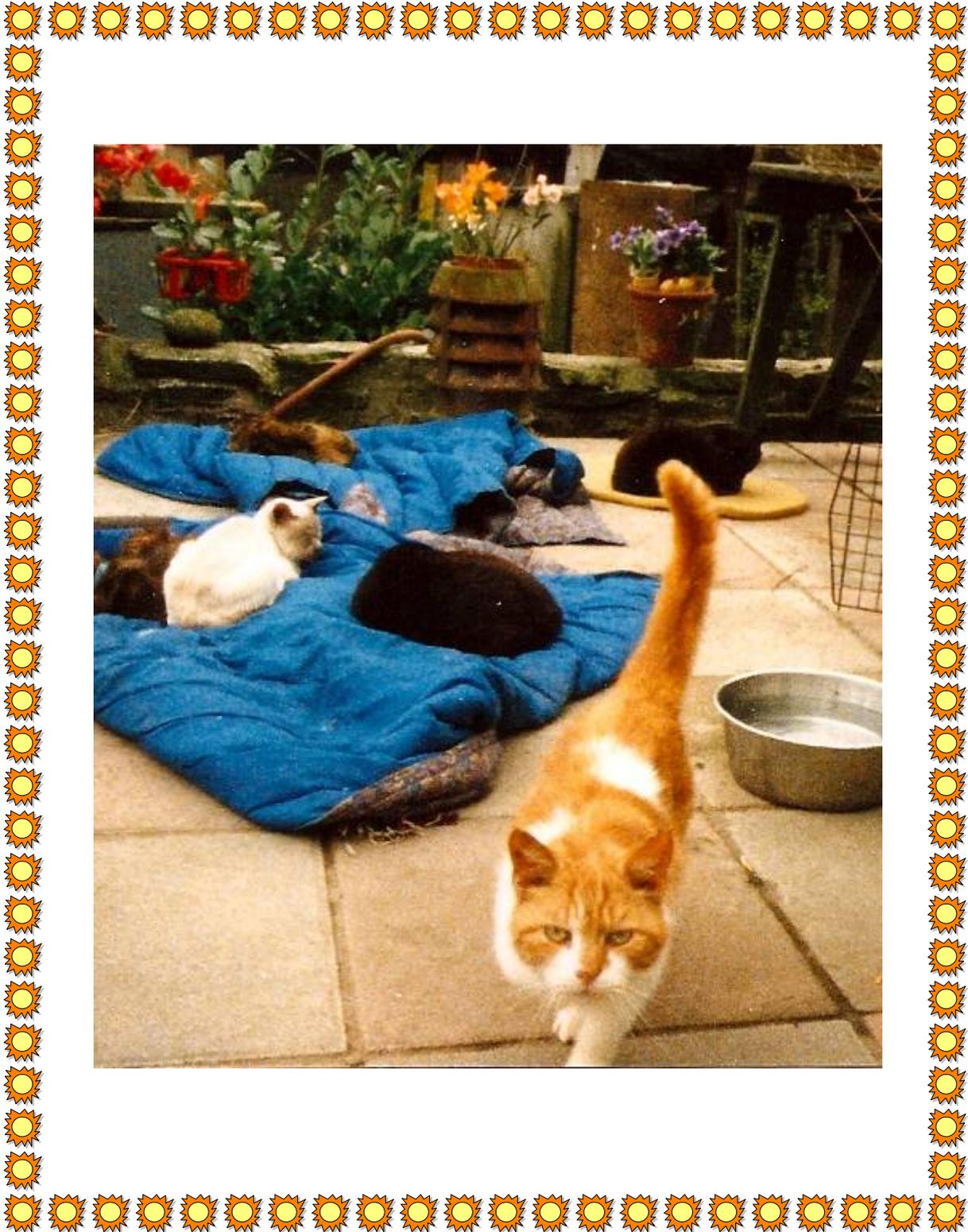


# Socelelex

Newsletter Summer 2009

---



## **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.

**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.**

## Welcome to the Socelex Summer Newsletter

We've had a long winter, plenty of snow and lots of rain. Things are looking up now though, the sun is lovely for the animals and the sanctuary helpers. It seems like we've gone from winter to summer in just a matter of days.

