

Socelex

Newsletter Christmas 2017



Hello from James
Happy Christmas and Happy New Year!

A Brief History of Socalex (Part I)

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 Socalex (the Society against Elephant Exploitation). Maria soon found that other animals needed her help and Socalex 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.

Another year nearly over, where does the time go? Summer was short and sweet and no sooner had we got all the leaves cleaned up then they were falling again. At the sanctuary we've started stocking up with animal food. Everyone's saying that we are in for a severe winter, we hope not. Though here in South Wales we've been lucky for the last three years, anyway we will be prepared whatever comes and the animals will have a good Christmas and New Year.

John and our helpers would rather like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas and Happy New Year. Thanking you for your support through the year.

John & Staff



Dave Dee Dozy: The three rabbits

On a very cold winter's day a basket was left outside the gate to the sanctuary. An open plastic washing container with three rabbits all cwtched together making no attempt to get out. We were all amazed to see them so docile at being picked up and brought in. The three were put in a cage and fed and watered, they soon made themselves at home. We made arrangements for them to be seen by our vet to check them out. Though they looked in very good condition, very good fur and really heavy and very friendly and easy to handle. It makes you wonder why their previous owner had to take such a drastic step to get rid of them. We would have liked to know some history about them. It's obvious they had been looked after and loved a lot, it must have been a painful decision to make.



Next morning, we took them to the vets; the nurses could not believe how big they were, massive rabbits. Very very friendly. Dave, Dee and Dozy were all made a fuss over and they loved it, so did the nurses. When they had their next check up, they were all given a clean bill of health. They remarked on how easy to handle they were and what lovely pets they would make. Everyone at the vets said how large they are. We weren't sure what breed they are and everyone seems to say something different. Dutch Lop Eared seems the most likely.

Back at the sanctuary, we had to make some major adjustments to our rabbit accommodation, they were too big for our compounds. Some quick alterations had to be made and so a new extension was constructed out of mesh and timber. The three of them were soon happy in their new home, job done. Running around like March hares, plenty of room to play. Dave, Dee and Dozy are really content.



On a really stormy evening, we were called out to rescue a young bird in distress by the canal side. Picking the bird up, it was just like wet feather, very very light. We took it back to the sanctuary for examination, no injuries could be found. It was a matter of feeding it up and keeping it warm. Within a few days, it was feeding good on an A.D. diet with a syringe. As he got the idea of being fed, he was trying to eat the syringe as well! After ten days of care, the bird was ready to back to the canal side, probably glad to see the old mates again.



Tommy

A handsome tabby cat, large with an appetite to match. When he's eating he does not like any other cats around. As you can see, he looks really worried. He has the run of the sanctuary and beyond, just comes back for breakfast, lunch and supper. He's a favourite with the girls at Socalex. Tommy's very nice to have around; on the call of his name, he's there. We don't know where he comes from but we know he likes climbing trees. He was seen once or twice sleeping on a branch flat out, for a big cat he's very athletic. With his strength and agility, he should be called Top Cat. Never mind, Tommy's Tommy and he knows his name.



A Brief History of Socalex (Part II)

2017 marks 10 years since Diane Allen died and it barely seems like any time has passed. She first visited Socalex a few months after Maria had died and very quickly came to love the place. Diane later wrote of the first time she visited the sanctuary:

I first became involved with Socalex in the autumn of 1996. Sadly I never had the good fortune to meet Maria, founder of Socalex, but I have heard and read a lot about her and the fantastic work she did for animals. I heard from a friend that Socalex was in need of help and that is where I came in. I was not, in those early days, able to visit the sanctuary, as I was agoraphobic.

My friend Kate sent me lots of cuttings about Socalex and the animals, so I put together the first newsletter from that, and then advertised in a local paper, for people to join Animal friends of Socalex sanctuary. Eventually, I realised that if I wanted to write about the sanctuary and help in a hands on way and with fundraising I needed to visit.

It was a lovely spring day on March 15th 1997 so I decided to take the plunge and visit the sanctuary. Daffodils lined up along the route to cheer me on my way. Walking into Socalex was like walking into another world, a world of peace and serenity, where the love for the animals is so strong that you could almost reach out and touch it.



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Diane would help out in all the daily duties involved in running an animal sanctuary as well as writing the 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 to manage that with her ongoing treatment. Diane passed away on May 16th 2007.



Nia one of Diane's cats

Merry Christmas & HAPPY NEW YEAR

Your Stories

We would love to hear from any Socalex 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.

You can either post your stories to the usual address or e-mail them to Socalex@googlemail.com

Everyone at Socalex would like to thank you for all your kind donations over 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.