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Wildlife

RESCUE NEWS | SUMMER 2016



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The **Folly Wildlife Rescue Trust** is a registered charity dedicated to the rescue, care and rehabilitation of injured, orphaned, sick and distressed wildlife.

The Trust operates primarily in Kent and Sussex, and every year, some **3,500 casualties** pass through its door.

Its education programme looks to highlight the many man-made hazards wildlife faces, as well as dispelling the myths and misconceptions that can so easily lead to persecution.

From the editor

Welcome...

To the **summer edition** of the Folly Wildlife Rescue newsletter.

Well, it's summertime, and after yet another wet and windy winter, it can't (to my mind at least) have come soon enough!

So how did our wildlife fare this time around? Well, it just so happens that the results for the RSPBs *Big Garden Birdwatch 2016* have recently been released (with half a million people counting some 8 million birds!), and the picture is quite encouraging; many of the smaller species fared very well indeed, with sparrows in particular having shot up by an amazing 33%.

As for the reason – once again, it's probably down to the incredibly mild weather we've been experiencing – bugs, berries and other foods remained abundant, and the absence of any prolonged cold spells helped to protect all the really tiny species such as wren, goldcrest and long-tailed tit; whether this will actually equate to a bumper breeding season remains to be seen, as the recent trend has been for colder, wetter springs.

But of course this good news was inevitably tempered by some bad, with several species continuing to show worrying declines: starlings were down 30%, while blackbirds were actually recorded in 24% fewer gardens than they were in 2010.

On the mammal front, we're continuing, very worryingly, to see fewer and fewer hedgehogs here, while as for badgers, the mild winter didn't really do them any favours; in 'normal' cold weather, they tend to hunker down in their setts (with the cubs being born from late January onwards), but when it's mild, they're very much up and about, so subsequently, more are hit by cars.

This last winter and spring, we saw record numbers of dead badgers on the roads – no doubt leaving many still dependent cubs to perish.

On a more positive note – Bill Oddie has agreed to become a patron! Last December, much to our delight, Bill and his family visited the *Folly Festive Fayre* to do a spot of Christmas shopping. Big mistake, as before he knew what had happened, we'd got him into a corner and talked him into becoming a patron!



So Bill now joins Jilly Goolden and Jeff Beck in our *Folly Hall of Fame* and very pleased we are to have him!

Seriously though, Bill was very impressed with what he saw here (and you can read what he thought about his visit on our website), and it's an incredible endorsement to have him on board.

Hope you enjoy the newsletter.



The B3 aviaries, vet unit and new nursery! **part 5**

Rather amazingly, we've now reached Part 5 of 'Shaping up', our look at ongoing developments here at Folly and, as usual, there's lots to report!

Over the winter months, we did try to make progress with the B3 aviaries, but in the end it was just too cold to work in there, so we were forced to sit in a warm room drinking tea.

But by early May, everything was back on track: the aviary fronts, doors and mesh panels were in, the ceilings were up, internal doors fitted, and three of the five aviaries had been lined with hygiene cladding. If I say so myself, they're looking pretty good, and in the next edition of the newsletter, we'll be revealing all, with a B3 *Shaping up* – special – so how exciting is that!

In the meantime, back in B4, the new nursery (which has very kindly been sponsored by *The Linda and Gordon Bonnyman Charitable Trust*) is now

completed and, what's more, already in use! This unit is a huge step forwards for Folly, because up until now, we've had to utilise our very busy and very noisy ICU/Reception for rearing the baby birds, which to say the least is far from ideal. The new unit, though, is totally different: warm, quiet and easy to keep clean, so a huge improvement on the old set-up. Our very grateful thanks to Linda and Gordon for this wonderful support of our work.

Our grateful thanks as well to *Support Adoption for Pets* for their very kind grant, which has now enabled us to fit the nursery out with holding pens, hospital cages and a set of weighing scales!

Next up is the vet unit (comprising consultation room, diagnostics, and X-ray), which as you can well imagine is a pretty ambitious project. The three rooms, complete with double-glazed doors and windows, hygiene flooring, suspended



An inside view of one of the new aviaries



A sneak peek at the new nursery



4 years ago – our Opening Day,
9th April 2012

ceilings, and a heating and ventilation system, are now in place, and we're looking (when we've raised the funds, that is!) to fit the work benches, cupboards, hygiene wall cladding, and lead lining for the X-ray chamber. It's all incredibly complex, but when completed, it'll be the most important part of the hospital, so we have to get it exactly right.

