

Quaker Concern for Animals



NEWSLETTER –SPRING 2008

To say that we love God and at the same time
exercise cruelty towards the least creature is a contradiction in itself

John Woolman (1720 – 1772)

HOW TO JOIN QUAKER CONCERN FOR ANIMALS

Please complete the following form and send to:

Marian Hussenbux,

30, Sherry Lane, Arrowe Park, Wirral CH49 5LS..

I wish to become a member of QCA. I enclose my yearly subscription of £10, or £5 (concessionary)

I wish to pay by Standing Order

I wish to make a donation of.....

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:

.....

.....

Telephone number, if available:

Email address, if available:

Meeting attended, if appropriate:

Please make cheques payable to **Quaker Concern for Animals**.

Please note, we regret we cannot accept CAF cheques.



COMMITTEE OF QUAKER CONCERN FOR ANIMALS - 2007 - 2008

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*And as the butcher takes away the calf
And binds the wretch, and beats it when it strays,
Bearing it to the bloody slaughter-house,
Even so remorseless have they borne him hence;
And as the dam runs lowing up and down,
Looking the way her harmless young one went,
And can do nought but wail her darling's loss.*

~ William Shakespeare (from *Twelfth Night*)

INTERFAITH CELEBRATION OF ANIMALS

The Fourth Interfaith Celebration of Animals, sponsored by *The World Congress of Faiths* and *Quaker Concern for Animals*, was held at Golders Green Unitarians on Sunday 16th September 2007.

The Service was led by the Rev. Feargus O'Connor, Hon. Secretary of The World Congress of Faiths., and the following participants spoke briefly but cogently, explaining an aspect of their religion as it dealt with our treatment of animals.

Andrew Burns told us that in **Buddhism** even the smallest insect is important. All Life is seeking an end to suffering and the realisation of happiness. This message was reinforced by Seeta Lakhani, who stressed that **Hinduism's** view of Life includes all creatures, mankind's role in the world being that of the good steward. Our patron Nitin Mehta –**Jain** - told us that Lord Mahaveer was born in the same region and at the same time as Lord Buddha. Nitin talked about Ahimsa (non-violence), and the exhortation not to kill or help to kill any living being. He said that wars will never stop until we make peace with the animal kingdom. We then heard from Charanjit Ajit Singh, who informed us that in **Sikh** religious works there are countless references to animals, with reminders that God is in them, as in us. In their unique ways, big and small, all worship God.

Dr. Sheelah James told us that **Jews** are adjured not to cause pain to any creature. Indeed, in Judaism, anyone who is cruel to animals cannot be regarded as righteous. In his book '*Judaism and Vegetarianism*', Professor Richard Schwartz says he believes that the ethical path for Jews is to become vegetarian.

The **Muslim** view was given to us by Dr. Roohi Majid, who stated that Man is the custodian of the planet, and is the intermediary between Allah and all forms of life. For the **Christians**, the Rev. Dr. and Mary Braybrooke stressed that we are all responsible for the cruelty meted out to animals at all times. We also heard from the Rev. Dr. Linda Hart - **Unitarian Universalist** - who told us about a service for the blessing of animals in the States. Linda reminded us that Paradise is generally pictured as a place where humans are at peace with all animals.

Brian Millar, for the **RSPCA**, told us that the organisation is setting up, jointly with the **Humane Society of the United States**, a huge fund to promote businesses which promote animal welfare. He was followed by **Sonia Waddell, from Quaker Concern for Animals**, who read a moving story of Jesus healing a mule (from the book 'After Noah' by Andrew Linzey and Dan Cohn-Sherbok).

The tale is of unknown date from a Coptic manuscript and ends with Jesus telling the owner of the mule, who has been cruelly beating it, 'Now go on and beat it no more, that you also may find mercy'. Nick Galley, of the **World Society for the Protection of Animals**, asked us to think about the extent of animal suffering in the world and told us about the excellent work that WSPA are doing in countries around the world and especially that they are working on getting The Universal Declaration of Animal Welfare accepted internationally.

