



The Hedgehog Welfare Society



TO PROTECT THE WELL-BEING OF PET HEDGEHOGS THROUGH RESCUE, RESEARCH AND EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE WHO CARE FOR THEM NEWSLETTER #11, JULY/AUGUST 2004

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European Hedgehog Awareness Month



Once again, we welcome members of the Hedgehog Welfare Society to European Hedgehog Awareness month! This year, during the month of July, we focus on learning more about the unique characteristics and challenges of European species of hedgehogs. We also gain an appreciation for the individuals who sacrifice resources, free time, and sleep to care for and protect hedgehogs. Please, give yourself a great treat and a new education at the same time by reading through the many articles submitted by our European friends and colleagues. I promise you that you will not be disappointed!

This past April, 2004, I had the great privilege of attending the European Hedgehog Research Group (EHRG) Workshop in Münster, Germany. Paul van Oosterhout had signed me up for membership in EHRG two years earlier, and since then, Paul, Kis, and I had been looking forward to meeting at this workshop. The EHRG workshop was an invaluable educational experience for me, as well as a rare opportunity to meet in person and converse with the scientists and “carers” who work directly with hedgehogs in the wild. (The people who take in sick and injured hedgehogs are commonly called “carers” in Europe). I will be eternally grateful to Paul and Kis for opening the door for me and to Nigel Reeve for granting me the opportunity to give a seminar.

Fortunately for those of us who read the HWS newsletter, many of our new European friends generously donated their time, talents, and knowledge to share stories and experiences with us for the newsletter this month. Members of the HWS thank you all immensely for your contributions. (See the “About the Authors” list on page 3) 

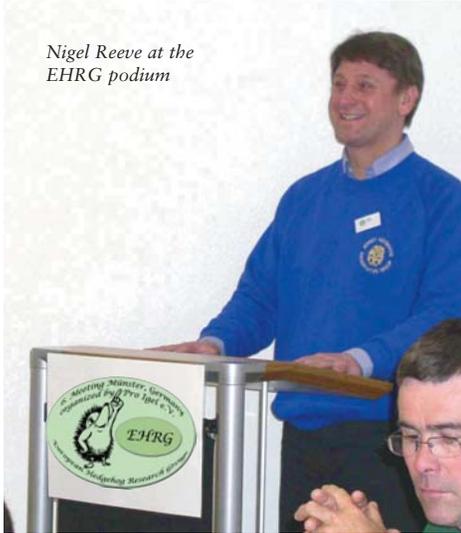
Donnasue Graesser

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The European Hedgehog Research Group: *A Personal View*

Nigel Reeve at the EHRG podium



by Nigel Reeve, United Kingdom

The European Hedgehog Research Group (EHRG) was the brainchild of Norwegian ecologist Beate Johansen. At the time she was a lone researcher studying the ecology of hedgehogs, but, although there were several active researchers throughout Europe, she found there to be no forum for sharing information and discussing ideas. Beate organised the first International Hedgehog Workshop of the EHRG in Arendal, Norway in April, 1996. That first workshop initiated several new collaborative projects and forged lasting friendships. At the same time, Beate greatly improved contacts between researchers by creating a mailing list and setting up a web site.

From the outset, the EHRG was primarily a scientific research group, but one in which scientists and non-scientists (usually "carers") could exchange information and collaborate to improve our knowledge of hedgehogs. There are many opportunities for carers to participate in scientific research of many kinds. As a result we really have pushed forward our knowledge of hedgehogs on many fronts including: population genetics, ecology and behaviour, physiology, ecotoxicology, parasitology, disease, and pathology.

Our web site (www.ehr.org) is now maintained by Paul van Oosterhout, based in

Denmark. Thanks to the recent work by Paul, the success of the site has grown amazingly with over 35,000 hits from a total of 37 countries in the year 2003-4. The web site provides links to other hedgehog-related sites and free on-line access to the abstracts of the papers and posters presented at all the EHRG meetings. The EHRG meets have been held in: Arendal (Norway; organised by Beate Johansen), Vienna (Austria; organised by Benedikt Föger), London (England; organised by Nigel Reeve), Lund (Sweden; organised by Görgen Göransson), Gemmano (near Rimini, Italy; organised by Dino Scaravelli) and the 2004 meeting in Münster (Germany; organised by Ulli Seewald).

The recent Münster meeting welcomed our first speaker from the USA (Donnasue Graesser), who told us about the genetics and pathology of "wobbly hedgehog syndrome." Of course, there are no wild hedgehogs in North or South America – let me briefly digress to encourage you to make sure it stays that way! There are many famous examples of damaging introductions

of all kinds of animals and plants, and their diseases, plus many more examples that are much less well known but just as serious. The meeting also welcomed two ecologists from New Zealand studying the descendants of European hedgehogs introduced at the end of the 19th century. Please note, these hedgehogs have since become a widespread and significant threat to a broad range of endangered native species occurring nowhere else in the world.

The future of the EHRG must be that it remains a research group. We apply the standards of professional research, but we are not harshly over-critical of those with only preliminary data or ideas, or who have only been able to carry out a small project because of a lack of resources. Nor do we set much store in people's qualifications – it is the science and the communication of information and ideas that matters. It is this non-elitist and inclusive atmosphere that has encouraged many and allowed such productive collaboration between scientists and carers.

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Norwegian Ecologist Beate Johan



Hugh Warwick discusses the Uist hedgehogs

The membership of research groups naturally undergoes a succession; new people become active, people change jobs and move out of active research, projects end and researchers move on to other things. Nevertheless, many who move on professionally are still part of the EHRG community. This includes Pat Morris, one of the best-known and most prolific UK

hedgehog researchers, and myself. I quit academic life in October 2002 in favour of working as an ecologist for the Royal Parks in London. Nevertheless, I won't lose my expertise overnight, and I won't be leaving the EHRG anytime soon. The Group remains a focus for the exciting new work being done internationally by both established and new faces in the hedgehog research world with which I have been involved since 1976. The new work adds knowledge, challenges pre-conceptions, and discards flawed ideas. Who would not want to stick around to see that happening and to continue to help to facilitate that process? I am really looking forward to the next meeting in 2006. 🐾



Ulli Seewald,
organizer of EHRG
in Germany

About the Authors

All our authors this month are very busy people! On top of their jobs, families, and lives, they go above and beyond in their selfless efforts towards the well being of hedgehogs. I am sure that each of them has spent many sleepless nights caring for sick hedgehogs, taking data in the field, and/or compiling information to teach future generations of hedgehog caretakers. We greatly appreciate their hard work and big hearts. Even more, we appreciate that they took time out of their busy schedules to share their unique knowledge with the readers of the HWS newsletter.

Our authors this month include **Nigel Reeve**, the Community Ecologist for the Royal Parks in London, England. Perhaps Nigel is best known in the USA as the author of the book *Hedgehogs of the Poyser Natural History Series*. For this newsletter, Nigel writes a very interesting history of the European Hedgehog Research Group.

Hugh Warwick is an ecologist, journalist, photographer, and proud father of Matilda. Hugh is a trustee of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, and very active in the endeavour to save the Uist Island Hedgehogs. He shares with us a firsthand account of the Uist situation, as well as some beautiful photographs. Hugh

also shares with us an amazing story from his pre-Matilda days, working in the field radio-tracking hedgehogs.

Of course, no "Euro-month" would be complete without an adventure story by our very own **Kis vanOosterhout**. This year, she tells us of a very special hedgehog, Carla. Incidentally, Carla is named after my husband, Carl, who spent part his vacation in Denmark warming up this little girl.

Janet Peto is one of the hardest working women on the planet! She is the secretary of the European Hedgehog Research Group, a prolific educator in the hedgehog world, and the founder of the very successful "Hedgehog Welfare" organisation in the United Kingdom. We love the name of her organisation! Janet not only cares for hedgehogs in need, but also takes the time to turn her care experiences into research and articles to help so many other carers. Janet submitted several articles for the newsletter – too many to print them all in this issue. So, keep an eye out for more articles from Janet in the future. In this issue, I included the research article that Janet presented at EHRG in Germany, as well as a great story that illustrates how dangerous life can be for hedgehogs in the wild, and what it takes to nurse them back to health.

Many of us have great relationships with **Janis Dean**, the founder of the Fylde Hedgehog Rescue Trust. She is in competition with Janet for the title of busiest woman on earth! Janis writes about the beginnings of her organisation, and how her chance meeting with one little hedgehog in her garden turned into a lifelong commitment to caring for overwhelming numbers of hedgehogs.

Naomi Wikane contributes her usual very valuable book review, with a European twist! Whether or not you have read this month's book, *The Natural Hedgehog*, Naomi's review is informative and insightful. **Rachel Wentz** shares a delightful article about the mischievous literary past of hedgehogs.

Finally, the African hedgehogs are not forgotten in Europe. Our veterinary article this month is by **Merle Rehorst**, a veterinarian from the Netherlands who writes about a cardiomyopathy case in an African Hedgehog. And, **Shonda Statini** shares with us how a British homeopathic pharmacist helped her save the life of a hedgehog that she rescued from a life of neglect.

Once again, the HWS would like to thank all who contributed to our newsletter over here in North America. We are so honoured to learn from you all.

The Fate of the Uist Hedgehogs. Who Should Decide?



Photo: Hugh Warwick

by Hugh Warwick, United Kingdom

I have spent many nights like this. Out in the dark, accompanied by the skitterings of paranoid oystercatchers, the electronic thrum of displaying snipe, and the ever-present roar of the Atlantic. No moon tonight. And the hedgehogs are proving elusive.

But this was also a very different nighttime hunt for hedgehogs. Previous versions have involved me radio-tracking them – allowing me to snoop on their private lives; watching as rehabilitated youngsters reintegrate back into hedgehog society. Or just counting them – trying to see how many had erupted from the handful released on a small island in Orkney in a failed attempt to control slugs in the postman's garden.

No, this time it is a matter of life or death. If the small team of people I was with found a hedgehog, it would be carefully collected and checked by a vet before beginning a new life on the mainland. If the other team of folks out this night found the hedgehog, it would be dead by dawn. Killed as part of an attempt to assist the breeding success of ground-nesting birds.

I did not plan to become partial in this story. I went to the Uists – three stunningly beautiful islands in the Outer Hebrides, off the west coast of Scotland – to record a piece for BBC Radio. The piece I recorded was impartial, but as I did the interviews I began to realise that this story was much more complex than I had first thought.

These facts I knew: In the early 1970s someone brought a small number of hedgehogs to south Uist. Previously these islands had been

free of hedgehogs. The breeding populations of wading birds on the islands are internationally important. The massive rise in numbers of hedgehogs coincided with a substantial decline in the breeding success of these birds. Hedgehogs do eat birds' eggs. Hedgehogs are part of the problem behind the decline in breeding success. For things to improve, hedgehog numbers will have to be reduced.

Additionally I knew that some very good ecologists had been involved with the

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Two hedgehogs in medical care
Photo: Hugh Warwick

process that led to a decision being taken that the best form of control was lethal. I cannot say I liked the idea that hedgehogs were going to be killed, but the evidence presented in the media, and the presence of these ecologists made me sure that this was the right decision.

But then I started to do some more reading. I found that the conservation authority, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), had ignored the work done by Dr Nigel Reeve, suggesting a trial programme of hedgehog translocation. Nigel is one of the world's foremost experts on hedgehog ecology and behaviour. Instead they commissioned a further report from an academic with no published experience on hedgehog ecology and behaviour – and this report concluded that the only option open to SNH was to kill the hedgehogs, as translocating them would impinge upon their welfare.

I found that this paper referred to work I had done in its justification. This was when I started to get really cross. The work I had done involved following young hedgehogs on their release from a winter in care, having been found in a poor, undernourished state the previous autumn. This radio-tracking exercise was vital as it allowed us to ascertain whether these hedgehogs were able to survive – having had no experience at foraging or nest building. It also allowed us to see if they were able to reintegrate back into hedgehog society. The work showed clearly that hedgehogs cope really well with re-introduction to the wild. I found that they put on weight, used nests in a typical manner – and I found them mating with wild hedgehogs.

But five of my animals died. This was seized upon as proof that translocation would result in slow and lingering deaths for the Uist animals. What utter nonsense. My animals were juveniles who had spent months in care. The Uist hedgehogs will be adults, in captivity for the briefest of times. Most significantly, though, my animals did not suffer slow and lingering deaths. Their deaths were fast and violent. Cars killed two and three were eaten by badgers – fates experienced also by the wild hedgehogs in the study area.

Discovering this massive error forced me to look more closely at the decisions made by SNH in their justification for a cull. They were riddled with errors, half-truths and wild assumptions. Now – I am not a 'bunny-hugger'. If there had been no other option I

would have agreed that a cull was necessary. If there were no volunteers willing to take on the job of translocating the hedgehogs, I would not have expected SNH to do that work. But there is an alternative to culling that is being actively blocked by SNH and there is a great team of dedicated volunteers willing to help with the translocation.

So what is the problem? Well, SNH refuses to acknowledge the volunteers' work. They refuse to help – in fact they actively interfere with the process of translocation. This is not for want of trying on behalf of the

Anyway, these proposals have all been dismissed leaving UHR with no other option than to send out teams of volunteers to scour the islands at night looking to rescue hedgehogs from their death sentence.

That might be okay – two teams of people out searching – at least it is a level playing field? But even that is denied the volunteers of UHR. Not only does SNH have access to the almost bottomless pit of tax-payers' money (they spent £90,000 (c\$150,000) killing 60 hedgehogs last year – you do the math), but they are also the authority to whom



Photo: Hugh Warwick

volunteers. They have formed a small group called Uist Hedgehog Rescue (UHR). They have met with SNH, supported by some internationally renowned mammal experts, and had all their attempts at finding a solution disregarded or obstructed.

