

Chicken & Egg

Issue No: 1
Spring 2012
FREE

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Spring Chicken

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GALLERY • GIRLS IN THE CITY!**

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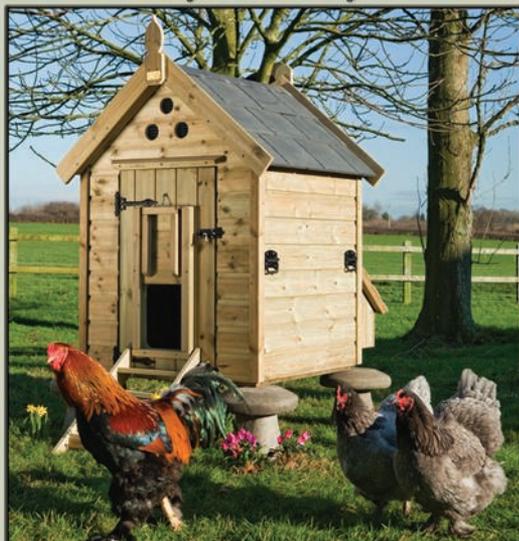
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Editor's Letter

Dear Readers

Those of you who know the British Hen Welfare Trust will be aware this is not our first missive to the masses, but *it is* our first magazine and when choosing the title we went back to the age old conundrum of **what came first – the chicken or the**

egg? The scientists would have us believe it's the chicken, but for the purpose of our magazine we think both have equal importance, hence Chicken & Egg seemed apt (thank you to Ian for coming up with this one).

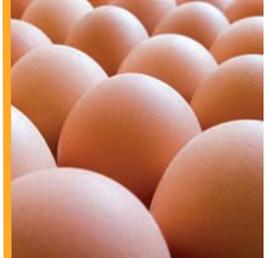
For the benefit of new readers, we are **passionate** about the hens that lay the eggs you eat, and we think these perfectly packaged little parcels of nutrition deserve so much more attention than they get. We want to celebrate their unique versatility by bringing you all things egggy, but more importantly we want you to enjoy, as much as we do, **the simplest of pleasures that is keeping chickens**. Specifically, our gorgeous, cuddly ex-bat hens.

Our first issue contains lots of news about our feathery friends, some fun **celebrity interviews** as well as a look at the more fundamental issues surrounding chickens in Britain today.

If you like eggs and/or cooking, but don't know about hens, give us a try ... you may just want to join our flock of hen loving supporters! And if you enjoy this magazine – pass it on to someone you like – you'll be doing us (and the hens) a huge favour and the recipient may just thank you too for introducing them to the pleasures of **Chicken & Egg!**

I hope you enjoy!

Jane
X



**Chicken & Egg is a publication by
The British Hen Welfare Trust**

The British Hen Welfare Trust is a national charity that re-homes commercial laying hens, educates the public about how they can make a difference to hen welfare, and encourages support for the British egg industry. Its ultimate aim is to see consumers and food manufacturers buying only UK produced free-range eggs, resulting in a strong British egg industry where all commercial laying hens enjoy a good quality life.

Patrons: Jamie Oliver, Jimmy Doherty, Antony Worrall Thompson, Amanda Holden, Antony Cotton, Harbour & Jones, The Duchess of Richmond, Pam Ayres, Philippa Forrester, Julia Kendell



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Beautiful gifts



Front Cover:

Claire Cloke's, Fluffy, pretending to be a sparrow!



Eggy

NEWS

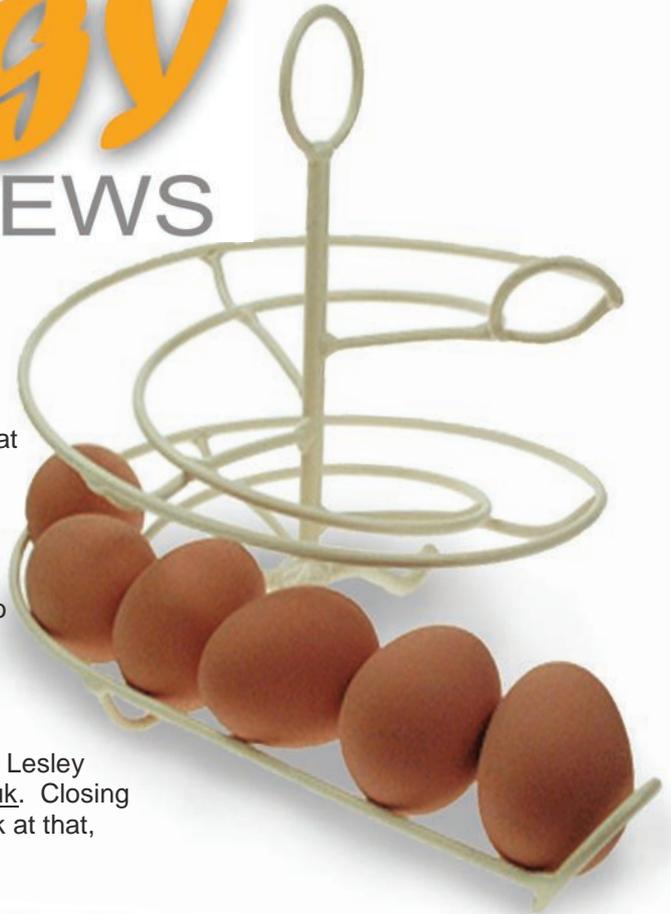
**Everyone
needs an
egg skelter!**

This simple, yet brilliant design ensures you eat your eggs in

date order and they look stylish whilst they wait to be turned into something *eggtastic!*

Get someone new to subscribe to C & E and we'll pop your name, and theirs, into a prize draw.

We've three Egg Skelters to give away. Send the name and address of you and your friend to Lesley Beer at competitions@bhwt.org.uk. Closing date 31st March 2012 ... ooh, look at that, just in time for Easter!



The Lakes Free Range Egg

Company farms 70,000 free range hens right in the heart of Cumbria. This family owned business was the first to introduce 'Trace your Egg' coding that links your egg direct to the farm where it was laid, and remains at the forefront of forward thinking by recently introducing the use of robots from the car industry to pack eggs. The robots can pack more than 6,000 six-egg packs an hour ... Now that's a robot you *don't* want malfunctioning!



Check out Brody's all day Brekkie...

... as dished up in Brody's Breakfast Bistro in Torquay. The 'all-you-can-eat' breakfast offers a home-from-home experience with large tables enabling groups to sit together with each table having its own toaster.

The menu includes breads, crumpets and waffles as well as access to a fully automatic, self-serve pancake machine producing American style pancakes at the touch of a button. Unsurprisingly, the main attraction is the all-day breakfast buffet offering unlimited sausages, bacon, baked beans, hash browns, tomatoes, black pudding, mushrooms and Exe Valley eggs.



On his choice of Exe Valley Eggs Bistro owner and chef, Tristan Toms, said: "To ensure we offer the best quality, we only use the best ingredients and products, co-operating with local producers and suppliers. This way our guests get the breakfast they deserve, and we fuel the local economy." Now that's what we call going to work on an egg!

I expect all

James Bond

fans out there will know the new movie, Skyfall, starring Daniel Craig has begun filming for release later this year.

But how many fans would know that 007's favourite snack is scrambled egg?! Specifically, as served by his housekeeper, with fresh coffee!



SKYFALL
007



Did you know ...