The *Guest Speaker was Rabbi Prof. Dan Cohn-Sherbok*, who told us of his childhood as a good Jewish boy, with no companion animals, as they scratched furniture and gave one allergies! He showed us how his life, his diet and his spiritual outlook all changed and evolved over the years, not so much from the study of Theology, as from the influence of the companion cats, first introduced to him by his wife. On the subject of vegetarianism, he made the point that if one would not eat one's own loved companion animal, then by extension one should not eat any animal.

The Service also included inspiring hymns and prayers – and finished with delicious vegetarian refreshments!

~ Sonia Waddell



JAIN STATEMENTS

KHAMEMI SAVVE JIVA

We forgive all living beings,

SAVVE JIVA KHAMANTU ME

We seek pardon from all living beings,

METTI ME SAVVA BHUTESU

We are friendly towards all living beings,

VERAM MAJJHAM NA KENVI

And we seek enmity with none,

~ From *Jain World*.

MEMBERS' NEWS

“Poole Meeting has something of a history of fund-raising for QCA, but there has been a gap in doing so for the last few years. It has now re-instituted a series of musical evenings as fund-raising events, and the last one was held in early November, which raised £120. Poole Meeting at the moment has a number of enthusiastic and skilful musicians, and these evenings comprise live music-making and are held in the conservatory of a local Member.”

~ Many thanks to **Jeremy Deane and Poole Meeting**.

Bill Palethorpe of Eastbourne Meeting succeeded in having his excellent article, *Down on the 21st. Century Pharm*, which deals comprehensively with many aspects of the exploitation of animals, especially as food, printed in the *Gandhi Foundation Newsletter* in November 07.

PHONELINE REPORT

The Animal Rights Helpline is now in its thirteenth year, sponsored over the last four by QCA. It acts as an animal Samaritan facility, aiming to help the human species too. Callers are often desperate and unhappy, glad to have a sympathetic listener. Whilst it is not always possible to find a solution, practical advice I offer can channel concern into action. For example, “Angela” rang yesterday, from a small dairy farm in Cornwall. She is very isolated and harassed by the hunting and shooting fraternity and currently by pheasant shoots. She is appalled by their cruelty, the way the birds are reared and their helplessness as they are massacred, or terribly wounded, on their first ineffectual flights. She wanted to know if it’s “legal” and she fears for her own animals – her cockerel was shot, perhaps by mistake. It would not have been wise to suggest she write to her local paper or take any political action – it is unlikely she would attract any sympathy and she cannot risk retaliation from animal abusers. We agreed she telephone LACS for information and Animal Aid for the details of a local contact who might offer support. There have been a number of similar calls, some of which I referred to local activists, veterans of the days we campaigned against hare coursing.

The recent TV programmes exposing the horrors of factory farmed chickens has had a dynamic effect, though responses from animal lovers are not all positive. Animals were killed in the process, in the hope that future generations of birds would be humanely reared. Ethical dilemmas apart, it has been gratifying to receive calls from individuals offering homes to these birds. Later in the year, “Sarah”, who specialises in end-of-lay hens, and has rehomed hundreds, will be looking for fox-proof homes – I can arrange this, if you want to home some hens.

I like to hear from enquirers who may be able to take political action; a family in Hertfordshire on a small estate are threatened by a breeder of rottweilers planning to build breeding kennels for fifteen dogs. The caller was concerned, both for the dogs and local children, so I advised her to contact the council for details of the planning application. It may not be too late to object and she will also contact her local press and organise petitions.

Sometimes couple separate, leaving animals, often a large dog. Buster, a gentle rottweiler, was one such animal. Fortunately, a local sanctuary was happy to take him, which was a huge relief to the caller. A disabled man rang about a stray cat he’d been feeding. Happily ensconced in his conservatory, she had produced four kittens. I assumed he wanted homes for mother and babies, but in fact, he wants to keep them and was worried the “rightful owner” might claim them, which was most unlikely. I offered help with neutering and vet care from the excellent RSPCA clinic, but he may also need financial support from St. Matthews Cat Collective, my pet charity.

