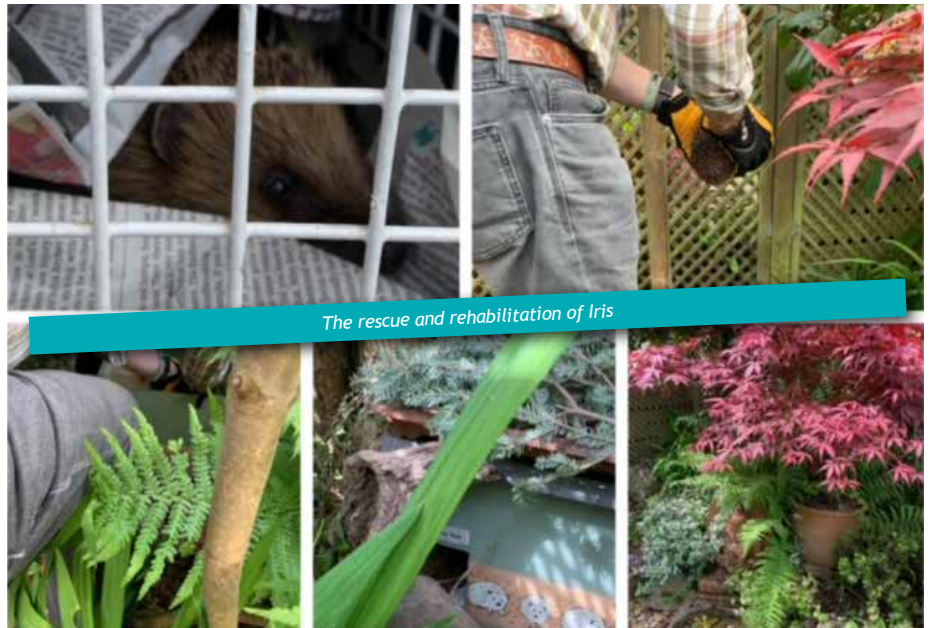
Iris is a lady hog that we took to Hedgehog Rescue who needed urgent expert care for a badly infected mouth and eye. We decided to call her Iris because she now only has one bright little eye.

We collected her from you after her stay of almost one month. On her return to us, we carefully placed her into a new sheltered hog house and, later that evening, she wandered off, presumably back to where she originally came from.

We kept checking our trail camera, but sadly no sightings of her, only our resident male hog Trevor. Our neighbours were watching out for her too, but no one spotted her.

Then last night... celebrations! We heard what sounded like a rather loud courtship! And this morning we were excited to see Iris looking very well! It was easy to spot her now. She fed and drank well, and seemed very content around Trevor.

Since the photos were taken we have added a tunnel to the hedgehog house entrance, and it's now completely covered with logs and foliage.



*The rescue and rehabilitation of Iris*

We will keep you posted as to the outcome of the romancing. Here's hoping she will keep returning, and may one day bring her family too!

Hoping this little success story cheers your day. We thank you and your volunteers for all your hard work! And thank you so much for making Iris well again.

*Bridget & Michael,  
Iris, and a very happy Trevor!*



## “I HAVE A HEDGEHOG IN MY LOFT!” - story from a volunteer’s husband

**It all started with a strange phone call from a lady who was adamant that she had a hedgehog in her loft.**

My initial reaction, upon speaking with her was, *‘Of course you have a hog in the loft... everyone has one! Now stop eating those funny little mushrooms and call me back when you confirm it’*

*“How do you know?”* I asked.

*“I really do. I heard it snuffling and I think I saw it.”* she said,

*“Ok let’s get this right, you think you have a real hedgehog living in your loft?”*

*“I think so.”*

*“If you have, Caroline will come and have a look at it, but first we need to make sure it’s not a squirrel or a rat.”*

The lady went on to tell me that her neighbour had a humane trap for cats which she would set up in the loft, and that she will call me back if she catches anything.

