

# Socelelex

Newsletter Summer 2011

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**Anne the Elephant**

## **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. 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 other animals needed her help and Socelex expanded to include any animal that needed care.

The sanctuary is a converted farm and covers nine acres of land, it 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, she sadly died in August 1996. Her brother John and son Shane, together with a small team of dedicated helpers, carry on her 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 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 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 because of visits to hospital and different consultants. Diane died 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**

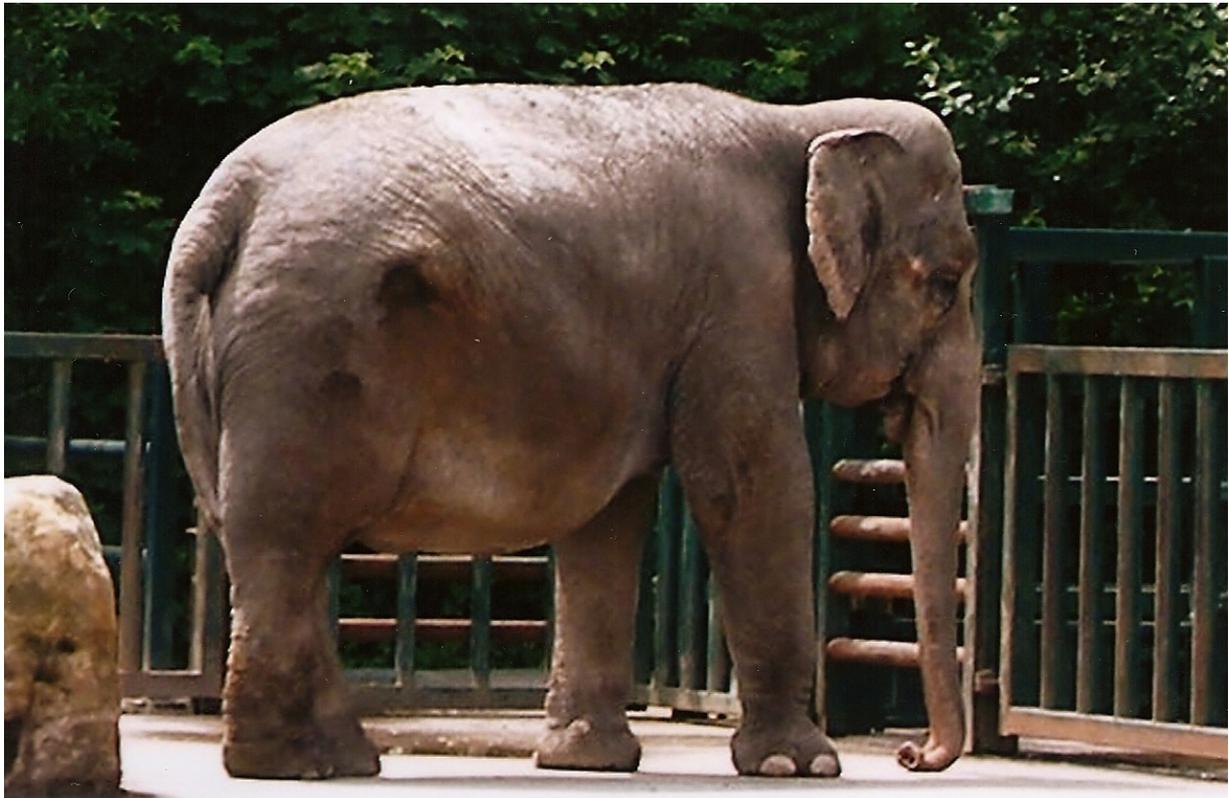
We would love to hear from any Socelex supporters who have taken in any animals from the sanctuary over the years. It would be great if we could include your animal update stories in future newsletters.

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

## Anne the Elephant

In March, we were horrified to hear of the plight of Anne the Elephant being abused by her groom. There are no words to express our feelings; circus animals have a rough time anyway without being mistreated like Anne had been.



Maria, the founder of Socelex, campaigned about circuses for most of her life so we felt great affinity to this story. Socelex would like to thank all involved in exposing this cruel behavior. Just moving animals, especially elephants, around in lorries is stressful enough without them being beaten. For all the work Anne had put in for the circus you would think her reward would have been nicer. It was a relief to hear that they had let her go to Longleat Safari Park for her retirement.

Anne is now in her new home. We are told that she has settled in well. At the moment, her new home is temporary, a 13 acre enclosure and house must seem like heaven to her.

They say elephants never forget, let's hope that Anne can.

## Ginger

Ginger came to Socelex after a tip off from a member. He was only a kitten but he was homeless, injured and in a very sorry state. His injury was a very nasty wound to his back leg, possibly caused by being caught in a wire. He was very thin and in bad general condition, his survival was in the balance.

We took Ginger to our vets' surgery where he was hospitalised for 6 days. The vets did tests to see what underlying things they had to deal with. However, apart from being injured and underfed, he was ok. The nurses thought he was lovely, one nurse said 'he's a little fluffy fighter, gorgeous!'.

Ginger was put on ???? and a special diet, he thrived, putting on weight and healing up nicely. We had a report on his progress nearly every day, first of all the calls were hard to make as you didn't know what you were going to be told. As he started to make



progress, the calls got easier. 'He's doing well' is what we wanted to hear but there were a few problems with his stomach due to not having had enough food in his short life. But he got through that and when we rang on the Thursday afternoon, we were told that he could come home to the sanctuary. Still on a special diet and limited mobility, after saying goodbye to the nurses we left for the sanctuary.

At Socelex, he soon settled down, eating and sleeping he soon put on weight. Our other cats could see him, all very friendly and he was trying to get out of his pen to mix with them all. Two weeks passed till he could join them in the garden.

Now he's out with his mates, sunbathing, climbing trees and playing. He's got a way of coming by you for a little rub on top of his head, you know he's glad to be there. He's now a firm favourite at the sanctuary.

## Me-Me & Timmy

At Socelex, we often get asked 'will my cat (or dog) accept a new pet?' What's the answer? Well, each animal is different but like humans, most get on ok after a while. Of course, you must take some precautions like never leaving them alone until you are sure that they are ok with each other.

That's how it was with Me-Me the dog and Timmy the cat. Me-Me was 15 years old and Timmy was just 10 weeks old. Timmy first tried to make friends but he had no chance, Me-Me wasn't interested and things looked pretty uncertain for some time. But little Timmy



persevered and gradually got nearer and nearer to Me-Me. Meal times are always a time for special care, making sure to feed them apart at first. Me-Me thought all the food was his and poor Timmy wasn't getting a look in. Slowly, he found his own food and ate it before Me-Me found it. Once that was sorted, it took a few days to ensure the eating arrangements worked for them both.

After food, Me-Me liked to have a little sleep as we all do, it seemed a good idea to Timmy as well. Me-Me was on the settee so Timmy decided to try and join him, very carefully he got up with Me-Me and went to sleep. There's nothing like a cuddle to cement a friendship.

## Just a nice picture

This is a photo of a mother and calf African Elephant taken by a photographer in Amboseli National Reserve in Kenya in 2001.



All elephants here roam freely in their natural environment. We end this newsletter by sending out best wishes to Anne and hoping she has a happy future.