... that the food colourant lutein is added to chicken feed to make the yolks a deeper colour. Lutein is a naturally occurring colourant found in green leafy vegetables such as spinach and kale. Birds that free range, of course, also

have access to additional nutrients from their free range exploits which can result in an even deeper egg yolk colour and richer flavour.



A CHRISTMAS CRACKER!

I know Christmas has long gone, but what we achieved in the final few weeks of 2011 just before the cage ban came into effect, makes it worth looking back in time for a few moments:

Boom time for farmers

Christmas is traditionally a profitable time of year for egg farmers as we, the public, are busy baking in preparation for the festive season, demand for eggs is strong and prices usually higher than average. This then set the scene for our end of year hen frenzy with most of our farmers wanting to hold their birds right up to the last few days of the year.



Valiant Volunteers

Step forward 15 teams of fabulous BHWT volunteers, all of whom were happy to swop family festivities for hard work and long days. Over three days we worked with 11 farms and brought out just short of 7,000 hens as a result!

Our West Midlands team handled 2,200 hens in 2 days, Michelle in Cornwall snuck 1,200 into stables at home, Brenda in Surrey waited hours to access her hens, but they all came out and all got homes. Jean in Essex helped hundreds *and at the same time* broadcast to the nation via Channel 4 News about our lovely girls and the need to support British farmers. And so it went on.

New Year's Eve Jolly

Just when we thought we could sit back and toast the end of the barren battery cage and celebrate the start of a new era for laying hens, in came two more pleas from farmers, desperate for us to take hens unable to fit on the slaughter lorry. Could we take them? Oh, I expect so! What else would we rather be doing on New Year's Eve?! Nothing more satisfying than saving the lives of 850 beautiful young hens, not yet a year old! And there was always the consolation of a clear head in the morning...!

Liberty!

And eventually Liberty, the last battery hen to come out of her cage, arrived at North Parks on 29th December. Within hours she had achieved celebrity status appearing in six national newspapers, being discussed on Radio 4's

programme by James Naughtie who wished her well – she even starred in the Sydney Morning Herald and Brisbane News. A hen equivalent of Susan Boyle I think you'll agree!!



Random Acts of Kindness

None of this massive hen adoption programme would have happened were it not for the unswerving dedication of our volunteers, and the commitment of Gaynor and Wendy at Hen Central who worked with me throughout the holiday period to get the hens out and cope with the avalanche of calls we received from the brilliant British public!

On New Year's Eve a stranger's kind action summed up what the hens mean to us all. She spotted our vehicle and trailer as we were loading hens, and she stopped and offered to help load up the last few hundred hens onto the trailer. Having handled thousands of hens in the past four days and lugged heavy crates full of hens into vehicles, we were mightily glad to meet Niki! She said she had some of our hens, loved them to bits and wanted to simply help us to help them. And that's how it works: in so many ways *you* help *us* to help *them*.
Thank you.



**“what shall I do today...
run, jump or play?”**

Freda Roam, happy egg co. farm resident

Here at the happy egg co.
we care about our hens
and are passionate about
hen welfare.



Our hens are lucky enough to enjoy a free range life on our very own happy egg farms and we endeavour to make sure that other hens can enjoy the same freedom of the great outdoors.

**the
happy
egg co.**

**We are proud to support the
British Hen Welfare Trust**

For more information about our happy eggs, visit
www.thehappyegg.co.uk

EGGS FOR SOLDIERS

Soldiers for eggs might put the fun back into breakfast, but eggs for soldiers has far more long term benefit. The happy egg co. teamed up with *Help for Heroes* back in April 2010 to provide direct practical support to members of the armed forces who have been injured in the line of duty. Their 'Eggs for Soldiers' campaign donated 15p from every pack sold to *Help for Heroes* and The happy egg co. have just celebrated raising £250,000 for the charity.

Marketing Director, Steve Horton comments: *"We're extremely proud to have hit our fundraising target so far ahead of schedule; since launching in April the brand has gone from strength to strength, exceeding our expectations. To have raised such a large sum - through pack sales alone over just nine months - shows that consumers in Britain are especially sympathetic to this cause and want to show support through everyday decisions such as their weekly food choices. We hope the brand continues to grow and we surpass our target donation figures every year."*

Bryn Parry CEO and Co-Founder of *Help for Heroes* added *"We're thrilled that Eggs for Soldiers has hit the £250,000 target three months early. It's great to see the British public are so supportive of Help for Heroes; this money will go a very long way toward helping wounded servicemen and women returning from conflict."*

And how good to know the happy egg hens helped make a difference to such a worthy cause too. Well done one and all.





Girls in the city

Julia Stephenson writes the green lifestyle column, the Green Goddess, in the Independent every week, as well as on environmental subjects for the Evening Standard and the Sunday Times. She has published three bestselling novels, Pandora's Diamond, Chalet Tiara and The Green Goddess Diaries, based on her environmental escapades in the urban jungle.

She has appeared frequently on television and radio discussing current affairs, animal welfare and environmental issues and has turned her top floor, 2 bedroom Kings Road flat into a model eco-friendly home. She grows her own herbs and vegetables, composts all her kitchen waste, makes her own cleaning products and adopts our ex-bats! The Good Life in Chelsea! Julia Stephenson writes:



“I live in London in a top floor flat in Sloane Square. Two years ago we adopted 3 ex-bats and installed them in a comfy billet on our flat roof. Many people assume one must be living in a rural idyll to keep livestock, and are surprised to hear that chickens were roosting within clucking distance of the Kings Road. But I say why not? Chickens are far lower maintenance than cats or dogs, plus they provided us with three eggs a day.



At first I worried that a city roof might not be the ideal place to keep them. Hens like to scratch dirt and kick up in flower beds. But when I explained to Jane that I could offer a Bernie Inn, not a Ritz Carlton, she was adamant that I go ahead. ‘They’re ex-battery hens and have been used to extremely restricted conditions, so I imagine after 2 years of Alcatraz, a Bernie Inn would be chicken heaven’.

My boyfriend extended an inexpensive guinea pig house from B&Q with chicken wire to make a decent sized run which we covered with newspaper. Following the advice of my cleaner, whose family keep chickens in the Philippines, we then put down chicken wire. The mess would then slip through the wire onto the newspaper, which could be cleaned up (not by me I hasten to add, I am fortunate that my boyfriend took it upon himself to be the Chicken Comptroller and Poop - Picker - In - Chief).

But once the beastly wire was down I began to fret. I worried that the wire might dig painfully into the girls’ dinosaur-like feet. And although my cleaner offered practical chicken husbandry tips, when she confessed her brother bred cocks for cock-fighting, I was concerned that welfare issues might not be uppermost in her mind. So I insisted that the Chicken Comptroller remove it and replace it with turf from the garden centre.

First - time chicken keepers are often advised not to buy ex-battery chickens but I disagree. My Mother owned 8 pedigree chickens that were far trickier and stubbornly refused to lay eggs for years - quite obviously they were too posh to push. Our baldy old girls were prolific egg layers in comparison. As a reward we would let them out of their run to forage in the raised flower beds. Of course they soon munched their way through these, but it gave them so much pleasure that I didn’t mind.