At that, the phone call ended and me and my wife Caroline tried to figure out how a hedgehog had learnt to use crampons and climbing ropes to ascend into a loft.

Half an hour later, the phone rang again.

*“I’ve got it!”*

*“Got what?”*

*“I’ve caught the hedgehog in the trap and it’s not too pleased.”*

Okay, so this was now real, and the lady was obviously a really caring person who was extremely concerned for its welfare, so Caroline delegated the task and I was sent off to a nearby address to see the incredible climbing hog.

I arrived and there in the trap was indeed a decent sized hog. After persuading the hog to leave the trap I did a quick visual check to see if it was okay. Other than looking a bit grubby, it seemed fine.

The lady informed me that she had heard it in the loft for a couple of days before she called us.

Of course, I had to determine how this little spiky chap had gained access to the loft. It turned out that this two storey house was built into the side of a hill and the sloping roof at the rear was only about four-feet above a little courtyard. There was no direct access to the loft from the ground, but along the wall below the guttering was a vertical four foot trellis for climbing plants. I searched in vain for any other way that the hog could have got into the loft - there was none.

So the only possible conclusion was that the hog had climbed the trellis into the gutter then squeezed under the eaves into the loft. What an amazing hog!

It was great that the lady was so caring and took the trouble to investigate so that the hog could be rescued. We had a great chat about hogs whilst I was holding it, during which she asked if they bite.

Not wanting to pass up an opportunity I made a barking noise and pushed the hog forwards towards her, which made her jump. Childish I know! However, it’s great that people like the lady are genuinely concerned about our native wildlife.

I took the hog back to Caroline where she gave it the once over and declared it not injured but she thought it may have a slight wheeze when breathing.

The next morning she gave it a bath and took it to the vet for a check up, who gave it an antibiotic jab and some fluids and declared it ready for release back into the wild.

I have since exchanged a few texts with the lady about the welfare of the hog, keeping her updated on its progress. The ropes and other climbing gear that the hog must have used to climb the vertical wall must still be in the loft.”

*Hilton*





## HOG OF THE MONTH - VENUS

Venus came into HR on 5th June with a severe injury to her snout, which resulted in her losing half of her nose.

This injury was suspected to be caused by a garden strimmer, which is one of the main culprits for many open wounds, particularly upsetting and 'life or death injuries' which we see over the Spring/Summer in Hedgehog Rescue.

Venus was a small hog, with severe facial injuries and likely experiencing trauma as a result of her snout related injuries, which meant that she was having difficulty finding food due to the impact on her sense of smell and in turn challenges to eat unaided.

Yvonne had to 'handfeed' a specialist soup mix to Venus via pipette several times a day until she was able to feed herself on the food we provide ordinarily



Venus gives a high-five

in HR. Venus received many courses of medications to treat her infections as well as pain relief, a lot of TLC (Yvonne in particular had a very soft spot for Venus), and even some Reiki and Bach flower treatments from one of our trained volunteers; supported with homeopathic remedies from Yvonne, thus giving little Venus a full and holistic range of support to get back on her feet.

After a recent successful trial stay in the enclosed garden of one of our fosterers, Venus has now permanently moved into this garden and is reportedly doing well. She has found a home once again in the wild, albeit with half a nose, and the support of an enclosed garden with loving, attentive carers for a little extra help. Good luck Venus, you will be missed!

Ami

## WHO'S IN, WHO'S OUT...

### Spikelet

Female hog Spikelet was picked up weighing just 69g along with her brother Bob. Their mum had disappeared and one hoglet was already deceased outside the nest.

Sadly Bob also had a puncture wound and died a couple of days later, but Spikelet fought against the odds.

I syringe-fed her for weeks, she was doing really well until she got to 400g then got very poorly with a heavy



A very grumpy Spikelet

worm burden. We treated her for that and thought she wouldn't make it on a few occasions, but I'm happy to say that she is now in my garden rewilding before her release.

