

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY ANIMAL RESCUE (24 HR): 07817 995751

Cat rehoming: 01271 323740 (Mrs Pauline Bussell, Chairperson)
 Dog rehoming: 01271 860376 (Mr Chris Steer)

Treasurer: 01271 861212 (Mrs Jen Colenso)
 Huilmarsh, Yelland Quay, West Yelland, Barnstaple EX31 3HB

Secretary: 01237 474486 (Mrs Jane McPhee)
 Special Care Unit: 01598 760638 (Mrs Cherry Durbin)
 Animal Collection: 01598 740603 (Mrs Diana Lewis – Ambulance Driver)

POSTAL ADDRESS

North Devon Animal Ambulance

C/o Market Veterinary Centre
 River View Commercial Centre
 Riverside Road
 Pottington
 Barnstaple EX31 1QN



NORTH DEVON ANIMAL AMBULANCE

Newsletter

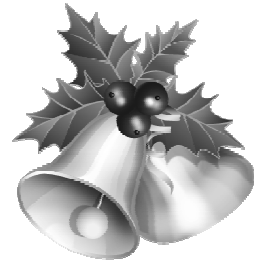
Distressed Injured And Needy Animals

www.northdevonanimalambulance.co.uk

Registered Charity
 Number 1106314

Patrons
 Lord Mallens of Bedfordshire
 Shaun Ellis

+NDA
 North Devon Animal Ambulance



NUMBER 22: Winter 2009

LUCKY LUCY



We love Lucy: animal rescue at its best brings joy for Lucy (centre above, and below) and her new owners.



BELOW: What did Diana and Pauline find in Venn Wood? See Page 2 for the full heart-melting story of the rescue that turned certain death into a happy ending for one very lucky little animal family...



Fifty years after *I love Lucy* wowed TV audiences, the words have taken on a special meaning for Brompton Regis dog lovers Ian and Sue Jarvis.

Lucy, a year-old collie, was recently rehomed by the NDAA after a horrendously cruel start in life (see Diana's report). After being treated so badly as a pup, it was amazing how, on first meeting Ian and Sue, she crept up to Ian, looked at him with her big sad eyes, and immediately put her trust in him. She's equally happy with Sue and has settled in well with Bethan, the couple's two-year-old springer spaniel, and Sam, their elderly 'Heinz 57'.

Extraordinary by any standards

Ian and Sue (seen above right with their newly enlarged canine family) were looking for a young companion for Bethan as the spaniel was proving a bit too lively for Sam – also a rescue dog. As experienced owners, Ian and Sue have owned collies before and bring a great understanding of the breed's needs. Lucy's turned out to be extraordinary by any standards, quickly putting her terrible experience behind

her as she bravely and confidently takes to her new family. What's more, despite being very underweight she's a perfect lady at feeding times, eating daintily as she fuels up for the frequent short walks needed to build her muscle strength.

Happiness shows in bright eyes

Nowadays, Lucy shows her happiness with bright eyes and a wagging tail. She's even discovering the puppy playfulness she missed so badly in her early life and is developing her own little foibles.

Describing the new family member, Ian keeps referring to one particular foible:

'Lucy is one foxy lady,' he says, 'and I mean this literally. She loves to adorn herself with *Eau de Renard*, seeking out the places to roll to gain this delightful scent whenever possible. Needless to say, she's getting well acquainted with the hose and shampoo!'

The occasional foxy smell? Sounds like a small price to pay for the unconditional love of such a wonderful (and very lucky) new family member. □

100 CLUB

It's a great way to help local animals, and places are still available for just £5 per month by standing order. You'll then be entered into our draw (last Friday of the month) for a £100 prize.

Please contact the treasurer for your application form.