UHR have presented outlines for studies that would help mollify the concerns of SNH. Surprisingly, the conservation organisation seems to have taken on the role of protector of animal welfare (something which it seems entirely ill-equipped to deal with) on behalf of hedgehogs...yet carries out brutal (yet effective) control of many other species without turning a hair.

it is necessary to apply to get a license to look for hedgehogs with a torch. This might seem an absurd license to acquire, but it was introduced to help control illegal hunting with bright torches. It actually is a relatively sensible piece of legislation. And guess what ... SNH refused to grant UHR a license!

So that is the reason I spent a night out with the volunteers – risking my ankles in rabbit holes. It was a great reminder of the thrill of fieldwork, being out in such wild conditions, surrounded by so much wild life. Though it would have been even more fun if we had actually found a hedgehog! It has reinforced my desire to find a way to take a

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Photo: Hugh Warwick

sabbatical from my journalism and get back to doing some research.

And it has also reminded me that it is vital to question the decisions made by those in authority. In this case, the conclusions reached by those whom we trust to know better (and whom we trust with our taxes) have proven to be so utterly wrong. I am still struggling to find an explanation as to why SNH has persisted with this course of action. The world's leading experts in hedgehog ecology and behaviour have signed up to a statement calling for a halt to the cull, yet still SNH persists. In their defence, I can only imagine that they are frightened of being perceived as having caved in under pressure from animal welfare organisations. But is that enough of a reason to ignore good science and carry out an unnecessary and very expensive slaughter of healthy hedgehogs? 🐾

About the Author

Hugh Warwick trained as an ecologist but is now a freelance journalist and photographer. He has studied hedgehogs on and off for nearly 20 years and has just been appointed a trustee of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society. He was asked by the animal welfare charity (and member of UHR) Advocates for Animals to write a critique of the SNH position. The paper can be viewed at:

<http://www.advocatesforanimals.org.uk/pdf/UistHedgehogs.pdf>

It is not just hedgehogs that Hugh works on. His investigation into the impacts on farmers in the North America from GM crops has been published in over 20 countries:

<http://www.soilassociation.org/seedsofdoubt>

And last year he revealed the extent of a silent killer – smoke from cooking fires – that is the fourth largest killer in the least developed countries of the world:

<http://itdg.org/smoke/>

But his proudest achievement to date is his daughter, Matilda May:

<http://www.urchin.info/>

Whose Tat is That?

Write to donnasue.graesser@aya.yale.edu if you would like to play "Who's Tat is That?" We will feature a new tattoo in every newsletter. Points will accumulate each quarter and the winner will be announced in December of 2004. Special prizes will be awarded.

- 5 points for submitting a picture of your tattoo to be featured.
- 4 points for being the first to correctly identify the person with the ink.
- 2 points for everyone else correctly identifying the person with the ink.



Last month's tattoo belonged to:
Kim Scea (5 points)

Only correct guess:
Yoli Odgers (4 points)

*Journeys to Europe and shore to shore,
this hedgie-person knows how to explore.
She's a woman on the move,
and her hedgies are known to be quite Groovy.
She can tell you that worms taste divine,
as long as you chase them with the right wine.*

Radio Tracking Hedgehogs in Devon

by Hugh Warwick, Oxford, United Kingdom

Editors Note: This article was originally published by the BBC Wildlife Magazine in July of 1993. The author granted us permission to reprint it in the HWS newsletter.

Remaining entirely objective while studying animals such as hedgehogs can be difficult. Tracking their almost every movement through the night gives one plenty of opportunity for insight into their characters. Dr. Pat Morris, the hedgehogs expert and my overseer, groaned with despair when he discovered 270 had become George, and 298, Freya. Referring to the hedgehogs by the frequency of their radio transmitter was convenient (to track each one, I first had to set the receiver to its frequency), but it was hardly conducive to relating hedgehog stories to friends and acquaintances, and so each hedgehog soon gained a name as well.

After the first few days, it became clear that number 288 had a propensity for disappearing off at great speed, and so he was named after racing driver Nigel Mansell. Nigel soon became my favourite (I'm sure I was not supposed to have favourites, but then I was in Devon, and Dr. Morris was safely in Surrey). This was possibly due to his fearlessness – he allowed me to follow him as, under the glare of my torch, he carried on in a typical hedgehog manner, his busy snout leading him from slug to worm. One of my most memorable encounters occurred soon after I'd arrived on the farm. It was 3am, and having just completed my final round of the night, I had popped outside my caravan to clean my teeth. Sitting just a few metres away was Nigel. Seeing me, he ran off down the lane, giving me a sudden urge to record some of the noises I'd promised for Radio 4's The Natural History Programme.

Over the next hour, Nigel treated me to a



Photo: Pat Morris

wide range of snorts and sniffles as he searched for food, and loud chewing as he tucked into various small invertebrates such as slugs, worm and caterpillars. Then he found a black slug that was rather larger than he typically tackled. Scrabbling at it, he rolled it back and forth across the tarmac and then he ate it. After he moved off, I examined the ground and found it was covered with slug slime, as if he had been deliberately removing the unpleasant mucilage to make the slug more palatable.

I suspect the tactic didn't succeed, though, because his next point of call was a dandelion, the leaves of which he avidly

'mouthed' before spitting them out. Nigel then started contorting himself in his efforts to spread saliva on to his spines – a wonderful display of self-anointing, one of the less-well-understood aspects of hedgehog behaviour. It appears to be linked to strong flavours – some captive animals, for example, self-anoint after chewing leather shoes – though what it achieves I cannot imagine. To obtain some of the accompanying noises, I held my microphone very close to him. His response was to puff himself up and snort. Though this aggressive display did have the desired effect of making the microphone retreat, it also provided some wonderful noises for the tape.

Nigel was one of 12 hedgehogs released on the farm, which had been identified as a good place for them, with lots of food and shelter, and barns to hide in. For the past three years, it had been used as a release site for injured and underweight hedgehogs that had been cared for by the RSPCA's wildlife hospital at West Hatch, near Taunton. The research was part of a detailed study (funded by the Royal Society for Protection of Cruelty to Animals, and organised by Dr. Pat Morris) of rehabilitated hedgehogs' ability – or lack of it – to survive in the wild.

All the animals we released had been found the previous autumn – juveniles too small to survive hibernations. They had been fed and kept awake over winter until the weather improved. Nigel was found wandering around in daytime in late September. He was very light, only just over 100 grams, very lethargic, and would certainly have died soon if not taken into care. Some of the other hedgehogs had an even worse start. Hettie had been found last October, with one of those plastic rings used for holding cans in four-packs stuck round her middle. As she had grown, it had cut into her flesh and the wound had become infested with maggots. But she responded very well to treatment and, like all the hedgehogs, had been given a clean bill of health by veterinarian Tony Sainsbury of the Institute of Zoology in London, before being let go. The last step had been to attach a small radio-transmitter to a patch of clipped spines on the back of each hedgehog. The transmitter had a small, luminous tag, which glowed green and was invaluable in helping to find the hedgehogs – though it was potentially alarming for the uninitiated to see little green lights travelling through gardens and fields.

We released the animals in two batches. The second batch was provided with food and bedding and kept in pre-release cages for five days. The cages were then opened, but food and bedding were placed in them for another five days, giving the hedgehogs somewhere to retreat to if they failed to acclimatise in the wild. Encouragingly, our results showed that there was little difference in how hedgehogs fared in the two groups. Nigel and Hettie were both released in the second batch. Hettie had a more subdued, though no less endearing character. She would remain quite relaxed when picked up for her nightly weighing session – a brief indignity involving the animal being placed in a converted pillow case beneath a spring balance. Keeping a record of the weight was an essential part of

the study, because we needed to know if the newly released hedgehogs were eating properly (if they weren't, they would lose weight very rapidly).

As the one responsible for keeping track of the hedgehogs' progress, I was forced to adopt their nocturnal habits. Peter and Jean, who own the farm where the hedgehogs were released, kindly let me park my caravan at the top of one of their fields for the period of the study, and were remarkably tolerant of me dashing about in their garden at night, bleeping noises emanating from my radio-tracking receiver. My typical 'day' started at dusk, with the first task being to locate each hedgehog and, if it was up and about, to weigh it. During the night, I'd do at least another two rounds, and sometimes five or six if the hedgehogs were really on the move, plotting their locations through the night and returning to my caravan about dawn. If I was lucky, I'd sleep until around lunchtime, when it would be time to do another round to check the location of each hedgehog's day nest.

The radio-tracking equipment is capable of picking up signals over at least 1 kilometer, but hedgebanks will muffle the signal, making it appear to come from miles away. Worse still, farm buildings can very effectively reflect it, sending you off in completely the wrong direction. Fortunately, I had the help of Louisa Gammidge, an old hand at radio-tracking, having perfected her skills on dormice. Louisa was also there for moral support – I was still unconvinced as to the absence of unknown horrors in the dark.

On arriving at the farm, Louisa and I went on a short tour of what was to become my home for the next two months. Walking up the steep hill south of the farm, we came upon a textbook badger latrine, complete with badger hair caught on a nearby piece of barbed wire. Minutes later we set up a hare, and then a buzzard appeared overhead. A day didn't go by without seeing one of these magnificent birds, and their plaintive mewing cry is one of the most lasting memories of the valley, which is extremely beautiful. There is, however, a major blot on the landscape: enormous 400-kilovolt-carrying pylons striding over the horizon. Louisa and I had never encountered anything quite like them before and were totally unprepared for the phenomenon they exhibited when the atmosphere became more humid. An electrical hum, which became a cacophony of crackling as the air gets wetter. And when the conditions are

really bad, the noise is accompanied by a ghostly blue glow.

This 'son et lumiere' was in full swing as Louisa and I trudged off in search of Freya. It was the first night after she'd been released, and we were in the process of thinking up a name (considering the combination of the appalling weather and her disappearance from the range of the receiver, we were having problems coming up with anything even half polite). If we had thought the cables unnerving from afar, it was nothing to the terror of walking beneath them carrying something akin to a TV aerial.

"We're in wellies, so we'll be okay."

"Arcing can't be a problem, I'm sure the farmer would have warned us."

As much as we tried to pacify our fervid imaginations with logic, the image of sudden flashes of electricity homing in on the aerial would not disappear. Eventually, we found the errant Freya, by now named after the intrepid Victorian traveller, nonchalantly tucking into some tasty morsel just beneath a pylon. We weighed her and double-checked that she really was a female (according to received wisdom, it's normally only males that travel such great distances).

The following day, Freya again vanished. We eventually tracked her to a farm 1 kilometer away, at the other end of the valley, giving me my first attempt at an explanation to the neighbours of what was going on. "Excuse me, but one of my hedgehogs is missing, and I think she might be in your barn..." The farmer was genuinely interested in the project, which was just as well, as Freya chose to stay around his farm for a week before returning closer to the release site.

Fortunately not all the hedgehogs behaved like this. Hettie remained near the farm where she was released, at least early on, frequently foraging in the garden. Nigel, though, exhibited very different habits. He travelled much further than any of the other animals, but regularly returned to the same day-nest, spending only the odd 'night' at different sites. Hettie, by comparison, spent no more than five at each nest. How much this represents a difference between sexes or just between individuals is hard to tell. Hedgehogs are notoriously difficult to generalise about.

Over the weeks, they all became far more relaxed about being handled. This gave us wonderful opportunities to look at them

closely. But with their new-found confidence, they no longer curled into compliant balls of spines when we needed to pick them up for weighing. Instead, they would run away whenever they got the chance. It was now that the luminous tags came into their own. Certainly, when the nights were very dark, it was possible to see the hedgehogs from more than 50 metres away. When the moon was bright, however, moondrops glistening on grass and reflected in puddles became dead ringers for hedgehogs.

The most extraordinary luminous observation we made was of one green light slowly circling a stationary one in a series of little leaps forwards and backwards, accompanied by sneezes. Invariably, it was a male making advances to a female and the sneezes were her way of telling him where to go. The bizarre sneezing and snorting noises of courting hedgehogs in the flowerbeds often cause humans great consternation in the middle of the night, but it was obviously a bonus for us. When we heard this amazing noise coming from the farm garden, we could be confident of finding two hedgehogs at once. I did, though, begin to feel a bit of a killjoy whenever I needed to weigh the combatants (one of which was often a wild hedgehog), as the couple rarely resumed courtship after such a rude interruption. On one night, we found Nigel with three different females in the space of four hours, and the following night, Hettie was found with two different males within an hour. All the activity reassured us that our charges were becoming integrated into wild hedgehog society.

One particularly cold, clear, and beautiful night, while I still only had a pair of leaking wellies, I discovered some of the other inhabitants of the area. Standing, bravely, beneath one of the pylons, I heard what could best be described as a large hedgehog pushing through the hedge. Out popped a black and russet badger (the soil gives everything in the area, including most of the content of my caravan, a reddy-brown tinge). After snorting back and forth a few metres from me, it disappeared, only to reappear moments later, tumbling down the slope, rolling, grunting, and snarling with another individual about the same size. The two fought in and out of the hedge, up and down the slope, for 10 minutes before charging off up the hill. The whole spectacle was magical, and it was only when I tried to move again that I realised how effective mind over matter can be. My feet were as cold and as reluctant to work as they had ever been. Back in the caravan, the night

was a full thermal one, with two sleeping bags and a woolly hat.

Experiences such as those with the badgers added to the atmosphere of the area (their presence was also a good sign, because they eat the same sort of food as hedgehogs). Sometimes it was hard to drag myself out again after my between-rounds break and cup of tea at the caravan, but it almost always seemed worthwhile as soon as I'd been outside for a few minutes. The range of sensual stimuli I encountered as I walked down the lane was quite breathtaking. During the day, the hedgebanks are lit up with a whole array of plants, dog violets, early purple orchids, garlic mustard, stitchwort, and dandelions. By night, the moon reflects from these plants, highlighting the track. As the season progresses, the pastel shades of primroses give way to the egg-yolk yellow of dandelions. The combination of plants and animals gives a scent to the air that is quite beautiful.

