Heads or Tails

When cubs have heads like an adult or tails like an adult then they are no longer cubs and it’s time to let them go.

And let them go, we did! Over 200 rescued cubs were successfully released back to the wild between July and September and the 2020 cub season is now behind us.

It’s the culmination of a concerted effort by staff, volunteers and concerned members of the public to give sick, injured, orphaned and abandoned youngsters a second chance of a natural life. But any sense of self-satisfaction is short-lived as we enter the second most hectic point of the fox year – dispersal.

Fox families need to break up from autumn in order for everyone to find a territory of their own. Foxes are not pack animals. They don’t tolerate competition over scarce food and territorial resources. Sharing means caring, but the only person a fox needs to care about is themself – so why share?

The dispersal process is vital. A few months down the line this year’s cubs will be facing their first breeding season and, unless you are secure in a territory you can call your own, you’ve little to offer a potential mate and everything to lose by being harried and driven off by more dominant animals.

Dispersal is also important in reducing the likelihood of in-breeding which can only weaken the species, and that’s in no-one’s interest.

But it’s not without risk. Inexperienced youngsters will be moving onto unknown territories where they could be attacked by resident foxes and where the availability of food, water and shelter is unknown. There might be dangerous dogs who know the place better than they do. They won’t know the fastest escape routes and there will be roads they haven’t encountered before.

But that’s their business, and when the heads go up and the tails disappear into the distance, freedom is everything.
Mick Walker has died at the age of 73 following a lengthy illness. He and his wife Jackie joined us as volunteers 20 years ago, initially fostering cubs and convalescent adult foxes.

Mick then spotted an expense he didn’t feel we ought to have, in that we were paying out thousands of pounds for custom built foster and rehab pens. Mick had an empty garage, the tools, the skills and the time to build them for a fraction of the cost and, in doing so, he saved the charity a great deal of money.

When they reached a point where such direct involvement was no longer possible, Mick and Jackie stayed with us and began to collect quality items for us to sell through eBay and on our Facebook auction.

Our thoughts are with Jackie and family.

**Tortie comes out of his shell**

Although we rely on members of the public alerting us to “their” local fox in need of treatment, it is not often they do the job of containing the fox for us.

Tortie was suffering with mange, a rear leg injury and a nasty lung infection and, whilst waiting for us to deliver a cage trap, the householders managed to secure him in their tortoise box - quite a feat as the little wooden house was not much bigger than the tortoise! Luckily, Tortie was a cub of restricted growth but, even then, having tucked himself snugly inside, he had little room for manoeuvre when he found himself ‘banged up’ by his hosts and was easily apprehended!

After a few weeks, plus drugs, food and shelter, Tortie perked up and was reunited with his hardback pal.

**What we can’t do**

You may spot we’re not advertising our annual spring events in this issue. Both “Day Out with The Fox Project” and “Meet the Cubs” had to be cancelled this spring due to lockdown. As neither event can be conducted without compromising social distancing it would have been irresponsible to do otherwise, not just for visitors but for staff and volunteers without whom our operations would have to be suspended, leaving wildlife casualties without the support they need.

It remains to be seen whether we are able to resume these events in spring 2021 but, either way, we regret we’re not able to accept applications. This is because the majority of those who signed up to attend the 2020 events have opted to carry over their applications to 2021.

If we are able to announce the resumption of the events in 2021, it’s possible, for various reasons, that some folk may drop out and, if that happens, we may be in a position to offer available space to fresh applicants. But as we are subject to the whims of coronavirus, it’s doubtful we will know until we are very much closer to spring 2021. All we can say is “watch this space” or – better still – keep an eye out for announcements on our Facebook site -

www.facebook.com/The-Fox-Project-143198679641/

**What we can do**

Luckily, social distancing doesn’t affect our Cub Adoption Scheme, so that goes ahead as usual. And for those who aren’t familiar with the scheme, it’s a means by which you can follow the growth of three cubs from infancy to the point of re-release four or five months later through a series of four certificates – the first bearing your name, or that of a friend or family member lucky enough to receive the gift from yourself, and the following three showing the cubs’ development over that period. You’ll find the application form at the top of the sales page.

**THANKS TO TAZ**

Just a line to say “Thanks!” to Taz Kenward, who has left us after a number of years, first as a volunteer and then as a staff member. Her place has been taken by new ambulance driver Stacey Fletcher, so – “Welcome Stacey!”

But we haven’t seen the back of Ms Kenward. Taz has returned to volunteer status but, this time in a new and vital role managing our expanding social media platforms.
What we can’t do

Pancake was rescued in late July with severe mange and a guarded opinion on survival chances. It’s seldom just about mange, but the additional possibility of secondary infection. Sometimes, it’s invisible and can only be guessed at, with a debilitated animal developing jaundice, kidney or lung infections that can lead to uraemia or pneumonia.

More visibly, sarcoptic mange mites cause skin infection by their habit of burrowing into tissue and causing serious irritation to the host animal, who will scratch continuously in a bid to reduce the discomfort, often opening self-inflicted wounds and sores. And, as the skin is the largest organ on the body, you’re looking at the potential for life-threatening infection.

But we deal with this all the time and, whilst no-one can expect a 100% record and some animals come in with a level of infection already beyond reasonable hope, we have a very high success rate. Pancake was one such success. Following treatment and the provision of good food and rest, she was re-released back on her home territory less than three weeks after admission – mange free, though not furred up, as exposure to the open air is the only realistic ‘hair restorer’ and holding a fox in cossetted long-term captivity is likely to slow rather than generate growth.

