

ferrets in need



Newsletter

Issue 12, November 2006

A bi-monthly newsletter designed to keep every member in touch with what's happening at Ferrets in Need. If there's anything you'd like to

see discussed in the next issue, or you have an article or photograph you think might be suitable for the newsletter, please contact us at

editor@ferretsinnneed.org.uk, or via the contact details available on the Ferrets in Need Web site at www.ferretsinnneed.org.uk

Justin's Wheels



always has been a wanderer. He was found wandering the streets of Walkden before he arrived at an animal rescue in Irlam, which is where I first met him. He let his feelings be known by not wanting to go back in the carrier, escaping when I attempted to clean him out and by refusing to take the Metacam. His piece de résistance was pooping in his food bowl, multiple times, just to get the message across.

Justin was always a very fit, feisty little ferret which is why it was such a shock in July last year when he suddenly lost the use of his back legs. The poor soul was still determined to get about, pulling himself along with his front legs. We took him to the vet, who prodded and poked him. After saying watch out, he will bite when I do this the vet found he had feeling in his back legs after pinching his toes with what looked like pliers. Of course Justin didn't bite as he'll put up with anything after living with me for four years. The vet's prognosis wasn't good. He said to give him rest in a small cage like the large carrier we took him to the vets in, gave him some Metacam and said to see how he does.

Justin wasn't very impressed with the cage rest. For a start he wanted to be with his best friend, Sukie and secondly he

A week or so later we were back at the vet after seeing little improvement. The vet didn't seem too hopeful and explained that after talking to another vet more experienced in 'exotics' that he suspected it was a spinal tumour. He said we could carry out a £200 test that would involve Justin going to an animal hospital, and dye being injected into his spine. If it was a spinal tumour, they would put him to sleep under the anaesthetic. The vet seemed to think that cost would be an issue but what bothered me was the risk that if it was a tumour I wouldn't get to say goodbye and after putting him through all that. We decided between us and the vet that the best thing would be to take him home and let him do whatever he wanted. The vet only gave him a couple of weeks to live.

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Justin slowly got better but not completely. He had a set back in January when his legs got worse. We went back to the vet, saw a different vet this time and she explained that they still thought he had a spinal tumour and he had to go back on the Metacam permanently.

Justin got better again, but never completely recovered he and still has off days now. But he still likes to try to open his cage door and hasn't lost his lust for the great outdoors. A month ago or so we saw an article in an American ferret magazine about a 'Ferret flyer' wheelchair, made especially for ferrets. The difference between this wheelchair and others that had come about from down sizing dog wheel chairs was that it didn't restrict the movement of the back legs if required. I placed an order for the chair by emailing Robert and Donna Morgavan, the American couple who make the chairs. I had to measure Justin's inside leg measurement as the carts are made to measure and sent a photo of it, no mean feat with an albino ferret.

We got the money across via PayPal to a ferret shelter that the Morgavan's support, and we included a

donation for the shelter. We received a beautiful card in the post from the ferret farm shelter 'kids', thanking us for the donation. According to the ferrets at the rescue I'm an earth Angel as I have four rescues, I wonder what they'd make of other people I know who have even more rescues.

Justin's ferret flyer arrived at the weekend with some lovely toys and a personalised blanket as a surprise present. The blanket brought a few tears to my eyes! We also got a lovely letter with instructions for Justin on how not to be afraid of his ferret flyer from the eight is enough bunch. He's been having lots of fun in his ferret flyer ever since. He's now associated it with going out side and waits patiently at the back door to be let out, regardless of the weather. The best thing is that it has actually improved his posture; he is arching his back now when he walks whereas before he was dragging his stomach on the ground and getting carpet burns.

Joanne Leese

Social evenings are now held on the last Wednesday of the month at St. John's URC Church Hall, Wilderspool Causeway, Warrington WA4 6QE
Start time is 8.00pm.

Events Diary



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| November 2006 | Wednesday 29th November, Social Evening - Hob show |
| December 2006 | Wednesday 20th December, Social Evening - Decorate a cage/carrier competition |
| January 2007 | Wednesday 31st January, Social Evening - Ferret racing |
| February 2007 | Wednesday 28th February, Social Evening - Ferret Winter Olympics |
| March 2007 | Wednesday 28th March, Social Evening - AGM |

Ferret Olympics 2006

This year's Ferret Olympics were held at our social evening on the 30th August. The same three events as last year were included, the tube sprint, the ferret maze and the cup tip. The tube sprint is a timed run down a length of plastic tubing, and the ferret maze is, as the name suggests, a timed run through a maze. In the cup tip each contestant is given 2 minutes in which to knock over as many plastic cups as possible.

Tube Sprint

First place was taken by Joanne and David's Tinkerbelle, with a phenomenal time of 26.03 seconds. Not far behind was Ruth and Doug's Corey with a time of 27 seconds, securing him second place. Ruth and Eric's Timmy proved that it is possible for such a large ferret to run by clinching 3rd place with a time of 31.53 seconds.

Ferret Maze

This year's maze proved to be significantly more difficult than last year's, with 9 contestants failing to find their way through it, or running out of time. Of those

that did complete the maze, Ruth and Eric's Kerry was the fastest in 32 seconds, with their Jimmy taking second place with 32.5 seconds. Joanne and David's Tinkerbelle took the last podium place with a creditable time of 35.9 seconds.

Cup Tip

Four of this year's contestants succeeded in knocking over all 20 of the cups, so the 3 medal winners were selected based on their times. Clive's Gwyn was the fastest to knock over all of his cups in a time of 36.58 seconds. Charlotte's Roma came second with 58.04 seconds, and in third place was Ruth and Doug's Webley in a time of 1 minute 9 seconds.

Olympic Champions

Overall gold medal went to Joanne and David's Tinkerbelle with a total of 66 points from the 3 events. Ruth and Doug's Webley came second, scoring 54 points and Charlotte's Roma took third place with 50 points.

Marc Faulkner

Do you have a favourite ferret joke, story or amusing picture?
Send it to editor@ferretsinnneed.org.uk and we'll include it in a future issue.