On just one round I would move through the pungent smell of dog fox, then wild garlic, and as I entered the wood, a wall of bluebell scent. Waves of coconut would come from the thickets of gorse, and as summer neared, the fields turned yellow, not from hideous oilseed rape, but from masses of dandelions.

Rural though the area is, there is no escape from the car. Even on the small road leading to the farm, we lost two of our hedgehogs. Little Willy (named after an embarrassing condition, which was cured) was the first to be killed. Followed by Billy, one of the most endearing animals. He, more than most, seemed to enjoy being handled, and would investigate the various items of clothing I was wearing, snuffling around and making them even more dirty and smelly.

But the road itself held attractions for the more adventurous hedgehogs, who could not resist setting off down it. Doing a final sortie one dawn, to make sure all my prickly friends were in their nests, I failed to get any signal

from Hettie. Having checked the north side of the farm, I decided to venture down towards the main road, but after walking east for a while up the hill, I got an urge to try west, down the hill. By 6.30am, I was about to give up when I received a faint bleep, which got stronger as I reached a house just off the road. It was still too early to ask for permission to search round the house, and having established she was at safe, I set off home for a nap.

Returning at 10am, I introduced myself at the house and acquired the eager assistance of Denise, aged 10, and Kevin, 8. We all searched among the remnants of old cars and farm machinery. Finally, after scrabbling through some undergrowth, the nest was found in the middle of a hedgebank. As I emerged looking like I had been dragged through a hedge backwards (which was almost true), Denise passed judgement: "We don't get many people like you down here."

Soon after Hettie disappeared over the horizon, Hannah also did a 'runner', turning up at a farm about 1 kilometer north of the release farm. Again, the owners were very

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Photo: Adrian Arbib

accommodating, if slightly bemused, as Louisa and I wandered around their immaculate garden searching for clear bleeps. Sure enough, Hannah had made herself quite at home in a barn. So, what was going on? The males, not the females, were supposed to be the wanderers, searching afield for female conquests.

A possible answer was soon revealed when Tony Sainsbury returned to do an interim health check on the hedgehogs. Hettie and Hannah were pregnant. Perhaps they had left 'home' in an attempt to escape the relative overcrowding of the study site, before giving birth to their babies – the best present any rehabilitation study could hope for.

As the project drew to a close in mid-May, I took a four-day break. On my return, Peter informed me that he had found the remains of a wild hedgehog in the hayfield. Only the skin and spines were left, suggesting it had been eaten by a badger. On the first round that night, Pat, Louisa and I found Freya. All that remained was the transmitter attached to the spines. As usual, it took ages to locate Nigel, but when we eventually did, it was not as we would have wished. He, too, had been eaten. We felt very despondent as we retired for a cup of tea in the caravan.

When we started the next round at 2.45am, our concern was for Jimmy. He was one of the smallest hedgehogs, and did not often stray. I knew there was a badger sett [location] in the hedgebank from which the signal emanated, and feared the worst. As I got nearer, I could hear what could only have been a badger eating a hedgehog. I could see Jimmy's transmitter and pushed through the brambles to get it. I was confronted with the gruesome remnants of our friend. His head was still largely intact, but other than that were spines and transmitter.

I still like badgers, though it will be a long time before I can forgive them, especially for Nigel. But though we lost more hedgehogs than we were prepared for, the experiment itself was not a failure. Our hedgehogs did go back to the wild, they did nest in a normal fashion, and they did manage to find enough to eat. And the fact that both wild and newly released hedgehogs fell prey to badgers suggests that it was not lack of experience that was their downfall. Badgers and traffic are a danger to all hedgehogs, wherever they come from. 🐾



by Naomi Wikane,
Schoharie, New York, USA

Since this is our European newsletter edition I'd like to introduce you to a book I find invaluable in my library. It is *THE NATURAL HEDGEHOG* by Lenni Sykes with Jane Durrant. The book is published by Gaia Books Limited, England (1995). It can be purchased at: amazon.com/uk or whh.org/mainindex.html.

First of all, the drawings in color and black and white by Jane Durrant, plus the photos, are just wonderful. Jane Durrant is the founder of the Welsh Hedgehog Society and is renowned for her research into hedgehog illnesses and safe ways to treat them. Lenni Sykes is an experienced homeopath and healer with background in veterinary nursing. The views expressed in this book and case studies quoted are from experiences with hedgehogs brought into care at the Welsh Hedgehog Hospital, which was established in 1986. You might like to peruse their web site: whh.org/mainindex.html.

There is a two-page spread right at the beginning of the book showing distribution maps of 14 hedgehog species worldwide, with color drawings showing the distinctions of various species. That is followed by excellent material on hedgehog habits, which includes myths and folklore, self-anointing, behavior of hedgehogs, diet, hibernation, reproduction and rearing, and hazards to wild hedgehogs.

You will find illustrations of: the stages of hedge development from birth to adult, mealworm beetles and larvae worms, waxworm moths and larvae worms, hedge "poop" from normal to various stages of not healthy (including that awful green), how to uncurl an uncooperative hedge, hedges with those maggots that Kis deals with, using a urine dipstick for testing, sexing a hedge, feeding with a syringe, and much more.

Of course there is detailed information about caring and treating wild hedges. There is also information about crystal healing, Bach Flower remedies, aromatherapy, therapeutic touch, energy fields, and telepathic communication----all of which can be done with African hedgehogs as well. Homeopathy methods and medicines are covered in detail.

If you are interested in hedgehogs in general, and not just our African hedgehogs, this book is for you. I refer to it often. 🐾

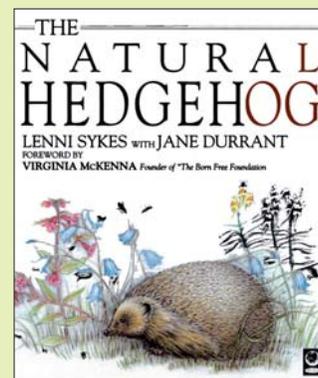


Illustration:
Margaret Myhre
and Andrew Sierra

The Literary Hedgehog

Have something to say?

Submissions to the HWS *Letters to the Editor* section are welcome. Printed letters can have "name withheld" upon request. Send either electronically to newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org or via snail-mail to HWS Newsletter c/o Kathleen Knudsen P.O. Box 70408, Seattle WA 98107.

Carla

by Kirsten vanOosterhout, Vejen, Denmark

On March 20th, 2004 we had been out to a family dinner. When we came home – quite late – a little box was standing on our doorstep. Inside this box was a very cold, dehydrated and skinny little hedgehog. With a weight of 240 grams I was surprised she had survived the long and cold Danish winter this far. No note was attached, so where she was from and what her story was will remain unknown.

She came under my tee right away, and after three hours she started moving and getting a little warmer. I gave her chamomile tea with a little salt and a teaspoon of honey with a syringe. At first, she didn't want to drink at all, but after a little while she found out it was tasting pretty good and – more important - making her feel good.

After a little rest she got Hills a/d along with a lot more camomile tea. Nice, warm, and comfy I left her to sleep in a hedgeiebag. I was pretty sure she had been up eating by herself during the night. When I went out to check on her in the morning I found a very cold, hibernating little girl and she had left me a very small poop. A closer look at her poop showed she had tapeworm. Easy to treat but not on a hibernating hedgehog. So under the tee she went again.

In the evening she was getting warm again. She got camomile tea, food and medication via syringe and enjoyed it. The next morning – she was hibernating again. This pattern went on for quite some days.

At this point of the story the BIG day came: Donnasue, Carl and Simon were coming for a visit in connection with the EHRG meeting in Germany. A day we had been talking about and looking forward to for TWO years.

It turned out Carl had some magic influence on the little girl. He was sitting with her and warming her, and he even fell asleep with her under his tee. When they woke up she got her food and camomile tea – was put to sleep in her hedgeiebag. And next morning her food bowl was empty!!

I don't know what Carl did or what he told her, but from that day she was eating and



Carla was cold and dehydrated when she arrived at Kis's



She starts to explore on her own four big feet!



She packed it on by May 1st - 946 grams!

drinking like crazy. Of course we named her Carla. Carla turned out to be a lovely mild girl – easy to handle. She loved turkey meat and her dried kitten food.

By the first of May, she was not a small girl anymore but a big lovely lady of 940 grams. After a nail trim and a health-check she was ready to go and explore the world on her own. When I released her she was standing with her nose in the air, then she went straight in my direction to hide a little between my feet. After sniffing a little more,



Carl works his magic on Carla



In early April, Carla weighed in at 256 grams



Carla gives one last "good-bye" sniff to Kis, and off she goes

she didn't smell any danger, and off she went into the night ... on her own.

I am sure she now is expecting a lot of little hoggies. And I now know who to call for help when I have a hedgehog who refuses to come out of hibernation. Pindsvinehjælpen (the Danish Hedgehoghelp) has an excellent carer in the USA. A carer who has his own membership card and license to nurse.

So: Simon, when I phone you for help will you please send your Dad over? 🐾

For Better or Worse

by Rachel Wentz, Orem, Utah, USA

Hedge•hog:

1. n. an adorably spiky and huffy little creature to spoil and cuddle and give mealies to.
2. n. a trickster; a deceitful animal with a tendency to plotting and vice.

As a slave to hedgehogs, I have developed not merely a belief in the first definition, but a working knowledge of it. Even if a Hedge-Houdini escapes, or a Vampire-Hedgie stabs or bites, it is impossible to think of him as actually bad. I may call him “Stinkweed” instead of “Tumbleweed” . . . but it would be ridiculous to even suggest that he isn’t My Precious. Nevertheless, the second definition has centuries of popularity, and the first definition is only recently becoming well-known.

All nocturnal animals seem to have critics—working in darkness creates suspicion. Nighttime roaming and aversion to sunlight has given these animals questionable motives— and story-tellers have long used the wariness of their listeners to easily build sneaky characters from nocturnal animals. Thus, a prejudice against hedgehogs has been reinforced by stories handed down through centuries. One such tale, passed through history as part of Shahrazad’s 1001 Arabian Nights, tells of a hedgehog who



Tumbleweed exploring the garden

uses false piety to lure a fellow creature to his death.¹ Not only is this hedgehog a trickster, but he pretends righteousness and faith in Allah to satisfy his greedy desire for more food. Committing sacrilege for food is a bad beginning for hedgehog literature.

One of the best known authors of the past millennium, William Shakespeare, continued in the same vein as Shahrazad. Not only do Shakespeare’s hedgehogs not deserve trust, but they are tricky and deceitful at best . . . and in league with evil, at their worst. In *Midsummer Night’s Dream*² Titania asks her fairies to watch over her as she sleeps, and as they clear the area of questionable animals, hedgehogs come second only to the fork-tongued snakes in their song. In *The Tempest* the hedgehogs who plague Caliban (“tumbling in my barefoot way and mount[ing] their pricks at my footfall;”³) are not personally at fault, since Ariel is putting them there and the hedgies are only acting instinctively. Nevertheless, the hedgehog is again paired with the snake, who has long been the animal symbol of treachery and devilishness. Nothing improves for the hedgehog in *Richard III*, when the vile Richard is equated with a hedgehog⁴— much to the hedgehog’s discredit. The hedgehog is further maligned in *Macbeth* when the witch triumvirate implicates him in their dark magic⁵— a serious accusation indeed.

Why all this negativity toward the hedgehog? In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries hedgehogs were often accused of stealing milk from cows— to such an extent that a bounty was placed on their heads. It’s hard to believe that our hedgehogs could possibly steal enough milk to matter (even under favorable circumstances). However, European hedgehogs are larger, and could drink more, but more importantly, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that they might be drawn to a barn for its relative dryness and warmth — not to mention the nice straw for digging. Hedgehogs probably were found in barns often enough. And, as farmers were wont to suggest, a cow that had been suckled by a hedgehog (or just huffed at all night) probably would have a bad reaction to the experience— and might respond negatively to being milked in the morning. The stories were never substantiated, but this is the era into which Shakespeare

was born. It is not, therefore, too surprising that the Bard often turned to hedgehogs when he needed animals of bad character in his writings. As nocturnal creatures, hedgehogs were “questionable” from the beginning, and rumors of theft (eggs as well as milk) made them into a public enemy. Unfortunately for hedgehogs, Shakespeare’s writings served to reinforce the negative attitude toward them, and even to spread it, as his writings began to receive acknowledgment in areas where hedgehog prejudice had not formerly existed.



... and exploring the globe

In the 1800s, the Brothers Grimm added to hedgehog literature by including hedgehogs in their story collection. Given the harsh tendencies of all tales collected by the Grimm brothers, their hedgehogs are no worse than other characters— and are intended to be admired as “clever” rather than disliked as “sneaky.” Nevertheless, stabbing a bride to death with one’s quills⁶ seems rather violent, as does plotting to “race” an opponent to his death⁷ in order to prove him wrong. The Grimm hedgehogs were clever— but that cleverness seemingly precluded good nature.

Luckily, today’s animals have more ability to be judged on their true merits than in the past. In fact more crocodiles, snakes and lizards are “gorgeous” each day. Because this new acceptance is unrelated to animal tales of the past, I don’t need to worry that someone will see me with a newt and a hedgehog and accuse me of some “double, double toil and trouble.”⁸ 🐾

¹The Hedgehog and the Wood Pigeons

²Act II, Scene 2

³Act II, Scene 2

⁴Act I, Scene 2

⁵Act IV, Scene 1

⁶Hans mein Igel

⁷Der Hase und der Igel

⁸Macbeth: Act IV, Scene 1

The Fylde Hedgehog Rescue Trust

by Janis Dean, Lancashire, United Kingdom

Ten years ago, I discovered a hedgehog in my small suburban garden. Today, every waking hour is consumed running a hugely successful hedgehog rescue centre...