We can now start doing the jobs that can only be tackled when the weather is right. Painting, maintenance and outside work are a pleasure in the nice weather. We have to have the sanctuary's sheep sheared and checked over, feet and horns trimmed if needed. Also, their ID tags have to be replaced this year due to new regulations on ear plastic markers.

Also, this is the time of year when we overhaul all the sanctuary's fences, replacing posts and wire where needed. This is heavy work but nice to do on a sunny day, shirt off. The animals like to watch what's going on, sometimes they even try to help in their own way. The cats love to get up the ladder to see what's going on, scaffolding holds no fear for them, it's just another climbing frame to explore and play on. Cats love to be up high to sit and watch what's happening below. The photo below is one of the sanctuary cats, Mary, looking down from a high point.



## George Update

George has settled in well, he looks forward to his walks, he gets a lot of attention. Here he is with Anthony in the lane outside the sanctuary. They usually walk about a mile and a half at a time then back home for a snack and a sleep (for George) and then off again in the afternoon. For an old boy, he's not doing too bad - he's got a good appetite and enjoys his food. His previous owner used to walk a lot in the countryside so George is used to it. Playing with a ball is another of his pastimes, good for his hips and joints. With George, it's usually the human that gives up first. We think he's about 12 to 14 years old, so he's in very good health for his age. We all hope there is a good and happy future ahead for him.



## Bric-a-Brac, Clothes etc.

As we no longer have spare storage space at the sanctuary, we regret that we can no longer take in or collect clothing or general bric-a-brac etc. However, you are welcome to take them to the Inter-Aid shop at 58 Crwys Road, Cardiff. We regret any inconvenience caused. We would like to take the opportunity of thanking Christine of Inter-Aid for her support.

## Still Needed

We DO however, still need pet food and blankets and can collect those, but please bear with us as we are not always able to collect straight away.



## Life of a cat through the eyes of Phoebe and Naomi

All we do is eat and sleep. We have a lovely lawn to race around and huge trees to climb and watch people in the distance walking their dogs. We are now 8 (me, Phoebe pictured right) and 5 years (Naomi). We have lived with our owners since we were kittens. I was found by John in a wet cardboard box outside the sanctuary gate. Luckily he took me in and looked after me. Then I came to live with Catherine who is my 'special person'. She said I have grown from a tiny nervous little kitten into a beautiful and intelligent girl. She looks for me as soon as she comes in through the door.



My sister Naomi was found in a carrier bag in Cardiff. Again luckily, John who lives next door brought her home. She never made it to the sanctuary because she came to

live with me, Catherine and Jean. She is not as shy as I am. She likes to play with all the cats in the area and pretends to hunt in the garden. I don't like to admit it but she is actually quite clever. She chases imaginary flies and leaps in the air. She is very lively and always wants me to play especially in the middle of the night. She wakes everyone up racing around the house at 3am! Then she wonders why everyone's so grumpy the next morning! Jean, Naomi's 'special person' says she is very cute to look at and very affectionate. They are always cuddling especially if Jean is wearing her velvety soft dressing gown!

Catherine tells me I'm a very clever girl. Like Catherine, I love tinned tuna! Unfortunately, it gives me a bad tummy so they've thought of a way to try and trick me. No chance! I've sussed out when she's opening a tin now – I wait for the special song Catherine sings to cover up the sound of the tin opening and then I know for definite there is tuna on the way! Within a couple of seconds, I am sitting behind her begging on my hind legs! Catherine always gives me a little taste but I always want more. I know it's only because Catherine loves me too much to let me have a bad tummy.

Quite often, we are visited by Nia and Billy who live next door with John. Strangely enough, Billy is golden like me and Nia is silver like Naomi. So quite often strangers get confused which of us is which.



