



Hedgehog Rescue NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023

MESSAGE FROM YVONNE

We say it every year, but this autumn has been a particularly busy time... Firstly, we've really noticed that, due to the warm spell, the hoglets coming in this year seem to have been smaller. Instead of 200/300g, they've been just over 100g - which means they need to be with us for longer for fattening up before they can be released. See [Who's In Who's Out](#) for just some of our tiny hogs.

We've also had a flurry of media attention, from *Radio Bristol's Steve Yabsley* interviewing us (airing on 18/10/23, 6.50am and again at 3.20pm). *Points West* picked it up and we were on TV on the 31/10, and again on *Newsround* on the 3/11 and 10/11 on national TV.

Although publicity can take up time it helps educate the public to the hedgehogs' plight. It also brought in some much needed donations from kind-hearted people wishing to help. There was, of course, a plethora of emails and phone calls which needed replying to... everything from "I can offer a hedgehog a home!" to "What can I feed my hedgehogs?", "What type of hog house should I buy?", "Should I clean my hog house?" and "Do we give talks? These were just some of the questions that were asked.

One interviewer asked why I thought we were so busy? I think there are many levels to this answer:

1) Media attention - with a bigger focus on wildlife, more people are concerned about the way our planet is heading.

2) Ease of finding a rescue - What would you have looked up twenty years ago in the *Yellow Pages*? "Hedgehog", "Animal", "Sanctuary", "Wildlife"? The internet has made this so very easy nowadays.

3) Knowing there are rescue centres out there - which has become more apparent since programmes like *Animal Hospital*, *Supervet*, *Yorkshire Vet*, *Springwatch*, *Countryfile*, etc. etc.

4) Awareness and education - people are more aware and concerned specifically in the hedgehog's decline.

5) Lack of food and habitat - we have lost over 90% of our hedgerows since the Second World War, and The National History Museum states we have lost 60% of our insect population in the last 20 years! As hedgehogs depend on insects for their diet it's hardly surprising that they cannot find enough food or shelter. And don't get me started on artificial turf!!



6) Wildlife cameras - as more people invest in these, they see that the wildlife entering the garden may have something wrong with them, lots of ticks, dragging a leg, a bald area, scratching too much, or hedgehogs that are obviously too small to successfully hibernate.

I recently gave a talk to a class of reception children who were very enthusiastic about my visit. I think the hedgehog skeleton is a favourite prop of mine. Everyone says it looks like a dinosaur. When you think about it, hedgehogs have been on the planet for at least 15 million years - when the Sabre-toothed Tiger and Woolly Mammoth walked the earth - so it's not that surprising.

Incidentally, the European Hedgehog has approximately 300 bones in its body, including 7 cervical or neck bones, which is the same as us and giraffes - a fact that never ceases to amaze me. And, of course, five toes on each foot. Noel Fitzpatrick (*Supervet*) has written an article on this which is an interesting read www.gracethehedgehog.co.uk.

On another note... Christmas isn't far away as I write this, so please don't forget that you can raise money for Hedgehog Rescue when you are doing your online Christmas shopping, just by going to easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/hedgehogrescue and choosing us! We also have items for sale at HR, some of which are highlighted in this newsletter.

Finally, I would like to thank all the volunteers, couriers, those behind the scenes that help with the newsletter, folding and shredding paper, and running the stall, and all those that support us and wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

See you in 2024!

Yvonne





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SANTA PLEASE STOP HERE! LAST MINUTE SHOPPING IDEAS

Our clever crafting elves have been busy here at HR, sewing a variety of homewares and seasonal treats for you and your loved ones. All are available to buy directly from HR, your volunteering friends who have no doubt led you to this newsletter, or by attending one of our fundraising stalls at local events.

The pictures really do not do them justice, nor cover the range of perfect presents you can choose from! Prices start as low as £1 for animal friend pin badges and all proceeds come back into HR to support the vital work we do, so shopping local and small has never made such a difference until now.

Choose from fragrant lavender wheat pillows sewn with love in a range of nature inspired fabrics (£8), to hedgehog and animal inspired lavender bags (from £1 each). Perhaps you're on the look out for glass ornaments, fun hedgehog masks or Christmas inspired decorations (from £1 each). We have our infamous mini hedgehog soft toys available (£3.75 each or two for £7) - a perfect fit for a hanging stocking - and hand-knitted hedgehogs and handmade cushion covers from head elf Yvonne.

We have it all, so do think of hedgehogs when you are thinking of last minute festive shopping or you have any winter-time birthdays to celebrate.



Glass ornaments, masks, wheat bags and beanie toys!