After a happy year, foraging on the roof, my Mother died and we had to move to her house in Guildford to do the place up. With trepidation, and very slowly, we introduced the posh chickens to our girls. It wasn’t easy, we had to divide the run into two for a while, but after about 2 weeks they were able to integrate. Soon after, spurred on by the new arrivals, the posh girls began to push again, and became prolific egg layers. Foxes were a great worry of course, but with my inammorato following the old countryman’s tip of peeing in the garden to ward them off, Reynard gave our garden a wide berth.

Sadly this story has an unhappy ending. We rented out the house and returned to London, leaving the happily integrated chickens under the care of tenants who were delighted to look after them. Unfortunately they were too delicate to follow our, ahem, watering advice with the result that 6 months later, all the girls were killed by a fox.

So the moral of my story is, even if you live in town with no garden you can still keep chickens. They may even be happier and safer than in the country. We are going to adopt some more ex - bats to our Bernie Inn on the roof. It may not be lush countryside, but at least they will be safe.”

Letting Go of the Glitz by Julia Stephenson is out now in paperback

TESCO

& hen welfare

Our philosophy has always been to tread challenging territory and with that in mind I contacted retail giant, Tesco, to try to find out what they *really* think about hen welfare.

I spoke to Charlotte Williams, Corporate Affairs, at the Cheshunt Head Office, and here is the result of our exchange:

Thank you for agreeing to this interview Charlotte, you must be aware that as a result of Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall's campaign for meat chickens, the subject of poultry welfare is one that many of your customers take seriously. What are you doing to raise the welfare standards of the chickens you source?

"We have always been strongly committed to improving the welfare standards of the chickens we source and sell across all our ranges – from standard to organic. There have been considerable changes to the poultry industry in the last three years which have largely come about through collaboration and sharing of best practice. For example, we have restricted the transport time and stocking density of our value chickens, and introduced pecking objects into our standard plus range.

We also regularly attend the Poultry Welfare Forum, which is made up of a wide range of stake holders from across the industry and aims to improve welfare standards across all ranges of fresh chicken."



Why should consumers believe your welfare policy - do you have an *independent* audit scheme and, if so, how does this work?

"We do indeed. In fact, we were the first major supermarket to carry out independent audits above the minimum industry standards. All poultry suppliers are audited by a third party, independent, accredited company. We also have a technical team who are responsible for writing and implementing our strict Livestock Codes of Practice which applies to all Tesco farms. These codes cover all aspects of farming from breeding to finishing, and ensure good environmental practice as well as welfare and food safety."

Does Tesco fund or contribute towards educating the public about higher welfare food choices?

"We are committed to giving our customers choice and to providing a range of products. All our chickens and eggs are clearly labelled to indicate the standard of production. We believe that the best way to educate the public about higher welfare food choices is to be transparent about our welfare standards and to make labelling as clear as possible so that customers can make informed decisions about the products they buy. Additionally, information about the welfare standards of our chickens is clearly set out, and regularly updated on our website, <http://www.tescorealfood.com/our-food/the-tesco-chicken-range.html> and we would strongly encourage all our customers to take an active interest in the food they buy. In this respect, we at Tesco, share a similar goal with the BHWT - we are both committed to improving poultry welfare standards, to the British poultry industry, as well engaging with consumers on a variety of poultry related issues."

What sort of relationship does Tesco have with its poultry and egg suppliers?

"We are proud supporters of British farmers and source 100% British Lion Quality eggs. Through our participation in the English Food and Farming Partnership supply chain group, we are engaged in active and continuing dialogue with farmers and processors on supply chain issues such as product quality, reducing farmers' costs and continuity of supply."

What is Tesco doing to ensure that those customers who want high welfare, can choose processed products - such as cake and quiche - which contain egg ingredients and derivatives produced to higher welfare standards?

"All our products containing egg and egg ingredients are fully compliant with industry standards so customers can be assured that whatever product they buy, the hen has been well treated."

What more do you think the British Hen Welfare Trust could do to promote free range eggs and support British egg farmers?

"I think there is a lot of consumer misunderstanding about the egg industry and there is lots of BHWT could do to correct the misinformation out there. New technologies and the rise of social media and networking sites, means that the internet is increasingly being used to communicate and build relationships directly with consumers, rather than going through third parties. This direct channel opens up a number of possibilities for connecting with consumers to promote free range and also opens up a channel for direct communication from British farmers to consumers."

This interview was, as we would expect, carefully controlled by Tesco's PR department, and despite being disappointed that they circumvented a few of my questions, I think their responses show that even amongst the giants there is a slow-moving but steady understanding that welfare is a key factor for consumers when making purchase choices. The power of the purse comes to the fore every time.

It would be fair to say that most consumers visualise free range hens enjoying time outside foraging with freedom of movement to come and go as they please. However, in large flocks of 10,000+, the percentage of birds accessing the range area is sometimes low. The BHWT is keen to encourage growth in small flocks of less than 5,000 birds, is Tesco proactive in encouraging growth in smaller free range flocks?

"In this area we follow the advice of the RSPCA's Freedom Food guide. There is currently no research to suggest that smaller flocks reduce the stress level of the birds, in fact, there is a significant risk that smaller flock size could increase the stress levels of birds. Similarly to humans, they feel that there is safety in numbers. We are of course, always open to adapting the prescriptions we make to farmers based on further research and this is one area we will continue to listen to the advice of academics and NGO's."

And finally Charlotte I would love to know a little more about you and ask a couple of personal questions if I may.

What is your favourite egg dish?

"My favourite egg dish is shakshuka – poached eggs in a tomato sauce flavoured with chillies, peppers and herbs with feta cheese on the top."

Are you a hen-lover and would you ever consider keeping hens as pets?!

"I fear that my current flat in South London is far too small to keep hens in. I actually grew up in the countryside though, so certainly wouldn't rule it out if I ever moved back."



Good Eggs

*Just a few of our FAB Fundraisers...
Thank you*

Volunteer, Alison Ingram, who helps our Surrey team, painted this beautiful picture of one of her ex-bats and has raised over £1,000 for the charity through sales of this limited edition print. If you would like a copy, please visit our on-line shop - the painting is only available through the charity.



Sarah Summerton starts off our clutch of good eggs this time around; she and her friends had a great time raising £80 through donations and the sale of homemade pet treats at a recent church blessing.



Becky Lock has some of our lovely ex-bats and as an experienced vet nurse based in Cornwall, fancied doing something a bit special to raise some money for us, sooo she's plumped for a skydive! Yeah, that's special alright ... Becky will be flapping her wings and hoping to land safely on 25th March. If you'd like to sponsor her and help her raise funds for us, then have a look at her justgiving page at <http://skydiveukltd.com/24-Becky-Lock-skydive.asp>.

If you would like to raise funds for us, please email: info@bhwt.org.uk
THANK YOU!

A LONG LASTING GIFT FOR OUR FUTURE HENS

by Poppy Melchior, BHWT Fundraiser

The British Hen Welfare Trust receives no government funding and relies entirely on the generosity of donations from individuals, support from companies, proceeds from our online shop, grants from charitable Trusts and gifts in Wills.

