In this issue

Many Faces of Phileas Hogg ................................................................. 2
Hedgie Trivia ...................................................................................... 3
Hedgie Birthdays ............................................................................... 3
The Literary Hedge .......................................................................... 4
J. G. Wood ....................................................................................... 5
Hedgehog Ornament Exchange ....................................................... 7
Maisey’s Costume Corner ................................................................. 9
Thoughts from the CVO ..................................................................... 10
HWS Committee and Officer Reports ............................................. 11
Lucy Laughs ..................................................................................... 12
Pog Chit-Chat .................................................................................. 13
New Hedgehog Supplies ................................................................. 15
New Hedgehog Checklist ................................................................. 18
The Many Faces of Phileas Hogg

DonnaSue Graesser

Phileas Hogg continues to have adventures galore as he treks around the globe. These past several months Phil has jetted to Virginia, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria. Then, he met up with Jennifer Sobon and Floyd in Wisconsin, for a cross-country road trip spanning Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska. Their destination was the Rocky Mountain Hedgehog Show in Denver, Colorado. He will hang around Colorado with Darcie Carter for a few weeks, and then fly off to another European vacation in Spain with Gioia Kerlin.

Phileas is a hogg who wears many hats, including a cheesehead, a sun visor, a biker’s helmet, marine dress blues, and whatever you call that hat that goes with lederhosen. Oh, and let’s not forget the ever fashionable red rain hat. Catch up on the latest looks of Phileas Hogg by visiting his blog site at http://phileashogg2.blogspot.com/

Many thanks to all of Phileas’s hosts.
Hedgehog Trivia

A bookplate is a paper label which can be pasted on the inside cover of a book to identify the book’s owner. The phrase *ex libris* which is Latin for “from the library of” often appears on bookplates. But bookplates function as more than nametags. They are little pieces of art that often reflect the book owner’s tastes, interests and eccentricities.

Bookplates were most popular in the nineteenth century but they first appeared shortly after Gutenberg invented movable type. As multiple copies of identical books became available, book owners needed a way to identify their books since, even with movable type, they were still rare and expensive. Bookplates filled this need.

One of the earliest known bookplates is thought to have been produced in Germany around 1450 A.D. It belonged to Johannes Knaebensberg, a chaplain who was known by the nickname “Igler” from the German word for hedgehog. The bookplate features a hand-colored, woodcut illustration of a hedgehog below a banner bearing a German inscription which, roughly translated, reads “Hans Igler that the hedgehog may kiss you.”

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**Hedgie Birthdays**

**NOVEMBER**

- Nov 1  Bindi Sue Storm
- Nov 1  Starr Storm
- Nov 1  Jove Storm
- Nov 1  Sparky Storm
- Nov 4  Holly Storm
- Nov 17 Autumn Storm
- Nov 17 Akeesha Storm
- Nov 17 Jaxmine Storm
- Nov 17 Shaquilla Storm
- Nov 18 Tsunami Storm
- Nov 26 Pekuzi-Man Lamb
- Nov 28 Gizmo Pozder

**DECEMBER**

- Dec 16 Oscar Boss
- Dec 16 Jelly Bean Boss
- Dec 23 Brooklyn Storm
- Dec 23 Hocus Pocus Storm
- Dec 23 Boss Hogg Storm
- Dec 23 Merryweather Kocunik
- Dec 24 Harmony Storm
Paul Stewart, a British author of fantasy, time travel and realistic novels for middle-grade readers, has contributed four titles to the hedgehog literary catalog. The first, *A little bit of winter*, is a lovely story concerning the friendship of Rabbit and Hedgehog.

As winter approaches, Rabbit and Hedgehog huddle on a tree root. Then Hedgehog, who is planning to hibernate all winter, carves a message into the tree bark for Rabbit:

Dear Rabbit,
Please save me a little bit of winter
for when I wake up.
Love,
Hedgehog

Hedgehog yawns, stretches and sets off to find a warm place to sleep through the winter.

The winter is cold and arrives early. Soon Rabbit emerges from his burrow to forage for food. He has just finished nibbling some bark from the tree trunk when he discovers Hedgehog’s message.