Climate change means that far too many baby hedgehogs are roaming about, but the RSPCA wildlife hospital will collect them and normally injured birds too.

My own “tribe” of animal rights activists always inspire me with their bravery and boundless love of all creatures. One girl, who is moving house, has a problem with a mother rat in her garden. As a midwife, I advised her to wait until the babies are born and active before moving them, after which they will be taken to a small wildlife park. I warned her about Weil’s Disease, an infection

carried by rats, which nearly killed me in Calcutta. So she will wear thick gloves and boots. Some readers may have doubts about the wisdom of this action, but as the great Buddhist sage Satish Kumar recently remarked on a BBC wildlife programme: "I respect all life, regardless of its use to humankind. Every creature has the right to live its life free from fear." I say Amen to that.

~ **Joan Court**. January 2008

THE LIVES ON OUR PLATE

Adolfo Sansolini, trade policy advisor to the RSPCA, Compassion in World Farming, the World Society for the Protection of Animals and the Eurogroup for Animals has been working since 2006 with **The Quakers and Kindred Animals Committee (QUAKA)**, which came into being as a result of an initiative by Wymondham Meeting in Norfolk. He will speak about his work at a public meeting at Friends' House, Norwich, on Saturday, March 15.

In 1991, Adolfo was instrumental in bringing about the European Union's Directive which will ban the use of battery cages for laying hens from 2012. As a direct result of a hunger and thirst strike which he led in 1999, the then Italian prime minister changed his country's attitude to the proposal. Other member countries then followed suit.

There will be an opportunity to ask about all aspects of animal welfare in relation to the competing needs of farmers, retailers and consumers, and the difficulty of getting the subject onto the agenda of the World Trade Organisation.

Following their nationwide petition to the EU regarding animal welfare in world trade, QUAKA was invited to Brussels for talks. Mr. Sansolini accompanied two members of the committee at a meeting with senior officials of the Department for External Trade. QUAKA was then asked to join an EU consultation group, the Civil Society Dialogue, where not-for-profit NGOs can express their views on all aspects of world trade.

~ **Mike Purton**. **QUAKA**. Please contact QCA for more details.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF QCA

This category has been created to welcome the increasing number of overseas contacts who want to be associated with our society. We now have Associate Members in Pakistan, India, South Africa, the US, Australia and New Zealand. **Mikki Aronoff**, a Friend from Albuquerque, New Mexico, sent us the following positive news.

¿QUIÉNES SON LOS ANIMALES? WHO ARE THE ANIMALS? ALTARS TO LIVES SACRIFICED FOR HUMAN GREED

On the occasion of the Mexican Day of the Dead festival, *Working Classroom*, a youth programme in Albuquerque, New Mexico, presented **Quienes Son Los Animales?: Altars to Lives Sacrificed to Human Greed**, an installation commemorating the lives of animals exploited for cosmetics, entertainment, fur coats and food.

Students from several Albuquerque secondary schools, with Working Classroom instructors Bethany Collins and Jorge De la Torre and guest artist Isaac AlaridPease, set up their installations in Visiones Gallery from November 2 - 21 2007.

From fashion catwalks to fast food drive-ins, university labs to undercover dog fighting pits, millions of animals live and die in pain to satisfy the human quest for entertainment, fashion

and cheap food. *Working Classroom* marks its annual artistic celebration of Dia de Muertos with traditional Mexican food, live music and *Quienes Son Los Animales?*, a series of contemporary altars dedicated to the dogs, horses, rhinos, elephants, minks, roosters and mice tortured and killed, not for human need, but for human pleasure.



Hanging in the slaughterhouse



horse made of betting-slips

Mikki Aronoff talked with some participants. They spent two to three weeks brainstorming a theme, then divided up according to interest; did the students change how they thought or lived during the process, which was completely student-led?

