

The Fox Project

Southern Wildlife Ambulance Network



Newsletter No.60

AUTUMN 2015

Necks on the Line

He wandered into a scout hall in Dartford. No-one had the faintest idea which direction he'd come from so there was no chance of reuniting him with his mum. So Scout joined the growing ranks of this year's spring intake – eventually numbering over 200 cubs!

A good-natured, fun-loving little lad, Scout made the most of every waking moment. Trouble is, when you're in with a group of five cubs and there are arguments over the food bowl, everyone gets Puppy Chum – and worse – spread all over them. So Scout had

a bath. His response to this was to climb into a bag of shredded Daily Mails – there is no better use for them – where he dried off and got covered in newsprint!

For most of our cubs the final outcome was good and, as I write, the last of those who overcame whatever trauma brought them to us has been released back to the wild.

These included **Fury**, a little dog fox we felt certain was not going to make it. From the start, he suffered repeated, violent fits that can easily result in serious brain damage. There was more than one occasion when we'd decided enough was enough and unanimously taken the view it was time to call it a day. But then he'd seem

normal again and we'd think, "OK, let's see how it goes..."

In the end, everything was fine and like **Charlie, Matilda and George**, all of whom arrived with similar issues, Fury went back to the wild.

Rascal was lucky. He was snatched from a 'pest controller's' trap. And **Nola** was lucky in a wholly different way. Some ill-advised person had decided to keep her as a pet until – and how many times do we see this? – an infant cub becomes a wilful juvenile and too hard to handle.

Very few cubs fail to revert naturally, which is why it is so easy to get them back to the wild when they're old enough. By then, even when they've been raised on the bottle,



Mick



Hattie

they don't like being close to people.

Nola proved her potential by going back to the wild as well as any other of our charges, which made us very happy. To us, a cub that has to be kept prisoner for the rest of its life is a tragedy.

Some cubs are fortunate enough not to have to remain with us for long. **Rolo's** leg wound healed fast; **Orlando** was treated quickly and effectively for mange; and **Sally Sales**, suffering with dog bites to head and shoulders, was caught early enough to prevent deep infection. All were successfully returned to their families before they'd barely noticed they were missing!

It took a little longer to get **Mick** right. Caught in a wire snare, he was cut almost to the bone around the neck. This made it difficult to clean and treat the wound as 'scruffing' was out of the question and the natural inclination of a manhandled fox is to bite.

Amazingly, Mick, even when unrestrained, didn't argue – until he figured we'd done enough. That was exactly the point where we didn't actually need to do anything more than just watch the healing.

Maybe he knew that. In any event, it wasn't so long before he was back home, even if he did look like a badly clipped poodle!

You are key to all our successes. Nothing comes free and it's thanks to your generosity and financial support that the likes of **Archie, Packet, Tennyson, Copper, Hattie, Bernard, Glen, Daisy, Joan, Wendy, Daffodil** and scores of other cubs now have a future.

It's also down to a brilliant team of volunteers, who work alongside our ambulance drivers and perform marvels. One of the most recent examples was the operation to rescue **Charlotte** by local rescuer Andy...

Charlotte was trapped by the neck in a three inch gap between a shed and a fence post. Concealed from view, with rain belting down and light fading fast, she was lucky to be spotted by the householder. Had she not been, she would almost certainly have been dead from exposure by morning.

The cub was unable to move in any direction; there was limited access from the top of a high fence; and she was facing the wrong way. Pulling her out by her tail was not an option. Her head and body were stuck fast and the householder was not keen to see his woodwork deconstructed in order to free a fox. But when Andy pointed out the other option was to leave the cub to die, decompose, fill the area with a foul stench and attract a swarm of flies, he agreed Andy could remove a couple of fence panels.

As Andy explained, "This still only allowed me to see her head and I now realised just how tight her neck was stuck. There was no room to scruff her but, using my thumb and forefinger, I managed to pinch the skin at the back of her neck. It was not enough to lift her free but I was at least able to ease her head up a little.