As well as the above, we also need to fund a wide range of veterinary equipment, including anaesthetic machine, examination lighting, blood test machine, otoscope/ophthalmoscope, autoclave, examination table, and, last but not least, the X-ray equipment itself.

With regard to the latter, we've been extremely fortunate of late, in that the Sevenoaks branch of the RSPCA have now granted us the funds to purchase the X-ray generator (and what a magnificent gesture!), while an incredible donation of £2,300 by

supporter Miyagi Yukinori (being the proceeds of the auction of an electric guitar that had been signed by our patron Jeff Beck) has now secured the purchase of the floating top X-ray table) – our very grateful thanks to them all.

So, apart from the lead lining and the safety equipment, that 'just' leaves the digital X-ray processor to fund, and coming in at around £10,000, it's going to take some doing, but once we manage to do that, and the equipment is in place, we should be on the home straight and ready to employ our own vet!

The 9th April actually marked our 4th anniversary here at Broadwater Forest, and looking back on those 4 years, you suddenly realise we've come a very long way indeed!



The Manager's Report

Annette Risley brings us all the latest!

As Dave reported in *Shaping up*, we've seen some major developments at the hospital recently, including the new nursery, 2 badger pens and (coming soon) the new mammal pens, which, with the 11 flight aviaries we're looking to have operational this year, will hopefully start to make life a bit easier for us (and bring the hospital that little bit nearer to completion too!).

The nursery is definitely a huge improvement on the old set-up we had in ICU; true, it was very convenient having all the baby birds in such a central place, as it was then easy to keep an eye on them, but unfortunately, with all the comings and goings (and never-ending phone calls), it had become a bit too much like Grand Central Station – a situation that brought with it a real danger of the birds becoming too tame.

On a practical level, the hygiene wall cladding and Altro flooring that we've had fitted make it extremely easy to keep clean, and with its built-in veterinary holding pens, heated

brooders and hospital cages (which can house everything from baby mice to badger cubs), it all looks pretty amazing!

It's also good to be able to keep all the hand-rearing equipment, milk replacers and weaning foods in one central place – no more hunting around for that elusive packet of teats – and with its own heat-recovery ventilation system, the unit stays warm and fresh.

Back in B1, the early trickle of casualty admissions has now turned into a torrent, and on any given day, we can admit anything from badger cubs to blackbirds, ducklings to dunnocks (and it isn't unusual to see 30 animals a day), but like a well-oiled machine (well, most of the time!) we're geared up for it and, barring sudden rushes, take it pretty much in our stride.

I mentioned at the beginning the 2 badger pens we've recently put up; these were originally in the garden at Folly Cottage (having been donated by the Crowborough branch of the RSPCA back in the 1990s), but they'd started to look a bit shabby of

late, so we've now (with the assistance of Badgers Trust – Sussex) had them green powder-coated – and very fetching they look too.

Their main use is to house badgers that, having recovered from their injuries, just need to be monitored to check their mobility before they go back to the wild. One of the nicest things is to see a badger, which perhaps 4 weeks earlier was at death's door, running around and tucking into its food!

Once again this year, we're using the proceeds of our Gift Aid return to fund our summer seasonal staff, and this year we have 7 people on board (although they won't, I hasten to add, all be working at the same time!), including 'old timers' Claire, Jenny, Trisha, Eli and Catherine, and newbies Kerry, Sorrel and Kizzy.

So when the going gets tough (as it is now), the team get going, and by taking some of the pressure off of us supervisors, we might, if we're lucky, have a tiny bit of sanity left at the end of the summer!

So it's all about team effort. The supervisors have all the knowledge and experience, but we in turn couldn't work without our incomparable wildlife care assistants, collection drivers and volunteers – and none of us could work without our receptionists, who co-ordinate the rescues, answer the phones, deal with the admissions, field all the enquiries, input the database and, most important of all, keep the tea and coffee flowing. It might be hectic at times, but it's always a great atmosphere!



Just a few of the many ducklings we're seeing



This is interesting – a photo of the generator cupboard!

Did you know that Folly Wildlife Rescue can admit up to 3,500 casualties every year and deal with twice that number of telephone enquiries?