The Fylde Hedgehog Rescue Trust is based in Poulton-le-Fylde in northwest Lancashire, UK, and was established in 1994 when we took in our very first patient. We are now a Registered Charity dedicated to providing a caring environment together with high standards of treatment for sick, injured, and orphaned hedgehogs, with the aim to rehabilitate as many hedgehogs as possible and set them back into the wild. We are a totally self-supported charity, and rely on our own fundraising activities, donations made by caring members of the public, and sponsorship programs to keep the Rescue Centre running. Hedgehogs in need of care are referred to us by the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA), local vets, the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS), and the general public. We also offer educational talks to schools and community groups, and give advice to the public on how to make the environment safer for hedgehogs and other wildlife. The local community too is involved as an ever-growing network of volunteers that kindly offer their enclosed gardens to be used for recuperating hedgehogs prior to their release. We also deal with many telephone calls and e-mails throughout the UK and from overseas regarding hedgehog welfare.

My love of hedgehogs began in the most unlikely of circumstances. Not long after I moved into my house, I kept noticing strange droppings on my lawn every morning. My curiosity was aroused. I decided to sit out one evening with my binoculars to find out who the culprit was. I waited and waited, and low and behold, a little hedgehog appeared – I couldn't believe my eyes. I thought it was absolutely brilliant!



How It All Began

After that I was hooked. I then began a series of nightly vigils watching the comings and goings of that little hedgehog. During the next few months I discovered that three hedgehogs were nesting in my garden. They had been coming in through a small hole in a neighbour's fence. Unfortunately, the fence blew down during a storm, and it had to be replaced. I asked if he would leave a brick out at the bottom so the hedgehogs could still get through, but he wanted it blocked off – and that was it, the hedgehogs stopped coming.

It was some months later that my sister found a small hedgehog in her garden. I

didn't know much about hedgehogs, but he only weighed 200 grams, and, even with the very limited knowledge I had at that time, I knew he was too small to survive the winter months on his own. I took him in and cared for him, keeping him warm and well fed to prevent him from hibernating, and then released him back into the wild the following spring. His name was 'Hob-Nob' because of his liking for a particular biscuit! I desperately needed more information, and so I attended several courses organized by Hedgehog Welfare on hedgehog care, treatments, parasites and diseases. I also attended practical workshops for wildlife casualties organized by The British Wildlife Rehabilitation Council.

At that time my only facilities were a small 6' x 4' garden shed, which housed three rabbit hutches. I began taking in sick and injured hedgehogs on a regular basis, and the word soon got around. It was after the RSPCA found out about my work that I found myself inundated with poorly animals. I soon realised that the shed wasn't going to be big enough, so my brother purchased for me a bigger 8' x 6' shed. We kitted it out with hutches, heat mats, electrical supply, and insulation.

By this stage, the initial kindness shown to that first underweight hedge-hog had turned into a full-time job. People were bringing me newborn abandoned orphans, and others that had suffered the most horrific injuries. Most of the injuries I was seeing were associated with garden machinery such as

lawn mowers or strimmers, or hedgehogs that had fallen into ponds or had got entangled in garden netting.

The list was endless. Hedgehogs are naturally inquisitive creatures, and they get into all sorts of fixes. Some that I have dealt with over the years have included ones that have fallen into tins of oil or paint, have become stuck in tin cans or yoghurt pots, have gotten stuck down drains, have been burned in bonfires, were



Janis Dean and one of her charges

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poisoned after consuming slug pellets, rat poison or weed killer, and have suffered road injuries.

Finding a vet who was prepared to treat wild animals was difficult, because they don't deal with very much wildlife during their training. I eventually found a veterinarian with an interest in wildlife, and together we have a great working relationship. I remember him saying that 'A hedgehog's anatomy can't be much different from a cat or a dog – just a bit smaller', so he agreed to give it a go.

Feeding newborn 'hoglets' was another problem that presented me with a steep learning curve. Having scoured the libraries for information and contacted every organisation that I could think of, I soon discovered that I was entering unknown territory. At first I tried feeding the babies on Lactol, which is a powdered milk substitute used for baby rabbits, but this proved unsuccessful. I also tried goat's milk, but again not very successful. Baby hedgehogs also receive colostrum from their mother for 42 days. Ultimately, I found that a combination of liquid 'Esbilac' (a substitute milk for puppies) and Ignatia (a homeopathic replacement for the colostrum) worked extremely well, and I am now able to raise orphaned hoglets with an excellent success rate.

By now, I began to realise that even my new shed was not going to be big enough, as more and more poorly hedgehogs overflowed into my lounge and back bedroom when the shed was full. I love them to bits, but they are not the best of things to have in your lounge! I was faced with a dilemma: Either I turned away increasing numbers of sick animals or somehow acquired larger premises. The only option I was left with was to demolish my run down garage and build a purpose-built hedgehog care unit in its place. Unable to fund the cost of a new building myself, I set about raising the money from scratch by running regular car boot sales and fund-raising stalls and writing literally hundreds of letters to local businesses and grant-making trusts asking for help with my project. Several people said that it couldn't be done, but after three years of intensive fundraising and hard work, the new hospital unit was finally opened on the 24th August 2002.

My ultimate aim is to re-introduce as many rehabilitated hedgehogs back into the wild as possible. After the initial care and treatment, they are taken to safe enclosed gardens, where they can convalesce in safety.

Progress is monitored by foster-carers. Once I am satisfied that they are 100% fit and healthy, they are released back into the wild at one of many safe release sites in the area. Disabled hedgehogs such as blind ones or amputees that could not cope with life back in the wild are found permanent foster homes - suitable fully secure gardens where they can live safely and be cared for in a semi-wild environment.

Taking care of hedgehogs is only a part of what we do. Education and helping to raise public awareness is another very important

part, which we hope will give children in particular a healthy respect for all wildlife, and ensure its survival long into the future. Who knows what the future will bring, but we now have a solid foundation upon which we can build and move forward in the field of hedgehog welfare. We can now provide these endearing little creatures with the help they so desperately need – they deserve no less. Ten years after my initial encounter with Britain's only spiny mammal, I now run one of the biggest full-time hedgehog rescue centres in the UK, thanks to a lot of help and support and a lot of caring people. 🐾



How It All Began

*a poem
written by
Sandra Duckworth*

It all started with "Hob-nob" - a poor little hoggie,
Who was found in a drain very cold and all soggy.
He was given some biscuit and a warm cosy bed,
And sure enough, "Hob-nob" bounced back from near dead!

The seed was now sown, and my sister was hooked,
So she raided the library for a Hedgehoggy Book.
Then studied the creatures for hours upon hours,
When came the conclusion, she had hedgehoggy powers!

Her house started filling with hedgehoggy things,
From stuffed ones, to pot ones, and hoggie keyrings.
Hedgehoggy this and hedgehoggy that,
But don't you dare tread on her hedgehoggy mat!

Soon word got around of her hog-healing hands,
The telephone rings - and another one lands!
Each one is then named, and logged in her book,
And all their credentials are patiently took.

It's also been known if you creep out quite late,
Hedgehogs queue up at the back garden gate.
The food is fantastic, you could say "cordon bleu"
And if they could speak, they'd be yelling for more!

Her shed was now filled to capacity, so
Into the spare room all the rest had to go.
She can sometimes be found down on hands and knees,
Inspecting her carpets for flea escapees!

She also does talks at the schools and suchlike,
On hedgehog awareness - the wrongs, and the rights.
Everyone's thrilled to see hogs she has brought,
And helping to save them is patiently taught.

When she loses a hoggie, it makes her so sad,
But she still perseveres through the good and the bad.
She is always on call, be it near be it far,
If a hedgehog needs helping, she jumps in her car.

Her patience is endless, dedication is too,
The smile on her face when another pulls through.
From finding a hedgehog stuck down in a drain,
Her life has never been quite the same.

Case History

New life at the Rescue Centre!

by Janis Dean, Lancashire, United Kingdom
Fylde Hedgehog Rescue Trust

A vet brought 'Penny' to us not knowing what was wrong with her and having no history as to the circumstances in which she was found. She had no obvious injuries but seemed to have trouble with her balance, continually falling on her left side after walking only a few steps. I decided to wait and see if she improved over the next few days. Maybe she had had a collision with something and just needed some time to recover. Not many days later, whilst going



about my regular chores in the hospital unit, I was about to clean out 'Penny's' cage when

I spotted something very tiny laid on its back amongst the shredded paper. Yes, 'Penny' had presented me with a litter of babies overnight! This one had fallen out of the nest and was now blue with cold.

Panic stations kicked in rather quickly! I carefully picked the baby up with a glove on, so as not to leave any strange scent on him, quickly wrapped him in a fleecy bobble hat, and put him into one of the intensive care units to get him warm. He was barely moving and at a guess I would say he was only an hour or so old. Baby hedgehogs are born about an inch in length with their tiny prickles encased in a water sack, which quickly disperses after one hour and then the tiny prickles can be seen. It's very rare to get the opportunity to see a newborn baby hedgehog, and so I quickly took this photograph of him just before I returned him to his Mum. You can just see the tiny prickles appearing.

I very carefully placed him underneath the shredded paper in the nest, and then kept my fingers crossed. Any disturbance of the nest could result in rejection of the babies or, worse still, the Mum eating them, as they

were so young. So the next few hours were quite worrying to say the least. I kept listening for signs that all may not be well. An hour later and it looked like Mum had accepted her baby back, as I could hear the distinctive sounds that she was feeding him. Thank goodness for that, what a relief!

Three weeks later, Mum and her four babies were transferred into my fully enclosed garden where they still remain. Babies and Mum are doing well. I took the following picture of two of the babies venturing outside the nest for the very first time. Once they are a good weight, then all four will be released into the wild at one of our safe release sites. 🐾



CONTACT DETAILS:

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TEL: (44) 01253 899404 Website: www.hedgehog-rescue.org.uk Email: info@hedgehog-rescue.fsnet.co.uk



Submissions for the
Newsletter Welcomed!

A question for the pogs?

Do you have a question you would like to ask the pogs?

Favorite Rescue Story?

Do you have a favorite rescue story you would like to share?

Favorite Photo(s)?

Do you have a favorite photo of your quilly master(s)?

Please send it/them to us either electronically at
newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org

or via snail-mail to
HWS Newsletter c/o Kathleen Knudsen
P.O. Box 70408, Seattle WA 98107

Paws across the Pond

(Reprinted with permission of Western Viking, www.westernviking.com)

by Kathleen Hjordis Knudsen

SEATTLE, WA – You may have noticed these wee critters popping up now and then throughout the pages of WESTERN VIKING, possibly with Alf Prøysen's beloved children's song Bolla Pinnsvin, or in the perhaps mystifying ad promoting the Hedgehog Welfare Society (HWS).

The HWS is an organization formed to protect African hedgehogs by offering their persons education, information, advice and rescue activities. In a recent interview with WESTERN VIKING, HWS Chief Volunteer Officer Jennifer Plombon shared its humble beginnings. The HWS primarily works to increase the awareness of what these precious creatures require. At the same time, HWS seeks to find good and safe homes to the unfortunately increasing number of hedgehogs who have wound up in inexperienced hands. These animals are often 'impulse purchases' from pet stores, the attraction quickly wears off, and they are left to live a very restricted life. "The founders saw that many pet hedgehogs were abandoned or given up due to lack of knowledge about their care, lack of resources to care for them, or to lack of desire to keep them. The HWS wanted to make sure these hedgehogs were cared for

or re-homed if possible," she stated. The basis for HWS is to give the hedgehogs here today the best possible care, and to do everything possible to prevent irresponsible breeding and careless/thoughtless selling.

The HWS is a 501c3 organization, going to the 'trouble' of all the IRS certification 'red tape' for two reasons, according to Vicki

heartwarming rescue tales, educational information, and great photos. There is also an online bulletin-board group where members can post via email about hedgehog – or the occasional other animal – related issues, and seek assistance from other hedgehog guardians. The HWS also offers Care Packages to persons adopting rescued hedgehogs.



A couple of Finnish hedgehog 'locals' check out the first-class accommodations built by Tiina Kuuteri's husband

McLean, HWS Chief Organizing Officer. The first is that bona-fide non-profit organizations such as HWS – with a determination letter from the IRS – do not have to pay income taxes to the federal or state government. The second is that contributions to the HWS are deductible on schedule A of your personal income tax return and can also be used as a deduction for some businesses. The purpose of this tax exemption and deduction is to give preference to organizations that are doing work that the government would have to do if the non-profits such as HWS and the Humane Society didn't do it.

Wealth of resources

Via its website, HWS offers many resources in the form of links to an online store, the USDA for licensing information, rescue sites, and a country-wide listing of veterinarians (many with the hard-to-find hedgehog experience); along with an online newsletter that is packed with fun stories,

There is a site called Quills and Comfort that collects names of pets who have died, sending condolence cards and offering a candlelight ceremony – The Circle of Light Memorial – drawing participants throughout the world.

The HWS sponsors hedgehog shows that bring people together and give their hedgehogs an opportunity to participate in athletic events and costume shows. Yes, there are hedgehogs that like to parade around in costumes. Not many, though the costumes are always incredibly inspired! The shows offer and sponsor educational talks by experienced animal guardians and veterinarians, with speakers and participants often teaching each other. "Best of all, through our Internet connections, many of us feel that we can travel almost anywhere in the world and find a hedgehog fan with whom to visit!" Jennifer explains.



These Euro-hedgegies are without a doubt in good hands at St. Tiggywinkles!

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Photo © Les Stocker M.B.E.

HWS Membership

For some members, HWS “sounded like some good work was being done and I like the mission, so I joined,” as Deb Weaver of Milwaukee, WI told WESTERN VIKING. Others, such as WESTERN VIKING subscriber Naomi Wikane of Schoharie NY “already owned hedgies and was part of the hedgehog community when HWS was formed. I knew some of the organizers, trusted them and felt there was a need for a group that would focus on the well being of companion hedgehogs through rescue, research and education of the people who care for them.”