The weight of her body made even this movement difficult and sensing she was on the move she began to struggle, exposing me to a good biting if she managed to turn her head! Luckily, she didn't, and I was able to raise her to the top of the fence, lift her free and get her into a carry basket."

The fence was put back good as new. The householder was happy. Andy was happy. The fox was safe... but how badly damaged?

Although Charlotte's neck and shoulders were bruised there were no constriction injuries – always our main fear, as loss of circulation can lead to life threatening flesh die-back - and after a few days in the hospital Charlotte was collected by a very happy Andy for re-release back on her home territory.



Charlotte

Mad Hatters Tea Party



Mad Hatter

Want to raise money for foxes? Are you MAD? Let's hope so!

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland". Why not celebrate the occasion with your own Mad Hatter's Tea Party? Pick a date, polish up your best teapot, bake some jam tarts and invite friends to

come dressed as their favourite Alice character – Mad Hatter, March Hare, White Rabbit, Queen of Hearts, Tweedles Dee or Dum, Cheshire Cat, Mock Turtle - even Alice herself!

And surely there has to be room for a Guest of Honour? There's no fox in the book. It's the only thing wrong with it! So cheat! Invite a fox! Charge

everyone a fiver or a tenner, have a riotous day then send us the proceeds.

There's a brilliant prize for the person who hosts the most profitable Tea Party. The publisher of the original Alice has produced a beautiful hardback anniversary volume, featuring the original drawings by John Tenniel and including a foreword by author Philip Pullman. It's an absolute beauty.

We were planning to judge entries on 26 November – 150 years to the day "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" was originally published – but with Christmas and New Year parties coming up that could be Alice-themed - and time-bending being a feature of the book - we're extending the event until 1 January 2016.

If you're the slightest bit mad, go for it. You'd be mad not to!

This newsletter is dedicated to the memories of John Clarke and Jessica Fusniak

John Clarke has died at the age of 79 – though few would have guessed or believed his age. John and his wife Sybil have been cub fosterers for The Fox Project for many years – Sybil doing most of the nursing work and John ever ready with screwdriver, drill, saw or batten when the youngsters made too many toothy inroads into the woodwork!

John was a quiet, gentle man with a ready chuckle. We'll miss him a lot and our thoughts are with Sybil at this time.

Jessica Fusniak has died at the age of 93. She and her husband Joe were supporters of The Fox Project from the day it was born and Jessica looked out both for her local foxes and for any other animal in trouble.

She never quite admitted it, but we always suspected she may have 'liberated' the occasional ill-treated or neglected cat and dog, a series of which appeared in her home from time to time!

A great lady and one who would not for a moment mind us switching the spotlight to her husband Joe in order to relate

the following family story...

Joe had a particular reason to like foxes. A member of the Polish Airforce during WW2, he was one of hundreds of exiled airmen who escaped from their country when Germany invaded and who formed their own squadrons to fight alongside the national airforces of France, the USSR and the UK - in the latter case, making a significant contribution as part of the RAF during the Battle of Britain.

Joe was a rear gunner and on 31 January 1942 he was in a Wellington bomber flying low across the Yorkshire Dales. Weather conditions were cloudy and visibility poor. It was manageable and there was nothing to suggest worse was to come. But things can change fast on The Dales...

Suddenly, a massive blizzard engulfed the plane, blotting out all landmarks and reference points in a matter of seconds. The pilot was flying blind at over 230 miles per hour and climbing fast to avoid hidden peaks. He might even have made it but for a drystone wall which tore off the gun turret with Joe still inside. When he came to, he was lying in deep snow with a badly broken ankle.

Able only to crawl, Joe followed the trail of debris to where the plane's fuselage lay several hundred yards away. Inside were four dead crew and a barely alive wireless operator. Joe wrapped him in a couple of parachutes, the only available protection from the cold.