But then we also enjoy the support of over 200 volunteer carers, fosterers, rescuers, receptionists and collection drivers to deal with it all – pretty mind boggling, isn't it!



Project Hedgehog

The hedgehog is one of the UK's most popular mammals – everyone loves them and although not exactly cuddly, they are pretty cute!

But now they're one of our most threatened species, and numbers have fallen by a third in the past ten years alone. In an effort to help, we're now launching *Project Hedgehog*, a local initiative, which, amongst other things, will try to ascertain just where hedgehogs are living in Kent and Sussex – if they're still common or whether they're in decline, with a view to seeing if there's anything we can do to protect them.

There'll be more on *Project Hedgehog* in the next issue, but in the meantime, read what our new patron Bill Oddie has to say about hedgehogs:

“ I am a grandad. You can tell because I am always saying things like 'there was much more wildlife when I was a lad'. But it is true. More house sparrows in our streets, more cuckoos in the countryside, and definitely more hedgehogs in our gardens. Even people who lived in towns had almost certainly seen live, wild hedgehogs; quite often we had to rescue them if they'd gone snuffling into a greenhouse or cold-frame and couldn't find their way out; we probably then took them to show at school before releasing them back where they were found.

The other place we saw hedgehogs was squashed on the roads; it was sad, but in a way it was also a good sign, as it meant that there were lots of unsquashed hedgehogs out there as well.

But now, even that's become a rare sight, but not because all hedgehogs have been flattened by lorries and cars; it simply, and worryingly, proves that there are far fewer hedgehogs than back when – you've got it



A hedgehog entangled in games netting



Grub up!

– I was a lad. The same thing has happened to moths. After a drive on a warm summer night the car windscreen would be covered with them. Nowadays our windscreens remain largely un-splattered – we may save a few pence on Windolene, but it’s at a price definitely not worth saving.

Wildlife rescue centres like Folly don’t take in many moths, but they do take in hedgehogs, and each year there seem to be fewer and fewer of them. It would be nice to think this meant the animals were surviving and thriving in the wild, but in fact it is more likely the opposite. Something is very wrong – we are losing one of the most delightful and best loved characters in the British countryside, and although there are probably many reasons for their decline, one of the most serious must be the overuse of pesticides in our gardens, which has badly affected their invertebrate food supply.

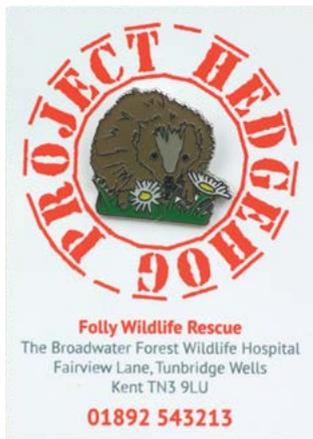
But there is plenty of information available on hedgehog-friendly gardening (British Hedgehog Preservation Society, the local wildlife trusts, etc.) and hopefully, if the reasons for their demise can be addressed in time, they may eventually be as numerous as when... well, you know.

Mind you, if that does happen, there will be many more of them to get stuck down drains, entangled in bean netting or squashed by lorries, so thank heavens Folly and all the

other rescue centres are to hand with their care and expertise, protecting not only hedgehogs, but all other wildlife too.

And by the way, that’s something that didn’t happen when I was a lad.”

Very nicely put, Bill, and in the next issue, we’ll be outlining some of the things we’re looking to do to help them. In the meantime, if you want to support us, why not buy one of our *Project Hedgehog* badges or, even better still, adopt one of our real, disabled hedgehogs to help fund the work.



Project Hedgehog pin badges

Only £1.50!

Deer update



A fallow buck entangled in wire

Six months into 2016, and unsurprisingly the calls to the Deer Unit show no sign of letting up – over 70 to date, while last year the team attended an incredible 232 incidents!

Entanglement in netting and fencing, dog attacks and deer vehicle collisions continue to make up the bulk of the calls we receive, and every time they go out, our volunteers never really know what they're going to be faced with. For instance, sometimes there's no deer to be seen, so then a thorough search of the surrounding undergrowth needs to be carried out, as even injured animals can be quite mobile; if they're lucky, the animal will be discovered (and often some distance away from where it was originally reported), but because in the heat of the moment, people get confused about locations, sometimes nothing is found.