Come and see us at the **Victorian Day in Chipping Sodbury THIS SUNDAY**, where we will have these items and more on sale!



Tree decoations and lavender bags from £1!

*Chipping Sodbury
Victorian Day*

Sunday 3rd December 11am-6pm

Christmas shopping - Gift and food stalls
Mulled wine and mince pies

Fairground rides - Live entertainment all day
Steam traction engines - Punch and Judy

Chipping Sodbury High Street

With a special visit from Santa
(The original Santa float)

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates and information on the event
www.facebook.com/esvictorianday

Graphic design by www.graphicsgarden.co.uk



THE LITTLE BLACK BOX

Here, Mike, our go-to maker for hedgehog boxes, tells us how it all started.

Following signs of hedgehog activity in the garden, my partner Fliss and I put some food out and moved CCTV cameras to watch what was happening, and we were delighted to discover hedgehog activity.

I have always liked playing with wood so had a go at building a safe space for them to hide or hibernate. My first attempt was an oversized shoe box with a tunnel entry, and hinged lid, which got a lodger who stayed for some time. My friend and neighbour Sandra said she would like one too, so I made another. Both these boxes are still in use today – over nine years later.

Fliss found a tiny hog out during the day one November, and with the freezing weather we took pity and homed him for the winter; “Spike” survived and thrived until his release in late March. The following autumn, we found “Stinky Pete”, who was only 220g but grew to over a kg during the winter, in our spare room.

We released them both when the weather was better, as advised by those lovely people at Hedgehog Rescue in Yate. We also created a feeding station, which had to be adapted to stop Mr Seagull from dragging the dish out and making a racket at 4am in the morning.

Later, we found another unwell hog. The wonderful Karen came round, and took the hog back to Yate for the full health spa treatment. Karen asked if we would like the hog back and if we had a house that could provide shelter and sanctuary whilst it established itself. We showed her one that I had built.

Following conversations with Karen and some online research I adapted the design to make them more practical and user friendly. I volunteered that if anyone ever needed a hog house I would be happy to build one. After that the orders started to flood in, so we agreed an arrangement where boxes are donated free to HR to who would gratefully sell them to help raise much needed funds towards their running costs.



A standard size box is about 50x40x30, but bespoke orders can be made to accommodate the space available - like the one from Yvonne for 15”x15” to fit under a log pile. This one has a side entry and a handle to pull it out from under the log pile.

Some timber treatments are not good for animals. However, the Japanese method of scorching the wood protects it, giving it a distinctive black appearance, whilst also disguising the fact the wood is recycled from old pallets or sheds. I’m proud that all the wood I use is recycled. I’ve become the local “go-to-man” if people have wood to dispose of, which I’m delighted about, Fliss less so, as it takes up quite a bit of space! Some designs have hinged lids with a locking method; but generally it’s not needed as people put them under bushes where foxes won’t lift lids and they’re not inspected on a daily basis. However, these can be included on request.

Enquires for hog boxes should be made via Hedgehog Rescue. I’m always happy to do a little to help hedgehogs, as I am sure all who are reading this are too.

Mike



Hedgehog Boxes can be ordered via Hedgehog Rescue





MY YEAR WITH 'COFFEE BEAN' THE HEDGEHOG

Late last Autumn Yvonne asked me to rehome an autumn Juvenile female Hedgehog to be released into our garden, as she had gained enough weight to hibernate.

We called her Coffee Bean as her shape and colour just reminded us of a Coffee Bean! We released her into one of our hog houses situated inside our stock-fenced wildlife-safe zone of our garden, adjacent to fields. We thought, like the other released hedgehogs in our garden, that that would be the last time we would see her and, checking the wildlife camera the next day, we saw her make her way out of the hog house to investigate her new surroundings.

The next time we would see Bean would be when my dog alerted me to something in the garden, and just by instinct I knew that she had found a hedgehog nest. Bean had made herself a home at the base of a large Ash tree under some Ivy and leaves. We decided to move her back to the hog house with fingers crossed that she would realise that this B&B was infinitely better and safer - with a ready-made bed!

All went quiet over the winter, but we suspected that she was hibernating nearby as we could see activity and hog poo around the garden and feeding station. This was a very comforting thought, and so we put food out at intervals throughout the winter for her and other hedgehogs to nibble on, as and when.