She is the grumpiest hog I have ever had... a real biter. I have to put my feet inside the washing basket when I sit outside at night and she still puts her nose through trying to get to them! She launches herself at my pyjamas and hangs on to them.

### Hoglets galore...

It's been non-stop this summer, with 25 hoglets arriving since June. Sadly, not all have made it, but we have had a lot of successes and releases. It sometimes even involves taking them with me everywhere, as they need very regular feeding!



Just some of the hoglets passing through HR

Karen



## EXTENDED THANKS TO OUR EXTENSION HEROES!

At Hedgehog Rescue we are lucky to have a fantastic team of volunteers who not only help our hedgehogs, but have a range of individual and very useful skill sets which they bring to HR.

Our volunteers Tom and Alan have been busy co-creating and adapting the new extension at HR, nicknamed the "Elvira Suite" after one of our late supporters, Elvira Pearson, who kindly left a donation in her last wishes. This suite frees up valuable hospital beds by safely housing the 'rewilding hogs' who are imminently due for release to the wild/enclosed gardens.

Alan has cleverly adapted the hutches by creating fully removable fronts and adding lino for easy access and cleaning, whereas Tom has been staining and wax sealing the hutches, ahead of looking to improve the lighting and ceiling area.

A huge thank you to both Tom and Alan who have brought so many combined skills to the extension and very valuable changes.

*Ami*

## IT STARTED WITH A KNIT...

Our talented founder Yvonne has been busy knitting these adorable little hedgehogs to raise vital funds for HR.

They make lovely present toppers instead of bows, the cutest of stocking fillers if you have started seasonal shopping already, great car dashboard companions or perfect gifts for the nature lover in your life.

There are a range of colours and they cost just £3 each. Please contact Yvonne if you would like to purchase one, or more.



Buy your knitted hedgehog from HR!



The Elvira Suite



Venus in the Elvira Suite pre-release



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

16 September • 10.30am-4.30pm

### Yate International Festival 2023

Activities, workshops, food and music. Yate & District Heritage Centre, Church Road, Yate. *HR stall attending* [www.yateheritage.co.uk/events/month/](http://www.yateheritage.co.uk/events/month/)

11 November • 10am-1pm

### Thornbury Volunteer Centre Table Top Sale

Thornbury Methodist Church Hall, High Street, Thornbury, BS35 2AQ

## EDUCATIONAL TALKS BOOKED:

### September:

Kingswood Prep School. Wickwar Cubs

### October:

Inner Circle - The Ship, Yate Library, Brownies, Beavers

**Please do contact Yvonne to book in a talk!**

## MAKING A HIBERNACULUM

To bring hedgehogs into your garden, start lower down the food chain and bring in other smaller creatures first. A good way to create a wildlife friendly habitat in your garden is to create a hibernaculum. It's a word from the Latin "hibernacula", which means "winter quarters" and is a warm, sheltered home that may be used by anything from

bees to lizards or frogs and toads. It will be a safe space for creatures to hibernate over winter.

The picture from [Wildlifewatch.org.uk](http://Wildlifewatch.org.uk) shows how to make one. although they don't have to be as big as this one if you don't have the space. It's worthwhile checking out their website too, as they have a lot of great ideas for wildlife.

Liz

**You will need:**

- Spade
- Logs and branches
- Rocks and bricks
- 2-3 drainpipe off-cuts or cement pipes
- Turf or meadow flower seeds (optional)

If using plastic drainpipes, roughen the insides with sandpaper so that they are not too slippery for animals to climb

- 1 In a sunny spot, dig a hole about 50cm deep and 1.5 metres across. *Be careful not to build your hibernaculum on free-draining sites or where the soil gets waterlogged.*
- 2 Fill with logs, branches, bricks and rocks, leaving plenty of gaps in between.
- 3 Insert entrance tubes (drainpipes) at ground level into the pile.
- 4 Cover the pile with soil (to about 50cm high).
- 5 You can plant meadow seeds or turf over the mound.