Several weeks down the line, we received this photo from the householder – not great, because Pancake was on a mission for tit-bits and wasn’t in the mood to pose – but it shows the folly of those that doubt sarcoptic mange is anything but a one-way trip.

We don’t always receive feedback after we’ve rescued, treated and re-released a poorly fox but, on the occasions we do, it strengthens our belief that what we are doing is well worth the effort.

Pancake’s Days
So who else did we have in this year?
Well, in no particular order but with a rhythmic twist—
try chanting this in ‘gangster rap’ style...

Annie and The Hawthorns, Hobo, Harry, George, Cricket and Julius.
Daisy, Pringle, Pom and The Whistlers.
Rusty, Richard, Bunny and The Snowdrops.
Sid, Shep, Bramble and The Pizzas.
Venetia, Vita, Valley, Vole, Victor - and Vienna.
Micky, Marion, Wally, Wanda, Jonathan, Jack and Jill.
Alice, Sparrow, Ivy and The Hopblines.
Blackbird, Billy, Broom, Ben, Dakota and The Springers.
Elva, Sandy, Luggage, Rue and John and The Jordanaires.
Lucia, Louis, Lauren, Lydia, Leah, Lester, Bobby and The Jersey Boys.
Rigby, Rob, Wren, Raquel and Delilah and the Diggers.
Hog, Bear, McQueen, Bertie, Hula, Easter, Cilla and The Teacups.
Elsa, Claudia, Spinner, Katie, Cookie, Elza and The Otters.
Tom, Plum, Jam, Jade, Del, Rum, Morris and Mallard.
Timmy, Tiny, Teddy, Thaw, Pom, Pic and The Tillys.
Frank, Dane, Lottie and The Crofts, James, Essie, Connie and The Charcoals.
Polly, Smoky, Hermione, May, Grape, Dora, Dover and The Stream Banks.
Bumble, Skoda and Carly
Wizard and Oz (no relation).
King and Queenie (no relation).
Pike (don’t tell them your name, stupid boy!).
And lots more.

So long, cubbies! It was nice to know you. Be safe.
**Christmas for all**

We’ve expanded our sales goods range this year. These are just some of the items and there’s plenty more on our website [www.foxproject.org.uk](http://www.foxproject.org.uk). Every sale goes towards building the new wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centre we announced in Newsletter No 69, so please support our Christmas sales drive and help us get there.

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**2021 Calendar**
Plan ahead with our 2021 calendar, designed by Dani Clarke and featuring beautiful photos of this year’s rescued cubs. As always, it breaks up into 12 postcards when you’ve finished with it, so it does two jobs for the price of one!

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**Christmas cards**
There’s a new Christmas card designed especially for The Fox Project by artist Thea Otrog called “Settling in for Santa” – five cards with envelopes at a price that seldom buys such exclusivity.

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**Cosy winter hat (one size fits all)**
Our soft and cozy winter hats, made from polyester/acrylic, comes in a choice of heather grey or heather purple.

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**Glove puppet**
As for the kids – if you’re not one, yourself! – how about this lovely glove puppet? One of the best we’ve seen and fits most size hands.

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**Face coverings**
The current health emergency prompted a small Scottish artisan collective to create this stylish face covering – their fox design is embroidered onto double layer, washable, hospital quality cotton, and can be adjusted to a comfortable fit.

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**Wooden coaster & mug**
The same artisan collective has also produced this hand-turned wooden coaster made from locally salvaged Yew wood – and if you have a coaster, you’ll need one of our Fox Project mugs to stand on it!

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**Tiny Tots’ T-Shirt**
There’s a choice of sizes for the tiny people of your acquaintance. Tom Street’s design is available on an organic cotton t-shirt in three sizes from 6 to 24 months.

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And there’s an even bigger range of sales goods available on our website, so go to [www.foxproject.org.uk/shop/](http://www.foxproject.org.uk/shop/) and take a look.
Please fill in the above form and return by post to:
The Fox Project, The Lodge, Kings Toll Road, Pembury, Kent TN2 4BE

01892 824111 • fox@foxproject.org.uk • www.foxproject.org.uk

ADOPTIONS, SALES AND DONATIONS

Name: __________________________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________
Postcode: _______________________________________________________
Email address if digital copy preferred (essential for overseas adopters) ___________________________
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 Name: _________________________________________
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
I wish to Gift Aid any donation shown here and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 12 months
to Southern Wildlife Ambulance Network / The Fox Project (charity no: 1190070)"

Title: ______ Name: ____________________________________
Signed: _________________ Dated: ________________

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Title: ______ Name: ____________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________________________________________________
Post Code: _____________________________________________________________________________________________________
Telephone number: __________________________________________ Email: _________________________________________________

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

No: ____________________________________________ Security No: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] (last three digits on reverse of card)
Expiry Date: / [ ] [ ] [ ]

Please send all future communications by email

Please send Adoption Certificate to:
Name: _________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________________________________________________
Postcode: _____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Price Item Size/Colour Quantity Total

Donation
UK Postage: £3.10
Total

Privacy Statement
Further to recent changes to Data Protection laws, we would like to make it clear that we do not share your data with any other company or charity.
Neither do we store credit and debit card details. These are destroyed immediately following any transaction and are never shared – even within the organisation – by email or other form of written communication. In this and other regards we are obliged to comply with annual security assessments stipulated by Worldpay.
Our full Privacy Statement may be viewed on our website or mailed to you on request.