Recent Winners are:

September 2009:
 Mr P Ellis

October 2009:
 Mr T Bussell

November 2009:
 Mrs G Pollard

Shop News

The three shops are thriving under the supervision of Christine (Barnstaple), Mary (Braunton) and John (Bideford). They've had a very successful year and since Bideford re-opened it's gone from strength to strength. Shop volunteers work very hard in a part of the NDAA that gets little publicity and has less of the 'aah' factor as they're not dealing with adorable puppies, kittens and other appealing animals. But they do raise a steady income for the charity and we couldn't function without them. The committee thanks you all for your support and the time you give, and sends best wishes for a happy Christmas and New Year. Grateful thanks also go to the members of public who kindly donate the goods that keep the shops so full. □

NDAA shop opening times:

Monday to Friday: 9.30am to 4pm
Saturdays: Barnstaple and Bideford close at 3pm
Saturdays: Braunton stays open until 4pm



FORTHCOMING DIARY DATES

NDAA Christmas Party – Friday, 11 December 2009 at 7.30pm, Hillside Cottage, Bidna Lane, Northam, EX39 1NU (kindly organised by Mrs Jane McPhee). All volunteers and supporters are welcome.

DONATION SLIP

Week by week and month by month our work continues – Can you make a regular donation that is secure funding for us? Standing Orders are a safe, cost effective and easy way to make a regular donation towards saving animals. Regular monthly donations enable us to plan ahead and also respond rapidly to calls for assistance and help with rescuing animals. If you already have a Standing Order with us – THANK YOU. If you would like to set one up please contact the Treasurer at the above telephone number/address. If you are a standard taxpayer please also complete the form below in full including your signature. We can then reclaim the tax on your donation as Gift Aid = 25p for every £1 donated.

NORTH DEVON ANIMAL AMBULANCE (D.I.A.N.A.) – REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1106314

I / We enclose a donation in the sum of £..... for the North Devon Animal Ambulance (please make cheques payable to NDAA)

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Please tick this box if you are a standard taxpayer and would like the Charity to treat all donations that you make on, or after the date below, as gift aid donations unless you notify otherwise. Please note that you should notify the Charity if you do not pay an amount of tax at least equal to the tax deducted from your donations.

Signed: Dated:/...../.....



Lifesaver Alfie

Last July, we rehomed Toby, a three-year-old Jack Russell, to Brixham-based Jodie Ellis. Renamed Alfie, he settled well with Jodie's other JRs. Recently, Alfie's persistence helped save a local man's life...

While out with Jodie one evening, Alfie wouldn't come back when called. Next morning, after this happened again at the same place, he led Jodie to an injured man lying unconscious in undergrowth. Jodie then got a local caravan

site owner to call the police. It turned out that the man had fallen down an bank the day before and been kept warm (in low overnight temperatures) by his dogs.

Talking about the episode later,

Jodie described feeling guilty for not following Alfie the previous night – but proud that his persistence had eventually made him the hero of the day. □

Picture courtesy of the *Herald Express*, Torquay





Babes in the Venn Wood...

It was a 'typical' afternoon for the NDAA: a dog hurt in a road accident; a family who no longer wanted a 14-year-old cat as it required costly vet treatment; a call to collect 10 unwanted rabbits (males and females together), living in horrid conditions. Diana thought it couldn't get worse...

The next call came as she approached the Misty Unit with the cat and rabbits on board – and it took her breath away. A young man said there was a box at Venn Quarry with a cat and kittens in it; he'd seen it that morning while walking his dog and it was still there at 4 pm. The phone clicked dead and there was no recall number!

After unloading the ambulance, Diana and Pauline raced to Venn Quarry in the ambulance. It was a Saturday and no one was there as they began their search. Diana takes up the story:

'We'd been looking for 30 minutes and were beginning to think it was a hoax. Suddenly, Pauline spotted a red cat carrier in the bushes of Venn Wood.'

Inside, Diana and Pauline found a little tortoiseshell cat and her six tiny two-week-old kittens. All were icy cold and covered in fleas; mum was pitifully thin and so glad when we got her back to the Misty Unit and into a warm, cosy bed with her babies. As well as their fleas, all had to be treated for respiratory infections and worms before a week of love and warmth restored them to normal kitties again.

