Chicken & Egg

well beyond welfare

Issue No.29
Spring 2022

HELPING HENS GLOBALLY:

How we're improving welfare across the world

How to spring clean your hen house

Eating insects...they're not just for Bushtucker Trials!

How creative can *you* get with an egg box?

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The Smallholder Range is continuing to support the work of the BHWT by making a donation from each bag of Natural Free Range Layers Crumble and Natural Free Range Layers Pellets sold.

dear **supporters**

Enough of the cold dark nights, bring out the daffodils, the warm sunshine and all things spring! Along with our hens, thousands of whom have had to be extra patient in waiting for our volunteers to scoop them up in their arms, we have been itching to get going again, and we are!

For all sorts of reasons this really is quite an exciting edition – we have hens (the best news obviously), we have news of Chicken Run II – did you even know there was going to be one?! We have baby dinosaurs and hens learning how to do DIY (well that's possibly stretching it a bit, but you'll see what I mean on page 40).

We share with you how we are using your generous Christmas Appeal donations, trust me your kindness is already being used to great effect and we also have a model illustration of how a poorly hen can thrive and love life in our And Finally section.

Throw in our lovely competition prize courtesy of The Simple Life magazine, some good eggs, some great Egg Clubbers and gorgeous Easter recipes and shop treats and you have quite a loaded edition.

Oh, and last but definitely not least, we've an update on our veterinary course – it's the most exciting news and years of work coming to fruition.

Kettle on, feet up, time to chill with chickens for a while at least ...

Warm wishes

jane howorth mbe
founder & ceo

PS: If you'd like to stay up to date on BHWT news then subscribe to Fresh Laid News, our monthly eNewsletter.
To subscribe visit bhwt.org.uk/subscribe

british hen welfare trust
adoption locations

- ENGLAND -

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- OUR STORY -

As Britain's first national charity to be focused on hen welfare, the British Hen Welfare Trust has built its mission and reputation on saving ex-commercial hens from slaughter by finding them new homes as family pets.

The charity also works to educate and influence consumers as to how the choices they make at the supermarket impact laying hen welfare.

To date, we have found adoptive pet homes for over 860,000 ex-commercial laying hens.

If you would like to learn more about the British Hen Welfare Trust, please visit our website at bhwt.org.uk or scan this QR Code:

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Are you ready for Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget? Because we are!

The eagerly anticipated sequel to the highest-grossing animated film of all time is coming exclusively to Netflix in 2023. Having pulled off a death-defying escape from Tweedy's farm, Ginger has finally found her dream – a peaceful island sanctuary for the whole flock, far from the dangers of the human world. When she and Rocky hatch Molly, Ginger's happy ending seems complete. But back on the mainland the whole of chicken-kind faces a new and terrible threat. For Ginger and her team, even if it means putting their own hard-won freedom at risk – this time, they're breaking IN!

NETFLIX

All say ahhh for rare baby dinosaur 'Baby Yingliang'

An embryo found inside a fossilised dinosaur egg could be anything between 66 – 72 million years old. Baby Yingliang belongs to a toothless theropod dinosaur (an oviraptorosaur) and the fossil, said to be the most complete dinosaur embryo ever found, suggests the creatures developed bird-like postures close to hatching – much like today's hens!

Find out more about the discovery on the Birmingham University website birmingham.ac.uk/news/index.aspx

photo credit: Julius Csotonyi

Did you know... Egg-and-spoon races formed part of village celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897, alongside the tug of war and blindfold wheelbarrow races.

Ethical concerns raised with in-ovo gender determination technology

Previous studies have indicated that in-ovo gender determination of incubated eggs can help to provide a solution for the mass culling of male chicks in layer hen production. However, the technology is raising ethical concerns relating to the sensitivity of the embryo, the use of rejected eggs and the accuracy of in-ovo screening itself.

In-ovo technology identifies male chicks within the egg during the incubation period. It's expected this technology will be ready on a large scale in most countries where animal welfare is a priority, including the UK.

Dr Corrina Reithmayer, from the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development in Germany, led a study for four months investigating consumer attitudes and found people were concerned about the ethicality of the technology specifically screening errors and conscious pain perception. Over 40% of respondents would only approve the technology if carried out, with certainty, before the onset of pain perception.