To help overcome this problem, we always ask that, wherever possible, people reporting a deer casualty to us mark the spot with a carrier bag, scarf or similar item that they then tie to a bush or nearby road sign; this simple action not only saves valuable time, but can save lives too.

On the operational front, we're currently looking to acquire a dedicated 4x4 crew-cab truck for the deer rescues; as well as having lots of space for equipment (and if necessary, a deer casualty), they're ideal for the many

off-road situations that the team frequently encounter. Last year's *Walk for Wildlife* (together with a generous private donation) set the ball rolling, and with several grant applications now in the pipeline, we hope to be able to raise the remainder of the money over the coming months.

Another item of equipment we'd like to acquire is a pneumatic dart gun. Handling large, powerful animals like deer can be fraught with difficulties, as well as being hazardous to both rescuer and deer, so if we were able to sedate them, it would substantially reduce the risks; however, there are some obstacles that need to be considered, so it may be a little while before we know if it's going to be feasible or not.

In the meantime, we're now well into the breeding season for both fallow and roe deer, and so there are lots of fawns around. It's well worth remembering that if you do come across what appears to be an abandoned fawn, you shouldn't (unless it's in immediate danger) pick it up, but rather phone first for advice; both species often leave their young for many hours on end, tucked away in dense undergrowth or long grass (returning only briefly to feed them), so Mum is never far away.



watch out for...

That old garden shed!

You may have been putting off taking down that old shed – but when you do eventually get round to it, a bit of caution is advised!

Spring has sprung and we're now well into summer – the garden is looking great, and it's time to sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labour. Hang on, though, that old shed has definitely seen better days and needs to come down – but the trouble is many small mammals like a good shed too, and so might have made a nest beneath it!

Sheds are great places (and I should know, having spent my formative years in one), but as the French say, '*Tout passe, tout lasse, tout casse*' – everything passes, everything wears out, and everything falls to pieces, and sheds are no exception to the rule!

Within just a very few years, what was once a fine example of the shed-makers' art quickly becomes a mouldering pile of half-rotten timber, torn roofing felt, and sprung floorboards – time marches on!

But on the plus side, even a rotten old edifice such as this is a veritable nature reserve, providing a home not only to mice, hedgehogs and foxes, but to a wide range of spiders, bugs and other creepy-crawlies; in addition, a shed provides valuable protection against both the weather and any potential predators that might be lurking about.

So by all means take it down (and the shed in our photograph has definitely seen better days!),

but choose the right moment to do so. On balance, early autumn is probably about right, and if you can spread the work over a few weeks, it's even better, as any small animals that are in residence will then have plenty of time to up sticks and move home.

As well as old sheds, other materials left lying around will attract wildlife.

Corrugated iron, plywood and old fencing panels are favourites, so take extra care when lifting or removing them.

If you do uncover any small mammal nests, cover them up again.

If there's been too much disturbance, the mother will move her young to a safe place.

If you do happen to come across a football-sized ball of leaves, grasses, crisp packets and black bin liners beneath your shed, it's likely to be a hedgehog nest (and may still be in use), so check it very carefully before proceeding any further; if there are hedgehogs present, carefully cover the nest over, and phone for advice.

In the meantime, why not treat yourself to a new shed – you deserve it!

Fundraising stuff!



Our fundraising is going from strength to strength and with the great team we have, it can only get better!

Our most successful event last year was the **Folly Festive Fayre**, which we ran in the weeks up to Christmas. There were some great gifts, Christmas cards, adoptions and refreshments available, and it was lovely to see so many people coming along to support us (and nice for them to see a little bit of the hospital operation too).

The event raised well over £2,000, and we'll certainly be doing it again this year, so watch the section on our website for further details.

Our **Adopt a Hedgehog** scheme has just completed its first year, and has been very well received. An adoption makes a fantastic gift (or lovely treat for yourself), and is perfect for all hedgehog fans! For just £25, you can choose one of our three hedgehogs (Rosie, Snuffles and Quillen), and for this you'll receive a colour certificate, fact sheet, and a great gift pack too; this year, we're also looking to build them new enclosures, so will keep you posted on that.

For further details on our adoption scheme, see our website www.follywildliferescue.org.uk or give us a call and we'll put a form in the post!

