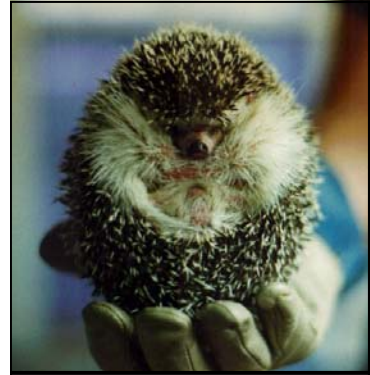


## *A Tale of Two Centers*

Toward the end of January, I had the opportunity to take a brief vacation to England. It was my first trip out of the country and I was excited about finally getting a stamp on my passport. In addition, I was most eager to visit a wildlife rehabilitation facility that was founded and run by a friend of mine. This was a wonderful opportunity to see how things are done "across the pond."

The Wildlife Hospital Trust, familiarly known as St. Tiggywinkle's, was begun about 30 years ago by noted British author, Les Stocker. Like me, Les started his wildlife activities in his backyard, out of a small garden shed. With the help of his wife, Sue, and son, Colin, his practice grew. Ten years ago, Les was able to obtain property in Buckinghamshire and build a state-of-the-art wildlife hospital. Today,



*One of the many hedgehogs admitted each year*

Tiggy's admits approximately 10,000 animals each year, from hedgehogs and badgers to deer and starlings to sparrow hawks and red-tailed kites. In addition to a full-time staff, they offer training to 20 vet students who each work a 12 to 24 month internship. Tiggy's has two exam/triage rooms (one for small animals and one for large) and a fully equipped surgical suite that I drooled over!

In addition to the ever-increasing number of outdoor enclosures, Tiggy's also has a wonderful park-like setting where visitors can view "non-hospital" animals and have a picnic while their children enjoy the playground equipment. That area is accessed through a well-supplied gift shop that offers stuffed animals, sweatshirts, T-shirts, books (including those authored by Les), magnets, figurines, etc.

I have always taken pride in the progress that SCWC has made over the past ten years. After seeing St. Tiggywinkles, I realize that we still have a long way to go. SCWC has always been astounded and grateful for the strong support we have received from the public. We know we can count on you to help us achieve in Maryland what Les and his family have created in England.

Of course, I did manage some leisure time; Westminster Abbey, Kew Garden, Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square and shopping. Traffic of the "wrong" side of the street was a bit confusing but the Brits were kind enough to label each crosswalk with a sign telling pedestrians which way to look. The time difference was also a little strange; leave the US at seven pm and arrive in the UK at seven am; leave the UK at noon and arrive in the US at three pm! Overall, it was a fun break for me and the weather was surprisingly good. Seeing Tiggywinkle's helped to reassure me that it is possible to build a truly professional facility for wildlife rehabilitation. SCWC will be working hard in the coming years to achieve what Les Stoker has accomplished "across the pond."

*by Chris Montuori, staff*

