

## Special Delivery!

Aimee – named after the vet nurse who found her and notified the Hospital – came in with a neck wound caused by plastic netting. Fortunately, the wound was superficial and healed well. We were about to release her back to her home in King's Stanley, when she stopped feeding, and didn't emerge from her box as she usually did in the evening.

Suspicious aroused, on June 9<sup>th</sup>, John listened closely and heard squeaking sounds! Aimee had given birth to six healthy hoglets.

Apart from checking to make sure they were warm and comfortable, we disturbed them as little as possible. Aimee resumed her healthy appetite for mealworms, crunchy cat biscuits and dog food.



Ten days old

At ten days old, the hoglets looked much like spiky little conkers, but by three weeks, their eyes were open and they looked like miniature versions of mum.



Three weeks old

In the wild, the mother would normally lead her babies out to start learning to forage at about five weeks, abandoning them altogether at about eight weeks. The young hedgehogs then disperse and lead solitary lives, except for mating.

As this litter was confined to a pen, the mother was unable to forage for them as she would in the wild, but they have learnt to find the food left for them and have been feeding on mealworms, and cat crunchies. Aimee has been a very good mother and was still snuggling up to the youngsters, even when they were eight weeks old.

Aimee has now returned to the garden in King's Stanley, where she was originally found, and the young hedgehogs have gone to new homes in Paganhill and Rodborough. They have been released in groups of three, two girls from one litter, and a boy from another, in the hope that they will be able to form new breeding colonies next spring. Two more of this litter will go to Minchinhampton.



Six weeks old.



Eight weeks old.

The Help a Hedgehog Hospital is currently developing a patch of land to serve as a pre-release training area, for young hedgehogs like these to learn to forage for themselves in a safe environment, before they are released into the wild. We are hoping to be able to release young hedgehogs into this facility, when the work is completed, which has been funded by our generous supporters.

Julien Crowther  
Hedgehog carer.