Diana says: *'Why do people still feel they have to abandon animals like this? If we hadn't responded to that call immediately, or hadn't kept searching the woods, those little mites would have had a miserable death. If people must get rid of animals, please, please, ask us for help, it's why we're here.'* □

Call us on **07817 995751**

Moving house soon? Remember your chips!

Are you about to move home? Every year, not re-registering microchipped pets when North Devon owners move leads to broken hearts when their pet strays...

In a recent case, a dying cat needed urgent veterinary treatment. After eventually contacting the French equivalent of Petlog, the NDAA learned that the owner had returned to England without re-registering kitty. If this had been done, we could have contacted them immediately. On a happier note, we rescued another stray cat in North Devon and discovered that it was registered in Germany. Thanks to microchipping and up-to-date details, he was quickly reunited with his owner.

Whenever the NDAA attends stray dogs,

cats, horses*, and even rabbits, it checks for microchips. With more and more pets being 'chipped', you can't imagine our joy when that scanner beeps. Too often, we discover out of date contact details. So please re-register your pet's chip when you move – it avoids so much unnecessary sadness.

*The law requires horses to be microchipped or freeze-branded. We recommend visible freeze branding as a horse marked like this is less likely to be stolen and re-sold – and slaughterhouses check brand numbers too! □

NDAA OFFER: If your pet hasn't been 'chipped', the good news is that the NDAA offers this service for just £10. Call Mrs Pauline Bussell on **01271 323740** now! Within 48 hours, your pet could be registered and you could be enjoying the peace of mind that comes with a professionally microchipped pet. □

Surprise, Surprise!

One of the joys of NDAA volunteering is visiting care homes for the elderly with a few little animals. Such was the case when Diana Lewis and Pauline Bussell visited Chelfham House in Barnstaple and found the residents having a short, peaceful after-lunch nap...

Gently, Pauline and Diana tapped a shoulder here, and touched an elbow there, then pulled fluffy little kittens from their basket while our mascot, Shadow the Labrador, affectionately nuzzled his soft wet nose onto laps.

'My turn now'

Within minutes, the room was wide-awake and full of smiles and cries of 'my turn now'. At one point, two elderly ladies nearly came to blows as they accused each other of having held a kitten for too long...

After an hour in the lounge, Diana, Pauline and their four-legged wards visited the bedridden residents, including Mrs Dilys

Singleton (seen below with one of the kittens).

'It's hard to put into words the joy of seeing the interaction between the animals and those gentlefolk,' said Diana. 'Yet again, we've seen how animal welfare benefits North Devon people as well as the animals.'

Recalling this and other similar visits, Diana and Pauline are filled with joy at how elderly gentlemen and ladies reminisced with such heartbreaking emotion about pets they'd lived with in the past – and the pleasure these animals had brought into their lives.

Christmas visits planned

Such visits bring comfort and unconditional love to so many elderly people – a love that is reciprocated by the residents' gentle handling of what can often be fragile little creatures. Can there be a greater gift to offer? With this in mind, we'll be visiting as many residential care homes as possible this Christmas. □

Do you run a local residential home? Call **07817 995751** if you would like the NDAA to arrange a surprise visit for your residents. □



Autumn Watch... with the NDAA

On another of his occasional days out with the NDAA's Diana Lewis, newsletter editor Al Hidden was reminded again how animal rescue benefits North Devon people too...

A beautiful autumn day is already half gone as we meet at the NDAA's Misty Centre. Instead of a planned mid-morning rendezvous, it's already lunchtime – thanks to a major closure on the M5. Diana's already done half a typically busy day's work – no badger rescues this morning, but cats, two collie pups and an injured hedgehog. And as we leave the Misty Centre, the phone rings again as more people report sick animals or follow up earlier calls.