Thank you to everyone who very kindly donated towards our **Christmas Appeal** – with your help we raised an amazing £5,300!

Want to make a quick and convenient donation from your mobile? We're now registered with **JustTextGiving** – so simply text FWRT00 and the amount (£1/£3/£5 etc.) and send to 70070. Further details on our website.

Thank you to **Sophie Hill**, student veterinary nurse at Companion Care Vets in Tunbridge Wells, for raising £100.97 through a cake sale – very much appreciated!

Our partnership with **Invicta Insurance Services Ltd** in Sevenoaks continues; with every insurance policy you take out with them (car, home, business or travel), they will donate £20 to our **Project Hedgehog** fund (see article for details) **AND** you will automatically be sent a free adoption pack for Rosie the hedgehog, comprising a colour certificate, fact sheet, and hedgehog beanie toy. Why not give them a call on 01732 471

950, quoting Project Hedgehog, for a full, competitive, no obligation quote.

Thank you to **Southern Salads Ltd** for donating £251.28 to us via our online donation page at Charity Choice, and to everyone else who has used this valuable facility to support us.

A big thank you to **Buy Wise Pet Supplies** in London for their ongoing support and recent donation of £370!

A series of **Wildlife Awareness Days** held at LUSH Tunbridge Wells, Wyevale Garden Centre and Sainsbury's Tunbridge Wells has got off to a good start this year raising £476.70. We couldn't have done this without the dedication and commitment of our wonderful fundraising team – so our thanks to them all, and if anyone else is interested in helping out for a few hours a month, please do give us a call.

Wishing lots of luck and success to **Donna Rudd** who is running the Bawl Marathon for us on 14th May, and to **Angie Jarvis** who is running the London Bupa 10k run on 30th May.

Could you raise money for Folly by joining an event or setting up your own? Do contact us to discuss how we can support you with leaflets, flyers and sponsor forms.

Standing orders continue to provide the bulk of our income (with lots of people now making monthly donations that range from £3 to £50 a month), and what's more, it's an income we can rely on all the year round; when you think that a daily newspaper can easily cost £28 a month, and a cup of coffee a massive £50 a month, it does put it in perspective!

Thank you to everyone who already supports us this way, and if you are thinking of doing so, just email us at info@follywildliferescue.org.uk and we'll send you a form.

Our **Walk for Wildlife** will take place again this year, and **Saturday, 17th September**, is the date for your diaries. We've changed the booking system to make it easier – simply register your interest with us and we will send you a sponsor form. There will also be a prize

for the person who raises the most money – so quite exciting! If you can't attend but still wish to support the event, one of our lovely volunteers will be walking on our behalf, so sponsorship will be very welcome. Watch our **Events** section for more details.



The merchandise corner in reception



Our new hedgehog card!

We would also like to say a big thank you to **Hazel Kelly** for donating some wonderful paintings, from which we've now produced two beautiful greetings cards of a hedgehog and a badger. This unique range will soon be available at the online shop, but if you can't wait, you can always pop by and get some at reception.

Talking of the **Online Shop**, we're really looking forward to getting it up and running – there'll be a wonderful range of wildlife gifts, adoptions and stationery items up for grabs, so do keep an eye on our Facebook page for details of the launch!

Meet the staff!

Our rogues gallery continues with the wildlife care assistants!

As you probably know, we employ just 3 full-time staff here at Folly – but in the busy summer months, we're joined by some very capable part-timers!



Jenny Shelton

Jenny has been with Folly for many years now and, in fact, did her original work placement over at Folly Cottage. She's something of a 'mother hen' to the other care assistants, who are in awe of her incredible tidying skills!

Claire Coomber

Claire is one of the original crew here at the hospital and, with her faithful hound Rufus never far behind, is very much a regular here at Broadwater Forest!

Catherine Warner

Catherine too has lots of what we call 'previous', going back to her student days – but she keeps coming back for more, so it can't be all that bad!



Tricia Dale-Jones

Tricia can't, it seems, get enough of Folly either – as well as filling a care assistant's role, I see she's now working in the office – probably planning a take-over!

Eli Buckle

Eli has so many of her own animals at home, it's amazing she ever finds the time to come to Folly, but she's a regular too, and it's good to see her back!



Newcomers **Kerry Cheesman**, **Sorrel Hatt** and **Kizzy Arnold** are also raring to go (a warm welcome to them all), and we wish them very good luck with the busy summer season that lies ahead!

