

The Amazing Story of Pumpkin the piglet



There's something very spooky about this little piglet and the events surrounding her discovery. Although she was with us only a week, she left an indelible mark on our lives.

It was August 1997, around midnight, and we were driving home down a narrow lane past a pig farm we nicknamed 'pig alley'. We spotted this tiny piglet running along the verge and stopped to rescue it. Despite several attempts to re-introduce her to the fields on either side of the road, this little piggy refused to go home. It was too late to call on the farmhouse so we had no option but to take her home with us and deal with the matter the following day.

On examining her, we were shocked to see that she was quite unwell, with a possible eye infection and a badly cut ear and face. She was also having difficulty breathing. We gave her water and made her as comfortable as possible for the night using a cardboard box with some old towels for bedding.

The following day, we took her to the vet, who gave her a check-up and an antibiotic injection, and then we set about calling the farmer. He did not want her back, explaining that she could infect the herd, so we tried to locate her with other pig farmers and smallholders in our locality - but without success. We had to consider other options and asked Finkley Down Farm Park, near Andover, if they would have her.

While awaiting their reply we had work and other commitments to keep us busy. I was playing with the Navvies at this time and we were booked to provide a barn dance at a 50th birthday party.

Strange incident No. 1: As we would have to nurse this little pig for a few days, we decided not to leave her at home but to take her with us to the gig, safely tucked into her box, so that we could keep an eye on her. It was a very hot evening and we couldn't leave her in the car, so we asked if the host would mind if we placed 'our animal' in a cool room at the venue. This was given the OK by our birthday girl host, who promptly burst into tears immediately she saw Pumpkin, calling her mother over as she wept. We were very surprised at this unexpected reaction, but not as surprised as we were to hear the explanation. Our host's father had recently died and would be sadly missed at the party. Yet our host had deemed that 'if there is any way father can show up at the party, I'm sure he will'. She went on to explain that her father used to breed pigs - specifically, rare breed Tamworth pigs. Pumpkin was a Tamworth pig...

Strange incident No. 2: Lynn had been given a 1997 calendar which showed a different breed of pig for each month. It didn't dawn on us straight away, but we noticed that the picture showing for August was... yes, the Tamworth!

Pumpkin was eventually located at Finkley Down Park Farm, who we thank for their hospitality, and lived happily until, sadly, she succumbed to a further serious infection.

We're not sure why Pumpkin, who was named by our niece, came into our lives but we have some theories. We've certainly never experienced a more spooky set of circumstances.

During the making of A Catalogue of Mysteries, we decided to immortalize her and the memory forever by capturing her image on the sleeve graphics.