When the two friends reunite in the spring, Rabbit is prepared to help Hedgehog experience winter for the very first time.

This story is beautifully illustrated by Chris Riddell, who is also known as a political cartoonist in the UK. His characters are wonderfully expressive: Rabbit is wide-eyed, neurotic and anxious while Hedgehog is sleepy, curious and just a bit grumpy.

The book is still in print and is available through Amazon.com, Borders, and Barnes & Noble. Used copies may be purchased through Amazon and the Advanced Book Exchange at http://www.abebooks.com/.
John George Wood was a prolific amateur naturalist, author, and lecturer in England during the later nineteenth century. He was the author of many books and articles and also edited *The Boys Own Magazine*. In 1852 Wood served as curate of the parish of St. Thomas the Martyr in Oxford. He was ordained as a priest in 1854.

Wood eventually took up lecturing as a second career. During the period from 1879 to 1899, he traveled throughout the British Isles popularizing the study of natural history. He even visited America in 1883 for a speaking engagement in Boston. He referred to his presentations as “sketch lectures” because he was in the habit of creating sketches in colored chalk on a blackboard, as he spoke.

One of Wood’s books, *Common Objects of the Country*, sold a remarkable 100,000 copies in just one week! Other titles included *Illustrated Natural History for Young People, Bees, The Boy’s Own Book of Natural History*, a four-volume series called *Natural History Rambles*, and *Petland Revisited*.

Wood’s 1870 publication *Natural History Rambles, Lane and Field*, published by *The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* included a lengthy discussion of hedgehogs as “one of the most characteristic examples of animal life belonging to a lane.” Hedgehogs, he explained, were also known by the names *Urchin, Vuzpeg, Furze-pig*, and, in Devonshire, *Alboar*, which Wood speculated was actually the Devonshire pronunciation of *Hedge-boar*.

Here is his description of the hedgehog:

The hedgehog is common enough in our lanes but is seldom seen except when discovered by dogs. During the day it conceals itself in an ingenious shelter, generally composed of dead leaves which have collected in some dry hollow. By nightfall it comes from its retreat in search of food and is therefore a very familiar sight to entomologists who are in the habit of going out at night with a lantern.

It is more active than is generally supposed, and when alarmed by the glare of the lantern, scuttles along at such a pace that it might easily be mistaken for a large rat. In spite of its speed it can easily be captured as the light dazzles it, and it does not know whither to go. When touched it will not bite but will roll itself into a ball so that its sharp spines radiate in all directions and form an effectual protection against almost any foe except man. The raven, however, cares little for the spikes, driving its long, sharp beak among them, and into the animal’s body, without sustaining any harm itself.

Sharp, though, as are its prickles, it can be picked up without harm even to a tender skin. By placing the hands on either side, the prickles can be gently pressed toward the tail, and the creature is then quite harmless (p. 17).

The author then goes on explain that hedgehogs are nocturnal, easily tamed and very useful in dealing with cockroach infestations. He also describes the “bristles” of very young hedgehogs as “white, soft and incapable of doing damage, becoming hard as the animals approach mature age (p. 18).”

Wood concludes his commentary on the lane hedgehog with a wonderful illustration of a hedgehog hiding beneath some ferns as well as a discussion of its diet.

When at liberty it feeds mostly on worms, frogs, &c., and is a great destroyer of snakes, when it can catch them, seizing them by the neck, crunching them systematically from head to tail and then eating them. During the winter it undergoes the wonderful process of hibernation. All animals which hibernate exhibit similar symptoms though in varied degrees. They entirely cease to eat and almost entirely to breathe. The action of the heart is scarcely perceptible and all the bodily functions remain in abeyance for several months (p. 18—19).

A few years following the publication of *Lane and Field*, J.G. Wood produced another book titled *Petland Revisited*. Much of the fourth chapter was devoted to the subject of hedgehogs and their suitability as pets. In this excerpt he introduces the idea of keeping hedgehogs as pets.

Having always possessed a sort of Bohemian love of eccentricity, I am ever glad when my correspondent is kind enough to furnish me with authentic histories of pets which do not belong to the ordinary “domestic animals.” Fortunately, I am able to present my readers with many biographies of such animals which have been in friendly relations with human beings.

