

# Socelex

Newsletter Winter/Spring 2015

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## 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

Another year at Socelex and it's been another very busy one. With so many animals in need of help, there seems to be a never ending supply! Last winter was mild but very wet which isn't good for either man or beast. We spent a lot of time in January, February and March taking hay and carrots to ponies on the mountain, apparently abandoned by their owners. What grass was left was just turned into a muddy bog and so the ponies were starving and in danger of dying through lack of food. Because there was no shelter for them they were deteriorating very fast which also led to veterinary problems.

We're sure that their owners did not foresee the consequences of turfing their animals out on to the mountain, they probably thought it was free grazing . Keeping horses, or any animal, is expensive, both in time and money.

Unfortunately, no prosecution was able to be taken as the owners never came forward. So much for horse passports.



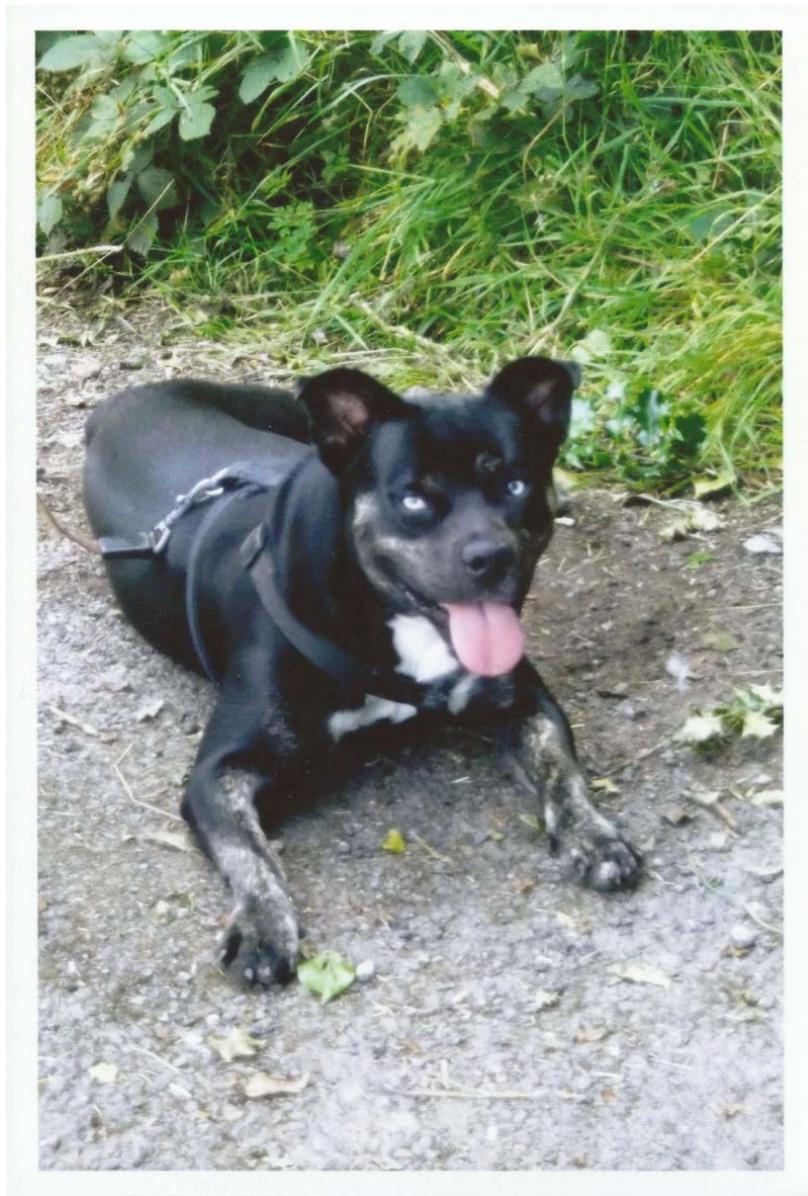
However, as the weather got better our job got easier. As usual, work continues on at the sanctuary.

## Blue

Blue came to Socelex early in the spring. A striking looking dog with very unusual eyes, both different colours. At barely a year old, he is a very powerful dog; he's been neutered and is very fit. He's trained to walk on a lead which he loves; a good walk is what Blue needs as he's got so much energy to spare.

On meeting people, he's at first very defensive and can growl at new people. However, once you pass that initial obstacle, he's ok, very responsive and does what he's told.

Blue is looking for a nice home with someone that likes to take long walks, he would make the ideal pet.



## Flossie

Flossie the cat came to Socelelex after being dumped outside our gate on one of the wettest nights of the year. She was in a cardboard box and by the time we found her, the box had caved in on her. She was soaking wet and terrified but luckily she didn't leave the box or she would have been in an even worse state. On finding her, we took her to our reception unit to warm her up. We could not get her to eat, so she had to be syringe-fed. We took her to the vets and the only problem she had was that she'd been starved; only half the weight for a cat of her size. So, the vet put her on an AD diet; three weeks later and four more vets visits she was well on the way to recovery.

Every time you looked at her she seemed more beautiful, in fact the staff at the vet's called her Beauty. She was so affectionate like she was saying thank you for taking care of me.

After five weeks, she was well enough to be neutered and signed off by the vets. She was now ready for a very special home, and that's what she's got now.

I took Beauty, now Flossie to a new home. After having a long talk to the lady, we let Flossie out of the carrying basket and she started to explore the room straight away. She was very settled within twenty minutes, at home in the dog's bed. Flossie made a big fuss of her new mum too, it must have been love at first sight and so I agreed that this would be her new home. Flossie now has a lovely home with a

nice family. Cassie the dog and her are best of friends. What a nice ending to be part of. Her new mum sent us a photo of Flossie playing up a tree in the garden, she really is the apple of everybody's eye.



## Billy

This year, we have had to say goodbye to our Billy, he passed away a few weeks ago after nearly 15 years of a happy life. His start in life was pretty bad; at four weeks old, he only weighed in at half a pound. He had been deliberately dumped after being taken off his mother far too early. His stomach was full of grass which was causing a blockage; the blockage had to be removed under anaesthetic.

After weeks of TLC, Diane got him back to fitness and very soon, they were inseparable. He liked sitting on her shoulder and rubbing her face with his. I like to think that they are both together now.

Billy (1999 to 2014) A very special cat.



## Inter-Aid

Christine of Inter-Aid has been a good friend to Socelex for well over thirty years. She first met Maria in 1982. They were very good friends and soon Christine started supporting the sanctuary.

It was a sad day when the Socelex sign had to come off her window. Unfortunately, Christine had to semi-retire from the shop and helping us. We at Socelex are really grateful for all her efforts in the past. She will be dearly missed by the animals and staff. We cannot thank her enough and we wish her and her family best wishes for the future.

Good luck Christine.



## **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**

**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.**

**At Socelex, we look forward to the new year and all the new animals we will meet. Let's hope the winter is mild which is good for humans and animals alike.**

**Wishing you all a Happy New Year from John, the staff and all the animals.**