More work on this is clearly needed in our view and we will keep you updated.

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How your generosity will help our poorly hens

A HUGE thank you to all who donated to our Christmas Appeal; you raised over £39,000 for the poorly hens that we save from slaughter every year.

As we start rehoming hens again this spring, we're already putting your generous donations to good use.

We save around 60,000 hens from slaughter every year and whilst most are ready to be adopted immediately, there are always a few hens who need special attention and veterinary care. It is these birds who will benefit from the money donated by you, our kind and caring supporters.

We're using the funds to overhaul our poorly care team kits including buying heat lamps that provide much-needed warmth and walk-in runs which will soon be winging their way to our teams across the country. As well as new kit, much of the money from our Christmas Appeal has been dedicated to covering vet fees to help give those

poorly hens the best chance at a new life. Sometimes, with medical care and TLC, even the sorriest-looking hen can make a remarkable comeback.

Turn to page 42 to read how one such hen, Hedwig, not only survived, but is thriving after being looked after by one of our poorly carers.

Once again, a heartfelt thank you for your Christmas Appeal support.

rehoming **round-up**

In a normal year we continue to rehome hens all through the winter. This year the arrival of Avian Influenza and the Government housing order meant we had to stop rehoming mid-December.

Our grand total stands at 862,467 hens saved from slaughter so we should hit our next milestone of 900,000 hens by the end of 2022. Our hens' popularity remains as high as ever with over 12,000 lucky hens booked for when we started rehoming again at the end of February.

Calling all volunteers!

Did you know we're looking for volunteers across our 45 adoption sites?

We need people who want to make a real difference to the lives of hens.

But we can't do it alone, we need your help. Take a look at our volunteer vacancies at **bhwt.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/**

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What's in and What's Out in a Laying Hen's Diet

We all are familiar with the soya bean as a concentrated protein source appearing in many of our food products, and for many years now soy has been widely used for exactly this reason in poultry feed. However, increasingly, this animal feed product is under scrutiny.

Global production of soy has doubled in 20 years increasing devastating deforestation and leading to the loss of endangered species, local jobs and adverse climate change. Moreover, many EU countries are dependent on imports to fulfil their feed requirements raising the issue of long-distance transportation and leaving them vulnerable to increasing costs which impact profit.

As a result, interest has grown in alternatives which provide a similar protein source without the negative consequences. Sunflower and rapeseed make good soy replacements, but these have lower protein digestibility leading to lower egg production and higher risk of intestinal health problems.

Another source of protein explored over the past few years is that of insects. Black soldier fly larvae (BSFL) are high in nutritional value but contain chitin which restricts digestibility, which also, in turn, impacts productivity, so work is taking place to find the pivotal point that allows birds to maintain performance whilst enjoying a more sustainable feed source. Interestingly BSFL also gives a darker yolk colouring too, so watch out for darker yolks!

As we reported in our Fresh Laid News, Morrisons, is keen to become the first UK supermarket to achieve the accolade of carbon neutral eggs on shelves this year. Morrisons claims that by switching to feeding BSFL it will save 56 hectares of land from deforestation in South America and is trialling insect feeding on 10 farms, each having 32,000 free-range hens.

Morrisons will deliver three tonnes of waste fruit and veg weekly to feed these 'insect units', helping the insects to grow to 5,000 times their initial body mass in a fortnight and feeding a total of 320,000 hens who will lay around a million eggs in a year.

It seems this circular agriculture is set to grow and Morrisons have already started feeding seaweed into cows' diets to reduce the production of methane.

One wonders how long it will be before we are also eating insects ... just a thought?!

Kevin Cooper's egg boxes feature a hen line drawing

Eggs-traordinary creativity!

How do you like your eggs? Whether fried, boiled or scrambled, imagine receiving them in an ornate egg box stamped with a cheery logo. That's the kind of treat you can expect from our Egg Clubbers.

When hen keepers sign up to the Club, they receive a welcome pack filled with handy information, a membership card, egg box labels and donation tin stickers. They are also invited to join our private Egg Club Facebook group, a lively community that share successes, ideas and queries.

