

Socelex

Newsletter Christmas 2013



Happy Christmas and Happy New Year



A Brief History of Socelex

As a child, Maria Hennessy's dream was to run away and join the circus. When she grew up, she got a job in London before landing her dream job; however, the dream became a nightmare when she found how badly the circus elephants were being treated. Angered by this, she began to collect evidence of their mistreatment. Her



quest led her to hitchhike to Nepal, India and then on to Japan to tend sick circus elephants where she hired a Jumbo jet to fly them to a safari park in Argentina.

In 1975, Maria went to Afghanistan and persuaded army guards to let her into a compound to help an injured elephant. It was then that she founded Socelex (the Society against Elephant Exploitation). Maria soon found that other animals needed her help and Socelex expanded to include any animal that needed care.

Maria learnt a lot about animal medicine and was able to nurse them herself but in August 1996, Maria died of cancer. Her brother John and son Shane, with a small team of volunteers, carried on her work but running a sanctuary is a full-time job so they had little time for fund-raising...

In 1996, Diane Allen visited Socelex through her work with the Cat Protection League and fell in love with the place. She had a lot of experience fund-raising for the cats and turned her skills to help Socelex. Diane helped out with the daily duties involved in running the sanctuary as well as organising the fundraising. Later on, her mobility was impaired with osteoarthritis but she still carried on her work. In 2006, Diane was diagnosed with cancer, she still tried to help where she could but her hospital treatments made that difficult. Diane died in May 2007, she is greatly missed by everyone at Socelex.



Our Year

November 2013 and it's been a year since our last newsletter, we've had a very busy time here over the last 12 months. Our intake of animals has kept everybody extremely busy with all the trips to vets and nursing the animals taking a lot of time. Well, that's what we are here for and we enjoy it but it is hard work.

The year started off with lots of snow which gave us a few problems getting in and out of the sanctuary. With help from a few of our neighbours we eventually managed to get up and down the lane. At times, it was tricky as we slid most of the way up and down wondering if we were going to make it. With the cuts in council services, the winter roads are not gritted and salted as needed, country lanes are way down on their priority list. Still, we did manage to get through the spring in one piece.



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: **soclex@googlemail.com**

As soon as the snow was gone, we had to get to work on the repairs and maintenance of the buildings around the sanctuary. The sheep barn needed a new concrete floor, which proved to be a really big job. We had to hire machines (as shown in the photo below) but with the help of volunteers, the job was done, just like that. This barn will not only be used for our sheep over the winter but also for hay and straw storage.



When that job was finished, we went on to the fencing, this is a never-ending job but it's a very important for the safety of our animals. Luckily, we had some good weather which enabled us to get on with the work.



After that, we had a lot of tree work to get on with, some trees were too tightly grouped and some of the limbs of others had to be removed altogether for safety reasons. We have about 300 trees, so it's definitely not a five-minute job, in fact, it took about five weeks in all. At least that's a job that will not need doing again for years, we hope. So, anyway, the year has just flown by, and now another winter is in sight.

Here's a photo of Suesy having a little exploration around the sanctuary, she's a bit of a loner but keeps herself occupied walking around seeing what's going on.



When our volunteers are working, she's there supervising whatever job they are doing. If she wants attention then she walks in front of you and stops dead, you just have to give her head a little rub then she walks on. She seems to need a bit of company, maybe because she was dumped, it might have made her a bit insecure.

Suesy is still a young cat, under six months old but she's already had a litter of kittens. She's now been neutered and made a good recovery. She's very fit and now looking for a good life and a nice, new home.



Henry came to Socelex in the spring. He's a very handsome boy with bags of personality, good-looking and he knows it too. Henry answers to his name and he can be very vocal when the corn is coming round in the mornings.

It's nice to have the sound of a cockerel on the sanctuary, a real sound of the countryside.



Best wishes to you all and thank you for your support. We 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 always put to good use.

Happy Christmas and Happy New Year to you all from the animals, John and the team.