

Socelelex

Newsletter Summer 2008



Tiddles - is giving a big yawn. He even makes me feel tired! He's looking forward to a long, warm and sunny summer as are we all.

A Brief History of Socelex (1975 to 1996):

Maria

Maria Hennessy had always loved animals and like many children dreamt of running away to join a circus. After working for a while in London Maria found a job with a circus - but the dream soon became

a nightmare as Maria found that elephants were regularly hit with iron bars and their bowels emptied before each performance. She was so incensed by this that she became a spy on behalf of the animals and collected evidence of their mistreatment in some circuses by any means she could. Maria's love of elephants led her to hitchhike to Nepal and India, with her son Shane, to monitor their treatment and to Japan to tend sick circus elephants before hiring a Jumbo jet to fly them to a safari park in Argentina.



In 1975 she went to Afghanistan and persuaded army guards to let her into a compound to help an injured elephant. It was thus that the charity Maria founded was called Socelex - an acronym for the Society Against Elephant Exploitation. Before long Maria found that more modest animals also needed her help, and Socelex gradually expanded to include any animal that needed care.

The sanctuary, which is well known throughout Gwent and the valleys, is a converted farm, covers nine acres of land and costs approximately £2,000 a month to run. The animals include sheep, foxes, dogs, rabbits, ducks, pigeons, wild birds, geese, chicken, rooks and 40 cats.

Over the years Maria gradually learnt a great deal about animal medicine, and was able to nurse the animals herself - but Maria had cancer, and after a courageous fight to live for her beloved animals she sadly died in August 1996. Her brother John and son Shane, together with a small team of dedicated helpers, carried on her valiant work. Running the sanctuary is a full-time job so they had little time for fund-raising...

A Brief History of Socelex (1996 to 2007):

Diane

In 1996, Diane Allen visited Socelex through her work with the Cat Protection group and fell in love with the place. She had many years experience fund-raising for the cats and turned her skills to help all the many animals that Socelex rescues.



Like Maria, Diane had an inherent love of all animals and couldn't bear to see any in pain or distress. She would help out in all the daily duties involved in running an animal sanctuary as well as being solely responsible for the Socelex newsletters. Latterly, her mobility was impaired with osteoarthritis but she was determined to carry on her work.

In 2006, Diane was diagnosed with cancer - she still tried to help where she could but it was difficult with the visits to hospital and different consultants. Diane passed away on May 16th 2007. Diane will be greatly missed by everyone at Socelex, her mark has been indelibly left on the sanctuary in all the good work she did.

Your Stories

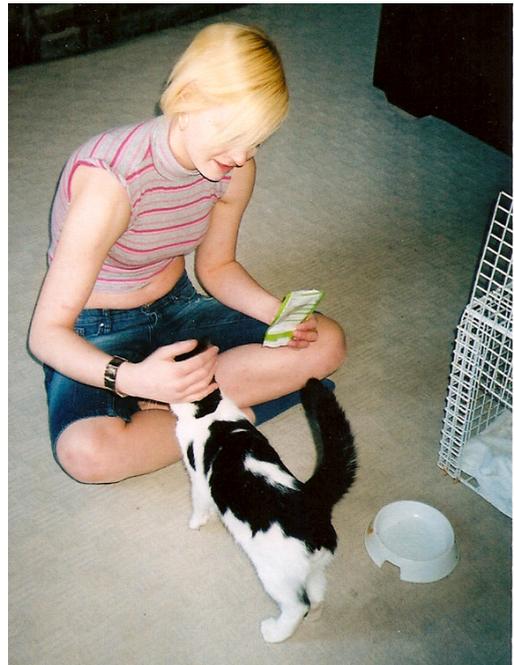
We would love to hear from any Socelex supporters who have taken in any animals from the sanctuary over the years. It would be great if we could include your animal update stories in future newsletters.

The address for your stories is on the enclosed checklist, or you could e-mail them to: Socelex@googlemail.com

Everyone at Socelex 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.

Max Arrives Home

We took Max, a very nice cat from Socelex, to a lady who was looking for a pet. We left him in the carrier for a bit for him to get his bearings whilst I had a talk with the lady about pet care & cats and what they need. The new owner told me that she had everything ready for Max. He was very relaxed in the basket taking it all in. The lady wanted to see him so I told her to get him some food which she did. Max came out to eat the food and went to his new Mum. I could see they were made for each other. 'Oh he's lovely' she said. With that, he ran upstairs to explore his new home.