'A free neutering service...'

At Tiverton services we meet Chloe from Bicton College to collect a sick guinea pig. En route, we've fielded more calls and been buzzed by a low-flying helicopter, which makes me wonder whether a helicopter would be a more suitable vehicle for Diana. One call is from a family that's just got a female rabbit to go with their male pet:

'We don't want them to mate,' explains the caller before Diana offers to collect both for neutering. Diana then reminds me how important the NDAA's spaying and neutering service is, and a vital part of the charity's work; by controlling unplanned cat, dog, rabbit and guinea pig reproduction the NDAA reduces numbers of unwanted animals – and

future work. 'It's free too,' Diana explains, 'people can call and we'll arrange for their pet to be neutered.'

Another key emergency service

Seeing an RAC van in the services, I'm struck by the parallels between the NDAA's work and that of other emergency services, including long days and ceaseless commitment to helping people. It's a theme that resurfaces during the day. From expensive vets care for pets whose owners can't afford the fees, to the comfort two rabbits give an elderly granny, Diana's work benefits people like you and me every day of the year.

Soon, we're heading back to Barnstaple and the phone's ringing again – it's Secret World in Somerset, telling Diana about a lost Lanar Falcon in Chulmleigh in case she gets a call. Moments later, another call is full of thanks from the owner of a Pekinese that Diana's been caring for while the man has been in hospital.

In Whiddon, we follow up reports of a sick rabbit sitting behind the property. The caller's out when we arrive, so we leave a note, then cross town to collect a poorly dog and take it to Market Vets new practice on the Pottington Industrial Estate.

As bitch Molly and the Bicton guinea pig are checked in, I read about pet care for the forthcoming Halloween and Bonfire Night 'fireworks season' and examine the sound desensitisation CDs on sale to help pets get used to the loud noises. Then we're in the examination room with Charlotte, one of the practice vets as she and colleague Heather take blood samples and examine Molly.

Helping local people too

Afterwards in the NDAA's special-care unit (SCU), it's feeding time as Diana settles a feral cat (that's just had its infected tail amputated), into an intensive care unit.

The late afternoon light is low and golden as we wish the Market Vets team a good weekend and take Molly home to her appreciative owner. Then we're off to collect the two bunnies. After a brief struggle with the male, Diana gets them into two transit cages, then reassures the family's elderly grandmother that the pets will be returned soon. Yet again, we see how the NDAA benefits the lives of local people – not just its animals.

Major and minor incidents

More calls follow, and just as one case is resolved so a new one seems to be opened. By now it's after six and we stop to buy my supper before I drive home to Gloucestershire. Given our late start, we've accomplished lots, despite many of today's tasks being minor compared to last weekend's seal pup rescue, an ongoing project to catch more than 20 feral cats from a local property, or the police operations Diana gets involved in due to animal welfare issues.

As I eat my supper, I know that if Diana's phone rings on the way home she'll be off again. I marvel at her energy, and that of her NDAA colleagues, none of whom are paid for their work. They're an inspiration to the rest of us. □



Got Internet access? Read the full article on the NDAA website: www.northdevonanimalambulance.co.uk



Diana's AGM Report 2009

This year has seen huge challenges and achievements, in which the support and hard work by so many people means we arrive at another AGM with great pride in being part of the North Devon Animal Ambulance.

On a purely practical side, our wonderful new ambulance was donated by the Gwen Rees Trust. Its custom-made interior, with space for dogs, sheep, deer and other animals, and its amazing special-care extras, have made a huge difference to our ability to administer immediate first aid as well as ongoing care and transport for all sorts of creatures.

Further intensive care units for specialised creatures and newborns (from puppies and kitten orphans, to ducklings and fledglings) have helped our new Barnstaple special-care unit (SCU) and the Misty Unit, as well as with fosterers who successfully hand-rear so many sick or tiny patients. These are very expensive items, yet each time we've appealed for another, a firm, The Lions or an individual supporter has come up trumps.

