

# Animal Affairs

March 2009



## Reading with Oxon Border Branch

Registered charity no. 251482

[www.rspca-reading.org.uk](http://www.rspca-reading.org.uk) • Email: [volunteers@rspca-reading.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@rspca-reading.org.uk)

### Editor's letter

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2009! Last year was very successful for the Branch, thanks to the efforts of its Committee members and all of our volunteers. In fact, during 2008 we rehomed 24 dogs, 26 cats, 42 rabbits and 49 guinea pigs. Here's to an even more exciting and thrilling 2009!

Animal welfare has been high on the public agenda again this year with celebrity chefs continuing to campaign for the fair treatment of animals. The RSPCA as a whole is heavily involved in many of these efforts and has launched a number of campaigns for 2009 including Rooting for Pigs!, Stop the puppy traffickers, Demand welfare friendly chicken and Uncaged eggs. For a full list of RSPCA campaigns and information on how you can help please visit the main RSPCA website ([www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)) and click on Campaigns.

Once again, we hope that you will find the newsletter both informative and interesting. We would also like to hear your ideas and suggestions for future editions, so please don't hesitate to email [volunteers@rspca-reading.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@rspca-reading.org.uk).

In the meantime – enjoy!

Natasha Staley, newsletter editor

### Fundraising

Henley Collection Day – The recent Henley Town Collection Day raised a total of £402.12. As always, this money will go directly towards helping animals in the local area. Thank you to everyone who took part!

RSPCA Week – Collections will take place during the week of 27th April - 3rd May at Tesco Extra in Reading & Tesco in Henley. This week represents a great fundraising opportunity but requires

volunteers throughout the week, so once again all help is very much appreciated!

Please contact Mel Ivey at [volunteers@rspca-reading.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@rspca-reading.org.uk) if you would like to volunteer for either of the above collection events. Just a few hours of your time would be gratefully received.

### Reading Guinea Pig Rescue

RSPCA Reading Guinea Pig Rescue (RGPR) is a guinea pig-specific rescue centre working closely with the Reading with Oxon Border Branch of the RSPCA.

The reasons for rehoming guinea pigs vary from a change in circumstances (i.e. moving house, change in domestic situation, etc.) to uninformed choices being made about owning a pet.

The RGPR website ([www.readingguineapigrescue.co.uk](http://www.readingguineapigrescue.co.uk)) provides guidance, links to suppliers and details of guinea pigs available for adoption. Last year alone 46 guinea pigs were rehomed, but unfortunately many also had to be referred to other centres.

In 2008 the centre also held 2 Piggie PMs (open afternoons) to raise money to purchase much needed runs, housing and water bottles. A Spring Piggie PM is planned for April 25 and will be held at Active Vetcare Tilehurst from 2-5pm. These events are very popular attracting visitors from as far afield as Manchester! The RGPR also received matched funding from Vodafone thanks to the involvement of one of their employees. Gorgeous Guineas has also continued to offer its support by donating free skincare products. This has saved an untold amount in vets bills and allows RGPR to include a sample of shampoo in its rehoming packs too.

The centre currently has 18 guinea pigs looking for homes, the priority being

boars. If you would like to volunteer or are interested in rehoming a guinea pig, please contact:  
[karen@readingguineapigrescue.co.uk](mailto:karen@readingguineapigrescue.co.uk)

For more stories about our guinea pigs please visit [www.thepigissue.co.uk](http://www.thepigissue.co.uk)

### Witness appeal

Hampshire Constabulary is currently investigating the dumping of two dead ponies in the ford, Ford Lane, Bramshill. The incident took place between 17 – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008. The ponies were both brown and between 12 – 13 hh. One of them had a significant injury to its neck/head. The police believe that the ponies were transported to the area in a vehicle and were then covered in mud and leaves.

If you were in the area and saw anything suspicious or have any information that could help the police, please contact Constable S. Beale on 07766 697812 or 0845 045 45 45.

### Happy endings!

Benson needed a new home when his previous owners changed jobs and could no longer spend enough time with him during the day. As a young Collie cross he is a playful, affectionate and loyal dog. He's also a pretty handsome fellow too as you can see from his picture below!



