



## Binky Free Ros xx

I usually use this opportunity to share some of the highlights of the last quarter but, sadly, the start of this year has been somewhat overshadowed by a high level of loss and heartache.

No matter what anyone says, you cannot teach a child responsibility by buying them animals and leaving them to care for them. Children need to be led by our example, so to buy an 8 year old child five rabbits borders on insanity. Needless to say these five rabbits inevitably ended up on our waiting list. When we finally had space to help we called up the family involved only to learn that the two rabbits they hadn't been able to rehome themselves had been put together and subsequently they came to us....with their six "3-4 week old" kits!

This guesstimate of the litter's age immediately set alarm bells ringing. Most people who have had accidental litters know how old the kits are as they find them the day after they are born and remove daddy from the group. The fact that this family were unaware of their exact age told us that daddy hadn't been removed quickly enough and that it was highly likely that Ros, the mummy, was pregnant again.

Sure enough a week later 7 more little ones arrived. We then made the difficult decision to take the 6 older babies away from mum, as we felt they had some chance of survival on their own whereas the 7 new youngsters wouldn't get a look-in with their older siblings demanding mum's time and milk.

The six older kids went to live with Abi. Sadly, one-by-one, they developed respiratory problems and we lost them over the space of a week until only one baby, Sybil, was left. When the first baby died my immediate thought was I made the wrong decision and then had to deal with the guilt of wondering whether I made the right choice for the older kits. Not long after came the loss of the second kit and, at this point, mummy Ros developed post-pregnancy toxemia. She was carrying excess weight when she was rescued and this, combined with the intense stress of having 2 successive litters in such a short space of time, meant her body started breaking down its own fat, effectively poisoning her. Over three days I watched a beautiful bunny struggle to look after 7 babies whilst at the same time enduring a horrific death. She died on Monday morning in Jo's arms leaving 7 kits of 12 days old motherless. That beautiful, friendly rabbit should have been in her own home being showered with love and endless spoiling, not fighting for her life and being desperately driven back and forth to the vets.

After losing Ros we set up a roster to feed the 7 orphaned babies. All I can say is a massive thank you to everyone who has given time to fit in a baby bunny feeding session. They were being fed morning & evening every day and I feel truly blessed by the amount of help received from everyone who has stepped in to try and see something good come out of this awful situation.

Three weeks on we sadly lost one of the youngsters at just 5 weeks old, followed a few days later by one of its siblings. We have since lost another two. We do still have 3 youngsters with us who have battled the odds, and following our appearance on 'Daybreak' a few weeks ago, have now found a wonderful home together !

*Chloe Fluff*



# Events Update

**With almost 5 months of 2011 behind us, Fat Fluffs have already hosted and carried out three, big events including our two-day Bunny Bonanza at Hatton Country World. Add to that all the fetes and fayres that we have been invited to this summer and we have a busy, BUSY time ahead of us!**



On Saturday 12th February we welcomed bunny owners and their furry friends to our very first "Love your Bunny" day. Trying anything new is always a little bit nerve-wracking, but as the garden filled up with people and carriers we relaxed into an enjoyable and beneficial day.

Our trusted vet Rebecca Frost gave 46 bunnies an 'MOT', Chloe and Kate clipped dozens of bunnies' nails, Lucy and Ellie made lots of cups of tea and everyone happily chatted about their favourite pet. After a busy afternoon we totalled up and were over the moon to discover that just over £750 had been raised, whilst lots of bunnies had had an all-important check-up with the vet.

After a lucrative charity bag pack at Morrisons in Solihull last February we were eager to staff the checkouts again to raise funds for the Fluffs. So on March 12th, with thanks to lots of willing volunteers, we got stuck in! As before, it was fascinating to see what people buy in their weekly shop (!) and we had numerous comments about rabbit stew and the bunnies that are destroying the golf course! However, that said, we also met and chatted with lots of lovely people who were only too willing to drop a few coins into our lovely new, orange donation buckets. It was hard to gauge how much we had collected during the day and so the mammoth counting task began. Three tired Fluffy trustees with the help of Matilda waded through heaps and heaps of coins but it was well worth it when we totted up the final amount ... a staggering £854! A great big THANK YOU to all those people who gave up some of their weekend to support us – we really appreciate your help.