Wonderful benefactors

The year's biggest achievement was made possible by two wonderful benefactors. When Market Vets opened their new practice in Barnstaple they offered us free use of the top floor for a special-care unit. Their generosity, and a £50,000 legacy from our much-missed and loved patron Nancy Sawyer, enabled us to outfit the unit to a very high standard as a convalescent and care unit for all types of animals. Having the unit also massively cuts the cost

of hospitalisation at vets' around Devon.

This brings me to the day-to-day care of the hundreds of animals that pass through our hands. At the SCU, we've appointed 36 volunteer carers to work in shifts, cleaning, feeding and medicating sick, injured or post-op cases. These volunteers have proved truly amazing. Of the original 36, no less than 32 remain with us. They always turn up, never baulk at their duties, and give unstinting love and kindness to the little creatures in the unit – from a baby hedgehog to a large angry dog. When I collected a terrified little collie pup that had been beaten and chained in a barn (and was about to be shot), the poor little dog wouldn't even walk. It cowered, shaking, and was afraid to stand. Within a week our volunteers had the puppy walking on a lead and playing with a ball. Six weeks later, we found a wonderful new home for her...

Julie and the SCU

To whom must we say a big 'thank you' for organising the SCU and its day-to-day operation? Julie Ovey, of course, a lady of great organisational skills and a heart of gold. Her hours are daunting, from her early morning checks to the last evening walk for a recovering dog. If there's a problem relating to the unit, people turn to Julie. We're just so very lucky to have all these wonderful people.

Then there's Chris and Julia Steer, watching over our dogs for rehoming at Treyhill Kennels, spending hours each week taking calls for unwanted dogs and passing the enquiries to me. They take calls for 'Wanted' dogs too, and tirelessly show people around and match them to animals. They also take dogs to vets and spend hours worrying over the many difficult-to-home dogs. Without Chris and Julia we couldn't have rehomed the 78 dogs that now have bright, happy, loving futures.

Let's talk birds now and Karen's day and night care. So often, I've arrived with tiny nests of fledglings or injured birds and, despite her severe health problems, Karen's achieved amazing results. Who can forget the nest of newborn skylarks I collected from a local farmer. No one expected such shy and difficult birds to survive. Yet, two months later we watched three skylarks fly into the bright blue sky, singing their hearts out over Exmoor.

Cherry Durbin is a valued dog and orphan kid fosterer, one of those people you can phone at two in the morning and know the resulting response will always be 'Bring it over.' Highlights of Cherry's year were the 12-hour-old puppies whose collie Mum (herself only nine-months-old) was unable to rear them. I collected four tiny, helpless squealing bundles and raced to Cherry who had one of our intensive care units ready. Over the next four weeks Cherry averaged about four hours of sleep a night. For the month after that she had a house of chaos and rampage, yet all she did was laugh and love the little pups to bits so that, when they were 10 weeks old, three beautiful, socialised (but still a little mad) pups went to the cream of homes. Only three? Would you be surprised to learn that one little collie stayed with its foster mum? Don't do that too often Cherry, we need you too badly as a fosterer!

So many people to thank

There are so many more people to thank: Ali and Anne-Marie; Misha and Tim, who help regularly at the Misty Unit; Anni who looks after hedgehogs; Carol and Caroline the dog wardens with whom I work very closely – they've been such a help with welfare cases. And let's not forget Joe De Witt – what would I do with the snakes and lizards, some of which need special intensive care, if I didn't have Joe to turn to.