It was therefore no surprise when a first-time fosterer, unable to adopt permanently due to future work commitments, agreed to give Benson a temporary home.

It can take anything from a couple of weeks to a few months to find a suitable permanent home for an animal. In Benson's case, the weeks turned into months and a home had yet to be found.

However, in an unexpected twist, his fosterer's work arrangements changed, and she was delighted to be able to offer Benson the loving and permanent home he deserves.

(I'm not sure if I believe in fate, but I couldn't be happier and can't help thinking that it was meant to be! - Natasha, editor).

If you are able to offer a dog either a permanent or temporary home, please contact Lindsay Mills: 07853 892884

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## Rooting for pigs!

The RSPCA has recently launched its 'Rooting for pigs' campaign to significantly improve the welfare of one of the most intelligent, inquisitive and highly social farm animals. We are calling for clear and consistent labelling on pork products and a better law to protect pig welfare.



The results of a recent poll reveal that only 2% of those questioned understand the terms used on pork products, such as 'free-range', 'outdoor bred' or 'outdoor reared', meaning almost all shoppers are confused about the conditions in which pigs are actually reared.

That's why we are calling on supermarkets and other UK food retailers to work with us and the British pig industry to agree upon set definitions.

The RSPCA believes that clearer labelling will help shoppers make informed choices about pig farming methods they support through the pork they buy.

You can find out more about pork labeling terms and the how you can support this campaign by visiting [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk) and clicking on 'Campaigns'.

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## Poisonous plants

With Spring on the way it makes sense to be aware of the plants and flowers which can be harmful to domestic animals. One of the least known yet most dangerous is the risk to cats from lilies. As little as one leaf can kill a cat if ingested, and all parts of the plant are dangerous.

The first symptoms are depression, lack of appetite and sometimes vomiting. If left untreated the symptoms will worsen and include dehydration, diarrhea, breathing difficulties and bad breath. It is likely that the cat will eventually suffer from acute renal failure. If you think your cat has eaten any part of a lily you should get it to a vet as quickly as possible.

Other plants to be wary of include Diffenbachia (dumb cane or leopard lily), hemerocallis (day lily), cyclamen, poinsettia and amaryllis. Laburnum, some berries and toadstools can occasionally cause a problem.

For full details of plants known to be poisonous to domestic animals please visit the Advice Centre on the main RSPCA website ([www.rspca.org](http://www.rspca.org)) and look under the Pets section.

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## Meet the team...

In this issue we are focusing on another of our committed Branch volunteers...

Chairman: Tracey Joy

Tracey joined the Berkshire & Oxon Borders branch of the RSPCA 2 years ago after hearing a news article on the radio about how cruelty to animals was on the rise. Having decided that she wanted to do something proactive to help, she offered to volunteer and was offered the position of Chairman. Tracey works full-time in addition to her role with the

RSPCA. A dedicated cat lover, she has two cats of her own - Elmo (pictured top) who she rescued from a Caversham council estate as a kitten and Alfie (pictured bottom) who was adopted from the branch.



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## Useful contact information

Cat rehoming/fostering:  
Jane Griffiths - 0118 901 0701

Dog rehoming/fostering: Lindsay Mills -  
07853 892884

Guinea pig rehoming:  
[www.readingguineapigrescue.co.uk](http://www.readingguineapigrescue.co.uk)  
[Karen@readingguineapigrescue.co.uk](mailto:Karen@readingguineapigrescue.co.uk)

Rabbit rehoming:  
[www.readingrabbits.org.uk](http://www.readingrabbits.org.uk)  
[read\\_rabbits@btinternet.com](mailto:read_rabbits@btinternet.com)

Websites:  
[www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)  
[www.rspca-reading.org.uk](http://www.rspca-reading.org.uk)

To report any act of cruelty please contact the RSPCA 24 hour Cruelty & Advice Line on 0300 1234 999. Please DO NOT call any other number to report cruelty.

The Branch would also like to thank all of its volunteers, supporters and adopters. Without your help we would only be able to achieve a fraction of what we do. Thank You!