

ferrets in need



Newsletter

Issue 1, October 2003

WELCOME!

To this first edition of our new bi-monthly newsletter designed to keep every member in touch with what's happening at Ferrets in Need.

Clive Williamson has generously agreed to become the newsletter editor. So if there's anything you'd like to see discussed in the next issue, or you have an article you think might be suitable for the newsletter, you can get in

touch with Clive via the Ferrets in Need Web site at www.ferretsinnneed.org.uk, or by email at clive@ferretsinnneed.org.uk. Or why not just button-hole him at one of our regular social evenings!

A Second Successful Year

The event at Martin Mere over the weekend of the 20th and 21st September marked the end of FIN's second year of fund raising. I've been told that I can no longer use the excuse that 'I'm too busy organising events', so I must now produce a round up of the year's activities.

I'll leave it to the treasurer to give you details of how much money we made, and where the money has gone, and is going, but 2003 was even more successful, both in terms of fund raising and enjoyment, than last year. From what I've seen, there seems to be a direct relationship between the number of FIN members attending an event and the money in the collecting boxes at the end of the day. To all of those who helped at our events, I'd like to say a heart felt 'thank you'.

I find it very difficult to highlight any particular event as THE BEST, so many were spectacular successes, with the organisers eager to invite us back next year. But probably my personal favourite was Martin Mere, since it was a curious mixture of sadness

(the last event of the year), relief (at last I can get down to other activities such as cleaning the house), fun (wonderful place, wonderful people), AND made lots of money.

On the other hand, the Pickering Pastures Show seemed to personify FIN. Everybody had individual ideas on how to raise money, MADE money, and from the comments I received seemed to have fun doing it! One of the most successful features seemed to be Margaret's cakes. Not only did these make money for FIN but they also satisfied the basic bodily needs of those of our group who have a higher metabolic rate than most (you know who I mean!).

Throughout the year, certain activities have consistently brought in funds. Two of these activities are particularly noteworthy because they are undoubtedly the least interesting to do, and require the most work. Therefore, I would



like to praise the work of our worthy 'foot soldiers' who trudge wearily around for hours following children taking ferrets for a walk. Also I'm sure everyone wants to thank Ann and Bill Beck for all the hours spent finding and wrapping Lucky Nips. Both of these activities are a great favourite with children and significantly contribute to the success of our stand.

Finally, and most importantly, I think all of us will want to praise those ferrets who made it possible. Please give them a hug (or a treat!) and tell them they are 'the magic' of FIN.

Ruth Corbett
Event Disorganiser

We're sure that everyone would like to join with us in sending our best wishes to our chairman, Kath Frame, along with our hopes for her speedy recovery.

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Treasurer's Report

Since the 1st of March 2003, when our current financial year began, FIN has raised a total of £2,544.62. By far the bulk of that (£2,091.07) has come from our attendance at events.

In total this year FIN has had a stand at 18 events. Our first, on the 12th April, was at the Peggy Henderson Animal Rescue Centre in Sale, Manchester, where we raised £45.77. Our last outdoor event, over the weekend of the 20th September, was at Martin Mere, near Southport, where we raised over £200.

Eighteen shows in 5 months

sometimes took their toll on everyone's good humour, so sincere thanks are due to those stalwarts who turned up to help at every FIN event.

So far this year we've paid out £674.37, for equipment, veterinary bills, neutering costs and ferret food. This money has helped to support the South Staffs Ferret Rescue, Bolton Ferret Welfare and the C & D Ferret Sanctuary. It's been our policy this year to pay money directly to a rescue's vet, supply food directly to a rescue, or to pay a bill instead of simply giving a financial donation, since we believe that makes things easier for the rescue and is more

transparent for us as a charity.

We're currently assessing what further support FIN can offer to rescues. It's already been agreed that we will make a substantial donation to the Oasis Ferret Rescue to help fund building work so that additional ferret pens can be brought into service.

Finally, if you'd like to see where some of our money was spent, take a look at Luky's story on the C & D Ferret Sanctuary Web site (see Best of the Web lower down this page).

Eric Corbett
Treasurer

Where Angels Fear to Tread

We all know that breeding for specific traits in animals has sometimes led to major problems for the recipients of this human intervention, a classic problem being the respiratory problems associated with the short nose length of boxer dogs. Thankfully, legislation is now before the European Parliament to eliminate breeding for traits that are disadvantageous to animals. However, ferret owners are now posed with the problem of deciding what are the correct attributes of a typical healthy ferret.

Concerns have been raised in the ferret world about some

breeders in the working fraternity breeding for small ferrets, in particular small jills. I, like many other ferrets thought, 'Oh my goodness! This can't be good. Could lead to all sorts of problems' (wasn't sure really what sort of problems, but was unhappy at the thought of breeding for traits).

A few days ago I was talking to someone who had kept ferrets for over twenty years. He was unaware of this new controversy over breeding for small ferrets. He was just talking 'love my ferrets'. During our conversation he told me that he was concerned about how *large* ferrets had become over the past few years. He felt that the increase in size went

along with a loss of agility that made ferrets more prone to physical damage.

I am now very perplexed about what size I should be. But one thing that has become clear to me is that in all issues concerning animal welfare it's important not to rush in where angels fear to tread. Read around a bit, talk to lots of people from different types of background, and then, if there really is an issue, try and *negotiate* a change in attitude.



Zen Ferret

Best of the Web

In our first ever newsletter I'll begin with our very own Web site at [http://](http://www.ferretsinnneed.org.uk)

www.ferretsinnneed.org.uk. You're greeted with a bright and airy homepage offering an overview of what FIN is about and a number of links allowing you to navigate to a range of offerings such as the events diary, contact details and a variety of ferret care information.

Many of you will know that one of the rescues supported by FIN is the C & D Ferret Sanctuary, <http://www.cndferrets.org.uk>. The site has a well thought out layout which incorporates a wealth of useful information on the sanctuary and the services it

offers. It also includes a number of moving and successful rescue and rehoming stories.

Both of the sites above are maintained by Ferrets About, <http://www.ferretsabout.co.uk>. Take a look at the "fun stuff" section which includes a flash animated version of Monty Python's ferret song as well as extracts from an episode of the Simpson's involving ferrets. Check out the ferret myths section and you might come across some very surprising information. Don't forget to drop into the on-line shop before you leave!

Ferrets About isn't the only ferret product company operated by a member of FIN. There's also [http://](http://www.ferrets4everuk.co.uk)

www.ferrets4everuk.co.uk, which you really couldn't have expected me not to mention. Ferrets4ever sells ferret novelties and gifts.

Finally, it appears that we're not the only organisation called 'Ferrets in Need' in the world. There's another in New Zealand, at <http://www.ferretfans.net>. They operate an excellent mailing list, and have the most concise directory of links that I have ever found on a ferret Web site.

And the winner for this issue? It's got to be the C & D Ferret Sanctuary site. I found it to be the most moving, especially the rescue success story.

Marc Faulkner

Do you have a favourite ferret Web site? Let me know and I'll try and include it in a future review.