They struggled with what they wanted to say. Most of them wondered whether they should give up meat, cosmetics and so on. Some were already vegetarian, but most not. They decided that whatever they did, they would do it humanely, ethically and with as much consideration as possible. Some said that they were 100% against animal testing, eating animals, or wearing animals. The most difficult time for them was watching a video made in a slaughterhouse, lent to them by Animal Protection New Mexico.

Working Classroom is a street conservatory that identifies and recruits talented young artists and actors from Albuquerque's historically ignored communities- and provides tuition-free education and training, including college scholarships. Classes are taught by the country's top artists, playwrights and directors - professionals who welcome new creative opportunities and a prestigious venue for cutting-edge work. www.workingclassroom.org

PAKISTAN UPDATE

Every year on the eve of *Eid-ul-Adha*, the Feast of Sacrifice, a huge number of animals are transported to the provincial capital from far away areas of the Punjab. Transportation laws are not followed and animals undergo terrible stress in extreme weather conditions, causing many diseases in the animals. Most of them are suffering from lameness, due to painful arthritis. **Our Associate Member in Pakistan**, the veterinary student **Waseem Shaukat of Vets Care Organization Pakistan (VCO)**, reports that VCO has been arranging free veterinary treatment camps at different localities of Lahore on the eve of *Eid-ul-Adha* every year since 2001.

This year, a Free Veterinary Treatment Camp was organised at Bakkar Mandi, Lahore, December 15-17 2007. Some thirty-eight veterinary doctors and students provided their professional services. 734 animals were examined and provided with free treatment and medicines in Bakkar Mandi and

53 animals were treated in Shahdra Town Mandi. This work was covered by the press and TV. VCO is committed to continue its efforts to create a cruelty- free environment for animals in Pakistan.
~ *QCA sends our thanks to Waseem and VCO for their compassionate service.*

DONATIONS 2007

We donated funds to twenty-two animal protection bodies during the course of the year, which are listed on the balance sheet. Among them were:

Birds of Prey Sanctuary - This hands-on and non-profit- making organisation was set up to help owls and other birds of prey. Based at Littlecote House, Wiltshire, they handle wild and captive birds.

Birds may be handed in by public, also recovered by staff and people come in with problematic birds.

Wild birds remain in isolation until healthy, then are released back to the wild. If disabled, they are registered and found a home and all birds are given the highest quality of life.

The group also actively monitors habitats, visits establishments to promote awareness and greater understanding of owls and birds of prey, including arranging school trips.

PAWS for Kids - was started up in the north west of England by a group of women who recognised that there is a gap in the provision of services to women and their families who were escaping from violent homes. While refuges could accommodate women and their children, they could not take in any companion animals in the family. Animals had to be either left behind, perhaps to suffer at the hands of the man, given away to someone else or even put down. Often women remain in an abusive relationship rather than have to abandon animals to a violent fate or give them away permanently.

Paws for Kids fostering service offers some peace of mind for women and their children, knowing the animals are safe while they await re-housing from a refuge.

They cover the whole of the North West of England - Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and parts of North Derbyshire and Cheshire. In total, the animal fostering service is available to women in 44 different refuges, hostels and safe houses. They recruit and train a team of women volunteers to help run the service. These volunteers then receive ongoing training in animal handling and procedures regarding Pet Foster Carers and managing animal placements. "Many of the women and children are extremely distressed when we come to take their animals away. They are in a traumatic situation anyway, and probably fear handing their beloved pets over to total strangers. It is important to us to build a trusting relationship with them if we can, so that they are not going to be fretting about their animals. After all, they have enough worries already. Although they are not able to have direct contact with their animals while they are being fostered (*due to the potential problems around safety*) we keep them up to date with how they are, and we send them photos of their animals to reassure them." www.pawsforkids.org.uk

The Rabbit Residence Rescue is run by Caroline Collings, a young woman who has been rescuing rabbits since she left school after GCSE. She is a community care worker for the elderly and a few volunteers help with the sanctuary of 40 animals. Each rabbit rescued costs £60 to neuter, worm and vaccinate, and Caroline rehomes them in pairs to suitable homes. www.rabbitresidence.org.uk

Haiku written by cats

*I am in your way?
you seem to have it backwards:
this pillow's taken*

*Your mouth is moving:
up and down, emitting noise.
I've lost interest.*

*most problems can be
ignored; the more difficult
ones can be slept through*

*toy mice, dancing yarn,
meowing sounds. I'm convinced:
you're an idiot*

~ From Cat Fanciers, unattributed, so thanks to the anonymous felines!