As well as using Egg Club branded labels, many of our Clubbers choose to add their own stamp to egg boxes and construct wonderful egg huts to display them. Having seen some of these cracking designs and creations through the Egg Club Facebook group, we just had to share them with you. Here's a selection to impress and inspire you...

Harebell Hens' logo started out as a hand-drawn sketch, which was then carved into a stamp using a computer-controlled cutter. Elise Cartmell told us: "Everyone seems to like the boxes and certainly having that unique design encourages people to return them."

We love Luke Jones' egg boxes labels, which include his happy hen's names - how sweet!

Not only do the Forest View Egg Club hens proudly pop their eggs into pretty egg boxes, but they also store them in a smart egg hutch with a handsome cockerel decoration perched on top.

And finally, The Rising Sun's jolly egg hut is decked out with bunting and signage and even sells a few eggs-tras. You could say it's a bit of a one-stop breakfast shop!

Fancy joining our Egg Club? Sign up today and you can find out everything you need to know about membership and raising money for the BHWT through eggs on our website at: **bhwt.org.uk/get-involved/egg-club/**

Keep your hens warm & cosy with Dengie's FRESH BED for chickens!

Choosing the correct bedding is important to help reduce the risk of disease and to maintain a healthy living environment. Ex-commercial hens aren't used to roosting on a perch and prefer to snuggle down into a nest of bedding instead, helping them to feel safe and secure!

Photo credit: The Garden Smallholder

Developed in partnership with the British Hen Welfare Trust, Dengie's chopped dust extracted straw bedding is designed to keep your hens feeling warm and cosy; the pine oil coating provides natural anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties and keeps the coop smelling fresh and clean.

Fresh Bed helps to absorb moisture and droppings as well as cushion your hen's feet. The bedding will also keep them stimulated when scratching through the straw bedding.

Fresh Bed is easy to dispose of, is 100% biodegradable and will compost quicker than shavings or wood pellets, producing great compost for your veggies!

It is also suitable for other poultry such as ducks, geese and pheasants.

Available in great value 100ltr and easy-to-handle 50ltr bales. To purchase visit the British Hen Welfare Trust website www.bhwt.org.uk or visit www.dengie.com for further information and to locate your nearest stockist.

Dengie Fresh Bed Doesn't Cost the Earth

Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do. Our packaging now includes recycled plastic and remains recyclable, so please do re-use and then recycle when you've finished with it. We are using less plastic in every bale and are working hard to reduce this further.

MAXIMUM RECYCLED CONTENT

Dengie

Call **01621 841 188**

for friendly advice on the Dengie Help Line

*As part of Dengie's commitment to supporting the charity, during this campaign Dengie Crops Ltd, will make a total payment of £5,000 to British Hen Welfare Trust, a registered charity [no. 1147356] in connection with the promotion and sale of marked products like this one.

Proud to support British Hen Welfare Trust

GOOD EGGS

Cindi is our Golden Girl

When American TV icon Betty White passed away on New Year's Eve 2021, Cindi Taylor-Pitts was devastated. Betty, who starred in the 1980s sitcom The Golden Girls, was well-known for her work in animal welfare.

Cindi, 74, lives in Oxford but grew up in New York. Cindi said "I grew up with Betty White, she was always there on TV throughout my whole life."

Cindi learned from her American best friend (also called Cyndi) that fans were encouraging people to donate to animal charities on what would have been the actress' 100th birthday. So far $12.7 million has been raised! And Cindi gave £25 to the BHWT through her friend, Sarah Calcutt, who happens to be a volunteer for our Oxford team.

Nice one Cindi, you've done Betty proud!

Egg Clubber Elise on track for her £500 target

After adopting hens in 2020, Elise Cartmell quickly joined our Egg Club and set herself an ambitious target of raising £500. And she's already over halfway to reaching her goal!

Elise says, "I'm an essential worker and took my eggs into the laboratory each week and asked for donations; demand always outstrips supply. I also added myself to the BHWT Egg Club map and I now have a regular lady who comes up to collect eggs and donates via PayPal. I also have lots of friends and family who come by and collect."

Egg Club is the perfect circle of hens helping hens. Donations given for eggs are passed to the BHWT to help us keep saving more flocks from slaughter and rehoming them as family pets.