It was mid-afternoon but in the white-out conditions it was unlikely anyone would

have witnessed the crash and if they didn't get help before nightfall it was certain they wouldn't last until morning. Joe had only one option. If he stayed with his injured companion they would both die. Desperately, he began to drag himself across the hill in the blinding snow, using a wooden wing strut as a crutch and looking for a hill farm – or any other sign of life.

As the light faded, Joe's hope began to fade with it, until he came upon fresh animal prints in the snow. He identified them - from his boy scout days - as those of a fox and, reasoning that the animal would probably be heading for lower ground in search of food, Joe began to follow them – at one point turning sharp right and avoiding a sheer drop the animal had clearly sensed amongst the drifts.

Thankfully, the snow eased and the footprints remained visible, although Joe occasionally lost sight of them and had to cast around to pick up the trail again. His wooden support had long since splintered and he'd been dragging himself along for hours, but he didn't dare rest for fear of falling into an exhausted sleep from which he knew he wouldn't wake.

Suddenly, a couple of figures were stumbling towards him through the gloom. The fox's footprints had led him to the road close to an inn and, by sheer chance, Nan Parker, the landlord's daughter, had spotted the figure flailing through the snow.

Four months later, Sergeant Joseph Fusniak, in recognition of his bravery, was awarded the British Empire Medal by King George V and decorated

by Chief Air Marshall 'Bomber' Harris. But only weeks later, Joe was again blasted out of his turret during a bombing raid over Germany, spending the rest of the war as a POW before returning to the UK and making a life with Jessica, with whom he recently celebrated 70 years of marriage.

In 1973, Joe went back to the Yorkshire Dales and obtained permission to build a memorial on the summit of Buckden Pike, the hill on which his friends had died. The concrete plinth was embedded with fragments of the stricken aircraft and a stone fox head was mounted on the base to celebrate the animal that unknowingly saved his life.

Sadly, the fox head was subsequently smashed off and removed – one can only wonder at the motive for such gross disrespect – but was eventually replaced, remaining in place to this day.

Joe is now 93 and our thoughts are with him at this sad time.

RIP Jessica and John.



Buckden Pike

Adoptions & Christmas

Thea Olrog has done it again with her latest whimsical Christmas Card – “The Sweet Smell of Sprouts” and Dani Clarke has designed – and in most cases, photographed – our 2016 calendar. Both are available for sale nice and early. And, talking of early and in the certain knowledge, come spring, we’ll be as inundated as ever, why not get involved with our Cub Adoption scheme – the gift that lasts for months and months!

Old hands will know how this works but, just as a reminder, £22.50 buys you a personalised Adoption Certificate for yourself or for a friend or family member. If you’re buying it as a Christmas gift, we’ll mail it to them a few weeks before Christmas along with a covering letter explaining what it’s all about and who’s bought it for them. It’ll then go quiet for maybe three months...

Come spring, the inevitable intake of sick, injured and orphaned cubs will begin to

trickle in and the Adopter will receive a second certificate bearing photos and stories of three cubs and an adult fox. Two more certificates will follow between spring and autumn, charting the growth and progress of these four animals.

You could come along personally and watch them grow but I’m afraid that’s not allowed! These are animals that need to be returned safely back to the wild and we can’t risk undermining their chances by exposing them to more human activity than is absolutely necessary.

The Cub Adoption scheme is our way of getting you as close as possible to cubs without running that risk and your subscription helps finance the rehabilitation process.