With these two events successfully 'dispatched' our focus shifted to the Fat Fluffs Bunny Bonanza which took place in the marquee of the shopping village of Hatton Country World on Sunday 1st and Monday 2nd May. We weren't short of visitors over the two days as friends old and new dropped in to meet some of the sanctuary bunnies, try their luck on the tombola and browse our trading selection including bunny treats and Fat Fluffs clothing. Fundraising aside, we spoke to lots of people with rabbits or interested in adopting rabbits and gave out lots of information about rabbit care and welfare – another very important part of the work of Fat Fluffs.

As ever, if you are able to offer a few hours to lend-a-hand at fundraising events then please drop me an e-mail ([abi@fatfluffs.com](mailto:abi@fatfluffs.com)) – no experience necessary, just a willingness to get involved. Thanks!

*Abi Fluff*

## Dates for your diary

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May**  
North Worcester Amateur Rabbit Show,  
Kidderminster Town Hall

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June**  
Solihull College Open Gardens

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June**  
Knowle Festival, Knowle Park

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June**  
Tidbury Green School Summer Fayre

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> July**  
Hockley Heath Summer Fete  
Hockley Heath Recreation Ground

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July**  
Fat Fluffs 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday Party @ HQ  
More dates to be confirmed

If you know or hear of any events we could attend we'd love to hear from you. Please contact [abi@fatfluffs.com](mailto:abi@fatfluffs.com)

## www.fatfluffs.com

Please remember to check out our website and blog for regular news and updates. We also have an online shop



## Recycle your Mobiles & Cartridges



As well as helping the environment, Fat Fluffs can benefit from recycling your mobiles and printer cartridges.

Contact [vickie@fatfluffs.com](mailto:vickie@fatfluffs.com) for more details



## Please support Fat Fluffs on ebay

ebay sellers can support us by donating a percentage of the item sale to support FF. We now have official charity status through 'Mission Fish'

**twitter** [www.twitter.com/fatfluffs](http://www.twitter.com/fatfluffs)

## Can you spare a little time?

We have lots of events planned. If you could spare us an hour or two to rattle a tin or help support the team, please email [abi@fatfluffs.com](mailto:abi@fatfluffs.com) and we'll be sure to put you to good use!

## Raise funds as you search

Use easysearch every time you search the web and Fat Fluffs will get 50% of the fees paid by sponsors.



If you've adopted and wouldn't mind sharing your story, we'd love to hear from you. Please send your story and, if possible, a photo to [abi@fatfluffs.com](mailto:abi@fatfluffs.com). It would be great to hear how your buns are doing. More stories can be found at [fatfluffs.com/articles](http://fatfluffs.com/articles).



## Usagi & Coniglio

**These are my two bunnies, Usagi and Coniglio (now Honey and Coco).**

They have quite a story behind them having come all the way from Norway before finally reaching Fat Fluffs! I knew from the moment I saw them they were special! I had never seen two more loved-up bunnies before. They were more concerned with cuddling each other than exploring their new surroundings. I began fostering them in July, but quickly joined the ranks of 'failed fosterers' and adopted them into our family. They have settled in so well it's as if they had always been with us.

They live with my parents whilst I'm at university and my mum absolutely adores them; they are two very spoilt bunnies!



Coco is a wonderful cuddle bun who loves to sit on my lap and lick my hand. Honey is more reserved but has definitely come out of her shell since being with us. Although I don't think she will ever be a 'cuddle bun' she loves her nose rubs and enjoys giving us the run around and showing off with her binkies! Thank you to Fat Fluffs for all the wonderful work you do and for letting them join our family.

*Sophie & Family*

## Fat Fluffs Holiday Boarding

Lucky enough to be going on holiday? Need somewhere for the Fluffs in your life to holiday while you are away? Then look no further!!

Fat Fluffs has started up our own boarding facilities where your rabbits will be looked after and pampered in spacious hutches with bunny binky time outside and an experienced rabbit carer on site 24/7 to ensure they are fit and well and enjoying their stay.

**For more info please call Jo on the Fat Fluffs phone - 07737 218035**

## Vickie's Top 10 Bonding Tips

### **You Will Need :-**

- 2 rabbits
- An indoor cage/crate
- Oven glove
- Bottle of wine
- Doritos
- Chocolate (optional)
- Nerves of steel

Every bun needs somebun. Fat Fluffs do not re-home single rabbits unless the rabbit is to be bonded with a partner. Occasionally a rabbit will not tolerate the company of another and in this instance we do rehome as a single house bunny.

The bonding process can be a straight forward affair, but it isn't always the case. To ensure the bond starts off on a good footing, a neutral area is a must. We advise whilst a bunny is away from home being bonded, the existing hutch is neutralised using part white vinegar, part water solution.