Then there are the police officers who regularly help me and whose appeals for assistance I often receive when an animal is left without care after an arrest, a sudden death, or if it's in a vehicle after a road traffic incident. At one recent arrest, two very large and aggressive dogs had been incarcerated in a mobile home and needed to be taken into care. When I assessed the situation, I realised that I needed help. Vets Martin and Carly from Market Vets were soon with me. In a very difficult (and on the vets' part, brave) rescue, the dogs were sedated and I was able to take them to safety. A huge amount of work then went into taming and socialising them, as well as neutering them and giving them expensive veterinary care. Eventually, two dogs that had led lives of hell had a bright, safe new future. In a case like this, the police could easily (and with good reason) have decided to shoot the pair. Instead, they cared enough to call us out to help with the animals' welfare.

Amazing emergency services

We're so lucky with our emergency services in North Devon. The fire service always come up trumps when I ask for help: ducklings down drains, cats on roofs, and even sheep drowning in a huge drainage ditch on Braunton Burrows. To my intense embarrassment on that occasion, the fire service rescued not only the sheep but also me – stuck in five-feet of water and silt as I held a sheep's head above water. They had their priorities right – with great difficulty, they rescued the sheep *first* and then me!

The coastguards too have helped at many incidents. A recent seal pup call out to Putsborough Head was assisted by off-duty coastguards. The pup was too sick (massive infection of its neck from dog bites) to go straight to the seal sanctuary at Gweek. Instead, we took it to the RSPCA at West

Hatch. West Hatch has helped us lots with long-term care for the larger wildlife such as foxes, badgers and birds of prey. In return, I've taken many calls that they've been unable to respond to due to sparse out of hours coverage.

Our collaboration with the area's housing associations meant that, thanks to their massive advertising campaign, we neutered a large number of dogs and cats free of charge. If we hadn't, these animals would undoubtedly have produced a huge quantity of unwanted puppies and kittens. This is one of our most important policies as a local charity and we must maintain it at all costs.

Local partners

On the subject of local collaborations, I must mention the work we've done with Lynton & Lynmouth Town Council on one of the most rewarding achievements of the year. After years of controversy over the wild goats in Valley of The Rocks, meetings with many different organisations eventually resulted in a happy ending. The NDAA paid for all 170 goats to be treated for worms, lice and various other health problems, and vaccinated against Blue Tongue. Market Vets kindly donated the services of three vets and volunteers from many sources gave two days' time to work very hard (wild goats don't take kindly to injections and treatment). The outcome is that 50 goats will remain as valley residents while 100 will go to Surrey where they'll chew their way through 3,500 acres of MOD heathland under the auspices of Surrey Wildlife. It's a great result for everyone: local residents are happy; the animals will be in their element; and it'll look good on our statistics to say we rehomed more than 100 goats!

A great committee

Then, of course, there's the never-ending

behind the scenes management of the good work by our hard-working, devoted and very dedicated committee. Without them *none* of this would be possible – not me with the ambulance, the SCU, the volunteers, nor our three charity shops with their marvellous staff. None of it would be here if it weren't for the committee's unceasing work. They organise it all: Pauline chairs the admin meetings, while Jane handles the secretarial side of things and the Bideford shop. Our wonderful treasurer Jane Dennis-Smith had to give up due to Karen's health, but both continue to work with dedication on behalf of the charity. Now, of course, we have new treasurer Jennifer Colenso; I wonder if she realises what she's taken on...

Mick and Pauline

And of course, there's a big thank you to everyone else who beavers away without reward or recognition, as well as special thanks to my dear husband Mick who thought he was retiring from work 18 months ago – only to find that he's working harder than ever before, and covering similar mileages to me. And to our chairperson Pauline Bussell, a lady without equal who'll turn out at any time to do any animal welfare job requested of her. My eternal thanks also go to Pauline's late husband Norman who died in June and is much missed by the NDAA. His supervision as our resident vet is hugely missed by all of us – and by the animals.

To each and every one of you, please accept once again my gratitude for your support and help throughout the year. Without all of you, we simply wouldn't be here. We won't let you or the animals down.