Naomi went on to share a bit about the passion inspired by these quilled wonders and the organization that exists for their benefit. “I’m really proud of HWS and the work we do. We have established ourselves as a credible organization through the fruits of our work. We have become part of the international hedgehog community in several ways, including Euro-Awareness activities and participation recently in the European Hedgehog Research Group conference in Germany by HWS Treasurer Dr. Donnasue Graesser. Hedgehogs were introduced into the USA as pets. They need special care. They need us. We have a responsibility to them, and HWS helps accomplish this.”

In New Jersey, Elana Adler “joined because I was interested in rescue and wanted to be involved with a group who was more focused on hedgehogs and their care, needs and rescue, rather than some of the other organizations.”

“I think that anyone who is interested in learning more about hedgehogs would benefit from this group. It really gives a good idea of all the not-so-fun things that can happen to your hedgehog. I think knowing about illnesses that an animal can

get is important before you bring one home. The list is also excellent in education regarding care, housing etc,” Elana explained.

Vicki McLean of Salem OR told WESTERN VIKING “I believe in the need to help educate people about the needs of hedgehogs and to help find homes for hedgehogs that have been abused or neglected. Or, in the case of the European ones, that need special assistance from humans to survive in the hostile world we have created.”

Actually having a hedgehog as a pet is not a requirement for HWS membership. According to Vicki, “I would think a person who believed in animal rescue, research and education would enjoy participating in HWS. The funds go to a worthy cause in helping hedgehogs in Europe and America to remain healthy and loved.”

Global effort

In a world that is so filled with conflicts, it is wonderful to be a part of a global, internationally cooperative effort where everyone – regardless of religion, race or social status – works together towards the same goal... to improve the hedgehogs’ existence. This concerns both African hedgehogs – which many people have as pets – and their ‘cousins’ the European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*.

Kirsten van Oosterhout lives in Denmark, and serves as chairman of Pindsvinehjælpen, a Danish hedgehog rescue organization. She is a hedgehog rescuer and helps hedgehogs, which for one reason or another cannot survive on their own for a certain period. Babies who have lost their mother and require bottle-feeding, hedgehogs injured by garden equipment or automobiles – the list of dangers faced each and every day goes on and on. After rehabilitation, the hedgehogs are released back in to their natural habitat via recognized ‘safe’ gardens.

Kirsten receives countless emails daily from all over Europe – a great number of them from Norway – people who have discovered a hedgehog in need, and required direction on how best to help. She has also assisted Pinnsvinenes Velforening in Stavanger Norway.

Animals have always been a passion of Kirsten’s – from the time when as a little girl she took in her first abandoned baby bird, through the years volunteering at an animal hospital, to the present time where it is the curious animal hedgehog which receives her love and attention.

Through the Internet, Kirsten connected with the HWS, an organization whose ideals and beliefs reflect Kirsten’s own personal opinions where animal welfare is concerned. After joining the efforts of HWS, Kirsten became aware of the increasing number of African hedgehogs found in Denmark – and all of Europe – without decent basic care, and she started her own little assistance program, strongly supported by the HWS in North America. Alongside her work on behalf of European hedgehogs in Pindsvinehjælpen, Kirsten assists their African ‘cousins’ with either hands-on or verbal care to get them healthy and stabilized before finding them good and stable homes.

To her great pleasure, HWS came up with a fantastic idea – the month of July was designated as “Euro-month”, in support of the European hedgehog organizations. Through e-bay auctions, sales through the online HWS Ruby’s Rescue Shop, and private donations ‘adopting’ European hedgehogs, among other things, people from the US, Canada and throughout Europe worked closely together in support of these precious creatures. Adoptions provided the donor with a photo of the adopted ‘child’, along with regular updates of the hedgehog’s condition. The results were

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Hagrid was abandoned by his mom and almost drowned!



Maurita "adopted" Kima, whose injured leg had to be amputated.

overwhelming; with nearly \$1,000 donated via adoptions alone – all in the name of helping European hedgehogs. New and valued contacts were made, with considerable experience and ideas on care being exchanged across international borders and language barriers.

Participating rescue organizations included the Danish Pindsvinehjælpen, The Finnish Hedgehog Society Suomen Siilyhdistys ry, St Tiggywinkle's Hospital in Haddenham England, The Fylde Hedgehog Rescue Trust of Lancashire UK and the West Bretton Hedgehog Rescue in South Yorkshire UK.

When asked about the interest of Americans in European hedgehogs – “Aren't there enough needy African hedgehogs right here within our borders?” Jennifer explained “Indeed there are. In fact, given that the HWS has found new homes for over 500 hedgehogs since it was founded, some might argue that there are too many within our own borders! However, from its beginning, there have been European members in the organization. American and Canadian HWS members love to read the stories of European hedgehogs helped and released, and of babies fostered and fed.”

She continued, “The goal of European ‘carers’ is different from that of the HWS, in the sense that they do not consider hedgehogs to be pets, and once helped, the goal is release. It is the same as that of the HWS in the sense that we all wish to help animals and provide them with the best care and assistance and habitat possible for them.”

“It was a priceless experience to see how HWS members have actively supported this project for European hedgehogs,” Kirsten told WESTERN VIKING. She continued, “This is clearly a sign that – even in a busy and hectic world – many people concern themselves with more than what is found in their own back yard.”

Actions speak louder than words

Jennifer was personally involved in the Euro-adoption, as one who really backs up her talk with action. She explained the cross-cultural connection, “I felt that what the European ‘carers’ do is very consistent with the HWS’s goal of helping hedgehogs – all hedgehogs – wherever they might live. As the seamstress for the Care Packages, I made and donated large snuggly bags and hiding hats for the European Rescues to offer to their cold, scared, needy hedgehogs.”

When asked why they participated in the Euro-adoption program, the explanations were as varied as the people questioned. ‘Sounding neat’ when described, and being ‘affordable’ made it an attractive project. Naomi approached the effort with a pre-existing European background – “I’m interested in the welfare of hedgehogs world-wide and own quite a few European books about hedgehogs. I was aware of rescue work in Great Britain and Denmark and other countries and wanted to help in some small way.”

Elana was enticed “because I could give money to my favorite cause – hedgies in need – and help an animal in another country. It was kind of neat to fund an animal across the ocean, and the money certainly goes directly to them.” Vicki’s interest seemed to address the ‘man vs. animal’ imbalance. “I think it is important to support the goals of the larger cousins of our little African buddies. European hedgehogs are having a rough time against fertilizers, Firestone tires and other human inventions. They need human assistance to make up for human damage to their environment,” she explained to WESTERN VIKING.

Benefits of Euro-adoption

Even having suffered the loss of her beloved hedgehog Gabby just days earlier, Deb’s joy in helping Euro-hedgehogs came through as she told of her experience. “It was fun hearing about my adoptee and what was going on with her. Magnolia was finally released back to the wild with a male hedgie. It was also educational to learn what England does for the Euros.” And yes, she looks forward to this year’s adoption program. “HWS and its ‘driving members’ ROCK!” she concluded.

Naomi told of the connection made which spanned the Atlantic with her Euro-adoption. “I made friends with the person running the

rescue. I adopted a specific hedgie and named him Ed. I received his photo and updates as to his recovery. He was released back into the wild. I felt connected.” She, too, looks forward to this year’s adoptions.

Elana felt that while the Euro-adoption program was intended to benefit the European hedgehogs, she received invaluable benefits at the same time. “I learned more about Euro hedgies, their care, their needs and the risks that they have as a wild animal, as compared to our pampered house pets. I’d love to do it again. It was so cool to be able to help. I loved watching my hedgie grow and reading the wonderful emails that his rescuer sent me about him. I really felt like I had another hedgehog.”

Vicki perhaps best covered both ‘extremes’ of the benefits from Euro-adoption. “I enjoy the camaraderie of friends helping our little quilly friends. I like the sense of belonging and the feeling I’ve helped our friends in different clothing in some small ways.

“Besides, the pictures were adorable.”

If you find yourself somewhere in Europe, and happen to meet a European hedgehog on your evening walk, rejoice in your good fortune – maybe this particular hedgehog is one of the countless creatures that benefited from the HWS Euro-month.



Elana "adopted" Hagrid and helped him grow big and strong.

Kirsten concluded her interview with “Med ønsket om en god sommer... såvel for dyr som WESTERN VIKING lesere” – best wishes for a good summer... for animals as well as WESTERN VIKING readers.

If you would like to know more about hedgehogs, or are inspired to get involved with these precious little ‘pin-cushions’, visit the Hedgehog Welfare Society web site at www.hedgehogwelfare.org

Kirsten and the Danish Hedgehog Help organization can be contacted by phone at +45 76 96 81 00 or on the Internet at www.pindsvineplejerne.dk



Releasing Rehabilitated Hedgehogs: *A study*

Editor's Note: This paper was first presented by Janet Peto at the 6th EHRG Workshop (Münster, Germany April 2004). Janet sends Thanks to DFDS Transport, Spike's World, and Wildaid for sponsoring her trip to Germany to present this work. She also extends a "Thank You" to all the Hedgehog Welfare carers who help care for the hedgehogs and the members of the general public who helped carry out this study. Without them none of this would be possible. Janet's organization is also called Hedgehog Welfare. She can be contacted at: ehrg.members@virgin.net

This is not so much a scientific study, but a study that came about more as a case of necessity when a hedgehog hospital had the need to take in more animals than it could manage.

Background

In 1996, Hedgehog Welfare suddenly grew from handling fewer than 700 hedgehogs one year to 1,863 hedgehogs the next. Not wanting to turn hedgehogs away, with no other carers in the area, and with Hedgehog Welfare's commitment to maintaining its high standard of care, this sudden surge caused a dilemma.

Hedgehog Welfare's Standards of care (Pre-1997)

- All hedgehogs must be kept individually caged (except nestlings from the same family).
- No hedgehog carer may care for more than one set of nestlings or more than three individual hedgehogs. (This ensured that all animals were closely monitored and that each carer was not overloaded and enjoyed what he/she was doing, without it taking over their lives completely).
- All animals, irrespective of the time of the year or weather, were released not less than their hibernation weight (in Great Britain this being 450 gms). In fact many of the Hedgehog Welfare carers wanted to ensure that their animals had "a good start", so very often the animals were not released until they weighed 500-550 gms.
- All hedgehogs must be released where they were found, except where the actual site was no longer available, or if it was a cruelty or dog bite case, in which event they must be released in the same type of area and situation.



6 day old hoglets

These standards in practise meant that animals were in care for a long time, and winters were always a problem. Some very small nestlings, found in August/September, had not reached hibernation weight by mid-October, the latest time for releasing, and had to be over-wintered even though they were perfectly healthy.

Questions

In desperation, with no other alternative than to turn away hedgehogs or have them put to sleep (better than letting them suffer in the wild), it was time to question the standards, particularly in respect to releasing the animals. Experienced carers from other organisations and vets from wildlife hospitals were questioned, and they followed much the same release weight standards or released at even higher weights, some as much as 750-1000gms. When asked

how these criteria had been arrived at, no one seemed to know, and it seems that "we have always done it that way" was the typical response. Hedgehog Welfare asked the following questions of its own procedure.

1. An animal is fully recovered; it is fit and well but has not reached 450gms. Why do we keep it until it is at hibernation weight, if hibernation is several months away and wild hedgehogs that are free are the same weight or less?
2. If a hand-reared animal is eating well, able to build a nest, and hunt for food, why do we not release it until it is hibernation weight, when wild hedgehogs of the same size (or less) had left the nest and were fending for themselves out in the wild? The wild free hedgehogs were also learning life skills when food was at its most plentiful.

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3. As the climate was still warm, no ground frosts, food was still in plentiful supply, sometimes more plentiful than during the height of the summer, and wild hedgehogs were still about, why do we not continue releasing after mid-October?
4. Why do we not release when it rained? OK, you got wet, but did it really affect the hedgehog being released? Slugs, snails and worms could be found more easily in the rain.

New Criteria

No real answers to these questions were found, so new release criteria were set. Hedgehogs would be released much sooner, but would be monitored at the release site by the general public, which forms the basis of this study. The following are the new criteria used for releasing:

- The animal must be fit and well, tested for parasites—not necessarily completely clear—but in good condition and putting on weight regularly.
- The animal must have been kept outside for at least 7 days either in a rabbit hutch, wired run, or walled garden. The animal must be eating well -- a mixture of dried hedgehog food, cat food, and a little natural food where possible. The animal must be able to gather material and construct a nest with materials provided, but not put in a nest box.

- The release would be a soft release. Dry hedgehog food would be provided under cover until it was no longer being taken. A release box would be provided so that the animal, initially, had a dry nest and dry bedding until they were ready to move to another nest site. A typical release box would be a 30-45cm square cardboard box covered in thick plastic (bin liner) to keep it dry, filled with hay and strips of newspapers, and a 15cm hole cut in the box for the animal to escape through. The animal would be placed in the release box, which would be installed at the release site at least two hours before dusk with the escape hole blocked off. About one hour before dusk the small strip of cardboard blocking the release hole would be removed very quietly without moving the box.

- Most weather conditions would be acceptable for release provided wild hedgehogs were still about and common sense was used in releasing hedgehogs under 400gm during the harshest winter months. Hedgehogs were not released in very long hot dry spells, as food is not abundant.
- The released animal would be marked (correcting fluid on the spines) and monitored by the original finder of the hedgehog (a member of the general public).
- The animals were to be released as soon as they met the criteria.

The study was carried out because Hedgehog Welfare had concerns about releasing animals into the wild at such low weights. It was felt that if they could get some of the healthy animals released, this would provide space for more hedgehogs in need of care.