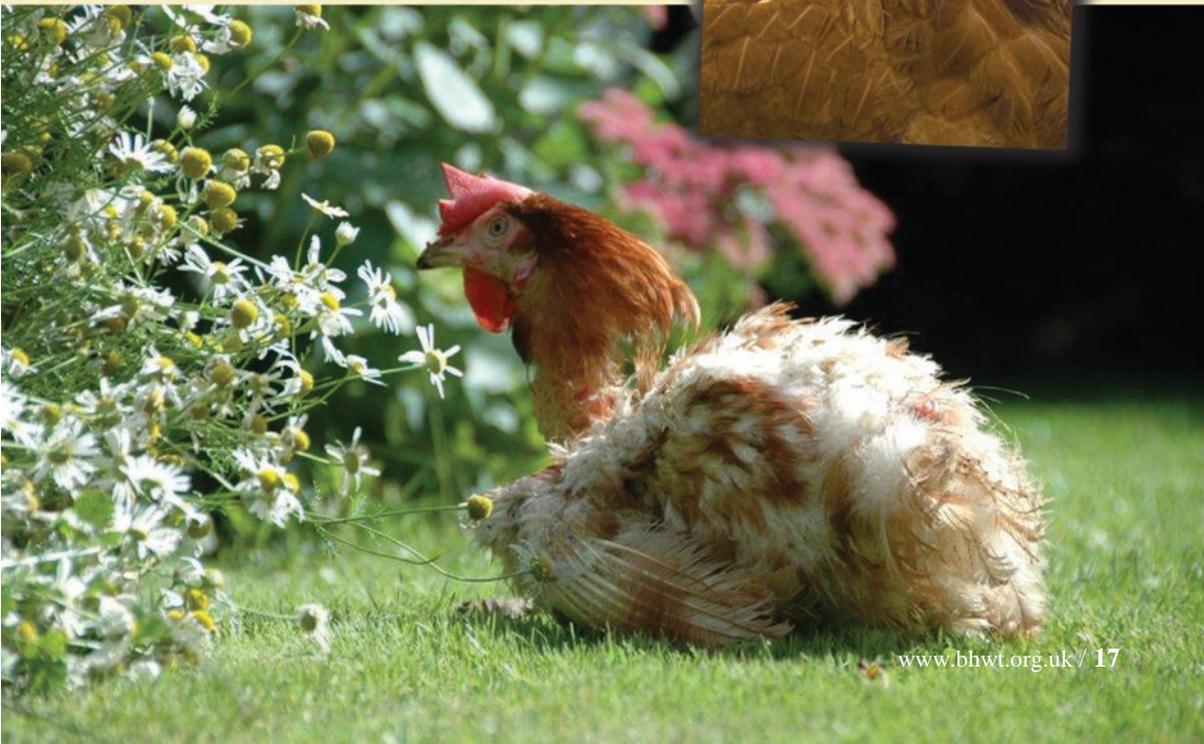
You will find enclosed a new leaflet explaining why leaving a gift in your Will, after family and friends have been looked after, is an excellent tax effective way of supporting your favourite charity.

Gifts in Wills enable us to plan ahead and continue our vital work re-homing ex-commercial laying hens and educating consumers.

If you have any questions about leaving a gift in your Will, please get in touch and call our office on 01769 580310 or email poppy.melchior@bhwt.org.uk

We would be delighted to hear from solicitor's firms across the UK willing to distribute our legacy leaflets in their reception areas, please get in touch and we will gladly send you some!

Thank you





Liberty

Photo courtesy of Barry Gomer - Daily Express

Cause for celebration?

By Jane Howorth

We helped 25,000+ ex-bat hens get out of their cages in the last quarter of 2011. Cause for celebration? Definitely! We could only do this with the commitment of our volunteers and support from all those lovely people, who like us, wanted to help as many of the final battery hens as possible. There was a real poignancy for me as the last bird, called Liberty, came out – she represents the reason I started this wonderful, crazy charity that grows so fast it sometimes feels like I'm holding onto a tiger by its tail!

We can now say we are battery hen free in the UK, no more hens in tiny, dark cages. Cause for celebration? Absolutely. But it was supposed to be a Europe wide celebration with billions of hens enjoying better freedoms. Sadly, some of our EU partners have not met the 1999 Laying Hens Directive and over a dozen countries continue to keep hens in the cages we have banned.

John Dalli, Commissioner of the EU, promised fairness across the board, but at the time of writing it is highly likely that processed products you purchase may contain egg ingredients laid by hens in battery cages somewhere in Europe. It's unfair on British farmers and unfair on British consumers – our farmers have invested heavily to meet the welfare regulations and we, as consumers, should be able to make an informed choice about what we're eating.

I spoke to Andrew Joret, Director of Noble Foods, one of the largest egg producer/packers in the UK and asked his view on the latest situation:

“We are frankly disgusted that, after such a long lead time for the banning of conventional cages, up to 25% of hens in the EU are still in the old battery cages. Whilst we applaud the Government's actions in looking for evidence of illegal shell egg imports, we think they could go further and follow the example of the Czech Republic in banning illegal egg for use in both the shell egg and liquid egg market. The absence of any firm action from Government on liquid egg highlights the need for production method labelling in liquid egg in the same way that we already have for shell egg. In the meantime we will have to rely on the pledges given by some food manufacturers that they will only source legal egg.”

Continued over ...



Andrew Joret, Noble Foods

Cause for celebration? ... continued

Having taken advice from officials in the UK Government and Brussels, Agriculture Minister James Paice has decided not to take unilateral action to ban imports of illegal eggs and egg products. Instead the Government is relying on the use of UV light to scan imported eggs to look for wire mesh marks on egg shells. If found to have come from conventional cages, the eggs will lose their Class A status and be used only as liquid egg in processed food products.

However, just consider how many products we purchase from supermarkets on a daily basis that originate from Europe. Products containing liquid egg laid by hens kept in battery cages will be impossible to distinguish. The Government's plan to publish a 'positive' list of companies who have guaranteed to use only liquid egg from compliant countries, will leave the way open for smaller food manufacturers to source cheap, illegal liquid egg to save a few pennies. In turn this could leave our farmers vulnerable as they lose out to cheaper low welfare alternatives.

How can we help ensure fairness for farmers and choice for consumers? Well, we'd like to see improved labelling so that consumers can select a product knowing the welfare standards employed. 'Production method labelling' is something we're keen to promote and our political lobbyist, Dave Neale, continues to have dialogue with the British Egg Industry Council on this subject. The RSPCA, too, have now shown support for our initiative and we'll keep you posted on developments.

In the meantime, check those labels – every time – and try, wherever possible, to buy products containing British eggs; at least you know the welfare standards used.

And sign up to the pledge to keep illegal battery eggs out of the UK, by visiting this link and pledging your support for British farmers, www.legaleggs.com/pledges.

Finally, because we think you need to know, those countries who continue to flout the rules and keep hens in conventional cages are: *Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Poland, Portugal, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Spain and Greece.*



OUR VIEW ON ... THE HAPPY EGG CO.

Most of you will be aware that there are now 4 systems for commercial laying hens in the UK: enriched cages, barn units, free range and organic. Within the total UK flock of 32 million hens, approximately 15.5m are in enriched cages and 15m free range; the remaining 1.5m hens are in barn and organic systems representing less than 5% of the total flock.

Free range flocks can reach as high as 16,000 birds in one flock, and with two sheds back to back the number of hens 'free ranging' from one unit can reach 32,000. This begs the question, how free range is free range?

At the British Hen Welfare Trust we have always been staunch supporters of range enrichment rather than cage enrichment, anything to encourage the hens outside to maximise their ability to express their natural behaviours. And this is why we support brands such as Sainsbury's *Woodland Egg* which ensures the birds have ample tree cover to encourage them to free range.