We have a good life. We have servants who cater for our every whim. There is always food when we want and comfortable places to sleep but they in turn get plenty of cuddles from us. We go visiting John next door who is always pleased to see us. Billy and Nia come round to see us so all four of us spend a lot of time playing in both gardens. Billy (pictured above) loves to sit on our patio table and Nia (pictured below) lies in the garden. The grown ups tell us we are all beautiful cats and who are we to disagree!! We are all great friends.

Anyway back to our life of leisure, this is the weather we enjoy, long summer evenings stretched out in the garden. Food on tap and plenty of cuddles. This is certainly the life!



We spend so much time in our lovely garden, climbing the big oak tree and listening for rustles in the bushes. We love it when we hear Auntie Mary's car pull up outside our house. We have her wrapped around our little claw and know that an early lunch is on its way!

My favourite place is under my neighbour's Forsythia bush. I like it in the garden – I don't spend all my time there but it's peaceful and quiet and I can watch the insects and birds – I look but I never chase them though!

**Continued...**

**... continued**

My sister Naomi's favourite place is the green house - not inside it but on the polythene roof (see photo). One scratch of her claws and she'll be sitting amongst the squashed tomatoes!! Nothing would surprise me about tomboy Naomi.

We have included some photographs of us – we hope you like them.

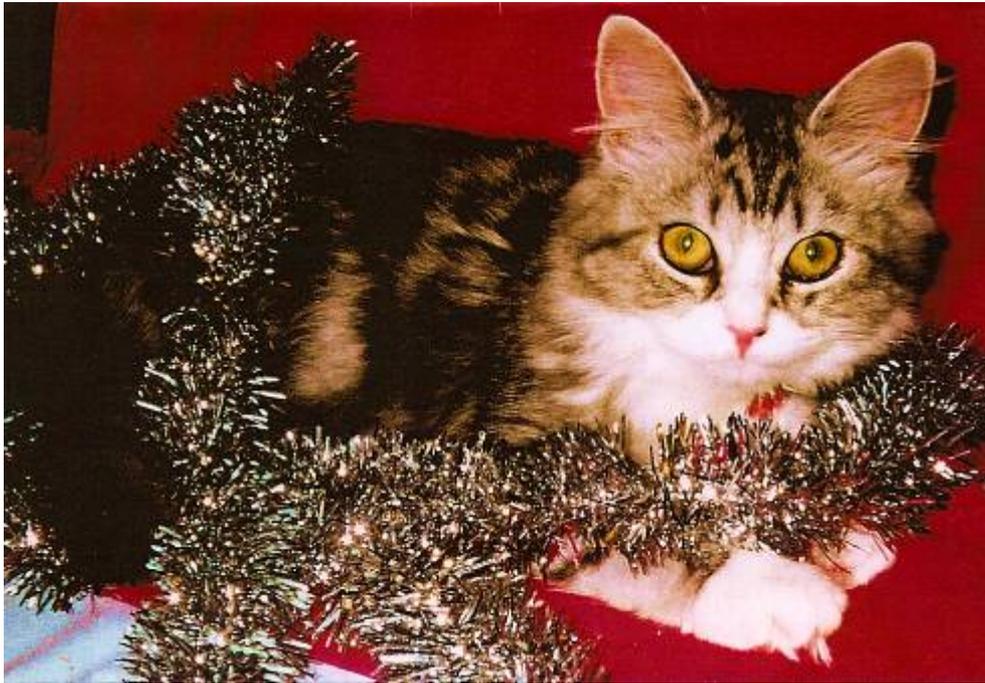


## **Your Stories**

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](mailto:Socelex@googlemail.com)

## Christmas Cards for Sale



Size of cards 13cm x 9cm (5" x 3.5")

Inscription inside 'Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year'

£1.50 per pack including postage (pack of 6)

Christmas cards quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total Price £ \_\_\_\_\_

Payable by cheque made out to 'Socelex', please send the order form with the checklist (including your name and address).