The study was carried out from early September 1996 to January 1997 (when the wild hedgehogs went into hibernation). Finders of the hedgehogs were urged to help by continuing to care for the hedgehog after it was released. All were very keen to help. They often telephoned to check on their hedgehog's progress, and the hedgehog was going back with them to where it was found. This is also very important, as it keeps the balance of hedgehogs in the area correct. They all had a little basic training, e.g. health and safety, handling, and problems to look out for. These short training sessions (10-15 people from the same area), which were held about 5-10 days before a hedgehog was due to be released, were very useful in many ways. The group became friends, stayed in contact with each other, and if anyone went away on holiday, one of the other members of the group would call in to feed and put out water. Several of these original finders are now regular hedgehog carers.

The training was confirmed with written instructions, which were given out when the hedgehog was picked up for release. These instructions and the training explained the

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Same hoglets at 15 days old

importance of monitoring the release of the hedgehog(s), as these hedgehogs were to be included in a study for new release criteria. It was unsure if hedgehogs could cope with being released so soon, so the finders were asked to telephone immediately if they were at all worried about their hedgehog(s). They were also asked to weigh the hedgehog after one week. If the hedgehog had gained weight, they were weighed again in one month's time. If the hedgehog had not gained any weight or lost weight, to weigh it again in another week's time, but to telephone in after each time the animal was weighed. They were asked not to pick up or approach the animal at all in between weighing sessions unless the hedgehog was to come back into care. The hedgehogs' weights were recorded on the animals' original patient record sheet after each telephone call. Everyone was warned that hedgehogs do not always stay on their release site and that they may not be able to find the hedgehog(s) to monitor and weigh them.

Results of the Study

306 hedgehogs monitored

6 sets of 5 nestlings when they came into care
2 sets of 4 nestlings when they came into care
8 sets of 3 nestlings when they came into care
14 sets of 2 nestlings when they came into care
(All nestlings weighed between 205-260 gms when released)

64 juvenile male hedgehogs

82 juvenile female hedgehogs

(All juvenile hedgehogs weighed between 215-300 gms when released)

41 adult male hedgehogs

29 adult female hedgehogs

(All adult hedgehogs weighed less than 375 gms when released)

After one week

190 hedgehogs put on weight.

61 hedgehogs could not be found.

25 hedgehogs lost weight but all the weight

loss was less than 30 gms.

30 hedgehogs showed no change in weight.

After two weeks

Of the 25 hedgehogs who lost weight,

- 20 had increased their weight to more than the original release weight.
- 2 had increased their weight to their release weight.
- 3 hedgehogs could not be found.

Of the 30 hedgehogs whose weight remained the same,

- 26 had increased their weight from the release weight by more than 50 gms.
- 3 had increased their weight but by less than 50 gms.
- 1 hedgehog could not be found.

Of the 61 hedgehogs who could not be found to be weighed in the first week,

- 41 were found in weeks 2 or 3 and had all put on weight (Some of these were found because neighbours had been involved and someone else found the hedgehogs).

After one month

Of the 216 hedgehogs that were still around the release sites (or neighbours' gardens), all had increased their weight by more than 100 gms. and appeared in good condition (All of these hedgehogs were re-marked, so that they could continue to be weighed and monitored at least every 4-6 weeks).

None of the released hedgehogs used the release box after the second night, (but 82 of the boxes were being used by other hedgehogs).

6 hedgehogs had to come back into care, as finders were concerned that the animals had appeared during the day and were not putting on weight. All these animals were released after 10 days care (outside) and then they increased their weight in the first week.

1 hedgehog died 14 days after release, but had been one of the hedgehogs who had increased its weight in the first week. From inspection of the body it was evident that the hedgehog had been attacked by another animal.

3 hedgehogs were found dead on the road from road traffic accidents (all after the first month). The bodies were weighed in two of the three cases, and their body weight had increased since the last time they had been weighed.

After six months

Reports of 178 of the hedgehogs all doing well and still around the release site (or neighbours' gardens).

Three years on

76 hedgehogs still around the release sites.

Conclusions

It is safe to release hedgehogs that are not of hibernation weight, so long as natural food is about and common sense is used. Finders are still requested to monitor the animals after their release and to report back if they are worried at all.

Using the general public in a simple study is a good idea. It increases their awareness of the animal's needs and gives each of them a feeling that he or she has helped a hedgehog back on its feet.

Releasing hedgehogs earlier gives carers time to care for other hedgehogs to a higher standard, and reduces the risks to animals being kept in over-crowded and unmonitored conditions. It also gets the hedgehog back into the wild sooner, therefore causing less stress to the animal. 🐾



What's in store at
Ruby's Rescue Shop?

Check it out at
www.hedgehogwelfare.org
Proceeds go to rescue, research
and education

Keychains, jewelry, postcards, clothing, bags, food & treats and much more!

The Story of Willow (and Sweetpea, Rose, and Mum)

by Janet Peto, Hedgehog Welfare, Newark, United Kingdom

We hope that you will remember the following story, although in parts very sad, and the next time you are gardening you will think about our little hoglets (baby hedgehogs), Willow, Sweetpea, and Rose, and how they came into our care.

On Thursday, 19 June 2002 in a local Churchyard, it was organised that all the rubbish that had been dumped there would be removed. A local Company seconded some volunteers to take on the exercise to clear up the Churchyard.

It was a warm summer's day and everyone was working well. While clearing a large pile of garden/churchyard waste, Mum Hedgehog was accidentally stabbed with a pitchfork, through the chest. She lived only a few minutes after the accident. The volunteers were extremely upset, but realised that they had disturbed a nest and set about finding the hoglets immediately. They could not do anything for Mum Hedgehog, but they hoped that they could save her family. They found three little hoglets, all pink.

The volunteers immediately contacted someone who cared for all sorts of animals. She told them that the hoglets must be kept warm and out of the sun. They must be placed in a small box lined with newspaper and soft tissues. She suggested a lemonade bottle filled with hot water to keep them warm, and something over the box to keep the flies off them. It was this early action that can make the difference between raising hoglets or losing them.

Hedgehog Welfare was contacted, and the hoglets were taken into care. On examination it was found that the pitchfork had also stabbed 'little Rose'. We cleaned up her wound, which was the full length of her little body. We knew that, as she was so small, we had little chance of raising her. Although, she had movement in both her front and back legs on the side of the injury, and she was taking her feeds well, so we



had to give her a chance. On Friday evening she refused her feed, being so small her little body could not fight off the infection. She was very sick. We tried to save her, but she became so sick. Rather than let her suffer any longer, she was put to sleep later that evening. She was almost on her last breath. Putting an animal to sleep is something we find very difficult to do, but we always have to put the hedgehog first. Sometimes it is the kindest thing to do for the animals.

The hoglets were less than 12 hours old when we found them. Willow and Sweetpea (a male and female) fed well, every 2.5 – 3 hours for about four weeks. The carer at the time got up at 02:30 on early morning to feed the hoglets and found little Sweetpea dead. After caring for the hoglets for so long, it is terrible when you lose one. We look after hoglets in sort of shifts, so we never have more than two nights when we have to get up. We all work other jobs, and therefore cannot cope with too many nights of getting up several times. One of the carers works on shifts anyway, and he sometimes feeds during the night, then someone else feeds during the day. That is the best of both worlds, but as the carer does not really like the night shift, it does not always work out that he is working nights when we have really small hoglets to feed.

We had a problem for a while with both the hoglets. They were feeding but not putting on weight. We think it was stress. When Sweetpea was examined post-mortem, we found several things wrong, which could have been caused by stress soon after birth. But, the main cause of death was that she was unable to digest her food, as her stomach was not formed correctly. So, even in the

wild, Sweetpea would not have lived for long.

I am very pleased to say that Willow was released in the garden of one of the carers who helped look after him. This is not usually done, but the Churchyard where Willow was found was cleaned and had not any untidy corners that could serve as homes for our hedgehog. The garden where Willow was released backed on to a different Churchyard. It is a similar type of area where we knew there are several hedgehogs about.

This meant we could not release any more hedgehogs to that site for at least 12 months. We did not want to upset the balance of hedgehogs in the area and cause either the released hedgehog or the resident hedgehogs to move out of the area to find food. Hedgehogs on the move often cross roads, and we all know how dangerous this can be. We are very careful how and where we release hedgehogs. It is always best to release them back where they were found as it keeps the balance correct.

Although the above was a terrible accident, everyone did what should have been done, as quickly as possible. With little hoglets, which were so small, it is this action that makes all the difference.

Please make something good come out of this accident. Remember our hoglets. Willow is now happy eating lots of slugs and snails (and often returns to the carer's garden to help himself to hedgehog food left out, just in case any hedgehogs are a bit hungry). Remember little Rose, who died so early on, and Sweetpea, who would not even have survived in the wild. And, please don't forget their Mum who died so quickly after such an awful accident. Although this doesn't apply to those in North America, but if you are in Europe, when you are gardening and cleaning up, be sure to check old piles of rubbish first. In summer it could be a nest with young, and in autumn or winter it could be a hibernating hedgehog. Please take care.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. 🐾

American Adventures *in Denmark*

by *Donnasue Graesser, Willington, CT, USA*

This past April, I had the opportunity of a lifetime (although I hope it wasn't a ONCE in a lifetime opportunity) to visit with our European friends, Kis and Paul vanOosterhout in Denmark, following the European Hedgehog Research Group (EHRG) conference in Münster, Germany. I have been told that "on every holiday, you must have an adventure", and we had plenty of them! I cannot possibly begin to describe all the great times we had, but I thought I would highlight were some of my favorites (and one travel nightmare!)



A real Danish meal

My least favorite adventure occurred the moment our plan started down the runway to take off. The plane suddenly stopped short on the runway and was almost immediately surrounded by fire-trucks. Apparently, there was an engine fire. Although it delayed our flight over 24 hours, at least the fire didn't happen 20 minutes later while we were in the air! And, although we had our 15-month old son, Simon, along with us, at least we were not

as bad off as another couple who had 6-month old twins. A day later, we finally, sleepily, stumbled into the EHRG conference hotel. It was well worth the wait, but I will forever be disappointed that I missed a day at the conference.

My most accomplished adventure was finding our way from Münster, Osnabrück Airport to the EHRG conference hotel. We had to take 2 buses through the country-side of Germany, and neither of our drivers spoke a word of English. We made it just in time to visit with my old Yale roommate, who lives in Germany and traveled by train to meet us. We enjoyed a 45 minute chat before she had to catch her train back to Duisburg!

My most humbling adventure was participating in the EHRG conference. I was privileged to listen to inspirational seminars and learned so much from so many people. I met scientists and "carers" who were not only brilliant, but extraordinarily nice people. Janet Peto, Ulli Seewald, Juergen from Germany (sorry I don't know your last name), Hugh Warwick, Nigel Reeve, Barbara who always had a smile on her face, Beate Johansen, and so many others.

My most tasty adventure was the food in Germany and Denmark! We had dinner at a quaint inn in Germany, and a fellow-EHRG participant helped us to translate the menu. We had moose meat and a mushroom broth.....Hmmm....you just don't get food like that here in the USA. And the breakfast and lunch spreads at the hotel were equally as scrumptious! The food in Denmark was incredible as well. Kis "prepared" for us

some authentic Danish food that was just perfect at midnight after a long drive back from Germany. And, we also had some typical "Danish" pizza (check out the photo). And, of course, a visit with Paul was not complete with sharing a tasty bottle of Trockenbeerenauslese. Now I know what all the fuss was about!

My most "cheesy" adventure was going to a cheese shop in Denmark with Paul. A week or so earlier, this tiny shop won the award of "The Best Blue Cheese in the World." Unfortunately, the shop was closed. But, lucky for us, nothing stops Paul van O. He disappeared into the back of the building, and emerged several minutes later with a big hunk of cheese for us. Our only customs claim coming back into the USA.



The best nocturnal adventure was visiting the barn where Kis's hibernating hedgegies go for the winter. A very kind woman by the name of Victoria owns the barn. Although I'm sure this was very mundane for some of the European carers, it was surreal to me! It was dark and spooky. Such a huge barn! So many hedgegies scampering around the barn. FAT hedgegies! Thank goodness for folks like Kis and Victoria who give these hedgegies a safe place to winter.

Carl had his own adventure, helping to nurse a cold little hedgehog, who we named Carla, back to health. Kis wrote a story



Kis and a barn hog

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Victoria and Chubby

about Carla, also in this newsletter. Just being able to meet all the hedgies at Kis's house, and see how she cares for them, was an experience neither Carl nor I will ever forget.

Our "community" adventure was the webcam visit that Paul set up with our American friends. Lots of people from the hedgehog lists got a true taste of Paul's sense of humor. And, they all got to meet Ciko, the hedgedog.

The BEST adventure of all was meeting Kis and Paul, their wonderful daughter Rinnie, and grandkids Casper, Christina, and Nanna C. Even though the kids and I do not speak the same language, we all spoke the two universal languages: hedgehogs and CHOCOLATE! From the moment we arrived in Europe, Kis and Paul showered us with generosity, good humor, hugs, and adventures galore. Paul took us to see places in Denmark that we would never have found on our own. They got us safely on a train back to Germany. We still had a few days left in Europe, but the best of times we definitely left behind in Denmark. We look forward to Adventures Part II, as soon as Simon is old enough to appreciate Lego Land! 🐾



Simon and Carl in Ribe

Hoofbeats

In our continuing series of articles about unusual medical conditions in hedgehogs, we introduce Tatter. Tatter's illness, diabetes, is not extraordinarily rare in hedgehogs, but her treatment was truly extraordinary! Shonda treated Tatter's diabetes with homeopathic remedies sent all the way from England.

Meet TATTER, our diabetic hedgie!

by Shonda Statini, USA

In memory of Tatter our little pioneer for diabetic animals everywhere.