Mary and Angie taking it easy

Jason

Jason has lived at Socelex for over ten years. He was feral when he came in, you could not get near him at that time as he had a very bad abscess caused by fighting - full tom cats often get into fights. Treating his



wounds was very taxing to say the least. He was really aggressive due to the pain but as his neutering took effect and his wounds healed he cooled down slowly, very slowly.

Today, he will let me pick him up if he wants to. If not, he lets you know. Jason has the run of the sanctuary, he thinks he's the boss. I know he's a big softy though really. Here he is eating grass and enjoying a sunny day in the garden.

Spring Comes to Socelex

Spring has come at last after a very wet winter at Socelex. It's very good to see the daffodils come out, they took their time. Nearly a month ago, the yellow tips were showing then we had the snow and they seemed to stop. After a bit of sun, off they went again. Never mind, they are here now as you can see from the photograph, they look really nice and the animals appreciate them.



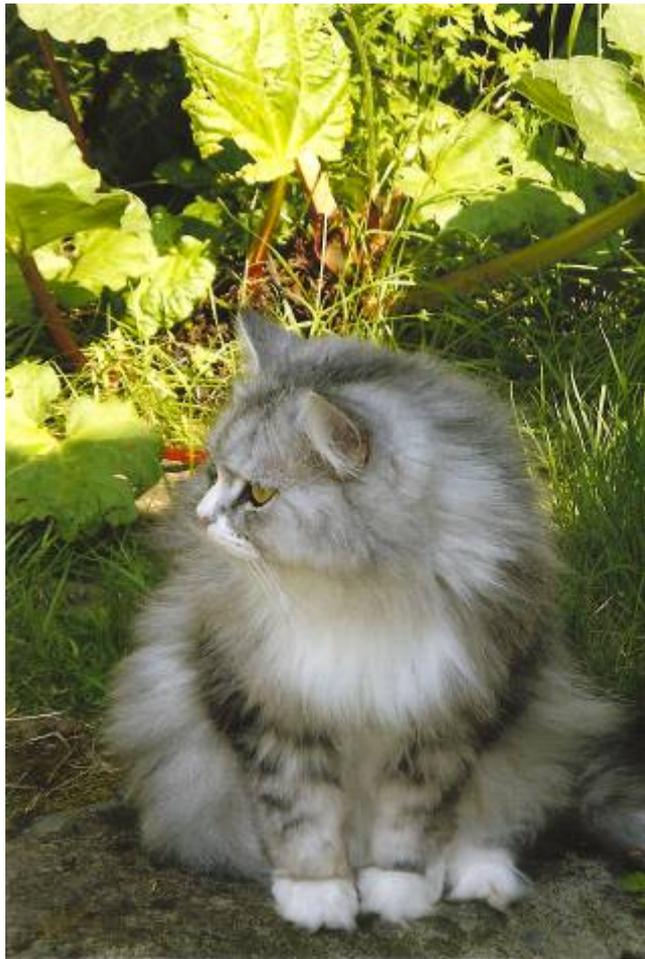
Fluffy looks at the daffodils

Update of Nia & Billy

Since Diane died in May 2007, Nia, Billy & John (Diane's husband) have lost four of their pals: Victor, Dylan, Kim and Annie, ages 14 to 18 ½ years.

Nia (7 years old)

Nia is a very quiet cat, she likes sitting in the garden, usually next to the rhubarb trying to make it grow. She also likes to sit under the big leaves out of the sun when it gets a bit too hot. She doesn't like the rain or cold weather, being long-haired getting wet and cold can get very uncomfortable! So, she can often be found asleep on a bed or in her basket in the living room.



Billy (8 years old)

Billy is very friendly with my next door neighbour (who also has 2 cats). The other day, the strong wind blew over the small greenhouse in their back garden – luckily, it was empty at the time. Billy climbed into it thinking the sun would help make him grow too; he was in it for quite a few hours! He has got a new game of going out at night, catching mice, bringing them into the house and then out again through the cat-flap to play with it on the lawn.