Diana



Animal statistics for 2008–09

With 2,052 animals for the year 2008–09, the numbers are up yet again, equating to just under 40 animals per week or five per day. Most of the animals had to be transported several times, first to a vet and maybe a short stay in our Special-care Unit. Many domestic pets will have gone on to a fosterer, our cattery, or kennels before being taken to a new home. Small wild birds will often have been transported to our bird unit, with larger wild birds and animals going to West Hatch or Secret World in Somerset.

Cats & Kittens: 715

Including animals rehomed by NDAA; sick or injured creatures treated by a vet and returned to owner; animals picked up, neutered and returned to owner; feral cats that were sick, injured, or needing neutering before being returned to site; strays returned to their owner.

Dogs: 132

Including animals rehomed by NDAA; sick or injured creatures treated by a vet and returned to owner; animals picked up, neutered and returned to owner; strays returned to their owner; three dogs put to sleep on a vet's advice for excessive aggression.

During the year, we ran two massive

neutering campaigns (and provided free neutering for all animals) in conjunction with Forches Community Centre and the Tarka Housing Association.

Horses & Ponies

Eight rehomed

Sheep: 15

Including rehomed, unmarked and sick or injured animals, and animals put to sleep on a vet's advice (unmarked, sick or injured, but untreatable).

Goats: 192

Including seven rehomed; 15 Valley of Rocks goats put to sleep due to untreatable sickness or injury; 170 wild goats treated and returned to Valley of Rocks.

Wild Birds: 313

Including sick, injured, hand-reared or convalesced and released back to the wild.

This year, due to adverse weather conditions, the survival rate for wild birds fell below 35%. Many, literally picked up from the ground, were found to be in a severely hypothermic and emaciated condition and could not be saved.

Large Birds: 28

Including swans, gannets, owls and buzzards (taken to West Hatch or Secret World for specialist care).

Ducklings: 93

Including sick, injured, hand-reared and rehomed birds.

Chickens: 241

Including sick, injured and re-homed birds.

Rabbits: 63

Including neutered, sick, injured and rehomed

animals.

Guinea pigs, Gerbils, Hamsters, Ferrets: 92

Including sick, injured and rehomed animals.

Cage birds: 22

Including sick, injured and re-homed birds.

Exotics: 7

Seven creatures were taken to Joe de Witt, our exotics expert for treatment and rehoming.

Hedgehogs: 67

Yet again, only a 30% survival rate due to weather conditions, sickness and injury. Survivors are treated and taken to safe release-sites when they are up to weight.

Badgers: 19

Including those put to sleep due to severe injury or sickness. All possible rehabilitation cases are taken to West Hatch and Secret World.

Deer: 9

Including those put to sleep or released to wild after treatment, and two fawns taken to Secret World for hand-rearing and release to safe wild sites after first aid.

Foxes: 15

Including those put to sleep due to sickness or injury, those treated and taken to a safe release site, and four cubs taken to Secret World for hand-rearing and release to safe wild sites.

Bats: 20

Including those put to sleep due to sickness or injury and those treated and released back to their wild habitat when up to weight.

(All figures are as accurate as possible.)



First class travellers

Tilly and Jo-Jo were the first patients to enjoy the luxury of the NDAA's wonderful new horse trailer, generously donated by the Edna Smylie Memorial Fund. Here's what happened when, in a desperate effort to find a new home for the pair, their owner saw the NDAA's website...

The horses' heartbroken owner was emigrating to Australia and had already tried every organisation in the country to see if they could take his beloved pets. Unfortunately, due to both horses being 27 (and needing lots of care), nothing was available.

The website works

With his journey drawing nearer, the owner was getting desperate. It was the NDAA's stunning website (developed and maintained by Barnstaple-based Net Tecs Internet Solutions Ltd) that gave the owner a last minute hope for Jo-Jo, an ex Irish racehorse, and her tiny 12-hand companion, Tilly, who'd been rescued from a slaughterhouse.

As soon as they received the desperate call for help, Pauline and Diana set off to

Bovey Tracy with the new horse trailer and returned with the equine duo onboard. Sadly, the likelihood of finding a new home for them together (they're inseparable) was unlikely.

