

Friends of GAWT News Update

September 2010



The **Global Alliance for World Rabies Day** on 28th September 2010 recently applauded our achievements in their newsletters.



"We tip our hats off to Goa Animal Welfare Trust. Since 2003 they have vaccinated a total of 25,000 canines and felines."

CHARMIAN BYRNE, who set up our anti-rabies programme 10 years ago, reviews the programme.

Goa Animal Welfare Trust (GAWT) holds about 40 anti-rabies camps for pets across South Goa from September to June each year. We concentrate on areas where there is no veterinary service available, or where communities are a considerable distance from veterinary help. In the last 12 months we have given 2,573 vaccinations at these Camps, an increase of nearly 200 from the previous year.

Our camps are heavily subsidized by us and made available to all. They are run by volunteers, and our veterinary doctor and two trained assistants are present. We use the best vaccine, and give the owners a personalised Vaccination Schedule for each dog showing when the next vaccination is due. No-one is turned away. We offer help, advice and medicines even if the owner cannot pay. This is the charity side of our organization; our concern is for the animals and there are people who look after their dogs, but cannot afford treatment or collars or simple dog soap, and we believe it is our duty to help these people in whatever way we can.

We also take puppies, kittens and sterilized older dogs to each camp, to be adopted, and many times we find owners bringing their dogs for vaccination and proudly showing us dogs they have adopted from us, some over 10 years ago, and each has been vaccinated ever since. We are fortunate we have a tremendous "loyalty factor" which prompts people to return to us for a second, and often third, dog, because they know it will be a healthy animal, with good veterinary services to back-up their adoption.

We couldn't do all this without our volunteers, who give us the gifts of their time, fuel and presence almost each week, to help us with this very important community work. We are also grateful for the help we receive from the local churches, junior chambers etc. who help with the announcements and posters. To all of these people we say 'Thank you for all the different ways you help us.' I must mention too the many people who give donations through the 100+ Club, or indirectly or directly to GAWT, or who in other ways support us so that we can continue with this very valuable programme. Thank you, without you we could not follow through with all the other programmes we are running.

Our April Appeal

You donated sufficient funds for us to install ceiling fans throughout the centre, much to everyone's relief. Now the dogs can escape the intense heat and humidity, particularly during the monsoons. They also have a covered walkway where they can be exercised. It's a wonderful sight to see them gathered peacefully under the fans as soon as the temperature starts soaring. There is nothing but the sounds of gentle snoring coming from every corner! Thank you to everyone who gave so generously.

A big, generous gift to us

Colin Levy, a Colva-based fundraiser with us for the last 10 years, who will be known to many of you because he organises our boat trips and is our "meeter-and-greeter" at our events, recently handed over to us a 42" plasma TV, and an 18" TV, 2 satellite systems and a DVD player, bought through years of raising funds at events in Goodmans. It was a fantastic evening there with trustees, volunteers and staff all having a great time. Goodman's restaurant in Colva is now the only place to be for the footie, cricket and mad karaoke nights.

Thanks, Colin!

Serendipity

GAWT Friend and supporter Carol Steen, who together with Norman owns and runs *Casa Susegad*, a small, luxurious, hotel, in South Goa, was in the UK recently and had a small accident in a hire car. A man backed into her in a car park. He was Italian and told her he was a vet. He gave Carole the £100 excess for her insurance. The scrape on the car's bumper was slight, so the excess was not taken. Carole returned the money to him. He wrote back saying he didn't expect to get the money back, had looked up her website, saw they supported Goa Animal Welfare Trust and said he was sending the money to them through their website. Thank you, Fabrizio. We received your very welcome donation!

South Goa Animal Rescue Joins with Goa Animal Welfare Trust

Earlier this year Sam Rose contacted us about a problem. She had to close down SGAR because of person problems and could we help. We were glad to, and now keep her friends and supporters up to date. She has kept her website open, www.sgar.org.uk (and it's well worth a read) but all visitors are redirected to www.gawt.org and we will be sending out our regular Updates to all her supporters. Below she explains what set her on the track of rescuing animals in Goa.