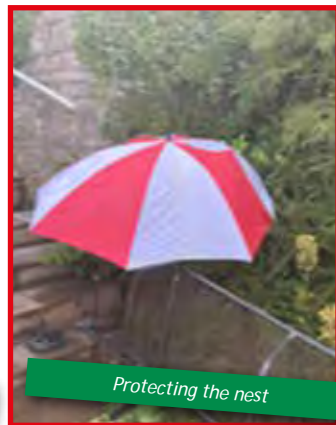
Once early spring had arrived, we checked and cleaned out all of the hog houses and feeding station ready for the wildlife to spring into action again. In early May we noticed that leaves and a leafy moss barricade had appeared at the feeding station entrance, to the side of our garden steps but hidden under shrubbery. And then a few weeks later



we heard squeaks.....then we knew that we had hoglets! Over the next few weeks, usually in the late afternoons, we saw Bean taking her usual walk along the back of the garage, down past the wood pile and across the drive to our little wild paddock for a rest from her hoglets. These sightings were both pleasurable and stressful as she clearly wasn't afraid of our dogs at all! She just went about her business and curled up when a dog nose got too close for comfort! She knew that her protective prickles would put off any noses that got too close!

Over the coming weeks, the weather was either dreadfully wet or baking hot, so we decided to use an old golfing umbrella to protect the hog family from both the rain and sun, and barricade the nest safely behind a metal sun lounger as our dog was now very interested in the noises and smells coming out of the feeding station! We fed Bean every night and just kept everything crossed that the hoglets were growing healthy and strong. In the late Summer, if we had been out at night, we would usually find 2 or 3 hogs on the lawn with a rustling coming from the undergrowth as we climbed the garden steps. Seeing a hedgehog in your garden never fails to bring a smile!

Taking care of Bean and her hoglets during those months was both stressful and joyous, and as autumn is now well and truly set in, with the onset of winter I do hope that Bean is tucked up somewhere safe and nearby. Two of our neighbours a few miles away have both recently found hedgehogs hibernating in their hay barns, so I'm wondering whether they are from our family of hoglets, or maybe we just have more hedgehogs in the area. Both are really positive and comforting thoughts.



Victoria



CHANGES IN MEDICINE LEGISLATION AFFECTING HEDGEHOG RESCUE

In September this year we saw a change in legislation which meant that Hedgehog Rescue could no longer access certain medications, including much needed antibiotics, due to this now requiring a vet to administer.

These legislation changes also greatly affect the farming industry and many other animal rescues across the country who do not have a vet within their voluntary teams or staff. This places a huge strain physically, financially and emotionally on us here at HR and those in the wider communities trying their best to help sick and injured animals on a day-to-day basis. This change has and will continue to force some rescue centres to close their doors, either out of financial hardship, volunteer overwhelm or the increased potential loss to animal life.

Although some may find this article a heavy read to what we usually offer, I felt it important to bring this to light, having experienced first-hand as a HR medical volunteer just how much this is affecting us as humans and also our beloved Hedgehogs.

The shifts are getting longer and more pressured, as volunteers in charge of medical related decisions are now having to factor in lengthy vet calls and visits where they once didn't have to. Sick Hedgehogs are being kept waiting for urgent medication, being underdosed due to healthy weight gain not being factored in at the time of prescription, and in some cases, are having to bypass HR altogether to be taken directly to vets so as not to delay their treatment further.



Piccola receiving her medication



A busy morning administering meds at HR

It's a very frustrating and upsetting situation for all of our volunteers and founder Yvonne, not to mention placing additional and unnecessary demand on busy vets and huge financial implications for a small self-funding rescue.

We appreciated lots of lovely press coverage at HR lately, but have not been given the platform to share all of the pressures behind the scenes and just how challenging this Autumn/Winter has been for us all since these changes were implemented. We are a busy rescue centre; all run on heart and voluntary donations of time and money.

That said, these changes are making our roles that much harder. I myself have had to make the difficult decision to step down from a permanent shift in the medical team due to being unable to manage the now demanding 6-7 plus hour shifts as someone living with a disability.

Ways you can help:

- Are you a vet with some time to donate to HR?
- Can you fundraise for us?
- Can you spare some time to volunteer so that we have a larger team to access and rotate?
- Can you write to your local MP to help us get this legislation reviewed?
- Can you share this newsletter to raise more awareness of HR?

I hope that choosing to share these changes will highlight the amazing work that often goes unnoticed behind the scenes at HR, and the ongoing need for support more than ever to keep all rescue centres going.

Ami



HOG OF THE MONTH - ISHTAR

The name Ishtar means “a fierce goddess”, “goddess of war”.. and this little hedgehog is certainly a fighter!

She was initially picked up by a dog, and although she was taken off the dog and safely put into a neighbour’s garden, sadly she was not carefully checked over to see if she was injured.

She stayed in the neighbour’s garden for four nights alone in torrential rain and freezing temperatures. During this time she was seen twice out in the daytime, when she was given some food which she ate and wandered off.