Elise told us: "Our newest hens are laying well and we love to make yummy Yorkshire puddings! We also tried Orlando Murrin's macaroni soufflé recipe from the last Chicken & Egg magazine, which was delicious!"

If you'd like to get involved with Egg Club, sign up today and join in all the fun. Everything you need to know about membership and raising money for the BHWT through eggs is on our website at **bhwt.org.uk/get-involved/egg-club/**

find the golden egg

If you're patient enough to find it, you could win a bundle of goodies from the Little Feed Company! This best-selling bundle includes 5kg Gastro Grit with 4kg Super Seeds and 4kg Cheer-Up Chicken to give your girls the extra support they need for the laying season.
To enter, visit the competitions page on our website at bhwt.org.uk/competitions where you can submit the page number of the hidden golden egg before 27/06/2022.

The Hoole Hen Hospice for Poorly Hens

Jan Hoole, long-time BHWT volunteer, knows that being a poorly carer is extremely rewarding, though it can be hard work and sad too. When hens arrive in a sorry state, Jan takes them home to her Hen Hospice.

She tells us, “I’ve had hens who have trouble breathing, a hen with a neurological problem and one with only one eye. I give them as much TLC as possible. Sometimes this means hand feeding every few hours for a couple of days or giving them a special supplement to help them start eating again if they’re unable to tolerate normal food.”

Jan is a hero to those hens that need extra support and is lucky to have a set-up where she can care for many different problems at one time. She told us “If they are too poorly to be left with the rest of the flock, they go into the “intensive care ward”, which is a puppy crate, until they are strong enough to hold their own.”

Our Christmas Appeal this year was dedicated to helping to support poorly carers like Jan by providing specialist equipment and funds for vet fees.

Jan told us, “Heat lamps and supplements are expensive. I was lucky enough to already have two puppy crates, but other carers may need these as well. We also often need to take our poorly hens to the vet for treatment, and medications can be expensive. If a hen is too ill or badly injured to go on, the last thing we can do for them is to make sure they are put to sleep humanely, and this often means a trip to the vet. This can cost anywhere up to £60.

“All these things have to come out of the BHWT's funds, so the additional money from the fundraising is vital to help us give the hens the best chance and the most comfort we can.”

We want to thank Jan, and all our poorly carers, for the hard work they do for the hens that need a little extra care. We also want to thank you for making the world of difference to the hens who need you.

Want to know more about the Christmas Appeal? Learn how your donation Helped on page 9.

Improving Pet Hen Health **Around the World**

As part of our mission to improve pet hen health and increase knowledge about chickens, we are proud to announce that we have teamed up with The University of Nottingham to offer a five-week online poultry course, fronted by Kate Humble.

It will be available via the FutureLearn platform from late April and is aimed at vets, vet nurses and vet students, but will be beneficial to anyone with a keen interest in poultry.

Topics covered on the course include basic anatomy and physiology, routine husbandry, specific infectious and non-infectious diseases, common surgical procedures, the basis of infection control, parasite control, vaccines and viruses, the difference between layers and broilers, nutrition, legal aspects and whether poultry feel pain.

You can be sure you will hear more as we get close to our launch date!

Hitting the international airwaves

At the BHWT, we love chatting chicken, so when we were asked to be part of an American podcast we jumped at the chance!

Our founder Jane Howorth was interviewed by two childhood friends who both show a deep love for hens in their *Coffee with the Chicken Ladies* podcast; a podcast that has listeners in 57 countries!

Jane and hosts Holly and Chrisie, AKA the Chicken Ladies, talked about everything from the work of the BHWT, how life-enriching it is to adopt ex-commercial hens, Avian Influenza, our Size Matters campaign, and improving veterinary care for chickens.

The interview with Jane aired in March 2022 and you can listen to it via Spotify or by visiting their website: **coffeewiththechickenladies.com/**

Size Matters Down Under

Our campaign to encourage people to switch to mixed weight eggs has been gathering momentum in the UK and has now reached Down Under.

We were more than happy to share our insights with a journalist from a consumer information magazine in New Zealand who is now laising with experts in New Zealand for a greater understanding on the issue.

New global veterinary diagnostics guide for pet poultry

As if our five-week course wasn't exciting enough we are also collaborating on a 50 / 50 joint initiative with a USA organisation to launch a pioneering online poultry diagnostic guide for vets.