"In March 2007 on Palolem beach I befriended a beautiful, skinny dog I named 'Preeti,' because of her beautiful green eyes. I fed her each day, and made sure she had water. When I returned to Palolem in December 2007 the first thing I did was go to the restaurant where I knew she would be. I was told by a friend that nobody had seen her for a few days. I met an English family who had been coming to Goa for 5 years and had looked after 'Preeti' when they had been there and their little boy told me she had died 2 days before I arrived. They had called a vet but he didn't arrive. I was gutted and so sad as I really thought I could have saved her at the cost of probably only a few pounds. My only consolation was that I didn't see her when she was so sick and I remember her as her beautiful pretty self. It was heartbreaking."

Now based in the UK, Sam has worked as a volunteer with our shelter in Canacona, close to Palolem, on a number of occasions. She is currently finding UK sponsors for our 'home' dogs there, who sometimes come in dreadfully injured, starving and at the end of their tether. And sometimes they often just wander in, lonely, isolated and looking for some love and company, a meal and some peace. Inevitably after experiencing our unique TLC none of them want to leave us. Ever again.

Sam asks me to tell you that it costs just £85 to sponsor one of these lovely dogs, who are full of happiness and joy now, and who love to help with the comforting of young puppies and kittens, and even our new arrival, Bella the tiny calf (read on!). (You can find Canacona GAWT centre on facebook).

We welcome Sam and her immense dedication to animal welfare, and active support for our work. She can be contacted through friendsofgawt@gawt.org or samiam3014@aol.com



Sam and best Buddy Stanlee

A new home for Bones

Some dogs just fall on their paws. Bones was so named because when she was found by long-term GAWT supporters Bob and Julie, she was just a bag of them. She was a pup, so Bob and Julie took her in, fed her up and kept her as a much-loved house dog for three and a half years.

Unfortunately they were forced to return permanently to the UK earlier this year and asked GAWT if we could try to find a new home for Bones.

As luck would have it Eva Figueredo and her 21-year-old son Agnelo were looking for a dog after their young puppy was tragically killed in a car accident. Volunteer Colin B took Agnelo to the Curchorem Centre to see Bones and thankfully they hit it off immediately.

Bones is a very affectionate girl, loves human company and was bright enough to recognise Agnelo as a great potential new owner! Agnelo, who knows a good deal when he sees one, adopted her straightaway and took her back to Betalbatim. She has settled in very well and is the perfect companion for Agnelo and his mum, Eva.

We've told Bob and Julie about her adoption and they are delighted too.



Bones with Agnelo

Lazy, Lazy Mama!



Some days it's just too darned hot to move, so Mama thinks she'll just have a piggyback indoors from Anup.

Rajasthan, here I come.

Rebecca Dyball has been supporting us for many years, and has now decided to go that extra mile – literally. In November she sets out to cycle Rajasthan to raise funds for us. Below she tells how she first heard about us, and why she thinks we are simply the best and her schedule for cycling through Rajasthan for 10 days to raise funds for us.

“Goa, its animals and people are very close to my heart. I travel, with my family, there every year to take our holiday - its like home from home to us. We discovered Goa Animal Welfare Trust (GAWT) about four years ago. I only wish the circumstances could have been different.

We were all ready to get into the car, when I saw a tiny white puppy dragging herself through the dust, seeking shade, very distressed, with no use in her hind legs. We fetched a towel and made her as comfy as we could, and gave her some water. We called the local vet, who suggested we take her to the GAWT hospital, and, after much persuasion, a kind taxi driver agreed to take us. I picked her up, she snuggled into my neck and her little sigh of relief shall never be forgotten.