One of the best-known free range brands on the market comes from the happy egg co, yes, the happy egg co. We've all seen their advertisement where the hen hops on the quad bike for a quick spin around the farm, before a spot of sunbathing and bug chasing through the long grass! It paints an idyllic lifestyle for laying hens. And pretty much, it is.

Flock sizes are restricted to 16,000 hens made up of 4 x 4,000 colonies, with many flocks smaller still. And having personally visited some happy hens on a happy egg co. farm I can vouch that the girls *are* provided with sandpits to dust bathe in, playhouses to pootle around and their range is generally enriched with brush and other interesting places in which chickens can enjoy doing chickeny things.

However, in October 2010, the happy egg co. had some negative publicity – a farm with disease issues had allowed conditions to deteriorate and subsequent undercover footage provided powerful evidence that all was not well at that particular happy egg co. farm. As often happens when a company experiences some negative publicity, many people assume that if one happy egg farm is badly managed, they are all badly managed. Not so.

In fact the happy egg co. and RSPCA swiftly removed the accreditation given to this one farm. The potential for harm made it worthwhile for both organisations to ensure they maintained high standards as well as rebuilt consumer confidence.

As Founder of the British Hen Welfare Trust, I'm passionate about laying hens, and as such can say that hens at the happy egg co. enjoy some of the best commercial laying conditions that this country has to offer. We would like to see *more* laying hens enjoying conditions similar to happy egg hens, and as such it is important that we don't assume all eggs in the basket are bad just because one is rotten.

To illustrate their goodwill to us, the happy egg co. are currently supporting us on a couple of fronts. They are helping us to help more hens which don't enjoy the same outdoor freedoms that happy egg hens do. Why? Because they agree that giving a free range retirement to hens from enriched cages is a really nice gesture from which all those involved, not least the hens, benefit. They have also kindly agreed to help us fundraise and to this end are lending their support to our Free Range Friday fundraising campaign, of which more to follow later.

We are proud of our new association with the happy egg co. and wholeheartedly support the ethic of hen keeping they represent.

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Spring Chicken

... By Jean Gill
BHWT Co-ordinator

To a country dweller there can be few things that gladden the heart or set the pulse racing more than the discovery of the first snowdrop gently easing its way into the watery spring sunshine, oblivious of the winter chill.

Hen keeping is such a summer pleasure. Seeing hens whose lives started out with so little promise wallowing in the unspeakable joy of a simple dirt bath or sunbathing with wings outstretched and eyes closed in ecstasy could never fail to melt even the hardest heart. Their forgiving nature and remarkably short memory span constantly allows them to relish the delicious minutiae of their new lives so it's all the more disheartening to see that, despite substantial falls for the past couple of years, the arrival of snow still manages to take them completely by surprise.

The change is often as swift as it is dramatic, inhibiting the simple pleasures they had come to enjoy, freezing their drinking water and seriously curbing the hitherto considerable potential of the compost heap. All those tasty morsels too slow to manoeuvre themselves out of range have gone to ground and vegetation is inaccessible under the snowy blanket so, once the hearty breakfast has been consumed, even the shortened days stretch ahead with little promise.

But, as always, all things eventually come to pass, the spring thaw sets in and the exquisite cycle begins again. The ground starts to yield up its treasures be they some small, unwary bug fresh out of hibernation or a glorious patch of saffron crocuses to be harvested by eager beaks. The days warm as they lengthen and once again there's time to waste in the self indulgence of an afternoon snooze or some serious feather preening.

All in all, not a bad life.



FLYING THE BRITISH EGG FLAG



We applaud those British free range egg farmers who ensure their flocks enjoy a good quality life whilst they work hard on our behalf, and Sunnyhill Farm is a very good example. Run by Catherine Armstrong, Detchant Farm, near Belford, Northumberland has a total of 56,000 lucky free range hens across her 408 acre farm. The hens supply customers ranging from corner shops to large retail chains, including Tesco, Morrison and Asda. Sunnyhill also supplies delicatessens, catering companies, hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions.

The farm is Lion Code and Freedom Food accredited and goes a step further with welfare by allowing llamas to mix freely with the hens. Prince and Heidi have been known to herd the girls towards the hen house if they see a fox and Catherine firmly believes having the llamas around gives the hens more confidence to range away from the hen house.

We are always interested to promote good examples of free range farming. If you would like to nominate a local farmer for our British egg flag, let us know at info@bhwt.org.uk titling your email Flying the British Egg Flag and we'll check them out.





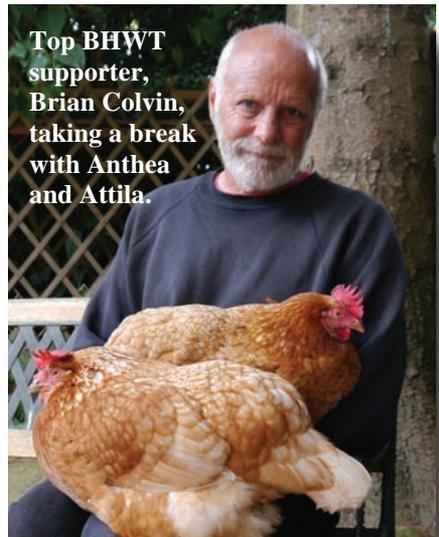
Gallery



Emma Densham's hen, Jalfrezi, and her young dog, Darcy ... waiting for dinner!



Mmmm, very nice, but you seem to have forgotten the cheese!
Re-homer Marie's little hen, Onioli.



Top BHWT supporter, Brian Colvin, taking a break with Anthea and Attila.



WOW, this Zumba business is great fun! BHWT Co-ordinator, Ronda Morritt's hen is getting in shape!



Elaine Harrison's son, Joseph is 'chicken smitten' with ex-bat, Pretty.



Follow that woman, she's got a cabbage! Madeleine Stewart and her girls.



YUM... I bet there's some tasty bugs in there! Sarah Berry's little hen does a spot of indoor gardening.

If you would like to submit a photo to our Gallery, please send to lisa.pope@bhwt.org.uk





Vice Versa The tale of an ex-battery cockerel

By Jenny Colvin

Our VV is a handsome bird
Her looks belie her gender,
A massive comb and wattles long
Hide character so tender.

Last to arrive and join our flock,
She had to know her place.
As Virgo aimed some painful pecks,
So VV fled apace.

As time went by, she grew more bold,
To mingle then, she tried,
With preening parties, getting smart,
'Cos beaks were occupied!