How to help!

People are always asking how they can help – where do I start!

There are many ways people can help Folly Wildlife Rescue, either through the volunteering opportunities on offer here or by supporting us financially – we've come a very long way over the past few years, but attracting enough staff and raising funds for running and development costs are still something of a struggle.

Wildlife care volunteers are pretty much the backbone of the operation here; OK, it's not the most glamorous job, but it's very rewarding work and you do get up close and personal with some great animals!

But if that's not for you, what about our **fundraising team**, they're a very friendly bunch, and if you don't feel very comfortable about asking people for money – don't worry, we don't work that way.

Our **wildlife collection volunteers** do incredible work, bringing us casualties from vets, the elderly and disabled or people without transport.

As for our **receptionists** – what would we do without them? Words fail me! Seriously, though, they're the backbone of the whole set-up and we couldn't run without them.

If you're a fresh air person, perhaps the **Land Army** is more up your street? Our small team are always busy, either with restoration work on the Nature Reserve, digging holes, planting trees or painting buildings – there's something for everyone!

Whichever option you choose, you can be sure of three things – a warm welcome, a friendly atmosphere, and the knowledge that your help and support will be very much appreciated!

Forthcoming events!

Saturday, 2nd July 1pm–4pm

@ The Broadwater Forest Wildlife Hospital – **Badger Awareness Day** (part of National Badger Week). Merchandise and information about badgers and our wildlife. Face painting and other wildlife themed fun. Parking on site and refreshments available. Admission free (but donations welcome!)

Saturday 17th September 10am @ The

Broadwater Forest Wildlife Hospital – Walk for Wildlife. A 6-mile sponsored walk starting from the hospital and taking in the beautiful RSPB Broadwater Warren. Contact Liz (01892 543213) for a sponsor form. Prize for the most raised!

Here are a few dates for your diary.

12th November–17th December – *Folly Festive Fayre* @ The Broadwater Forest Wildlife Hospital. Saturdays 10am–4pm and Wednesdays 1pm–4pm, for Christmas gifts, cards and mince pies!

Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for more details nearer the time.





Focus on – the common pheasant!



A very nice female pheasant

The pheasant is one of our most evocative birds, very much a part of the English countryside, but in actual fact is not native to the UK.

Originating from Asia, the vast majority of the birds we see in the UK have been bred and released by the multimillion-pound shooting industry – and the number released is truly staggering, something in the order of 35–50 million birds a year.

Of these, 'only' around 15 million are apparently killed outright, but millions more die lingering deaths after being 'winged', and with most of the survivors ending up under the wheels of motor cars or in the stomachs of foxes, you begin to understand the scale of it. But even that isn't the end of the story, because when you factor in the countless millions of foxes, stoats, weasels and (illegally) birds of prey that are killed to protect these 'game birds', together with the estimated 100,000 ducks, geese and swans poisoned every year by lead shot (and annually some 5,000 tons of lead goes into the soil), it paints a very sorry picture indeed.

Pheasants are now bred along the same lines as poultry – intensively packed into small pens and subject to all the same cruelties, including the dreadful anti-peck bits that are used to stop the birds mutilating one another; disease is rife and mortality rates high, but for the most part, the industry still manages to portray pheasant-

shooting as a good old-fashioned country pursuit that's run by a couple of old boys, rather than the bloated corporate agribusiness it's now become.

Another consequence of releasing millions of pheasants is still being contested – whether it's harmful to our native wildlife; as well as seeds, fruit, leaves and shoots, pheasants will readily eat lizards, frogs, newts, small mammals, ground nesting birds, and even small snakes, so bearing in mind the vast numbers involved, I should think the answer is pretty obvious.

It's also ironic that if you want to release even a single non-indigenous species like a Canada goose or grey squirrel back to the wild, you need to have a licence, whereas if you want to release a couple of million pheasants, just go ahead – not a problem!

At Folly we regularly see the consequences of the industry – road traffic accident victims mostly, but the occasional pheasant peppered with shot-gun pellets too – and although we do manage to save some of them, most have been mortally injured.

But having said all this, we haven't got anything against pheasants – they're lovely birds, with great characters, and are always a pleasure to see.

Hope you enjoyed the newsletter – see you in the winter!