QUAKER NEWS

FULL OF GOD, ARE THE ANIMALS

***Apprehend God in all things,
For God is in all things.***

Like Meister Eckhardt, philosophers and theologians over the centuries have seen, and urged us to see, that of God in animals. In the last decades, a strong rational case for respecting the rights of animals has been emerging and gaining in popularity. This rational position accepts that animals are similar biologically to ourselves, and have analogous feelings, and, therefore, the way we treat animals must be a moral issue.

There are many signs that progressive thinking regarding our treatment of animals is becoming mainstream. Oxford University opened a Centre for Animal Ethics, which is supported by distinguished academics worldwide, and recently, a number of European countries have overhauled their animal welfare legislation. These developments recognize that we cannot improve the lot of animals, without changing our ideas about them.

As Friends, what are our ideas about animals? Quaker practice is founded upon seeking God, not as an external Master, but as an inner guide, that of the Perfect which is in everyone. We hold that there is equality between the sexes, between those of different races and sexual orientation, and, as human pollution and overpopulation of the planet has become more pronounced, we have seen our relationship with other species in terms of partnership and responsibility. Has the time now come for Quakers to go from caring for animals as individual species, to that of *individual lives*? We believe that it has, and we therefore are asking ourselves important questions, such as:

- Is my pet my property, or a member of my family for which/whom I am fully responsible?
- Are wild animals as worthy of love and respect as companion animals?
- “Are farming/factory farming methods morally defensible?
- What farming practices are being supported when purchasing meat or fish? What species/environmental depletion are being supported? Is such support consistent with Quaker faith and practice?
- What is a “pest” species and what is it appropriate to do about one?

- When is hunting or fishing morally justified? Is killing for recreation consistent with the Quaker way, and with respect for the animal?
- Is torturing, poisoning, maiming, and starving scores of thousands of animals every year in the name of science, and every aspect of our lives involving chemicals and drugs?

In endeavouring to answer such questions, we are forced to examine our own individual behaviour *vis-à-vis* non-human animals. We try to do this in a Quakerly way, prayerfully, contemplatively, consensually, respectfully. We hope that our Friendly dialogue will guide our steps in clarifying our thoughts, words and actions in order to make a statement of concern about the spiritual status of animals.

We are a small group of five from **Auckland-Bay of Plenty Monthly Meeting in New Zealand**. We would welcome expressions of support or interest to skyle@unitec.ac.nz

~ **Sandra Kyle, Associate Member of QCA**

FROM SOUTH AFRICAN FRIENDS

Les Mitchell writes:

At the Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting held January 3-9 2008 in Grahamstown, South Africa, the organisation **Quaker Concern for the Protection of Animals (QCPA)** was formed.

We hope to link with like-minded groups, have a place on the YM web site, disseminate information inside and outside YM and develop plans for future action.

Co-Clerks are **Les Mitchell and Jen Stern**.

RELIGIOUS INITIATIVE – ANIMALS & RELIGION SUMMIT

In July 07, QCA was invited by Kris Haley, Special Projects Manager of **Best Friends**, the largest no-kill animal sanctuary in the US, to make a Quaker contribution to this initiative. Coincidentally, we had in the previous month held our first Interreligious Fellowship for Animals conference in Friends' House and both Kris and I were struck by the synchronicity of the thinking.

