



MARTIN with three of the ferrets at the sanctuary

# Chip in to find a ferret

by Katrina McKeever  
A NETHER Alderley animal sanctuary boss is calling on ferret owners to microchip their furry friends and find out more about how to care for them properly.

Martin Turner is often asked to find homes for the little critters found wandering through the Cheshire countryside.

He says many of the animals that come into his sanctuary on Bradford Lane are tame and were obviously once someone's beloved pet.

Although he would love to reunite them with their own-

ers, he says this is near impossible without the all important microchip and so he has to find new families for them.

He said: "We rehomed 20 last year but already we have had ten in this year, and it's only February. We do eventually find homes for every one but people keep them as pets and really bond with them.

"Lots of people will be missing them but they don't know where to look and don't know we've got them. If they would only microchip them we could get them back to their owners safe and sound."

A member of the mustelids family, which

includes weasels, otters and badgers, the ferret is a domesticated pole cat, originally bred for rabbiting.

Intelligent, playful and wiley, Martin says ferrets make great pets as they love to sleep, eat and play - in that order.

But their origins as rabbit-bitters makes them prone to running down burrows - then curling up into a ball and nodding off.

Those lucky enough to be picked up by wildlife lovers are taken to a sanctuary like Martin's, but without any information about their owners, they very rarely make it back home.

Martin currently has ten

ferrets as pets and is always happy to offer advice. He is concerned that some people who take them on as pets are not told how to care for them properly.

For example, female ferrets, known as Jills, should be spayed if they are not going to be mated otherwise a build up of oestrogen hormones form in their system which causes a fatal bone disease.

He said: "They are very special creatures, they love human interaction and love to play with each other, but you get back what you put in."

If you are able to offer a home to a lost ferret, contact Martin on 07950 867353.