A bond should ideally begin in an enclosed space as less space equals less chase. Humping, bum-biting and a little chasing is all normal bonding behaviour and usually settles down.

Sometimes we have to intervene if the humping, bum-biting and chasing is persistent by putting both rabbits in a carrier and taking them for a ride around the block!! General rule of thumb - rabbits do not like travelling and by unsettling them with a quick trip out, they look to one another for comfort and all thoughts of bum-biting and chasing are quickly forgotten.

Once we are satisfied the rabbits are happy and comfortable together, we increase the space. As each day passes, the space is increased and once we are confident the rabbits are happy, we allow them to return home.

From time to time a bonded pair can have fall-outs. When this occurs we reduce the space back and start the bond again, increasing the space each day if all is well.

Eating out of the same bowl during a bond is always an encouraging sign and to witness two bunnies flopped out side by side is definitely a love job.

*Vickie Fluff*

## Calling All Volunteers....

I'm looking for volunteers to act on our behalf in conducting home checks throughout the Midlands. We rehome throughout Birmingham, West Midlands, Worcester, Wolverhampton, Walsall, etc.

I provide the information and the relevant home check questionnaire and of course answer any questions pre home check.

Depending on the areas involved, you may get asked to do one per month or you may not get asked all!

If you are interested in becoming a Home check Volunteer, please email me at [Vickie@fatfluffs.com](mailto:Vickie@fatfluffs.com)

A Thank You.....

goes to my merry band of existing home checkers. Without your help we could not rehome our rabbits!

Vickie.



# And the winner is....

## **Fat Fluffs Rabbit Rescue was voted the winner of The Wetnose /Burgess award for Best UK Fibrevore Rescue Centre 2011!!!**

On March 4th me, Vickie and Jo Fluffs hot-footed it down to the capital to receive the award on behalf of Fat Fluffs. Arriving at Church House Conference Centre in Westminster, we immediately passed a small crowd of familiar celebrity faces as we made our way to the reception hall.



Amongst them, John Altham, aka Nick Cotton from Eastenders, and Anthea Turner were being led off for a photo call with OK! Magazine. As the celebs returned from being photographed the reception area was soon bustling and we began to feel a little out of our depth as we began to spot more and more well-known faces. We plucked up the courage to start mingling after we did a short radio interview with Thomas Janak for Wildtime Radio and we got a bit braver after we met up with TV vet Marc Abrahams, who had supported Fat Fluffs at The NEC's Ultimate Pet Show in 2009.

Soon the cue came for the ceremony to begin. After a few words of introduction from Wetnose's Gavin Gamby-Boulger, Wendy Turner Webster took to the stage to host the afternoon's events. Soon Fat Fluffs appeared on the overhead screen whilst Wendy introduced us and Chloe appeared large-as-life on the BIG screen in the short film 'Bye Bye Bunny'.

It was our turn to take to the stage to receive our award from Paul Miley, MD of Burgess Pet Care. We were a little disappointed that a celeb wasn't presenting to us, however, Paul more than made up for this with the praise he had for Fat Fluffs and the work we do rescuing and rehoming rabbits. I then said a few words of thanks, coherently I think, but I have no real recollection of what came out – the excitement, lights in our eyes & all those faces staring up at us – it was quite overwhelming! We had our photos taken and returned to our seats.

The overall prize of Best UK Rescue Centre and the £500 prize money went to Chestnut Cat Rescue, Essex, having dedicated some 40 years to rehoming 7000 cats!!! Although we didn't win the top prize, to find ourselves in the company of comparative heavy weights within the rescue world, after only 2½ years as a registered charity, speaks volumes about the dedication, commitment and hard work of everyone involved with Fat Fluffs to have won a 'Best Rescue Centre Award' at this stage. Thank you to everyone; we really couldn't do what we do for the bunnies without you!!!

As things were winding down for the day, just before we took our leave, we were incredibly lucky to meet former Blue Peter, GMTV and National Lottery presenter, Anthea Turner. Poor Anthea, ambushed by a Fluff, she didn't stand a chance and the cheek of me, too; - I asked her outright if she would become a patron for Fat Fluffs! Fortunately she was incredibly warm, gracious and amenable to the idea, and it turns out a former rabbit owner too, so she did no more than give me her email address, followed by a big hug & a kiss! So it is with great pleasure that I can now announce that TV presenter Anthea Turner has agreed to become a patron of Fat Fluffs Rabbit Rescue. Many thanks to Anthea and welcome to the bunny madhouse! Overawed, we completely forgot to get a picture of ourselves with Anthea to mark the occasion...Doh!

