

Friends of GAWT News Update

February 2007



Dear Friends, we wish you all a happy and healthy 2007 and thank you for your interest and support.

Slowly but surely we are moving towards completion of the purchase of our **new shelter**. Meantime we have been heartened to receive gifts and sponsorships for much of the new equipment we will need, as well as offers of help to rewire and replumb from our friends and supporters. We will keep you informed!

Well, it needed doing, as the damage from two year's monsoon seasons was all too evident to anyone visiting our **Charity Shop**, in Colva. So, with teeth gritted, we set to, with the help of two fantastic volunteers, Brian Kallman and Michael Hennessy, who scraped and painted, tore out cupboards, muttered darkly and frequently *sotto voce*, installed new shelving, and designed, built and installed a new rail for displaying clothes. We set up a stall outside so we could keep selling, and many thanks to volunteer Diane Kallman for all her work organising this. The whole thing took four days, and then I unleashed my inner bookseller and set out to reorganise the book display, sending out an SOS for books, getting rid of old and torn books, and training the staff in the rudiments of stacking books in alphabetical order by author's name. Not easy, when English is not your first or even your second language, but staff Juvina and Felcy rose to the challenge brilliantly. We also received a huge increase in good new and nearly new clothes, which are quickly being snapped up by tourists and locals alike. We now have a bright, clean, well-designed shop and already we are seeing a significant increase in customers as well as very positive feedback. As well as *Friends of GAWT/100+ Club*, the Charity Shop provides key funds for us.

We have a new recipe book published in November last, and generally finding favour with everyone. *A Little Taste of India*, was compiled by me, and designed by Linda Cree, and is targeted at all of you who are looking for **simply delicious meals**, easy to put together, with all ingredients, herbs and spices readily available in your local supermarket. All recipes are **light on the chilli**, but awash with wonderful flavours to make your mouth water. If you are in it is available in the Charity Shop in Colva. Hopefully, they should be available in the UK in a couple of months. £5 a copy plus p&p. Please contact me if you would like to buy one in the UK. It would be helpful to know the size of the demand so that I can arrange to have them brought over when friends visit the UK.

The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) generously sponsored GAWT's Blanche Moore to attend the international conference, organised by Blue Cross, *Asia for Animals 2007* in Chennai in January.

One piece of good news was the announcement by the AWBI that the ABC (Animal Birth Control) programme is working everywhere it is being implemented, with an incremental decrease in the number of stray pups clearly evident on beaches and throughout out towns and rural areas. Blanche reckoned the conference organisation and key speakers were superb, and we send our congratulations to Blue Cross for their achievement.

Meantime, we continue with our **Anti-Rabies camps** throughout south Goa. Between 60 and 100 dogs are vaccinated each week. And of course the Shelter veterinary doctor continues the ABC programme of sterilising stray dogs. Anyone who has been on the beaches of south Goa this season can see the benefits of this as the numbers of sick dogs are dramatically down. Any dog with a nick in the ear has been sterilised - it's their badge of honour! Of course, there will always be those who think it's OK to dump their pregnant dogs, or their pups, so the work never stops

We will try to bring you more on the *Asia for Animals* conference in next newsletter.

We have had two financially successful years organising fundraising events in local restaurants and friends' homes. But a certain amount of '**fundraising fatigue**' was being felt by everyone. Then Colin Levy, our volunteer-in-residence at Goodman's restaurant, revealed his **Big Idea**. It sounded not just brilliant but terribly attractive because it seemed easy to organise compared to what we were doing each month. But we didn't know if we could sell it to people. Well. Wow! Now, every two weeks we take 40 people on a specially reserved boat up the **River Sal**. Boat, food and drink all provided by Betty's Boats in Cavelossim, who have years of expertise in this area. They give us a good discount on the cost of hire, and we run a small shop and a raffle. Local taxis drivers have provided their services at a very good price too. No hassle and no pressure. And we know from past experience that the food on a Betty's Boat trip is simply superb. Owner and **chef Roy Baretto** cooks lunch which is usually large **prawns** in a delicious garlic and lime sauce for starters, followed by a large piece of **barbequed fish**, salad and savoury rice. (Options for chicken and vegetarians if required). All finished off with a fresh fruit salad. All food and **drinks** are included in the price of the ticket, and the whole trip including transport costs Rs/900 per ticket.

What strikes everyone almost immediately we start moving is the sense of peace on the river, (absolutely no music allowed!) and the wide variety of birds to be seen both in the air and at rest in the trees. The boys on the boat are highly knowledgeable about these, and point out particular ones of interest, such as the ospreys nesting and the very large fruit bats hanging off the branches their favourite tall tree - quite a sight. And the boat provides binoculars and a bird recognition book for every table. And then there are the **dolphins!** Before setting off up the river, we head out into the **Arabian Sea** for about an hour and, if conditions are right, we watch dolphins at play.

Now, we have a waiting list from one trip to the next! So for us it's win-win. We raise funds to keep the Shelter going, and everyone has a great time. We know this because they constantly tell us how much they enjoyed the food and drink, the peace and music-free environment of the day. Our thanks to Roy and his boys for making it such an enjoyable trip. The recipe for Roy's prawn starter will be on the website at www.gawt.org shortly.

Friends of GAWT - a cheap but effective way to help us.:

As you probably already know the 100+ Club has been renamed Friends of GAWT. It is a key fundraising arm for us and has members in Goa and throughout Europe. Membership costs about £16 / €23 a year and means you will be automatically entered into our monthly draw, where prizes are as follows:

1st prize Rs. 750/- 2nd prize Rs. 500/- 3rd prize Rs. 300/-

There is also a grand year-end draw in December each year where the prizes are increased to Rs. 3000/-, Rs. 1500/- and Rs. 500/- and you will be notified by email if you win.

Why such small prizes? It is simple; these are large sums in Goa, but a small sum for Europeans, which is why we also ask you, if you win, to donate your prize back to GAWT. You will also receive discounted tickets for all our events, when you are in Goa.

If your membership has lapsed or you would like to become a new Friend of GAWT this is a simple and easy way to support us from abroad. In fact If you make one payment for a year you get two month's membership extra.. We have set up **PayPal** on the website, www.gawt.org, to make all payments simple to transmit to us.



Again, thanks to everyone for your support and interest in our work. To know you all care makes a huge difference to us, when we are all feeling down about the state of some of our animals.

Best wishes
Clodagh Corcoran
Editor and UK Secretary
Email: friendsofgawt@gawt.org