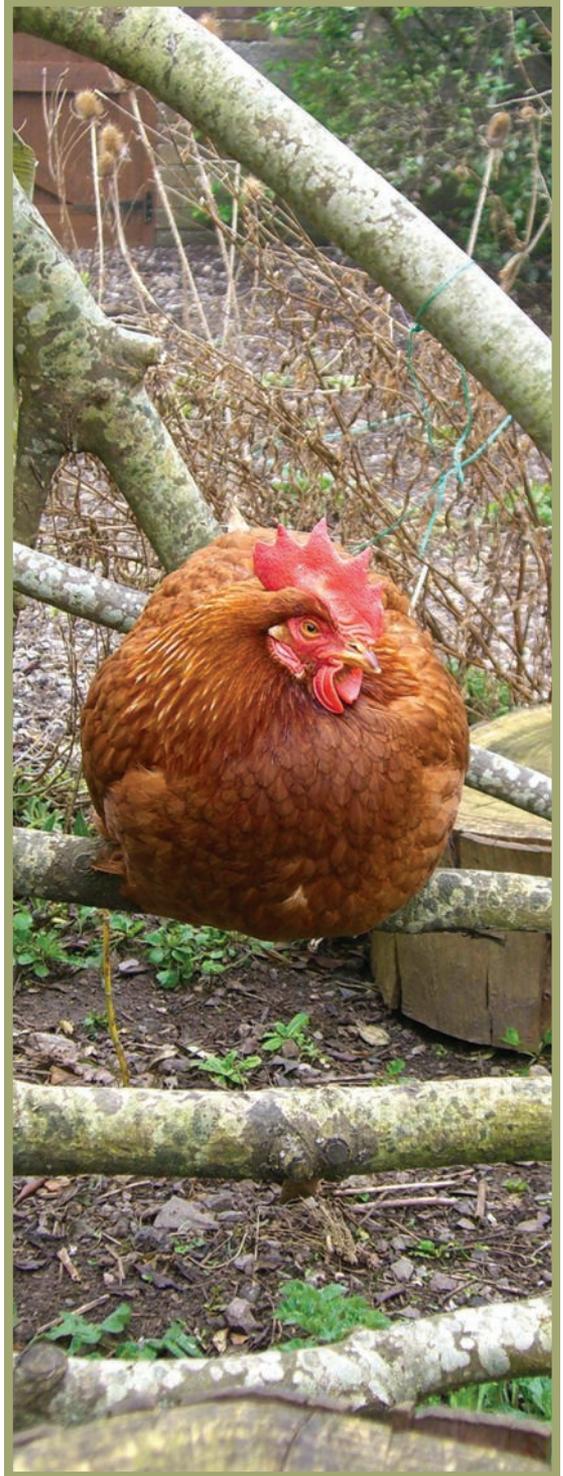
All's now serene for most the day,
Except when treats appear.
Then war breaks out amongst the flock,
And VV's filled with fear.

She knows she's well off with her 'mum',
And follows to the door,
To be let into that big coop
Is lovely, and what's more
The others press against the glass,
But cannot entry gain,
So VV enjoys treats galore,
And knows she'll feel no pain.

She has a little strut about
Exploring every nook,
Then settles down upon the floor
On carpet, pampered chook.
When quite refreshed, she's up again,
And fit to join the crew,
But not before she's left her 'mum'
A special VV poo!

Time has elapsed, that flock has died,
Another flock has waxed and waned,
But VV has outlived them all,
And now, a single hen, she's gained.

The treats are all for VV now,
She surely rules the roost,
So happy in the garden,
But in heaven in the hoose!



Get involved!



Good Friday on 6th April 2012 will see the launch of **Free Range Friday**, our brand new fundraising campaign .

Starting on Good Friday and continuing on the first Friday of every month, we will be encouraging our supporters to think about where the eggs in their food come from, and to get together to enjoy free range eggs, whilst raising funds to support the work of the charity. Fronted by our patron, Philippa Forrester, and kindly sponsored by the happy egg co. **Free Range Friday** is a simple and effective way to raise funds for the BHWT and is all about cooking or baking using free range eggs. You could host a breakfast or lunch, dinner or tea party, bake sale or pancake party, celebrate a birthday or anniversary – the choice is yours!

It is the BHWT's first national fundraising campaign and we look forward to receiving your news, stories, and photos. And remember to follow us on Facebook and Twitter too!

The fundraising pack, available from mid March, is full of ideas on holding a **Free Range Friday** fundraiser.

To register for a pack please email us on freerangefriday@bhwt.org.uk or phone us on 01769 580310.



HOLLOWAY HENS



HMP Holloway Prison is home to some of the country's most serious female offenders serving long term sentences. At the end of last year Neil Thompson, Head of Regimes and Equality, rang to say he wanted to adopt some hens as part of their garden programme offering educational and therapeutic projects to prisoners.

Initially Neil requested 20 and we sent the hens along with our Essex Co-ordinator, Jean Gill, in order that she could ensure the prisoners would know firsthand how to care for their ex-bats.

The feedback we got from Neil was that the hens had proved an immediate success and were thriving in their new life behind bars. The prisoners found the experience educational and rewarding, and NVQ courses had been started for some prisoners in the hope they would achieve a qualification that, on release, may help set them on a new path in life. Naturally the eggs were popular too.

Holloway take delivery of a further 40 hens soon and we hope that everyone, hens included, benefits from this innovative project.

SUPER SWEETCORN

Free range farmer's wife, Mandy Widdowson, read our Hensus Survey results about sweetcorn being one of the best nutritional treats to give your hens. Mandy takes occasional poorly hens under her wing on husband, John's, farm in Devon (16,000 hens kept in small flocks of 4,000) and decided to offer three under-the-weather girls the golden niblets as a last resort as they'd refused all other offers of food. And here's the email Mandy rushed indoors to write:

"Hi Jane and everyone at BHWT,

Just wanted to thank you for the wonderful magazine - I love it.

I have a small Hen Hospital on our free range egg farm, and this week I've had 3 very poorly hens who really wanted to give up the ghost. Your magazine arrived in Tuesday's post and I read about sweetcorn being a treat in your Hensus article. So armed with a syringe and tin of sweetcorn I have spent Weds and Thursday poking this miracle feed into their mouths. AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT.....today I have gone out and all 3 are sitting with their heads up, drinking from the water bowl and pecking off the ground. They aren't walking yet, but they are sat in the sun on straw and life is worth living again!! It really is a miracle food, so do pass it on. I have come straight in to email you the good news - 'cos farmer husbands don't get as excited about these things as me!

A big thank you. I wouldn't have thought about sweetcorn before, and I just love it when the little hens come good.

Regards, Mandy Widdowson"



Celebrity Scoop



Julia Kendell

We thought it might be fun to ask a few chicken-loving celebrities to describe a dozen of their poultry preferences...In this edition we talk to BHWT Patron, Julia Kendell, of BBC1's *DIY SOS* and ITV1's *60 Minute Makeover* fame...

1: Favourite breed – posh bird or ex-bat?

I keep a motley crew of hens.. I currently have 14 girls and one cockerel (lucky chap!). I have 4 ex-bats, 1 Light Sussex, 1 Araucana, 1 Creme Legbar, 1 Copper Maran, 1 buff Orpington, 1 white Orpington, and 4 mixtures that I hatched last Summer. I like to keep a mixed flock for variety in egg colour predominantly and feathering. But there's no question that the ex-bats are the most characterful and fun to have around. They love nothing more than following me around the veg garden when I'm digging and are the only ones who think it's ok to venture into our house to scoff the cat food!

2: Hen housing – good wood or plastic fantastic?

I've tried all possibilities. I currently have an Omlet Cube (designed for 8-10) and a small traditional wooden coop both attached to a 9ft x 18ft Flytes of Fancy Protection Pen (the chooks are allowed to free range around the entire garden when someone is home to keep an eye on them). I find the plastic coop much easier to keep clean and haven't had a single incidence of red mite in the three years I've had it. All of the hens choose to squeeze into it too despite having two to choose from! I have tried a recycled plastic hen house but felt it didn't offer adequate insulation and the solid floor was a nightmare to keep clean... which is a shame as I would opt for sustainable products wherever possible. I started out with 6 ex-bats and the Cube which worked brilliantly. Now that my 'passion' has grown somewhat, I need to re-think their living quarters and will probably build something magnificent in the garden for them.. when I've finished designing our house!