The guide will enable vets to check symptoms, diagnose and provide treatment options.

We hope to have more news for you in our next issue - watch this space!

Helping hens in Africa

When we first set up our Hen Helpline, we never imagined just how far afield it would reach!

We're used to enquiries from people caring for poorly chickens across the UK, but earlier this year we had the opportunity to help a hen in an African village by advising their keeper on how to vaccinate their flock against a disease that was proving fatal.

We were able to give them information about how best to protect their backyard flock and at the time of going to print, the hens were all still doing well, and their keeper was very grateful for the advice they received.

Another hen helped!

Sponsor a Hen reaches America!

Not even the Atlantic Ocean can stand in the way of people who want to support our work! Over the past few months, we've seen several people from the USA helping to raise funds by sponsoring and we're delighted that our hens are spreading their wings so far afield.

One transatlantic sponsor, Rai Mordente, who lives near Baltimore, told us, "We do have battery rescue here in the States but nothing nearby. A few of my Instagram friends have adopted from the BHWT and I have seen the positive difference you have made for both hens and humans. You have a lovely organization and it's one that I will continue to support when I can. Thank you for saving so many lives."

Thank you to all our sponsors, wherever you live. Sign up to *Sponsor a Hen* at: bhwt.org.uk/get-involved/sponsor-a-hen

Brighten up your day with one of our Epic Easter Exclusives

Whether you're looking to brighten up your wardrobe or want to make someone smile with one of our super spring chicken cards, check out our Easter exclusives - 100% of proceeds go straight to helping hens.

Sarah Boddy Easter Card Range £2.50

All cards are blank inside and individually wrapped in a cellophane bag with textured envelope. 145mm x 145mm (suitable for UK letter post). Designed and printed in the UK.

Teemill Spring Collection - Tote Bags £12 T-shirts £20

Ranging from XS to XXL, these Teemill designs are 100% organic cotton.

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The best way to celebrate your birthday?
Volunteering with the BHWT!

Carole Raven has a habit of celebrating her birthdays by doing something good for chickens. On her 50th birthday, she was gifted an Eglu and promptly rehomed her first (of many) BHWT ex-commerical hens. On her 60th, she decided to become a volunteer.

Last year, Carole turned 61 and spent her birthday volunteering with the Essex rehoming team. And she wouldn't have had it any other way.

Carole said, "It was fantastic, I spent my birthday with an amazing bunch of people. Yes, we worked hard, but seeing people collecting their hens and their enthusiasm, you get carried away with it."

Of course, she couldn't go home empty-handed on her birthday and four more lucky hens were added to her flock with Carole's kind boss donating to the BHWT to mark the day!

Animal lover Carole now has 10 ex-bats, she said, "With lockdown I was classed as extremely vulnerable and was in isolation. To then be let out and meet this amazing group of people who made me feel so welcome was incredible. We're there for a reason and we're there because we're passionate about hen welfare, and it is so evident how passionate everyone is about what the charity does.

"Our coordinator Fliss is superb; I've never volunteered for a charity who look after their volunteers in the way she does. Every now and then she gives us a call just to check we're ok and if we need anything.

"You're not just a volunteer that gets called up as and when you're needed, you're a volunteer that's respected and valued."

Spring clean your way to a happy hen house

It seemed like winter would never end but now the days are getting longer, spring bulbs are in bloom. Our hen houses, however, have taken a bit of a beating with lockdown so just as we spring clean our own houses now is the time to spring clean our hen houses.

Pull on those scruffy clothes or overalls, don a headscarf and dig out a face mask. Next, find a pair of Marigold gloves, a stiff hand brush and pan, a small scrubbing brush, a paint scraper, a bucket of hot water and your cleaning product of choice.

Choose a fine dry day and remove everything from inside your hen house, which includes perches if they are not fixed. Bag up all the dirty bedding and, starting at the top, brush the ceiling and walls to remove loose dust and dander (this is why the mask is essential).

Next get into those far corners (a paint scraper is a godsend for getting debris out of nooks and crannies). If you have a slatted wooden house, run the edge of the scraper along the joins, then go back and use the stiff brush again. Use the scraper to remove dried-on droppings from the lower parts of the walls especially near and along the perches and inside the nest boxes.