Who would have thought that a tiny, unwanted, unloved, and neglected hedgehog could end up making history in the homeopathic world? Well, our Tatter did! Thanks to one incredible man named Andrew Berwitz, a homeopathic pharmacist in England.

Little Tatter came to us as a rescue hedgehog. Lucky for Tatter, a girl named Diane Sheppard in Tennessee snatched her from a life of despair. Diane had heard of me on a hedgehog e-mail list in regards to Charlotte Mae, my WHS hedgie. Diane tracked me down, and offered to give me this poor unloved hedgie. How could I refuse? I was honored that someone I had never heard of thought enough about my care of my animals to track me down in another state and ask me to give Tatter a home.

When Tatter came to us, we could tell that her diet was not the best. She was frightened and extremely insecure. Her little ears had the worst case of "tattered" ends I had ever seen in all my life. I have heard that in extreme cases of tattered ears, they sometimes remain tattered even with the best of care. Hence, I named her Tatter. Together, Tatter and Andrew Berwitz pioneered the way to help future diabetic hedgehogs and other animals as well.

How do you know your hedgehog is diabetic?

One indicator that your hedgehog may be diabetic is that he/she is drinking an enormous amount of water. Tatter would



Tatter strikes a pose

drink almost a full bottle of water in a week, which led me to believe she might be diabetic. Most (not all) of my hedgies drink less than 1/2 a bottle of water in a week.

If you suspect your hedgie is diabetic, don't panic. First, take your hedgie to your veterinarian. The veterinarian will run a urine analysis and blood work to test for diabetes. It would also be a good idea to run a complete urinalysis and blood tests to see if there are other possible problems. Tatter was not only diabetic, but her tests also indicated liver problems. Tatter's liver issues were also corrected without traditional medications. To learn more, please see "Tatter's Story" at: <http://www.angelfire.com/oh3/hedgiesandus/TatterDiabeticHedgehog.html>).

If the test shows that your hedgie is diabetic, once again, don't panic because I have already done that for you, LOL! I have already panicked and found all the help you will need.

A Homeopathic Miracle Man

For Tatter, we consulted with a wonderful man named Andrew Berwitz. Andrew is the homeopathic pharmacist for the Welsh Hedgehog Hospital. Not only does Andrew treat animals of all kinds, he treats people as well. In fact he has treated many terminally ill cancer patients. If it weren't for Andrew, my Tatter would have never made it past the age of four, much less another year. My

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Tatter was a full blown diabetic - not borderline - but full blown.

In order to consult with Andrew about your hedgehog, you will first need a clear copy of your hedgehog's blood and urine values from your veterinarian. You can either scan and e-mail this information to Andrew, or explain it to him over the phone. Here is how you can contact Andrew:

E-mail: homeopathyheals@aol.com
 Andrew Berwitz
 1 Burned House Cottage
 Bucklow Hill Lane, Mere,
 Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 6LD
 England

His phone number is 011-44-1565-830-700. Because you will need to act fast, I would suggest you call Andrew instead of e-mailing him. Please be aware of the time zone differences between your region and England when you call.

In Tatter's case, Andrew made homeopathic insulin for her that he shipped over to us. In addition to the homeopathic insulin, he worked via e-mail with a compounding pharmacy nearby us that also sells homeopathic remedies. With Andrew's recommendations and a great pharmacy staff at 1st American Drugs, three remedies, in addition to the homeopathic insulin, were created for Tatter. 1st American Drugs also worked hard to create a flavor (apple) that

would make the remedies taste better for Tatter, with no change in effectiveness.

Change in Diet

Now that tests have confirmed your hedgehog is diabetic, and you have placed your call / e-mail to Andrew, the next step is to examine your hedgehog's diet. Diet is everything when you have a diabetic hedgehog.

I would recommend two foods for a diabetic hedgehog. One is a prescription cat diet by Hill's called W/D. The other brand is Select Care, by Innovative Veterinary Diets, Hi Factor Formula. Both of these foods are made for diabetic and/or overweight cats. You can only get this food from your veterinarian's office. A diabetic hedgehog can also have mealworms (as treats only - they are high in fat), boiled turkey, chicken, and non-sugary veggies. Sorry, no fruits. It is very important that your hedgehog does not get chubby or fat. Just as in a diabetic person, becoming overweight will make the situation worse. A hedgehog-safe wheel is a must have for exercise for a diabetic hedgehog.

Monitoring for Life

Once your diabetic hedgehog starts on homeopathic treatment and an appropriate diet, he/she will need to have another set of blood and urine tests in a few weeks at your veterinarian's office. Once normal glucose levels have been attained, the hedgehog's

glucose levels can be monitored with home urine test strips. This will need to be done routinely for the rest of the hedgehog's life span. The urine test strips can be ordered through a veterinarian or at a pharmacy. This monitoring will give advance warning of a problem before symptoms appear and the hedgehog starts to decline.

Homeopathic History

Thanks to Andrew Berwitz's wonderful dedication to animals and his holistic remedies, little Tatter lived a long, normal life, full of love, with us. Also because of Andrew's wonderful remedies, Tatter is making history in the homeopathic world over in England. When Andrew gives speeches at the universities in the UK, Tatter is one of the topics he discusses.

Here is a quote from an e-mail from Andrew, regarding his work with Tatter:

"When in Oxford last week visiting the UK's only specialist diabetes hospital, I mentioned little Tatter and how you had cared for her with our homeopathic remedies. So there you are, Tatter has been discussed in the foremost hospitals for diabetes in the UK if not the world. What a star she is." - Andrew Berwitz.

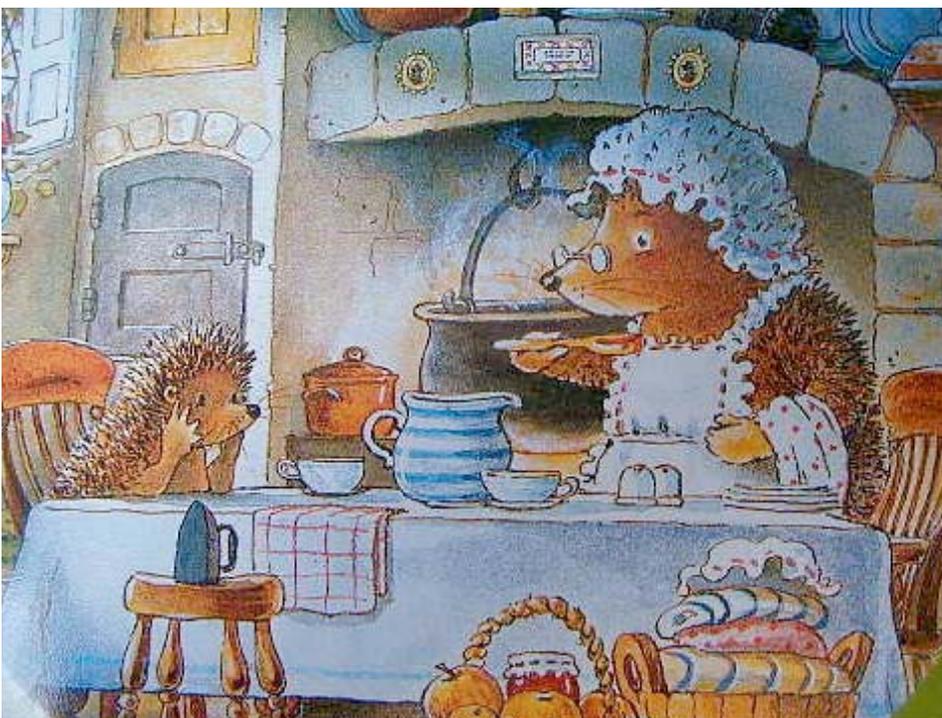
By the way, after a good diet and about a month or so, little Tatter's ears became velvety soft and smooth. Her ears were just as pretty as she was --- inside and out.

To learn about Tatter's remarkable story and her extraordinary progress with us, please go to:

<http://www.angelfire.com/oh3/hedgiesandus/TatterDiabeticHedgehog.html>

Thanks to Diane Sheppard for saving little Tatter from a horrible life and bringing her to us. Thanks to 1st American Drugs for always going the extra mile in caring for our animals and for being willing to consult with others. If you would like to contact them, their phone number is 800-482-8466 (Give them my name, Shonda Statini, and they can look up our records)

And most of all, thanks to Andrew for making it possible for our little Tatter to live a full healthy life and leave this earth knowing what it was like to be cared for and loved very deeply. 🐾





Checking with the Vet Staff

A simple cold or something more sinister?

by Merel Rehorst, DVM, the Netherlands

Editor's Note: During European month, we are privileged to have a report of cardiomyopathy from a Dutch veterinarian, Dr. Merel Rehorst. She observed a case of cardiomyopathy in her African hedgehog, Dribbel. Dr. Rehorst will be relocating in August to the Ashleigh Veterinary Hospital in Manchester, United Kingdom. She is very interested in seeing hedgehog patients and doing routine ECG's and ultrasounds to examine normal heart structure and function and to detect cardiomyopathy.

During my veterinary training I worked at a hedgehog shelter, and have since been captivated by these little animals. When I was offered the opportunity to adopt an exotic hedgegie that needed rehoming I jumped at the chance.

During my final year at veterinary school I noticed that Dribbel was not as active as usual. His wheel was clean and instead of using his home he was hiding in a corner of his pen.

I wondered if the temperature in the room was high enough, so I moved the cage to a warmer spot. When I did a physical I could not find any problems with the exception that I had some trouble listening to his heart mainly because of Dribbel's irritation to be woke up during nap time (which is basically the whole day). Eating and drinking behaviour were normal and he was bright, alert, and very annoyed during the check-up. After a few days he seemed to be

perkling up a little bit so I didn't pay it much attention.

A week later Dribbel started wheezing, and had too much clear nasal discharge. It looked like a basic respiratory infection and I treated him with antibiotics before I went to the university. When I returned, Dribbel was hypoxic and dying with pinkish froth coming from his nose. Dribbel died shortly after I came home.



Dribbel among the flowers

Pathology showed that Dribbel had died of acute heart failure caused by cardiomyopathy, a condition in which the muscle of the heart becomes progressively weaker, and the heart is no longer able to provide a sufficient circulation. Changes in blood pressure cause a back-up of fluids in the tissue. Fluid build-up in the lungs can

result in coughing and wheezing.

What surprised me was that the onset of the disease looked so much like an ordinary respiratory infection, instead of the fatal disease that it was.

Cardiomyopathy may be relatively common in older hedgegies (> 1 year), sudden death being one of the main symptoms. Hedgegies with decreased activity should be checked for cardiomyopathy as soon as possible since the symptoms only occur when there is already damage to the heart. A thorax x-ray and an ultrasound should be included in the check up of hedgegies suspected to have cardiomyopathy. At this moment there are no reference values for hedgegies, but an evaluation of the thickness of the heart muscle and the volume of the heart chamber can confirm a suspicion of cardiomyopathy. If your hedgehog is diagnosed with cardiomyopathy it can be treated with drugs like Digoxine, Enalapril and Furosemide to support the heart and delay the deterioration of the heart muscle. It is very important to keep your hedgehog in an optimal condition; obesity will put an extra strain on your hedgegie's

heart that might speed the progression of the disease. 🐾

Literature:

Raymond, R.T, Garner, M.M.:

Cardiomyopathy in captive African hedgegies, J Vet Diagn in Vest 12(2000) 368-472

Hedgie Hero

Gioia Kerlin

This month, we reinstate our profiles of the Hedgie Heroes in our community. It's "European Hedgehog Awareness Month", so we decided to choose a pog person who is not only noteworthy, but also has ties to European culture, Gioia Kerlin. Gioia is academically accomplished, well respected in the hedgehog community, extremely loyal to her friends, a dedicated hedgie-mom, and well versed in the nuances of hedgehog poop—all the qualities that make her the perfect candidate for the title of "Hedgie Hero." Gioia has also lived in Europe (Spain) twice, although she was born in the good old USA in Iowa City, Iowa. She grew up in Iowa and Arizona, then went to graduate school in Boulder, Colorado. She currently lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at the University of Tulsa.



Gioia is the guardian and protector of eight hedgehogs: Suhail, Adara, Pi Saleh, Kalilah, Safiyya Pearl, Ifni Ajani, Jool, and Aliyya. Gioia also remembers Yasmina, who was "one of the World's Greatest Snugglers." Suhail is Gioia's first hedgehog, who came to live with her shortly after the 9/11 attacks. When they met, Suhail climbed right into Gioia's hand, and she knew they were a perfect match from the start. Suhail is an Arabic name that means "gentle." Gioia says about his name: "It felt like an appropriate social statement, given recent events and the subsequent violence that would be around the corner."

Gioia's love for her hedgies is obvious to all who know her. Sherry Songhurst expresses her admiration of Gioia and her hedgehogs: "I met Gioia at the 2001 Denver Show, where she found Suhail. He became the first of Gioia's lucky little herd! The care and attention she lavishes on her hedgehogs is remarkable. As a result, she has the tamest, sweetest, hedgies I have ever met."

The HWS community applauds Gioia, not only for her commitment to hedgehogs, but also for her constant, positive presence on the mailing lists. Jennifer Plombon, Chief Volunteer Officer of the HWS simply states "I just love Gioia! I always look forward to her posts on the list, and to seeing what each of her hedgehogs has to say. Gioia is always kind and thoughtful in her posts; it's obvious that she really thinks about how best to present information and share knowledge with the rest of us. She is always ready with a cyber-hug, or prayer, or word of comfort. We have spoken many times on the phone and she is just as kind and thoughtful 'in person.' But the best thing about Gioia is her clearly evident, and often

expressed, great, great love for the hedgehogs who share her life."

Jan Ernst adds: "I am really in awe of all of Gioia's accomplishments, and then to be such a loving, nice person on top of it. I'm so glad that she was picked to be in the Hero column."