Once we arrived at the hospital our fears for this little pup were eased. We knew she was in the best place. Wrapped in a towel, they took her away and made her comfy, whilst she waited for the vet to see her. The staff took of our details and we received a call that night. The little pup had to be put to sleep; we were awfully sad, but she was in so much pain, there was nothing they could do - she was in the best place.

I am so astounded by the work at GAWT, it's not just an animal hospital for the stray dogs and cats of Goa, but a home, retreat, boarding kennels and a local drop in, where food, water and love is always plentiful. The passion and kindness of its staff and volunteers is truly amazing. I love this place.

Now I visit every year, taking proceeds from raffles plus money my family and I have managed to save over the year.

This year however I thought I'd do just that little bit extra, I'm aiming to raise as much as I possibly can for my passion, animals and their welfare. I'm cycling Rajasthan beginning 13th November. It's going to be very testing, but I'm determined! I've been training since March, my fitness and stamina is gradually getting stronger and stronger, I've still a long way to go but I'm feeling confident and really excited too. Here's my itinerary for you to take a look at, I'll keep you updated, on how I'm doing over the next 3 months. I'd appreciate it so much if you could sponsor me to raise funds for GAWT, which is run almost solely through donations.”

DAY 1: Fly London – Delhi

DAY 2: Transfer to Agra to rest and acclimatise.

DAY 3: Visit Taj Mahal. Bike fitting

DAY 4: Start the challenge through colourful Rajasthan Ride to camp near Bashawar.71km

DAY 5: Scenic cycling, rural Rajasthan at its best. Stay at Bhadrawadi Palace. 99km

DAY 6: Ride to Pink City of Jaipur. Free time in the afternoon to explore. 70km

DAY 7: Desert scenery, hill top forts. Camp near Sambhar Lake. 80km

DAY 8: Finish ride with celebratory meal in sand dunes outside Pushkar. 67km

DAY 9: Explore India's greatest camel fair in Pushkar. Overnight train to Delhi.

DAY 10: Fly Delhi – London

You can sponsor Rebecca via PayPal on our website www.gawt.org - please remember to type “**Rajasthan**” in the “**Any special instructions?**” box so that we know that your donation is for Rebecca.

Alternatively, you can send a cheque to Rebecca Dyball, Ashwell Dene, St Olives Close, Cross in Hand, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 0QE



Rebecca

Jazing things up

When volunteer Colin Pickersgill was asked by friends to look after their 9 month old kitten Jaz when they returned to UK, he said “yes” very reluctantly.

“I have always thought cats to be sneaky, shy and aloof creatures who only ever put up with human company as a means of being fed. Dogs have owners, cats have servants, says the old adage, and it's one I've always agreed with.

All my preconceived notions took a battering when I agreed to cat sit for three months..

Jaz is a little black and white kitten, now nine months old.

She arrived in a cat box complete with enough cat food to feed an army of cats – or so I thought at the time. She promptly disappeared under my bed and refused to come out for 24 hours, despite valiant efforts from me to entice her out with food and an assortment of cat toys. Aha, I thought, I was right about cats!

However, when she eventually decided it was safe to come out, she examined the apartment thoroughly, found nothing she disapproved of, condescended to eat and promptly curled up for a nap, not on my bed, but in it.

That I thought is it for the next three months. Actually after a few days settling in she has proved to be very playful, funny, intelligent and affectionate. She spends hours playing football with a small rubber ball, cat style, ambushing the ball and me, frightening the life out of me in the process. At the top of her considerable voice she lets the whole world know when SHE considers it's time for food – which she's getting through at a rate of knots.

I shall miss Jaz when it's time to hand her back to her owners. Unless, of course, I can persuade her to kick up a fuss & refuse to move back. Watch this space.”