If you have been able to completely remove your perches, stand them in the bucket of hot water and use your scraper and scrubbing brush to give them a comprehensive cleaning. Finally, concentrate on the floor.

Now you will need to methodically clean the house to remove dirt and grease. We always like to use hot water and detergent to deal with the worst of the dirt (working from the top down and not forgetting the ceiling). Then an all-round disinfectant, cleaner and mite killer such as *Nettex Mite Kill Ready to Use Solution* can be applied; once it has dried there will still be a residual action against mites and other crawling insects.

Feeders and drinkers will benefit from being soaked in hot water and disinfectant but remember to rinse them well and allow them to dry before refilling.

Plastic housing can be pressure washed if circumstances allow but will still benefit from a disinfectant treatment.

Once dry, replace all fixtures and fittings and refresh bedding. A ground and bedding sanitiser sprinkled in the nest boxes, bedding and even on the ground outside the pop hole will set your hens up for the spring.

NETTEX

See the full *Nettex Mite Kill* Range at **shop.bhwt.org.uk**

Now is also a good time to check for any damage to your hen house, repair any loose panels, torn felt or sagging wire; you may even decide a coat of paint or wood stain is appropriate. If you feel adventurous, wood stains come in a variety of colours!

Sheepdrove Trust

A thumping big thank you to Sheepdrove Organic Farm

Spread across 2,500 acres of pasture, meadows, woodland, and fields high on the Berkshire Downs, lies Sheepdrove Organic Farm. Established in the 1990s, the farm has diversified over the years to include an events centre, wedding venue, holiday lodgings and natural burial ground.

With a strong focus on sustainability, biodiversity and environmentally responsible projects, the farm is renowned for its exceptional conservation work and habitat creation for birds and other wildlife.

It is home to 25 species of butterfly, 10 species of bee, six species of bat and 104 species of bird (including five types of owl). Not to mention ex-bat hens from the BHWT who have also been lucky enough to call the farm their home since July 2021.

Alongside all of this, the farm also has a charitable arm known as the Sheepdrove Trust, and we were extremely grateful to receive a £5,000 donation from the Trust earlier this year.

From all of us at the BHWT, thank you! This money will help us to continue our life-saving work rehoming hens and develop pioneering new ways to improve hen welfare for commercial and pet flocks.

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One winner will be drawn on 27/05/2022.

Terms & Conditions: The competition closes on 27/05/2022. The winner will be chosen at random by the BHWT. The winner will be notified by email or phone. No cash alternative available. By entering the competition, you agree that you have the legal capacity to do so and agree to these terms and conditions. The winning prize is a 12-month subscription for The Simple Things magazine worth £53 by Iceberg Press. There is no entry fee and no purchase required. To enter the competition, you must answer the question on our related competition page on the BHWT website. If, due to circumstances beyond their control, The Simple Things or the BHWT is unable to provide the stated prize, they reserve the right to award a substitute prize of equal or greater value. The competition is open to UK residents aged 18 or over, except employees of The Simple Things and the BHWT and their immediate families, or anyone professionally associated with this promotion. The prize winner agrees to the use of their name for promotional purposes.

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Marriage's Feed

@marriagesfeed

Read Evie's update four months after bringing home her new hens ...

There has been a huge change in their appearance and the quality of their eggs are so much better too! We've noticed that the shells are much darker and harder, and the yolks are a lovely dark orange colour. On average, we get five to six eggs per day from the six hens.

Because we don't use all the eggs, we are able to give them away in return for donations to the BHWT through their Egg Club. Ours is called Evie's Pretty Little Hens.

We have a basket on our gate and an honesty box so people can leave a donation. It's a lovely thing to do because it means that our hens are directly helping the hens that are still in cages who will hopefully one day also experience a free-range retirement just like Skittles, Bellatrix Lestange, Bubbles, Squeak, Hyacinth Clucket and Peggy.

I also raise money through selling some little hen decorations I paint on my "Evie's Pretty Little Hens" Facebook page. When I began, my target was £50, now I've raised well over £2,000 through the sale of the wooden hens and my Egg Club!

