

# Socelelex

Newsletter Winter 2008/9



Happy Christmas and a  
Happy New Year!



## **A Brief History of Socelex (1975 to 1996):**

### **Maria**

Socelex stands for The Society Against Elephant Exportation and was set up by Maria Hennessey in the early 1970s. Maria had a soft spot for elephants after working with them in India and Japan and after finding out about the conditions that circus animals had to endure, she and a band of followers travelled near and far to campaign and picket circuses.



Later on, Maria visited schools to give talks to children about elephants and animal welfare. Armed with slides and a projector she would enthral teachers and kids with her many stories.

When Maria realised that many people without transport were unable to take their animals to vets, she started an animal ambulance service. This was greatly appreciated by pet owners in the valleys. So, the Elephant Woman became the Cat and Dog Lady, she was well known by vets in the valley at Newport and Cardiff. Very soon, the ambulance was picking up animals that had been hurt on the roads and if after seeing the vet, she couldn't trace the owners, she would take them home. Maria had so many patients she knew that she would need more space and better facilities for them. The decision was made that Socelex needed a sanctuary, the search was on. As with everything, Maria put her heart into it. She knew what the animals needed and any place that seemed suitable was looked at and checked out. It had to have good access and plenty of room for many types of animals from farm animals to pets.

Temple Cloud Farm met all her criteria, 'perfect she said, perfect'. Not used to doing things by halves, she set about turning it into the sanctuary she wanted, a place where the animals would be happy. That was back in 1981; Maria had lots of help from lots of people. Over the years, Socelex has depended on our volunteers; people seemed to rally around her. The work in the animal sanctuary is not easy at all; the job has to be done in all weathers. Looking after the animals is very hard but rewarding work.

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Socelex went from strength to strength looking after thousands of animals over the years. Unfortunately, Maria died in 1996, leaving others to carry on her valiant work. John and Shane were left to carry on the work of Socelex, along with a band of helpers, the sanctuary goes on...

### **A Brief History of Socelex (1996 to 2007):**

#### **Diane**

In 1996, Diane Allen visited Socelex through her work with the Cat Protection League; she instantly fell in love with the place. The peaceful setting of the sanctuary at Temple Cloud Farm and all the varieties of animals being cared for inspired her wish to help animals on a more practical level. She had had many years experience fundraising for the cats and was now able to turn her skills to helping the many different kinds of animals (and birds) that Socelex rescues.



Like Maria, Diane had an inherent love of animals and couldn't bear to see any in pain or distress. She helped out in all the daily duties involved in running an animal sanctuary from the dirtier jobs like mucking out and cleaning up after the animals to feeding them and playing with them. Time and patience is an essential part of helping an animal back to health, this is something Diane was easily able to do. Besides the practical jobs, Diane started this Socelex newsletter and would put a lot of effort into writing up the stories and taking the photos.

Latterly, Diane's mobility was impaired somewhat with osteoarthritis but she was determined to carry on her work. In 2006, Diane was diagnosed with cancer and continued to help out when she felt able to in between concentrating on her treatment. Sadly, Diana passed away on May 16th 2007. Eighteen months later, her presence at the sanctuary is still very sorely missed but her spirit is still there in all the good work that continues onwards.

## Storm

The ambulance was called out on one of the worst nights of the year, due to many of the roads being flooded, we'd had to divert three times.

A member of the public had witnessed a dog being run over by a car and severely injured. The dog was picked up and put by a garden wall for shelter, in shock, soaking wet and bloody. The kind man stayed with him until we got there. As the dog did not move when we arrived, the man said "I don't know if he's still alive but he's had a hell of a bang". However, he was still alive but in a terrible state. I gently put him in the ambulance, wrapped up in a duvet for warmth and took him to Socelex to be warmed up and dried out. His wounds were dressed and he was nursed with TLC before his visit to Bridge Vets. By the time he met Mr Blow his tail was wagging like a little machine. His front leg was broken in two places, the other front leg was cut very badly. First of all there was talk of amputation as it was a very bad break but they said they would try to fix it. 'Please try your best', I said. 'Ok, we will' said the Vet, 'What's his name?', 'Storm, it must be and it suits him', 'Storm will have to stay with us all day, phone up at 3.30 to see how he is'.

All day at Socelex we were waiting, hoping for the best result, then at 2.30 they rang, 'Yes, you can come and get Strom, he's ready to go. The operation had been very successful, the leg had been saved. He has a cast on one leg and a dressing on the other. Apart from that, he's ok and just needs painkillers and antibiotics. We can see him back in two days for a check-up'. The cast was nearly as big as him! Back at the sanctuary, Storm was settled in a recovery pen where he ate a small meal and settled down to sleep, which he also did for most of the next day. Not surprising at all with what he'd been through.



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At the Vets, they were pleased with his progress 'He's like a little bottle of pop, bring him back in four days, that's Tuesday', so off we went. Unfortunately, on the Monday, he'd managed to remove the cast so we took him straight back to the Vets to be re-plastered. Luckily, the leg was ok. 'Right', said the Vet. 'We'll have to put a collar on him to stop him getting it off again. After a bit of banging and crashing, Storm soon settled down. He had to have it removed to eat and drink but it worked. He had to go back and fore to the Vet to have the leg checked, everything was good.

The cast is now off, you'd never know what a bad accident he'd been through. He's now a normal and fit little boy. How different it could have been!

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## **Sooty and Family**

From time to time, we get stuff left outside our gate, food and sometimes animals. After nearly 30 years running the sanctuary, you get to know what's what. If it's a cardboard box, you know its probably got an animal in it. Animal dumpers usually go to that minimum outlay at least. One day, I saw a really expensive pet carrier by the gate. I expected it to be empty but it contained a mother cat and 3 kittens, 5 to 6 weeks old.

They all looked nice if a little unwell, might have been something to do with what they had been through. The mother is jet black, we called her sooty, her kittens are (1) tabby & white (2) tri-coloured (3) black & white. They are all eating well and are very active but not too friendly yet – early days though. The mother is very protective of her brood but they have been tempted to play.



## Woody

One August evening, we had a call from one of our members. A wood pigeon had come to grief in their garden and could we take it. I said yes, as long as they were able to bring it to Socexlex. At that time, I was tending to a lamb that needed urgent nursing.



Woody duly arrived at the sanctuary about nine at night. He had a damaged tail and wing, mainly feathers pulled out. After being examined and treated, he was put in a hutch for the night. He was very subdued which may well have been due to shock. By the next afternoon, he was full of life, corn and water and he was cooing like anything. The wing was left strapped up for a week to rest it and let it heal. The tail feather took a bit longer but they came ok. At the time of writing, he can now fly and we are waiting for a nice day to release him in the field to his freedom.

## Seagull

The baby gull that was found in the road in Cardiff has now grown up and flown away. We hope he's now down by the seaside, Barry maybe. Every time sea gulls fly over the sanctuary calling out, we look up and wonder if he's with them



After a not very good summer, we are now going into winter. In the sanctuary, we are forever sweeping up leaves. Before we know it, it will be Christmas and then a new year. We hope it's a mild winter and not too wet. Whatever happens, it will be nice to see springtime coming round again.

**Everyone at Socexlex would like to thank you for all your kind donations in the past year. The work here needs to continue so we can help more animals - all donations are gratefully received and put to good use.**