Love for the rest of their days

Instead, the committee decided to purchase a stable large enough for them to share, and had it erected close to the Misty Centre on property owned by the charity's chairperson.

Thank you everyone

Now, cosy and resplendent in their new horse rugs, Jo-Jo and Tilly are looking forward to the charity's loving care for the rest of their days. Thank you to all our supporters for making this, and other rescues possible. □

AGM Report

Our 2009 AGM was held at Portmore Golf Park on 25 November. Despite bad weather it was, as usual, well attended.

As well as NDAA business and presentations we were treated to another entertaining presentation by falconer, Jonathon Marshall who brought his golden eagle, Samson, and a rare gyr falcon (right) presented to him by the king of Jordan as a thank you for training birds of prey.

During the meeting, attendees heard how, despite a very busy

year, the charity remains financially sound thanks to several generous bequests, especially from the late Elizabeth Blenman and Nancy Sawyer, a former patron.

Our shops were reported to be thriving, the new Special Care Unit has been kept very busy, and Diana has already put many thousands of miles on the new ambulance.

The year has seen a bigger increase in the number of animals coming through the charity – and many more requests for help with vet fees. Demand for our

neutering service has also risen considerably and the charity remains available 24/7 to help all.

Two more Trustees, Sue Brodie and John Tucker, were elected to the committee to replace Karen Dennis-Smith (who retired through ill-health) and the late Norman Bussell. Our new treasurer, Jen Colenso, replaced Jane Dennis-Smith earlier in the year.

The meeting finished with coffee and biscuits and our thanks go to Portmore Golf Park for the use of their facilities once again. □



Holy orders

A call to Lynton Convent on a late (and very wet) Sunday afternoon found a distressed, and very poorly little cat being cared for by some obviously heartbroken resident nuns.

Puss had been an occupant of the convent for many years since moving into the peaceful, loving environment rather than enduring the harsh outside world that faces many stray cats. With Oliver's earthly life appearing to be coming to a close amid tears and prayers, the NDAA's Diana Lewis took the little cat to the vet so his end could be free of pain and fear.

Laid to rest

The next day, Diana returned Oliver to the sisters and he was laid to rest in the beautiful walled garden of the convent where he'd enjoyed many years lying happily among the flowers and crops. However, the convent wasn't the same without him; something was missing and a little gentle persuasion from Diana convinced the nuns that it would indeed be selfish not to offer another desperate soul a place of comfort...

Enter Missy, a sad and ill-treated little creature who needed love and peace in her life. What better place could we find than with Lynton's sisters? Soon, Missy realised that these gentle ladies were an easy touch as she stalked the corridors (very respectfully, of course) and made her demands known.

Here comes The Queen

Months later, how has Missy settled in at the convent? The answer lies in an overheard remark by Sister May Magdalene when Missy strolled past during a recent convent open day: 'Ah! There goes the Queen.' □



It's just along from the wooden gate...

Midnight drew near on another stormy night as Diana Lewis searched a county roadside for an injured bird that had been reported...

Though better than nothing, the caller's description of its location wasn't overly helpful as branches, leaves and driving rain swirled round Diana and cut visibility to a few metres.

Suddenly, she saw the glint of light in the ditch and found a tiny, bedraggled Little Owl. He was in a bad way, soaked through, shivering, and desperately thin, so Diana rushed him

home to where husband Mick had already warmed an intensive care unit. After receiving recovery fluid (like a human drip, but going directly into the bird's stomach), the Little Owl was clicking his beak crossly and demanding food. Next morning, Mick drove him to West Hatch for long-term treatment and rehabilitation – it was another good result.

OWL FACT: At this time of year, we recover many owls: Tawny, Barn and occasionally Little Owls. Food's scarce, vehicle headlights confuse them, and territories are under dispute – it's a difficult time for all birds of prey.