The hedgehog, for example, is not an animal which is usually advanced to the rank of a pet, and very few persons seem to have taken any interest in it.

In the first place, its habit of coiling itself up with its *chevaux defrise* of bristles is very unsociable, as it seems to take for its watchword the
Scotch motto: "Nemo me impune lacsit. [None provoke me unpunished.]" In the next, it does not appear to possess much intellect and its armoury of sharply pointed prickles renders it unpleasant to handle. [Note" A chevaux de fris was a military device consisting of a portable barrier of spikes used to obstruct charging horses.]

The author offers a series of anecdotes sent to him by various readers acquainted with hedgehogs. These include:

- The tale of a poacher who hid hedgehogs in his pockets to fool the game keeper. The keeper, searching the man’s pockets for illegal game, encountered prickly hedgehogs instead.

- Details about a child’s pet hedgehog who was on friendly terms with a black-and-tan terrier.

- A lengthy story from a woman who put a hedgehog in her kitchen cupboard to catch cockroaches and discovered a litter of 4 baby hoglets in the cupboard the following morning.

- A startling anecdote from a farmer who thought someone was stealing milk from his cow. He spent the night in the meadow with the cow and discovered that her milk was being drained by hedgehogs!

- Last, but certainly not least, is the remarkable tale from a young lady who described herself as "very fond of unconventional pets." Her friendly pet hedgehog liked to sit in her lap and at mealtimes would run round the table, stopping before each person, and asking to be fed. If refused, he used to frown, after his way—i.e. by projecting the bristles over his face—and with an angry snort he would pass on to the next person.

One day his sensitive nostrils detected an unknown scent. He quested about until he discovered a tumbler filled with hot negus [a punch-like combination containing wine or port heated with spices and sweetened.] Some of it was offered to him in a spoon, and he took to it so kindly that before long he could not walk, and I had to carry him to bed. Next day, when some negus was offered to him, he refused it indignantly (p. 239).

The story of this particular hedgehog and his drinking habits continues beyond this point, concluding when the hedgehog forms a lasting friendship with a ferret.

The entire text and the illustrations for both these books are available online. Although I recommend reading both, there is one caveat concerning Petland Revisited. Passages on pages 238 and 239 contain references to hedgehogs as a gastronomic delicacy. I am sure there are many members of the Hedgehog Welfare Society who would be inclined to avoid this particular topic if possible.

Resources:


For many of us in the hedgehog world, the best tradition of the holiday season does not occur in December. Christmas comes to our houses sometime in September or October - the day our hedgehog ornaments arrive! We anticipate the appearance of the ornament boxes for months. When we do find them on our doorstep, we tear into the packages with all the excitement of a kid on Christmas morning. Then we marvel at each treasure as we unwrap them one by one. For years and years to come, we will continue to cherish these ornaments on our Christmas trees.

Who delivers these holiday goodies? Is it Santa Claus? The Easter Bunny? The Hanukah Armadillo? No, it's Linda Edwards, with the help of all her ornament elves!

Each year for the past ten years, Linda has recruited the elves for the hedgehog ornament exchange via the online hedgehog groups. Each participant crafts enough replicas of his/her hedgehog-themed ornament to be shared with the entire group (plus two for charity auctions). For example, if there are 30 people in the exchange, they each make 32 ornaments, and send them to Linda. Linda divvies up all the ornaments, and distributes a complete set of 30 unique ornaments to each participant. The extra two sets are auctioned off on eBay to support hedgehog charities.

In the autumn of 2000, I was visiting Lori Keller in Ohio. Her box of ornaments had just arrived, and we were “ooo-ing and ah-ing” over that year’s masterpieces. Lori walked into a back room in her basement, and came out with an artificial Christmas tree in her hand – already decorated with hedgehog ornaments! Then she brought out another treen and then another! This was year #4, and she had four pristine Christmas trees, pre-decorated with hedgehog ornaments. All ready to just be pulled out of that room to adorn the house with holiday cheer. After seeing those fabulous trees decorated with holiday hedgies, there was no way I could resist joining in on the exchange for the next year and all the years to come.