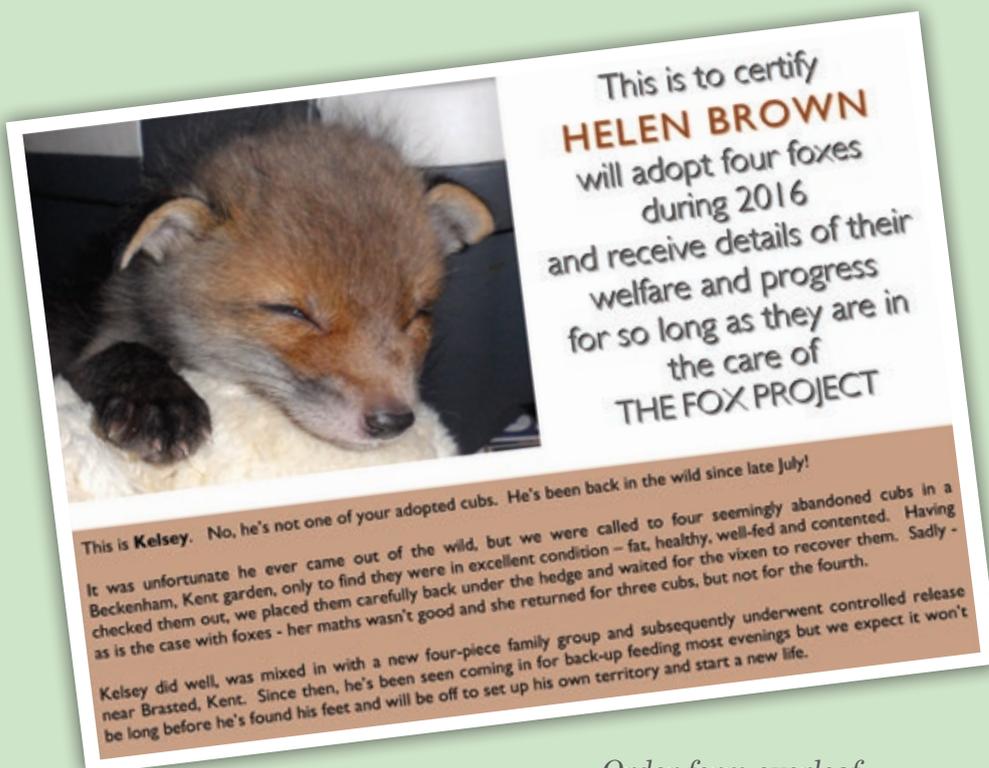
There’s never enough room to display all our sales goods in the newsletter but if you want to check out the full range, go online to:

www.foxproject.org.uk/shop

If your Cub Adoption is for someone outside the UK, we can keep the cost the same as for UK Adopters if we are able to provide communications by email.



2016 Fox Calendar



“The Sweet Smell of Sprouts” Christmas Card

Order form overleaf...

SALES, ADOPTIONS AND DONATIONS

Please send Adoption Certificate to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Please say it came from me (enter name you wish to be known by if you are giving this adoption as a gift.)

Standing Order Authority

Name of your Bank: _____ Branch Title: _____

Address of your Bank: _____

Your Account No: _____ Sort Code: _____

"Please pay the sum of £_____ from the above account on the _____ day of each month/year commencing _____ to Natwest PLC, 130 High Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1DE for the credit of:

Southern Wildlife Ambulance Network/The Fox Project, Account No: 81996950 Sort Code: 60-21-28"

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Gift Aid Declaration

Please sign this declaration only if you are a UK taxpayer and wish The Fox Project to benefit by Gift Aid. This will not cost you a penny nor involve you in paperwork, but we are only able to claim if you pay an amount of income tax/capital gains tax at least equal to the tax we claim on your donations in the relevant tax year.

"I wish The Fox Project (charity no. 1044928) to treat the above as a Gift Aid donation, to treat donations made since April 2015 and any future donations as Gift Aid until further notification."

Name: _____ Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Price	Item	Size	Quantity	Total
£7.75	2016 Fox Calendar			
£3.40	"The Sweet Smell of Sprouts" Pack of 5 Christmas cards with envelopes			
			Adoptions @ £22.50	
			Donation	
			TOTAL	

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____ Please send all future communications by email

I enclose a cheque to value £ _____ or my Credit/Debit card details are as follows

No: Expiry Date: /

Security No: (last three digits on reverse of card)

Please fill in the above form and return by post to:

The Fox Project, The Lodge, Kings Toll Road, Pembury, Kent TN2 4BE

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