Bella – a story of love

It's not often when you go on holiday that you find yourself picking up a tiny, stray badly injured calf from the middle of a busy road, and start looking for help for her, but that's exactly what happened to Guido and Shama who were on holiday in Agonda. She was just one week old, extremely timid and so weak she couldn't stand. To add to her woes she had a massive wound around her behind, probably caused by a pack of dogs. She had been abandoned by her mother. Guido and Shama doubted she could make it through the night, but they took her to our centre in Canacona just to give her a safe place to die, away from pack dogs. She is beautiful, so Janie, Radhika and the volunteers instantly named her Bella.

We immediately showed her how to drink milk from a baby bottle. She guzzled down a few pints the very next day, which was a huge relief as then we knew she would be able to survive without her mother. Our next challenge of course was to get the maggots out of her wound and quicken the healing process. It took a few days and lots of help and advice from our vet, but we succeeded and we were all so happy for her.

Bella very quickly bonded with our resident trainee paramedic, Ajit, our newest recruit at the Centre. Now they are inseparable and she follows him around everywhere. Everyone plays with her and she is quite happy wandering around with the dogs and cats, who have completely accepted her presence among them, although they undoubtedly think her 'bark' is a bit weird. Some of them go so far as to 'groom' her by licking her face. Bella just laps it all up. A happy ending for once, thanks to the quick thinking of Guido and Shama, and the tender loving care so generously given by Janie, Radhika and everyone at the Canacona shelter.



Learning to drink from a baby bottle



Everybody wanted to be Bella's friend



The day Bella stood up on her own



Bella arrives at Canacona Centre

Stop Press! Bella is still with us, happy and health. She is very affectionate with the volunteers and loves them scratching her ears. We continue to look for a sponsor for her.

Team-building day at Curchorem

The Curchorem centre was visited by dog whisperer Brian Willis (gofetchandbarkalott.com) recently and our dogs there had a marvellous time pretending to be pets for a few days, and having to take direction from humans!! We loved Brian's report of the whole experience. The full story of his trip to India is on our website.



Shashikant, Pradeep, Dr. Jayram, Raju, Mahadev & Sitaram
Dogs, from I-r, Motu, Chocolate, Beti and Bunty

"How do you communicate with a dog that is inherently distrusting of humans? Where is their desire to relate? Where is their desire to please? What motivates a dog that is completely self-reliant? Any dog whispering talent I thought I had was useless here. The "boys" at GAWT were just as challenging. Would they understand me? Could I change their cultural views of indifference to dogs? Would they laugh at my jokes? The necessity of modifying my techniques proved invaluable. I found myself talking slow with as few words as possible. This from a person that loves to throw around words and exaggerate. I also started to use my hands and arms in new ways. I became a dog training pantomime playing charades. Charlie Chaplin meets Cesar Milan with a little Pee Wee Herman using sign language. I never knew if the Boys were smiling because they were entertained or were just being polite to this crazy American.

The first day of class they all stared at me as if to say "Why on earth would we need to train a dog to do anything, let alone sit, stay and lie down? Why? What is the point?" The thought of having a relationship with a dog had simply never occurred to them. This is what dogs in India are up against. No one cares. There are many more vital things to worry about than dogs. Eventually, I was able to break through the cultural tradition. As a trainer I get the most joy from watching the precise moment when the dog and the handler realize the connection. Tears started to well up in my eyes when I saw the moment each trainee and dog accomplished their task. The moment they both realized the benefits of cooperation. The moment they both realized the yield of a budding, mutually beneficial, relationship. A fresh and rewarding fellowship was revealed to them. I was no longer confused about their smiles. They were smiles of wonder and gratitude."

Mindless Cruelty

We see lots of it, and it does get us down. Keeping positive often seems too hard. But even we were appalled when Chouti was brought into us recently. Someone was using her as target practice and had taken out her right eye.



What to do? We worked for days with the vet to save her, but she lost the eye. She became very depressed. But 3 weeks later she was up and running about with the other dogs and is quite happy again. If she hadn't come to us her death would have been a very slow one.



Chouti 3 weeks after treatment

More news from the shelters soon ...