HR volunteer Claudia went to see if she could find her, but with no luck. On the fourth day Ishtar was found



Our little fighting goddess, Ishtar

lying in the sun with flies round her so Claudia collected her. Ishtar was 227g, hypothermic, dehydrated and covered in fly eggs and lots of tiny maggots. We had to give her quite a few baths and sessions of maggot removal before she could be warmed up. You could see injuries on either side where the dog had picked her up but luckily there was no sign of infection.

After 10 days of fluids she is making slow progress as she has a heavy worm burden, and has put on 150g in four weeks, but she is going in the right direction, still requiring occasional fluids.

Hopefully Ishtar will continue to make progress; she certainly should be known as the Goddess of Strength and Resilience.

Karen

Total number of hogs in so far this year (December 1st): 515

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

Bella

Bella was being fostered by with two of her siblings, she wasn't doing well and had a worm burden and lungworm, weighing just 122g. She's currently having meds, fluids and nebuliser and is now 175g.



Bella

Harold and Tiny Tina

Harold and Tiny Tina arrived together from a vets in Great Somerford. Tiny Tina - who lives up to her name - was found by a lady who was concerned about the little hog's weight. She was just 148g, but is making slow progress - now at 203g.

Harold has an open fracture and necrotic back leg. He's had to have that back leg amputated, but is now doing very well.



Tiny Tina



Harold and his damaged foot

Stan

Stan came in weighing just 128g - much too little for this time of year - probably from a late litter. He was spotted by one of our volunteers, Caroline, from her kitchen window and brought in for fattening up.



Stan



MEALWORMS OR CALCIUM (“CALCI”) WORMS?

You may have noticed that some shops have started selling Calci worms as well as Mealworms.

The problem with mealworms is that they have a very low ratio of calcium to phosphorus, compared to a hedgehog’s ideal diet. When hedgehogs munch on these, their bodies try to balance things out by pulling calcium from their bones into the bloodstream, which results in weak bones and painful physical deformities. Studies show that feeding a diet with a balanced Ca:P (Calcium:Phosphorus) ratio improves animal health and helps with stronger bones and eggs. Calcium is especially important for egg-laying birds and hedgehogs, and so a deficiency can result in soft shells and a potentially fatal bone disorder called Metabolic Bone Disease.



Calcium worms (“calci worms”) are black soldier fly larvae and, unlike mealworms, they are rich in protein, energy-fat and amino acids. As their name suggests, they are particularly high in calcium (containing 20-40 times more calcium than mealworms). This means they are a valuable **supplement** to the diet of growing vertebrates such as birds and hedgehogs and contribute to the development of strong skeletons in insectivorous vertebrates.

WARNING: Please note that calci worms are best used as a **SMALL PART OF A HEDGEHOG’S BALANCED DIET AND MUST NOT BE FED TO EXCESS.** If you are feeding hedgehogs, it is far preferable to give them dried cat food or hedgehog food, and only use calci worms as a small supplementary treat, rather than the entire diet. **NEVER USE MEALWORMS FOR HEDGEHOGS.**

**Info for this article sourced from Vale Wildlife Hospital*

MEALWORMS V CALCI WORMS

Low in calcium	High in calcium
Lower fat content	Higher fat content
Good source of phosphorus	Good source of phosphorus
Causes metabolic bone disease	Doesn't cause metabolic bone disease
Higher protein content <i>(preferable to some birds)</i>	Lower protein content <i>(may put off some birds)</i>

Detrimental to:

Hedgehogs

Beneficial to:

Blackbirds, Robins, Siskins, Tits, Starlings and many other birds

Beneficial to:

Hedgehogs

Blue tits, Sparrows and Robins



WAYS TO DONATE

Don't forget to check out our Amazon wish list or shop through our easy fundraising link if you would rather play Secret Santa to our hogs. They are always on the nice list, rarely naughty!

WEBSITE:

www.hedgehogrescue.info/support-us

PAYPAL:

www.paypal.com/paypalme/HedgehogRescueYate

AMAZON:

www.amazon.co.uk/registry/wishlist/1667YMU51Y05P

EASY FUNDRAISING:

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/hedgehogrescue





WINTER REMEDIES AND NATURE'S LEAD

At 3.27am on Friday 22nd December, the wheel of the year will turn once again to welcome the Winter Solstice for those in the Northern Hemisphere. A celebration of the shortest day and longest night, leading us away from the light and into the darkness. At this time seasonal festivities are nearing their climax, seeing most of us becoming auto-piloting human doings rather than human beings.

By January so many of us start to feel the effects of a closing year or burnout from saying yes to everyone else and no to ourselves all in the name of Christmas!