We had a marvellous day at the Wetnose Burgess Rescue Awards 2011. Many thanks to both organisations for recognising the work we do for the much neglected and overlooked bunny. For the full story of how we came to be nominated and win, more news on our day at the awards – winners and celebs - plus a few more photos please visit our blog [www.fatfluffs.com/blog](http://www.fatfluffs.com/blog).



# Abscesses in Rabbits

By Cat Henstridge BVSc MRCVS

Abscesses are not, thankfully, very common in rabbits but when they do occur they can be very difficult to treat. So, prevention is definitely better than cure! Abscesses are accumulations of pus under the skin. They appear when bacterial infections get into the body through a sore, bite or, if they are in the mouth, an impacted tooth root. When the rabbit's body detects the infection, as well as mobilising the immune system, it also produces large quantities of pus in an effort to engulf the bacteria and stop them invading any further into the rabbit's system.

Abscesses can occur anywhere on the rabbit's body but they are most often found on the head and around the mouth. This is because they are commonly associated with dental problems.

One of the main reasons why abscesses can be so challenging to treat in rabbits is their pus is incredibly thick, with a consistency like toothpaste. This means not only is it very difficult to drain, it is also very challenging for antibiotics to get past it to kill the bacteria which are causing the problem. If draining, flushing and antibiotics don't work often vets will advise operating on the abscess to try to remove as much of it as possible. This can be very successful if it is on the body but it can be very difficult if the abscess is associated with the mouth as they generally track into the jaw bone and so it is impossible to fully remove them and they often recur, especially as the underlying issue, the tooth problems, will remain.

To help prevent abscesses, you firstly need to examine your rabbit carefully every day for any cuts or sores through which bacteria could gain access to the body and also monitor them or lumps or bumps which could be the start of an infection. To keep their teeth healthy it is vital that your rabbit eats a diet which consists of a majority of good quality hay, a small amount of pellets and also some fresh vegetables daily.

## Unwanted Gifts always gratefully received!

Please think about donating any of your unwanted presents or other items to the Fat Fluffs tombola as this is a very successful fundraiser for us. If you have anything you can donate please email [Vickie@fatfluffs.com](mailto:Vickie@fatfluffs.com). Thank you!

## Welcome to our new Fosterers!

So there has been a lot of movement in the fosterer list lately, we have lost a few for various reasons and some people have decided to take a break due to unforeseen circumstances. However, we are also pleased to announce that we have two new fosters, and they are:-

**Kirsten Russell, Heather McCulloch & Sam Rees-Boughton**

A big welcome back also to **Stacey Croft and Keith Pryce-Jones** who have agreed to foster for us again after taking a break,

We currently have 79 bunnies on the Fat Fluffs waiting list so if any of you would like to foster for us please get in touch with me at [sophie@fatfluffs.com](mailto:sophie@fatfluffs.com)

Sophie Fluff

## Fat Fluffs Trading

Please visit our Fat Fluffs shop <http://www.fatfluffs.com/shop> over the next few months to grab yourself one of our latest products! We would also love to hear from you about any other items you would like to see in our range! Please email [sales@fatfluffs.com](mailto:sales@fatfluffs.com) with your ideas.

## Thank you for helping our rabbits

Some of the rabbits that come to us are either too unwell to be rehomed or have some emotional scars that just won't heal, so they stay here to be looked after and live happy lives. They are all neutered, as long as they are well enough, vaccinated routinely and given the vet care they need.

If you would like to help support us in looking after these bunnies then please consider sponsoring a bunny for a year. It only costs £24.

It is easy to do, just hit the donate button at the top right of the home page at [www.fatfluffs.com](http://www.fatfluffs.com).

Alternatively, please complete this form and send it to us together with your donation. It could also make a great gift for someone who loves bunnies or for someone who already has everything!



- I enclose a cheque for £..... as a donation.
- I would like to fundraise for Fat Fluffs. Please contact me.

Name

Address

Postcode

Email

Signature  Date

- I wish to gift aid this donation and any further donations to Fat Fluffs.
- If you do not wish to receive any future Fat Fluffs information please tick here.

Please make your cheque payable to 'Fat Fluffs Rabbit Rescue' and send it to :  
Fat Fluffs Rabbit Rescue, 9 Moat Lane, Solihull, West Midlands. B91 2LN

Donate today