

News

# Adder alert after Lab Sydney bitten

Owner John Hutchings thought his pet might die "then and there"

BY LIZ WEAVER

PET owner John Hutchings is warning fellow dog walkers to be on high alert for adders after his labrador Sydney collapsed when he was bitten in the Forest.

John, from Blackfield, was taking nine-year-old Sydney (pictured) for his usual walk at Exbury last Monday around lunchtime. "He went off into the undergrowth and within minutes of coming back out he had collapsed and was struggling to breathe," he told the A&T.

"Before setting out for our walk I had noticed my mobile had very little battery, so I'd left it on charge at home. I thought I was going to have to flag someone down to help me get Sydney home but we managed, with him walking very very slowly and me helping him, to get back.

"It was extremely scary and I really thought I might lose him then and there."

John contacted Seadown Vets in Hythe immediately and was told to bring Sydney straight in.

"He went for some tests and it wasn't clear what was wrong with him straightaway because they couldn't see any puncture wounds," said John.

"But his face was very swollen so they were sure it was an adder bite. They gave him an anti-venom injection and he had



to stay in for a couple of nights, but as soon as he got home he was looking for sweets again, so I think he's recovering well!"

John said he wanted to warn other dog owners to be vigilant when walking pets in the Forest.

"It was a lovely sunny day on Monday - perfect conditions for adders," he said. "So people may want to keep their dogs on leads near the undergrowth."

"If their dog is bitten, time is of the essence and they need to get their pet to a vet ASAP - the sooner the better."

A spokesperson for Seadown said they see adder bites on a

regular basis in the summer.

"Adders are a relatively common problem for us at Seadown, and they often bite the face or lower limbs."

"The area will swell hugely and quickly and bruise, and without treatment it can become very damaged and the venom can be fatal. The best thing to do is to bring them down to the vets as soon as possible."

"Adders tend to bask in the sun, so are more common in the summer but it was a nice spring day when one was out and about and Sydney got in the way!"

In brief

### Three-vehicle collision on A35

TRAFFIC hold-ups ensued following a three-vehicle collision which partially blocked the A35 at Hinton. The incident involving a Ford Mondeo, a Honda Civic and a Vauxhall Astra took place in Lyndhurst Road, near its junction with Verno Lane, around 11.30am last Friday. A Dorset Police spokesperson said no one was injured.

One lane was blocked off while emergency crews worked at the scene, and the vehicles were cleared around 12.20pm.

### Court issues contact ban

A MAN has been banned from contacting a woman for a month under a domestic violence protection order.

Robert Lidster (42), of Church Street, Fordingbridge, must not threaten, intimidate or harass Sarah Lidster.

Under the order issued by Southampton magistrates, the defendant is prohibited from entering an address in Church Street and must leave the house if he has not already done so.

He must also pay £226 costs to Hampshire Constabulary.

### Baths duck races for Oakhaven

TOY duck races at Lymington Sea Water Baths will raise money for Oakhaven Hospice.

To take part in the event from midday on Sunday 15th April, people can buy a duck for £2 to be in with a chance of winning prizes.

For more information go to www.oakhavenhospice.co.uk/events, call Oakhaven's fundraising team on 01590 677773 or email penny.marriage@oakhavenhospice.co.uk

# Scouts without a base – but activities will continue



BEAVERS, cubs and scouts in Burton have been left without a base following the closure of their hall.

Burton Scout Group has been working diligently on raising funds to build new premises because the old one on the recreation ground in Martins Hill Lane - which has been used by local groups for the last 48 years - has become dilapidated and is no longer fit for purpose.

To date the group has raised £94,000 against a target of £140,000, and desperately needs to find interim accommodation.

Graham Markwick, Burton group scout leader (pictured with some of the youngsters), says the closure was announced with sadness and great frustration.

"For some time now we have been concerned that the dilapidated state of the hall is not ap-

propriate in terms of the health and comfort for those using it," he said. "We will, however, continue to use the hall for storage only, but we now have the huge task of finding alternative premises to accommodate the weekly Beavers, Cubs and Scouts meetings."

"I know that relocating temporarily is not ideal, but I feel that the hall has ceased to be fit for purpose. We will still continue with the full programme of activities for all groups, and thank the parents, leaders and local community for bearing with us while we raise the final amount to get started on a new hall."

Mr Markwick said the group needs a newly built base to meet all its needs rather than relocating to existing premises which could not. "We want to continue with

this benefit to the community and youngsters of Burton and surrounding areas, but we desperately need help to raise funds," he added. "We will do all we can to continue scouting in Burton but the current situation is worrying for us all."

The group continues to work on raising the remaining funds needed, and is contacting businesses, charities and individuals for support. It plans to have a new hall in place as soon as possible, but it could take up to 12 months depending on when the £140,000 target is reached.

For more information call Graham Markwick on 01202 475716 or 07738464618, or email themarkwicks@ntlworld.com

Anyone who wishes to contribute to the fund can do so via the group's website: 8thbsg.org.uk

# Men's Shed project will help lonely older men make friends

A SCHEME to help lonely people make friends through the fun of engineering has cleared a major hurdle.

Permission has been granted to turn a disused industrial building in Fawley into a Men's Shed - part of a national initiative mainly aimed at helping isolated older men get together to enjoy practical skills and training.

The parish council has allocated £10,000 to transform a 233-square metre structure in Newlands Road into one main space, plus two others for commercial rent.

It is hoped to be ready for launch after June after the planning application was recently approved by New Forest District Council.

The initiative has been further boosted by a £1,000 do-

nation by oil refinery operator ExxonMobil for tools and equipment.

A parish council spokesperson said: "At the moment planning is in initial stages - a steering group is about to be formed with a local resident and a local councillor working on this."

"The council is keen to develop the Men's Shed project involving as many people as possible from the local community. Primary use will be by residents of Fawley parish. If we do have capacity then it will be open for others from the Waterside."

Seven parking spaces are included in the proposals which are predicted to create six new jobs and cater for up to 20 people at a time, not just for men but also including women and young people.

The premises used to be

home to the League of Venturers Search and Rescue, a youth organisation led by Philip Pearce-Smith, before it controversially became insolvent and the property was handed back to the parish council in 2016.

The Men's Sheds Association, an umbrella group for projects around the country, said: "Men's Sheds are similar to garden sheds - a place to pursue practical interests at leisure, to practise skills and enjoy making and mending."

"The difference is that garden sheds and their activities are often solitary in nature while Men's Sheds are the opposite."

"They're about social connections and friendship building, sharing skills and knowledge, and of course a lot of laughter."

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