

NORFOLK TORTOISE CLUB QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER August 2011
All meetings will be held at St Francis Church Hall, Rider Haggard Road,
Heartsease, Norwich on 3rd Wednesday of the month at 8.00pm

Should you wish to receive our newsletter quarterly by post the annual cost is £5 to cover postage etc., please contact Daphne on 01603 435723, Lynne 01603 438050. The email version is free – just let Lynne have your details or you can read it on the website.

Should you have any queries or need any advice, please ring the above & if we cannot help we will try & direct you to somebody who can. We have members who breed & sell baby tortoises of various species including the more exotic larger ones & can let you have details – home bred tortoises help to reduce the numbers being imported & the breeders will offer all the back up support & advice.

Information is always available on the website www.tortoiseclub.org but if you do not have access to a computer & would like a newsletter or care sheets etc., please contact us.

The Club has tortoises that need to be re-homed from time to time & anyone willing to attend meetings &/or meet all the necessary checks can put their name on the list – as with most animal re-homing a club member will need to ensure the garden etc., is suitable & will give advice as to what is needed, if you wish to fill in an application form contact Eleanor.

Ian from DWARF (dangerous wildlife rescue) could not attend our May meeting due to pressure of work however we watched a video of his work & appreciated why he was too busy to come! He certainly does very important work dealing with creatures such as crocodiles that not many people would take on.

Helen from www.tortoisetable.org came to our June meeting & her website is certainly educational not only telling us what is suitable/safe for tortoises to eat but also a very good gardening tool as it shows many ways to identify plants from names, flowers, leaves. She also told us about her tortoises & how it all started when she unwittingly made all the usual mistakes that most of us who have kept tortoises for many years made, basically because we did not know where they had come from or what their previous life in the wild was like – the pet shops offered no information & many of these poor creatures were taken home & released into a cold garden area where the food & climate available bore no resemblance to their original home, it is amazing that so many of these older tortoises still survive & hopefully we are giving them the retirement they so deserve.

We were entertained by 2 of our younger members at the July meeting – giving an indication of how they cared for their pets which gave a good comparison as to the different habitat & treatment required for keeping tortoises & 2 well behaved guinea pigs & an adorable dumbo rat with huge ears. Both the tortoises & the furry creatures are very lucky to have owners who have made a real effort to study the needs of their pets & it is encouraging to see how seriously our younger club members take their responsibilities & I am sure any of our tortoises that outlive us will be well looked after. Andy also showed us how he had constantly moved & rebuilt tortoise accommodation in each new place during his many house moves (the tortoises obviously were the most important priority to re-house comfortably!!) & I am sure many people took away some good ideas on how to build pens etc. He also had some adorable baby tortoises newly hatched that day & some slightly older star tortoises which are very beautifully marked. He also sold cacti suitable for tortoises to eat – a very successful meeting & thanks to all concerned.

IMPORTANT DIARY DATES

Meeting at 8.00pm Wednesday 17th August

Eleanor is still to confirm who the speaker will be possibly someone from Tortoise Mad or a Vet

but details will be posted on the website as soon as she has more information.

Meeting at 8.00pm Wednesday 21st September

This is will be important preparation for hibernation meeting after the loss of several tortoises during the last extremely cold winter – all are welcome to come along & get as much information as you need to try ensure your tortoises get through the winter unscathed. Perhaps some re-thinking of whether hibernation areas we use are frost proof if the temperatures fall as low as last winter & providing a thermometer so we can see at a glance if they are likely to be in trouble.

Meeting at 8.00pm Wednesday 19th October

Dillon has arranged for David Alderton Editor of Practical Reptile to come along to entertain us – this should be a very interesting talk & some of us who try & produce newsletters etc will probably learn something!

BRITISH CHELONIA GROUP 15th October

Many of us belong to the BCG & they print details of our meetings in their newsletter if any one is interested in attending their Northern Symposium on 15th October at Chester Zoo look at www.britishchelonigroup.org.uk this is always a very interesting day with tortoise related speakers, a buffet lunch & time to chat with tortoise keepers from all over the country, make new friends & learn how others keep their tortoises.

SWALLOW AQUATICS EAST HARLING 20TH August

The next free tortoise check up day will be at Swallow Aquatics at East Harling on Sat 20th August 10am to 5pm – take your tortoise along & have a look at all the other interesting reptiles etc.

The various Tortoise Check up Days have been very successful & well attended specialist vet Louise wormed over 70 at All Creatures Health Care on the 16th July & many people had their tortoises identified.

Our stand at the Royal Show was a success & we had many subsequent enquiries from people who came along & talked to us.

Tortoise Club Shirts

Donna has organized Club polo shirts with tortoise club logo in a variety of sizes, these are good quality & selling for approx £12.50 & if anyone is interested in purchasing one of these please see Donna at the next meeting. (She has also now got 'hoodies' & fleeces)

If any of you would like to give a short talk on your animals & the way you keep them & any handy tips or if you have had experiences of meeting tortoises on holidays etc., please get in touch with me by phone or email - it doesn't have to be a long talk & it can be with or without the aid of power point! or email Eleanor: eleanorchubb@hotmail.com or 07799 688798.

Eleanor's Note

UV / HEAT BULBS : I found a very reasonable source of UV heat bulbs online. The bulbs are £24.99 each with free delivery! The website is called www.zooplus.co.uk. If you email me eleanorchubb@gmail.com I can send you a 10% voucher for your first order too! For those of you who are not online, please feel free to either call me on 01508 570984 to order for the next meeting or bring funds and details for an order to the next meeting. Some of you may also be interested to know that you can also buy large bags of dried dandelions for £6 and plantain for £4 from the same company. Note: the team always aims to bring the following to club meetings, but please call to check if you urgently require an item for the next meet. Nutrobal, Limestone Flour, granules, lumps of chalk (calcium) (when available), Tamodine and Seed. or email Eleanor: eleanorchubb@hotmail.com or 07799 688798.

Alternatively if you are not keen on using the internet, you are also able to purchase bulbs from Swallow Aquatic at East Harling along with many other reptile items. Please call the shop first on 01953 718184 to avoid disappointment. A special 10% discount for tortoise related goods is given to all club members at the checkout upon request.

One of our members, Susan Boone who regularly attends our meetings with 2 young friends is also involved with a local cat rescue we regularly get asked if cats prove any threat to tortoises – but most of us have found that cats usually seem to ignore them but quite enjoy the warm conditions we keep them in (mine does) – it would probably take a very large cat to damage a tortoise!

If you live in the area and are interested in giving a cat or kitten a home, please call Stephanie on 01692 535858 or email Christine Potter <pottercats@keme.co.uk> or talk to Susan at one of our meetings they have recently had a mother cat & 3 small kittens found in a garden & the mother had to undergo dental surgery + spaying & all are looking for good homes plus of course many others.

Linda one of our members asked if we can post the following info - this is different (as it is about chickens!) but she wondered if we could give her new website a mention so here goes! "If any of our other members keep chickens it may be of interest to them - the web address is <http://www.my-chicken-house.com>

request from Toni - **Wanted empty spice jars.**

Odd request but these are much needed by the Priscilla Bacon Lodge support group as once filled provide a cherished jar of memories of a loved one lost.

Rather than throw your jars in the recycling please could you give them to Marion (Chief of the Teas!) and she will pass them on to this very worthy cause. Many thanks for those already supplied.