Those of us in the hedgehog community proudly celebrated Gioia's successful defense of her Ph.D. this past April. Gioia describes the long and heroic route to her Ph.D.:

"I started college as a first-generation, non-traditional student after ten years of working at dead-end jobs like food service, gas station attendant, and service advisor/warranty clerk at a couple of motorcycle shops in Phoenix, Arizona. I had been in the motorcycle industry for about 4 years when the store hired a receptionist who was going to community college for a business degree. I thought to myself, 'Self, you used to be pretty smart. Maybe you could do something like that.' So I enrolled at Glendale Community College in 1990. To my surprise, I did very well. I was on a pre-physical therapy track, which turned into a pre-med track, which then morphed into Spanish -- simply because the MCAT exams for the year I was going to take them were requiring calculus, which was kicking my fanny. So, I allowed myself to be weeded out of the sciences and opted for Spanish, because I had fallen in love with Spanish after my first semester. I graduated with highest honors, and was chosen to translate GCC's graduation welcoming speech into Spanish, while a friend of mine gave it in English."

Gioia then went on to graduate with honors from Arizona State University, and was

accepted to graduate school in Boulder, Colorado. She says, "It's hard to know what to say about graduate school, other than 'It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.' I've never been in tears so often about anything else in my life, but I kept on doing it for some reason or another. I'm the first person on either side of my family to have graduated college with any sort of degree, so why not go for the gold?" Gioia received her Masters degree in 1996, and began her Ph.D. degree in 1997. She spent the year between teaching in Spain.

"If the Masters degree is like a 10k race, then the Ph.D. is one of those ultimate marathons where you keep going for 100 miles!" Gioia just crossed the finish line this past April. Congratulations Dr. Gioia Kerlin! Here is a little bit about what she spent those grueling, yet fulfilling, years studying:

"I chose a dissertation topic that I actually liked, just because I liked it, and because it was obscure and hadn't been beaten to death already. There was in fact only one chapter in one book that dealt specifically with my idea. I chose to research an historical work by a particular sixteenth-century Spanish author, named Miguel de Luna. Miguel was what we call today a "morisco", meaning that his family was descended from the Muslims who occupied the Peninsula for seven hundred years. He spoke Arabic fluently, and was one of the official court translators for Phillip II and Phillip III. What I liked about this fellow is that he used his position of authority as an employee of the court to forge a series of documents (one of which was the history I was researching). These documents portray the moriscos as valuable citizens of the Spanish crown and reclaim their sense of

pride and dignity as a community. Luna falsified these documents because the moriscos--his friends, neighbors and family--were being faced with cultural extinction and imminent expulsion at the hands of the Catholic monarchy. He basically defied the Inquisition, the Catholic Church, and the most powerful empire on earth at that time as he re-wrote the history of Spain as a country, shedding a positive light on Islamic civilization. I figure he deserved to be remembered by someone."

And, by the way, Gioia's hedgegie Yasmina was also instrumental in writing this dissertation. Yasmina "logged more lap time than any of the other hoggies while I was writing my dissertation. I don't think I could have done it without her."

Gioia has been to Spain for an extended period twice (so far). She tells us, "I've lived in an apartment at the foot of the Alhambra, which opened up to a postcard-like view of the fortress and the mountains, and in a cave (seriously!) dug into the Sacromonte next door to gypsies and flamenco dancers. While I was there the second time, I took an extended trip to Morocco. I traveled on a train (cheap train, not what Americans might normally like), where the "restroom" was just a hole in the floor (you could watch the track go by!), by a bus that broke down in the middle of the Sahara desert, and by camel. Morocco was a great experience, and the city of Marakesh was the absolute best. There was a plaza in Marakesh that came alive at night--I think it was called Djim-nal-fna, or something like that. Starting at dusk, people set up food stands and tents. There were dancers, trained monkeys, painters, magicians, story-tellers, jewelry vendors, henna artists, camel trains, music, tea shops, and just about anything else you can imagine, until the wee hours of the morning." Wow! I can just picture it!

Although I don't know if Gioia took advantage of those henna artists in Marakesh, she, like so many of our hedgegie-folks, has visited a tattoo studio once or twice. One of her tattoos is a geometrical design that she drew herself. The design represents "all the things I love most about Spain: the Islamic buildings like the Alhambra and the Great Mosque of Cordoba, grapes, flowers, cathedrals, etc." And, lots of various body piercings to go along with those tattoos!

Besides European travel and education, Gioia enjoys the finer things in life, such as cartoons! She is a self-proclaimed "junkie"

for shows like the Simpsons, King of the Hill, South Park, and Futurama. She also loves pink flamingos (the tackier the better!), echidnas, platypuses, and moles. She hopes to volunteer at the zoo in Tulsa in the near future if time permits. She figures so much of her day is spent cleaning poop anyway...

Pat Storm confirms Gioia's poop-cleaning talents. She says, "If Lori is the Poop Queen, then Gioia is the Poop Princess".

Gioia is a treasured asset in the hedgehog community. We all appreciate her kind words, sage advice, and stories of her spoiled hedgehogs. Even those of us who have not met Gioia personally, are touched by her loving spirit.

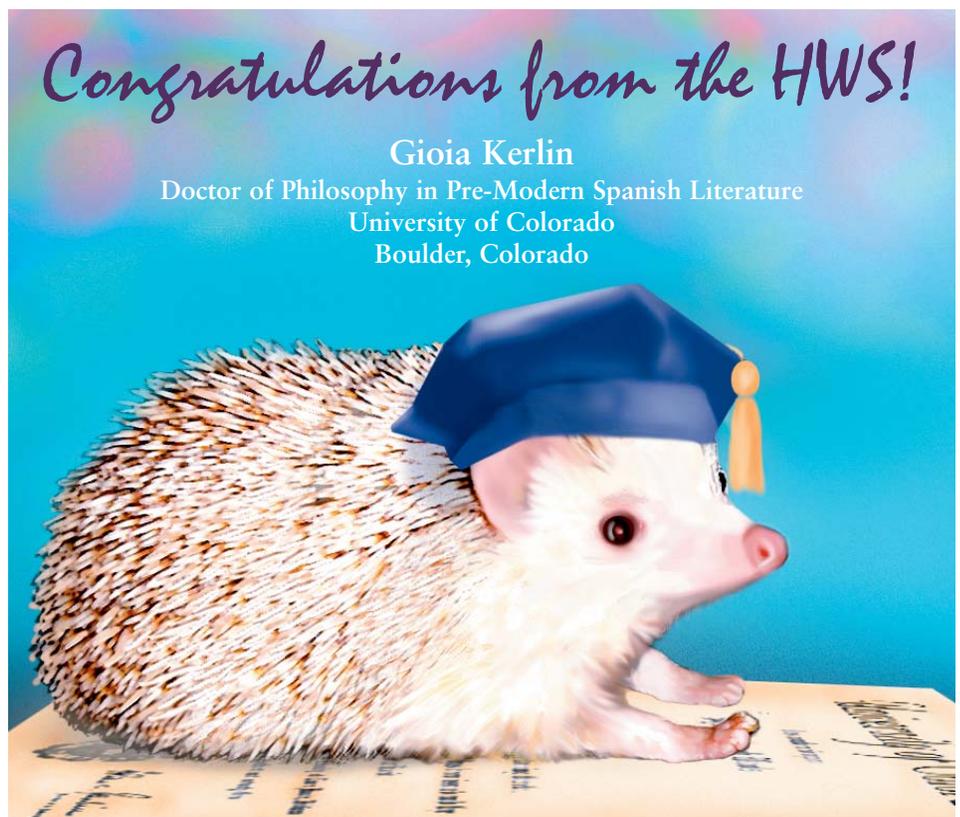
As is tradition, I'd like to close this column with some words from those who are honored to praise her hedgegie-heroism!

Gioia's close friend, Sherry Songhurst, tells us of Gioia's boundless energy and friendship: "During the time we knew Gioia in Colorado, she was working hard on her Ph.D., teaching classes at the University, and interviewing all over the country for her permanent position as a college professor. Then she found her place in Tulsa, OK, moved her household of 8 hedgegies and three cats, and successfully

defended her dissertation! All through this, she found time daily for each and every hedgehog, holding them, playing with them, and observing them one at a time as they free ranged. Amazingly, Gioia has always found time for her people friends, too! She would hop in her little truck and zip to Denver for every hedgehog party or meeting, or just to get together. She served on the Denver show committee. Whenever any of us from Denver went to Ft. Collins to take a hedgehog to Dr. Dressen's, Gioia would meet us part way and go along to provide emotional support if we needed it or turn the vet visit into a party if the results warranted a celebration! Gioia is a regular contributor to the hedgehog email groups. Her comments are thoughtful, well-written, and positive. Like Suhail and the rest of Gioia's herd, we are lucky to have Gioia in our hedgehog community!"

Susan Morrison is another personal friend of Gioia's from Colorado, who values Gioia's friendship and misses her in Colorado: "When I first met Gioia it was at the September 2001 Denver show, and she was getting a hedgehog for the first time. Later that year we had an open house at Sherry's....we helped her get all of the stuff that hedgehogs need, and I could see she was sold. She then joined the group for parties and such and helped with planning the 2003 show, but

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alas, she had to move to Oklahoma to work, we miss her very much. We were very excited when she came back in May and successfully defend her doctoral dissertation. Of course, we had a party in her honor. Since September 2001, I have seen her population grow from one to eight. She loves her animals and takes exceptional care of them. Our next move is to find a job for her in Colorado, so she can be back in the fold!"

Gioia also has many admirers from afar...

Teresa Johnson chimes in: "When announced that Gioia would be featured as a "Hedgie Hero", Pat Storm laughingly wrote back

"Gioia who?" Well, that may be a very serious question. While I've not yet had the pleasure to meet her in person, I have learned from posts on various hedgehog lists and commentary of friends who truly do know her that Gioia is a multi-faceted person with a bright and caring spirit. Especially when it comes to ANYTHING hedge! Gioia is quick to share her knowledge and experiences of health care, habitat, and cuddling. She has always responded with a kind and soothing word upon announcements of crossings. She is genuine. She is beloved by many, hedgie and human alike. When her own little herd was stricken with gardia, Gioia painstakingly took the

time and care daily to help her little ones recover - and at hefty veterinarian expenses. This is the kind of person Gioia is - willing to go that extra distance and give freely to help hedgies and their caregivers. She is an amazing person and truly a "hero".

Carol Fish Kregear has never met Gioia either, but she managed to sum up how we ALL feel about Gioia: "I just *like* her. She's brilliant, funny, and savvy. She sees right through BS yet manages to bring in the light without offending. She walks the walk that she talks, and she researches everything before yakking about it. She is a huge asset to the HWS." 🐾



Simon Says

by *Simon Ferdinand Correra, Willington, Connecticut*

Hello all my hedgehog friends! My name is Simon (Graesser) Correra, and many of you know my mom, Donnasue. Now that I have conquered waving Bye-Bye, walking, and using a spoon (sort of), it's time to try my hand at a new skill. I'll be writing a section of the HWS newsletter especially for kids. In this section, I will share my favorite books with you, some arts and crafts ideas, puzzles, pictures, and fun stories about my hedgehog friends. I'm sure some of my friends, like Cheryl and Mormor Kis, will chip in too!

July is European Hedgehog Awareness Month, and I just took a trip to Europe this spring. I saw many hedgehogs there, but they all looked very different than the hedgehogs at home. They were browner, and bigger, and had mighty big feet! Some of them were sick, and Mormor Kis was taking care of them at her house. Some of them were just waking up from hibernation in a barn, and they were the fattest hedgehogs I have ever seen! All of them eventually returned to their homes in the woods and fields of Denmark. They do not live in cages or sterilite bins. They do not run on

wheels, because they have the whole outdoors in which to roam around.

Meeting all these European hedgehogs reminded me of a book that Auntie Aimee gave me, even before I was born. My mom reads this book to me (I have not yet mastered reading myself, nor even knowing my ABC's). It is called *Come Here, Little Hedgehog* and was written by a lady named Tilde Michels. Sara Ball drew all the cool pictures. The book we have here uses English words, so I can understand it, but it was first written in German. (Auntie Susan will remind me to tell you the ISBN # is 0-687-08876-3)

In the book, a little girl named Lee Anna finds a hedgehog in her garden, and decides to keep him as a pet. She cannot understand why he is not happy, even though she thinks she is being good to him. She gives him warm straw to sleep in and good food to eat. She does not understand why he does not want to sleep at night, but sleeps all day long. Lee Anna's mom tells her that the hedgehog is sad, and should be let free to go home, but Lee Anna says she loves her hedgehog so much that she wants to keep him with her.

Then, Lee Anna's Grandpa tells her a story. The story is about a little girl, who was outside playing when a GIGANTIC hedgehog came up to her and brought the little girl home with him to live with his family. The little girl did not understand the hedgehogs'

language. Although the hedgehogs were tender and gentle with her, she was afraid of them petting her. They let her stay in a soft bed of straw, but it was so different from her own bed. At night when she wanted to sleep, the hedgehogs were awake and active. During the day when she wanted to play, they were asleep. She felt lonely and sad. She missed her own home and her own family.

After hearing this story, Lee Anna realizes that the hedgehog who she is keeping in a cage, is just as sad and lonely as the little girl in the story. She brings him back to his own home in the meadow, where he is happy once again!

Reading this book makes me think about the African hedgehogs that live at our house. These hedgehogs were abandoned by other people who kept them as pets, so they need people to take care of them. We cannot set them free, because it is too cold in the United States for African hedgehogs to survive. Even though we give them warm liners and snuggly hats, wheels to run on, balls to roll in, and lots of great treats to eat, I wonder if they would be happier if they could live free in Africa. What do you think?

I hope that all you kids out there will love this book as much as I do. Your mom or dad can buy it for you on amazon.com or half.com. I am so glad that Auntie Aimee gave me this book and taught me this wonderful story. 🐾