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BRITISH® HEN WELFARE TRUST

Easter rocky road roulade

RECIPE PROVIDED BY delicious. MAGAZINE

This double-chocolate and caramel Easter rocky road roulade is a decadent finale to a celebratory Easter lunch, plus it's great fun to assemble with the kids.

Serves 8-10

6 medium free-range eggs, separated
100 g caster sugar
35 g cocoa powder, plus extra to dust
15 g plain flour

For the filling
4 tbsp Biscoff spread or dulce de leche sauce
300 ml double cream
300 g mixed Easter chocolates, roughly broken or chopped (we used mini eggs, creme eggs, bits of chocolate Easter eggs and Toblerone)
75 g roughly chopped toasted nuts (we used blanched hazelnuts, toasted in a dry pan – add salted peanuts if you like too)
100 g biscuits, broken into small chunks (Bahlsen Choco Leibniz, chocolate chip or peanut cookies are all good)

For the topping
90 g milk chocolate, finely chopped

You'll also need an electric mixer, 25 cm x 33 cm swiss roll tin lined with compostable baking paper and an extra sheet of compostable baking paper

1. Heat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas 4. In a large bowl, whisk the egg yolks and sugar with an electric mixer on medium speed until creamy and thick – roughly 5 minutes. Mix the cocoa and flour in a small bowl, then sift onto the egg mixture and fold together gently using a large metal spoon. The mixture will be fairly thick.

2. In a separate clean bowl, whisk the egg whites with clean beaters until just stiff. Mix 2 heaped tablespoons of the whisked whites into the cocoa/egg mixture to loosen. Add the remaining whisked whites to the mixture and very gently fold in – use a balloon whisk first, then a rubber spatula for the last few folds to keep the air in – until smooth and combined.

3. Carefully scrape the mixture into the prepared tin and smooth the top. Bake for 12-15 minutes until springy. Remove from the oven and leave the sponge to cool for 5 minutes, then turn the sponge out onto a sheet of baking paper lightly dusted with cocoa powder. Carefully peel away the lining paper and leave to cool for 5 minutes. Loosely roll up the sponge using the baking paper it's sitting on to help you, then leave on the wire rack to cool completely.

4. To assemble, unroll the sponge and dot with the Biscoff/dulce de leche – roughly spread it out to make pockets of sauce. Whip the cream until it just holds its shape, then spread over the sponge in an even layer. Sprinkle over about two-thirds of the chocolates, nuts and biscuits, keeping the bigger chunks for the top. Roll up the sponge again using the baking paper to help.

5. For the topping, melt the chocolate in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water (the bowl should not touch the water). Allow to cool for 5-10 minutes (to thicken), then pour over the top of the roulade. Sprinkle over the extra chocolates, nuts and biscuits, pressing in if necessary. Slice and serve with a darned good cup of coffee.

Halloumi fries with sweet chilli & lime yoghurt

RECIPE PROVIDED BY HIGGIDY

Served hot from the pan, these crisp, cheesy fries are so good, they should probably come with a warning. Just don't let them go cold – no one likes a rubbery chip.

Serves 4–6 as a starter or side

2 × 250 g packs halloumi cheese, cut lengthways into 1 cm-thick sticks
50 g plain flour
1 free-range egg
1 tablespoon white sesame seeds
1 tablespoon black sesame seeds
50 g panko breadcrumbs
Vegetable oil, for frying
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Lime wedges, to serve

For the dip
150 g Greek yogurt
3 tablespoons sweet chilli sauce
Grated zest and juice of 1 unwaxed lime
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Pat the halloumi sticks dry between a couple of pieces of kitchen paper. Measure the flour out onto a plate, beat the egg in a wide bowl and mix the sesame seeds and breadcrumbs together on a separate plate. Roll the halloumi sticks in the flour, coating each side, then dip into the beaten egg and finally coat with the breadcrumb mixture – it's easiest to do this in a few batches.

2. Heat a 5 mm depth of vegetable oil in a shallow frying pan over a medium–high heat until it reaches 180°C on a cooking thermometer or a piece of bread dropped into the hot oil browns in 20 seconds. Fry the halloumi sticks, in 3 batches, for about 3–4 minutes until golden and crisp on each side. Remove from the oil and drain on kitchen paper.