3: The weekend coop clean – yours truly or him indoors?

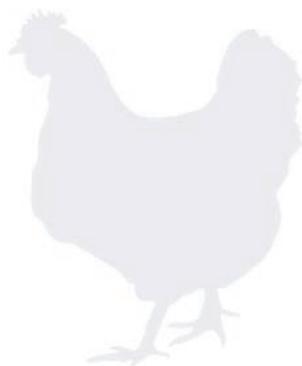
The chooks are very much my domain, although my OH does love having them around. I turn the straw in the nest box daily and empty the poop 'drawers' in the Cube every 4 or 5 days. Every Sunday my first job of the day is a change of straw and a check-over of the coops. Strangely my OH tends to 'step in to help' when it comes to pressure washing the coop every few months! I find keeping a layer of bark chippings in the run helps to keep the mud at bay and the chooks happy.

4:Your garden – hen-free or hen-pecked?

It is evident that the hens love to free range around the garden. It is annoying when they make a mess of the flower borders but presently our garden isn't that 'ordered' (we are demolishing and building a new house in the next 12 months) so we are not too precious about it. There are foxes locally, but we have been fortunate, thus far, not to have had any assaults during daylight hours. Whilst it would be devastating to lose them, I take the view that I would rather they have the opportunity for as natural an existence as possible.

5: Favourite eggy brekkie – full English or dainty egg soldiers?..

Ooh it has to be smoked salmon benedict with home-made hollandaise and chargrilled asparagus!



Continued on page 36

6: The British Hen Welfare Trust— mother hen or cock of the roost?

I am so proud of what the British Hen Welfare Trust has achieved, not only from the perspective of offering a second-chance to over 300,000 battery hens, but also in their intelligent engagement with egg producers across the UK and furthering attempts at legislation across the EU to ensure millions of hens are kept humanely.



7: Weekend bake - gooey gateau or cheesy quiche?

I am a true Taurean.. I love my food! I make a lot of quiches and cakes feature large in our household. My latest craze is kiwi muffins, and hot rhubarb and custard muffins. Yum!

8: British farmers – good egg or bad egg?

British farmers have a tough time with prices continually beaten down and cheap EU imports threatening their trade. I support our farmers wholeheartedly for taking the lead in the new cage welfare regulations and being ready to adopt the 2012 legislation where few other EU countries have done.

9: Guilty pleasure - Creme egg or fried egg?

Give me a real egg anytime. Creme eggs too sweet!

10: Your home – DIY Den or Designer Dream?

Ha! Everyone assumes my home is fabulous, being an interior designer, but at the moment we're living in the old shack that will be demolished when we come to build our new home. I call it 'charming' to put a positive spin on it but bits are dropping off it all the time now.

11: Glamorous gladrags or jeans & jumpers?

I'm definitely a 'both' person. I am a great believer in contrast in life; hot Summers and freezing Winters, grubby Festivals and opera at Covent Garden, and chilling out in a woolly jumper and Uggs on a weekend and teetering in 5" heels and slinky frocks for a party. One without the other wouldn't feel complete.

12: Your favourite co-star - handyman Craig Phillips or dandyman Trevor McDonald?!

Oh both please! Craig is a complete sweetheart and just as you would imagine, down to earth and a really top chap. I think it would be fabulous to have Trevor McDonald over for dinner as he has reported on so many historic events over the years.



BHWT Eggsellence Award

Contract caterer, Aspens Services, serve free-range eggs at 36 locations in England and Wales – including more than 30 schools and colleges - where the company provides catering and hospitality services.

We recently awarded them our Gold Eggsellence Award for using free range shell eggs and free range eggs as ingredients in all their meals. Deb Perkins, Co-ordinator for Bristol, went along to Priory Community School in Somerset to make the presentation where she met some of the pupils, a local contributor to the egg production effort and John Roe, Director of Aspens.

John said: "Free-range eggs are welfare-friendly and taste great. It's very satisfying to have our commitment to using only free-range eggs in our menus recognised by the highest level Gold Award."

And the good news is that this independent catering company is continuing to grow having just picked up a contract with North Birmingham Academy worth £650,000.

So, that'll mean a lot more happy hens then. Cracking stuff!



Pupils from Priory Community School celebrating their free range status!



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HAPPY HEALTHY HENS

By Richard Jackson MRCVS

Scaly leg Mites and Depluming Mites in Chickens

Scaly leg mites and depluming mites are two closely related mites which both belong to the genus *Knemidocoptes*.

The scaly leg mite (*Knemidocoptes mutans*) is commonly found on older backyard chickens.

This mite burrows beneath the scales of the leg causing damage which causes the damaged tissue of the leg to ooze with tissue fluid on which the mites feed.

This burrowing causes irritation, raised scales and crusting.

In the early stages of infection the affected bird will be no more than mildly irritated by the mites but as the scales become thickened and the mites cause more extensive damage the affected legs will become very painful.

It is important to note that it takes several months for the scales of the legs to become raised and consequently to heal again after treatment.

The mites are transmitted by direct contact with infected birds.

Treatment of scaly leg involves killing the mites and softening the roughened scales.

Killing the mites can be done using Ivermectin 1% spot on drops but it is important to note that Ivermectin isn't licensed for chickens and as such the prescribing vet needs to set an appropriate egg withdrawal (minimum of 7 days) and, if appropriate, meat withdrawal.

Dunking the legs into a jar of surgical spirit or methylated spirits twice weekly for three weeks will also kill the mites. Smothering the legs in Vaseline will help to soften the scales on the leg and to suffocate the mites. Scales can take twelve months to re-grow.

Finally routinely washing the legs using baby shampoo and a soft toothbrush can also soften the scales on the legs and aid with recovery.



The Depluming Mite (*Knemidocoptes gallinae*) is related to the scaly leg mite and like its better known relative is also a burrowing mite. However whilst the Scaly Leg Mite burrows in between the scales of the leg, the depluming mite burrows into the feather shafts particularly on the head, neck, back, belly and upper legs. As with scaly leg mite, the burrowing causes damage to the tissue which oozes with a nutrient rich fluid on which the mites feed. This burrowing causes irritation and pain to the bird causing it to scratch and to pull out its own feathers. Severely burdened birds will lose weight and will lay fewer eggs. One interesting fact about depluming mites is that rather than laying eggs they give birth to live young!

Depluming mites can complete their life cycle in as little as 17 days. They tend to be most numerous in spring and summer and then their numbers fall in autumn. Stressing birds will allow their numbers to increase more rapidly. Treatment for depluming mite involves using Ivermectin 1% spot on drops. But again it is important to note that Ivermectin isn't licensed for chickens and as such you should always seek advice from your prescribing vet and apply the appropriate egg withdrawal period.

Both scaly leg mites and depluming mites can only be transmitted between birds by direct contact.

For more advice or information contact the Chicken Vet at www.chickenvet.co.uk

POSH VS PERSONALITY

Supporter, Elizabeth Clare North, chose to photograph poultry as part of her Masters Degree in Documentary Photography. Through her work, she discusses the contrast between 'fancy fowl' and our dear ex-bat hens. These stunning portraits feature the fanciest of fowl, paired with an ex-bat counterpart (the tatty threadbare variety).