You may wonder why this has made it into a hedgehog newsletter, but nature, and particularly hedgehogs, are nothing short of spiritual gurus when we turn to them for seasonal guidance. Within the winter quarter trees are vulnerably standing bare without the protection of their dressed leaves, plants are no longer in their full bloom or rooting stages as their only job now is to survive the season, and our animal friends are long into hibernation or a state of slowing down, drawing on their annual lessons and Autumn reserves. It is indeed a time of integration when we are invited to gratefully reflect on the departing year whilst remaining curiously open to the one ahead. Winter's only agenda is to encourage all sentient beings to slow down, come into a state of stillness and to make peace with the darkness within and around them.

Take some time this season to connect to the energy of the Hedgehog; a totem of innocence and self-protection.

Mirror their lead this Winter and curl up, rest up and let yourself move into a place of surrender, for we cannot enjoy the Spring without first succumbing to the Winter.

5 Bach Flower Remedies to support you this Winter:



Use Bach Remedies to help restore your wellbeing over the winter period



WALNUT - the protective remedy to support you through the changing season, darker nights and colder weather. A must for those energy sensitive souls or those who struggle with seasonal depression

ELM - the peaceful remedy to restore calm and confidence, a must for those who find this season overwhelming in every sense of the word

ROCK WATER - the flexible remedy to banish those rigid seasonal routines and punishing new year regimes. A must for those seeking more flow and fun this Winter

CENTAURY - the assertive remedy for those who need a little help with their boundaries and self-care. A must for those seasonal people pleasers

RESCUE REMEDY – the combination remedy for those in need of rescuing from the season itself, themselves or others. A must for all those seeking a little more cheer in their new year

This won't replace the benefits of a bespoke Bach blend, but a few drops in your winter warmer or seasonal fizz will no doubt keep you going until the first light of spring.

Ami

(Ami is a Bach Centre certified and fully qualified Bach flower practitioner)

Graphic design by www.graphicsgarden.co.uk



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HR FUNDRAISING STALL

November and December is always one of the busiest times of the year for getting out and about with the stalls, to raise important funds for Hedgehog Rescue, with the abundance of pre-Christmas events. It's also a great opportunity to meet the locals and encourage people to help hedgehogs over the imminent hibernation period.

The team was busy covering as many events as we could, including Sam and Debs who raised £84 at Lincoln Barn Christmas Fair; Lynne and Jane who attended Brimsham Green School Fayre; Yvonne, Lynne and Liz who raised £69 plus £52 donations at Thornbury Methodist Church Hall Table Top Sale, Warmley Xmas Fayre (£75); and, last but not least, the imminent Chipping Sodbury Victorian Day on December 3rd.

If you think you might be able to help attend fundraising events with us, please do get in touch for more info.



Yvonne and Lynne at Thornbury Methodist Church Hall



Sam, who took the stall to Lincoln Barn Christmas Fair



The stall at Brimsham Green

NEW DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

We are looking forward to attending more events in 2024.. with a couple of events already booked.
Come and see us at:

8th February 2024 • 10am-12pm
Seed Swap at Doddington Parish Hall
Yvonne will be giving a talk

21st April 2024 • 10am-5pm
Old Down Country Park
Spring-time event - details tbc

Please contact Yvonne to book in a talk

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STOP THE PRESS! HR IS FAMOUS!

Did you see us on *BBC Points West*, read about us in the local newspapers or perhaps you caught us on BBC Radio Bristol recently? Apparently we even made it as far as the TV sets of London!

We were blessed to have an array of media coverage towards the end of our busy autumn period when HR was full to bursting and generated a lot of interest as public attention turned to our soon to be hibernating hedgehogs.

This came as a bit of a shock for our busy volunteers who had to quickly adapt to their 5 minutes of fame during busy shifts, but we were so grateful to welcome



Minnie, Mabel and Frank with our HR volunteer and hedgehog foster mum Julie McCotter

in more awareness, new supporters and much needed donations as a result. Thank you to everyone who took the time to get in touch with lovely letters of appreciation for the work that we do and to donate their time and money after seeing or hearing us.

There is still time to donate towards rising Winter costs for those sick and injured Hedgehogs who will be staying with us for Christmas dinner this year

or seeing in 2024 at HR, and we gratefully appreciate all contributions no matter how big or small to our self-funding rescue.

Ami

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

From everyone at Hedgehog Rescue



easyfundraising
feel good shopping

Find us on [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/hedgehogrescue

or download the App



Shop at over 4,000 online stores



Raise **FREE** donations for **HEDGEHOG RESCUE** every time you shop online