3. While the halloumi sticks are frying, prepare the dip by mixing the ingredients together in a small bowl, seasoning to taste with salt and pepper.

4. Serve the halloumi fries warm with lime wedges alongside for squeezing over and the yoghurt dip

Fig & almond frangipane

RECIPE PROVIDED BY HIGGIDY

Here, the traditional sweet, nutty filling is tempered by some rather grown-up figs, which are slowly stewed in rich, red wine. Be careful who you serve this to as they may start turning up unannounced.

Serves 8-10

For the pastry
200 g plain flour
40 g icing sugar
100 g cold butter, cut into 1cm cubes
50 g ground almonds
Small pinch of fine sea salt
Zest from an orange
1 free range egg, beaten

For the frangipane filling
150 g unsalted butter, softened
150 g light muscovado sugar
3 eggs
150 g ground almonds
1 tablespoon plain flour
1 teaspoon vanilla paste
Juice and zest of a lemon
8 figs, quartered
50 g runny honey

For the stewed figs
3 tablespoons light soft brown sugar
100 ml red wine
6 figs, quartered

For the whipped mascarpone
150 g mascarpone
3 tablespoons icing sugar
1 tablespoon vanilla paste

You'll also need 1 x 23 cm loose bottomed tart tin

1. Sieve the flour and icing sugar together in a bowl or food processor. Rub the butter in with your fingers or blitz in the food processor until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Mix in the almonds, salt, orange zest and egg until the dough comes together in a ball. If it looks too dry, add a couple of tablespoons of ice-cold water to bring it together. Pat the dough into a wide, 3cm thick round, cover with clingfilm and place in the fridge for an hour.

2. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the pastry to about 3 mm thick and line your tin with it, making sure the edge of the pastry stands a little proud above the rim. Trim the edges, prick the base with a fork and return to the fridge for 30 minutes.

3. Preheat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/Gas Mark 5.

4. Lay a sheet of baking parchment over the top and fill the tin with baking beans to the rim. Carefully place the tart in the middle of the oven and bake for 15 minutes. Lift away the parchment and beans and return the tin to the oven for 15 more minutes to crisp up the base. Remove from the oven to cool, but leave the oven on at the same temperature.

5. Beat the butter and sugar for the frangipane filling in the bowl of an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one by one, beating to incorporate each time. Fold in the almonds, flour, vanilla, lemon (zest and juice), then scrape the mixture into the cooled tart tin. Arrange the figs over the top, pushing them into the frangipane mix as you go.

6. Bake the fig frangipane in the oven for 40 minutes, until a skewer inserted comes out clean. While the tart is still warm, brush over the honey.

7. For the figs, add the sugar to the pan until it just starts to catch and melt at the sides. Pour in the wine (it will spit a little), and boil for 2-3 minutes until the mixture thickens slightly and turns glossy. Stir in the figs and allow them to warm through and soften for a minute before removing the pan from the heat.

8. Beat the mascarpone together with the vanilla and icing sugar. Once the tart is completely cool, slice into 8 and serve each slice with a dollop of the mascarpone on the side and a little of the stewed fig spooned over.

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Top Left: **Sour Cream & Onion crisps are top nosh for the Featherwell Feathered Friends**

Top Right: **The best of friends; Tilly and Rainbow Lorikeet Marley relaxing on the sofa**

Bottom Left: **Brenda, Twinkle, Joan and Anita learning a bit of DIY from Paul**

Bottom Right: **Agnes and Hetty love to ride out with their favourite human on a sunny day!**

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Hedwig the heroic hen

On a chilly October morning in 2021, at the end of a shed, stood a naked hen with a large lump on the top of her head and another above her eye.

It's rare we find hens in such condition, but Hedwig was not in great shape. A good job then that her fighting spirit was strong as she was taken to one of our volunteer-run special care units. Soon Hedwig was recuperating under the warmth of a heat lamp, eating special recovery feed and enjoying a sizeable dose of TLC!

An ear infection was quickly treated but the lumps were left alone while she regained her strength.

Within days, new feather quills began to sprout, and in one month, the change was astonishing. The lump beside her eye had vanished and the one on her head had shrunk dramatically.

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