There is no doubt about it, the fancy fowl look exquisite and these posh birds really do know how to flaunt their feathers to full effect. By placing our gorgeous ex-bats in similar grandeur to their 'fancy fowl' cousins, Elizabeth asks us to consider each bird as an individual. And we know that with patience and a little TLC, these tatty threadbares will blossom into magnificent birds too. In fact, if you take a peek at our Gallery, you'll see it's brimming with our lovely brown beauties!





Recipe Choice:
Scrambled Eggs
on Grilled Field Mushrooms



Serves 2

2 large field mushrooms (85 – 100g) each,
wiped clean

Spray olive oil

4 free range eggs, lightly beaten

15g / 1/2oz unsalted butter

½ teaspoon chopped thyme leaves

½ teaspoon chopped tarragon

1 teaspoon each chopped parsley and chives

Ground white pepper

Pre-heat the grill to high, spray the mushrooms both sides with a little oil and season generously with ground black pepper and sprinkle with thyme. Add 1 tablespoon of water to the pan with the mushrooms and place under the grill. Cook for about 10 minutes until tender, turning once.

Meanwhile combine the eggs with the herbs and season with pepper. 3 minutes before the mushrooms are ready, gently heat a non-stick saucepan or frying pan, add the butter until foaming but never smoking, then add the eggs, stir for 30 seconds then draw the sides of the eggs to the centre, creating lumpy curds. Cook until done to your liking, then spoon over the mushrooms, serve immediately.



By BHWT Patron: Antony Worrall Thompson



Your Letters

Our postbag is plump every week with your lovely newsy stories, photos and feedback. Here are just a few:

Hi everyone,

Well Done! Battery cages a thing of the past! at least in the U.K.

Thank you to you all for your hard work. Battery farming has always troubled me, thank you for doing something about it. It has been a privilege to play a part, albeit a small part, in this highly successful campaign. It's heart- warming to see that you can make a difference, and I have been very impressed with the up-beat and positive and non-accusative tone of the campaign. You must be lovely people.

I look forward to seeing what happens next. Thank You, from the bottom of my heart.

Rachel Horton xxxxxxxxxxxx

Hello Jo

What a lovely package I received in the post this morning - many, many thanks. I was delighted with your choice of Flopsy for my sponsored hen ... coincidentally it's one of my adored rescue dog Pip's many nicknames ... I must say that I think your sponsor package is really lovely ... each item is of such high quality.

I so wish I could have some hens here and would do so in a trice but sadly Pip is a natural huntress who would pounce on a feathered or furry soul in an instant ... Pip has many virtues but compassion for her fellow animals isn't among them. So sponsoring is as near as I can get.

I will certainly be spreading the word about BHWT among all my friends, relatives and acquaintances ... I'm so delighted to have found you all. And I'll make donation as and when I can.

Warmest Wishes, Lorna Lake



Hi Jane

I wanted to congratulate you on a super year in 2011, and good luck with Liberty too - what a tremendous achievement.

I re-homed two rather scrawny ex bats from Cranleigh on the 29/12/11. They have been christened Holly and Ivy as Xmas hens and were my present to myself - they are presently integrating with the bigger and more plush Milly and Mandy and I hope to have a settled little flock soon.

I am now following you on twitter and wish you the best of luck in 2012, I think what you and the Trust do is wonderful!

Charlotte Miles

Hi BHWT

I collected four hens today, and was most impressed with the efficient and calm procedure!

The hens were all eating their ex-bat crumb and pecking around in their new environment within minutes of being installed, were nonchalant about the sight of our dog the other side of the wire and one of them laid an egg before it went dark.

Please see picture of one of them posing amongst the brassicas!

Regards. Heidi Saxby





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Egg on your friends

Our magazine is an important educational tool and all we ask, if you opt for a printed version, is that you egg on your friends to support us by passing the magazine on. If you prefer our on line version, you can subscribe direct at bhwt.org.uk



Birds of a feather ... flock together

And that's exactly what our lovely, friendly supporters do by joining together on our **British Hen Welfare Trust Facebook page**. As well as lots of chicken flavoured chit chat, helpful tips and some heartwarming tales (often with gorgeous pics), you'll be able to add your experiences, ask questions and generally enjoy a warm welcome by other chicken folk.



Chicken Nuggets

NO! Not *that* kind! Snippetty bits, chicken soundbites, *that* sort of nugget ... and if that's all you've got time for, keep tabs on us at **@BHWTOfficial**. We post daily, but want to increase our tweetship (is that a word yet?!), so come on board and help, you'd be more than welcome.



Droppings

Not the sort you're thinking, honestly! Magazine droppings ... we want *you* to help us to change shopping habits by increasing awareness about our work. Passing on this magazine to increase our readership will enable us to educate more and more people as to why we think laying hens deserve a fair deal in life. Let's start an 'interesting droppings' initiative - let us know where you've left your copy, and we'll let you know the more weird and wonderful places in the next issue!

A NEW SET OF FEATHERS

I hope you have enjoyed our new look magazine, here's the rationale behind the launch:

Number ONE reason has to be the need to broaden our readership. Reaching people who use eggs on a weekly basis - and who might be conscious of the welfare issues surrounding free range shell eggs, but still be oblivious to the widespread use of eggs as ingredients in processed foods – is vital to gaining support for our work.

Number TWO reason is that we wanted to change our image from 'charity newsletter' to **glossy magazine** (well nearly glossy magazine!). This size and spec is right on trend and comes in at slightly less cost than our previous newsletters. Saving money? Always a good reason to make a change. My sincere thanks to our lovely Lisa who has worked hard with me to produce this new look, we hope you like it.



Chicken & Egg Magazine

is a British Hen Welfare Trust Publication

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Lincolnshire North - Swinderby
Northamptonshire - Brackley
Northumberland - Stocksfield
Oxfordshire - Didcot
Shropshire - Oswestry
Somerset - Midsomer Norton
Suffolk - Ipswich
Surrey - Cranleigh
Sussex - Chichester
Wales South - Gwernogle & Cardiff Gate
West Midlands - Allesley near Coventry
Wiltshire - Malmesbury
Yorkshire - Sand Hutton near York





Easter Baskets

With spring just around the corner, now is the ideal time to give your hens a spring boost to set them up for the summer: firstly we recommend worming with Flubenvet, ideally followed by a five-day course of Amino Plus and finishing with a sachet of Beryl's Friendly Bacteria to top up the friendly gut bacteria to help protect against infections.

Spring is also a great time to think about new housing, and Dorset-based Flyte-So-Fancy have produced a British designed house and run ideal for our ex-commercial hens. Built with unique features and options, this house is only available through the charity. It has a smart brass plaque and a pretty window in the shape of our logo.



We also stock feeders, drinkers, feeds and healthy treats, plus electric fencing kits which are the first in the UK to offer gates, meaning you don't have to turn the power on-and-off, or perfect the "stepping over the fence without getting a shock" dance!

And with Easter being early this year, what about opting for a choc

-free gift for a family member? Our little hen soaps proved hugely popular over Christmas as have these pretty Doris fitted aprons. And for those keen on tradition, our chocolate hens, made by prestigious chocolatier, Melchior Chocolates, are intricate as well as scrummy!



The BHWT Shop is run here at Hen Central, so every purchase directly supports the charity – so please get shopping!



YOUR *Only at*
M&S

1997

We only sold free range eggs.

2002

We only used free range eggs as ingredients in our own label foods.

2012

We support the BHWT in all its good work!