With ten years behind us and an average of thirty ornaments in each set, some of us have upwards of 300 hedgehog ornaments in our collections. And they are still growing! What do we do with all those ornaments? Some of us get bigger trees. For some, the ornaments overflow onto smaller trees in other rooms of the house, little artificial trees on the window sill, and some of the larger ones are displayed on counters and shelves. When I visited Pat Storm during the 2004 Christmas season, she had ornaments hanging from her drapes.

Besides the initial “opening of the box” every year, my favorite aspect of the hedgehog ornaments is when visitors realize that our tree is full of hedgies. I get to experience that sense of excitement all over again, as the visitors discover at each hedgehog ornament.

It is remarkable that after ten years of ornaments, the ideas are...
always novel. There are ornaments that are shaped like hedgies in 2D and 3D, ornaments with photos of hedgies, ornam-
ments adorned with fake hedgie poo, and mealworm-themed ornaments. The collections include ornaments made of
clay, beads, glass, felt, fabric, pine cones, dominos, shells, pipe cleaners, craft foam, wood, paper mache, crocheted
yarn, and dozens of other kinds of media. Nobody does Christmas trees like the hedgie people! Martha Stewart would
be proud of us all!

Linda Edwards is devoted to making this project a success each year. We are all extraordinarily grateful for all her ef-
forts. To get a better idea of the scope of the project over the past 10 years, Linda shares this message with all the
eves involved in the project: “It has been my pleasure to host the “Hedgehog Ornament Project” for the past 10 years,
and I am very excited to share this milestone with you. Most of you have either participated in this project, know some-
one who has participated, purchased or been gifted with these wonderful creations or been the benefactor of the funds
raised at auction. If you are one of the artisans, you can feel very proud to know that together we have created over 300
unique and beautiful ornaments. There have been 115 participants from the USA, Canada, The Netherlands, Denmark,
Africa, and Italy, with participation ranging from 22 to 39 people each year. Some of you graced us with your talent once
or twice and others held on for a longer commitment, including Pat Storm, Shonda Statini, Yoli Odgers, Susan
Goetcheus, Jan Ernst, and Cindy De La Rosa for six years; Donnasue Graesser for seven years; and myself, Lori Keller,
and Penny McQuarrie taking part in the project all 10 years. For me, the project remains as fresh and exciting as it was
in 1998. It thrills me to no end to see the creativity and love that go into each ornament and it warms my heart to know
that the spirit of the project grows stronger every year. Congratulations to you all!”

Darcie Carter sums up the feelings of all the exchange participants when she says: “I loved thinking up ideas and making
the ornaments. There were way too many ornaments to pick my favorite but some of the talent on this list is just fabulous
and inspirational.”

For an inspirational view of the 2006 ornaments, just check out the ornament blog at:
http://hedgieornaments.blogspot.com/

And, if you missed the chance to participate in the exchange in 2006 or 2007 but still want the chance to have these sets
of hedgie ornaments on your tree, keep your eyes on the online hedgehog yahoo groups. Auctions for both the 2006
and 2007 ornament sets will be announced sometime soon.

In same the spirit as the ornament exchange, Cindy DeLa-
Rosa has organized a quilt block exchange for the past
three years. The quilt block exchange is similar to the or-
nament exchange, in that each participant sews a set of
unique hedgie-themed quilt blocks, and the blocks are
distributed so that each participant gets a complete set.
To participate in the quilt block exchange, you will need a
sewing machine, and some degree of talent. If you don’t
have those, you can always bid on the auction! Cindy has
combined the charity quilt blocks into a gorgeous, snuggly,
hedgie quilt which will also be up for auction sometime in
the holiday season. Won’t this quilt be great to snuggle up
under in front of the fireplace on Christmas Eve?

A big thank you to Linda for organizing the ornament ex-
change for ten whole years! It is a great deal of work to coordinate the exchange, and the tradition means so much to
so many in the hedgie community. And, thanks also to Cindy for taking on the quilt block exchange, and making it a suc-

To take part in the 2008 Ornament Exchange, contact Linda Edwards at linda.gary.edwards@primus.ca
To take part in the 2008 Quilt Square Exchange contact Cindy DeLaRosa at cinrosa@aol.com