Kris says: "The **Best Friends Network** is a place for people of like mind and heart to share ideas and interests, and work together toward common goals, connecting people across the planet in an unparalleled 'Call to Action' for animals. Through a growing network of over 21,000 individual members who share information via almost 400 categorized, online communities, covering an A to Z of animal-centric topics, this planetary grid of like-minded individuals is defining the electronic impact of The Kindness Revolution." There are **two** components to Best Friends Animal Society:

~ *Best Friends Animal Sanctuary* is the physical location where all the animals are cared for. At any given time, there are 2000 animals sheltered there.

~ *The Best Friends Network*, the online meeting place where people get connected (www.network.bestfriends.org) in local and global community.

Within this Network, are a number of Communities built around pertinent, animal-centric topics, for example, a community dedicated to Pit Bulls, another dedicated to Animal Law and countless more. The Community to which QCA now belongs is the **Animals & Religion Community**. (www.network.bestfriends.org/religion)

At the invitation of *Best Friends*, we participated in the writing of the Proclamation by web conference, one of two non-US partners.

Thirty-two representatives from twenty-one different faith philosophies, thirteen states of the US, with Britain and Bhutan, were involved in the working parties.

Religions represented were Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism and Judaism and the Christians denominations covered included Baptists, Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Pentecostals and Presbyterians.

On November 7, 2007, religious leaders from around the US gathered for an historic Summit to sign “*A Religious Proclamation of Animal Compassion*”. It took place in the historic Cannon House Office Building Caucus Room in the Capitol building, in Washington, D.C.



Sabrina kitten blessed by ministers of three religions

The Proclamation begins:

As people from diverse religious traditions, we are united in our belief that animals have intrinsic value as part of God's creation and are entitled to live lives free of cruelty and exploitation. We therefore invite and encourage people of all faiths to speak with one voice on behalf of those who cannot speak in an effort that will define our legacy as stewards of God's creation.

~Preamble~

In a world of increasing violence towards others, ourselves, and our environment, we believe it is essential to reclaim and recover a commitment of compassion for all of life. We believe that a commitment to compassion begins with the most vulnerable among us, which includes animals.

There follow five **Calls to Action**, covering Pet Overpopulation and the Plight of Homeless Pets; the Meat and Fur Industries; Animals in Sports and Entertainment; Medical Research and Experimentation on Animals; and Wildlife Preservation and Protection.

Visit www.bestfriends.org for more information on the wide range of work they do.

JEWISH VEGETARIANS OF NORTH AMERICA

Because the world is heading rapidly toward an unprecedented catastrophe from global warming and other environmental threats, **Jewish Vegetarians of North America (JVNA)** has produced a documentary, *A SACRED DUTY: APPLYING JEWISH VALUES TO HELP HEAL THE WORLD*, to address these threats from a positive Jewish perspective.

Almost daily there are reports of severe droughts, floods, storms or wildfires, of the melting of glaciers and polar icecaps and other indicators of global warming. It is frightening that, while these effects are due to an increase in temperature of less than 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit in the past 100 years, the Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a group composed of hundreds of the world's climate scientists, is projecting an increase of 3 to 11 degrees Fahrenheit in the next 100 years. Israel is especially vulnerable to global climate change, in terms of reduced rainfall, severe storms and flooding from a rising Mediterranean Sea. *A SACRED DUTY* is a Jewish response to these realities. It reminds us that it is our sacred duty to become aware of current threats and our responsibility to apply Jewish teachings to how we obtain our food, use natural resources, and live among other creatures whom God created. It offers simple, practical measures for reducing our impact on the planet, including "an inconvenient truth" that even Al Gore has not yet acknowledged. Produced by the highly acclaimed, multi-award-winning film maker, Lionel Friedberg, *A SACRED DUTY* reinforces the messages in Al Gore's AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH and Leonardo di Caprio's, THE ELEVENTH HOUR about the dangers of global warming. However, it goes beyond these films, by showing how religious responses can make a major difference and why a shift toward plant-based diets is an essential part of efforts to reduce global climate change and other environmental threats. It also challenges people to consider the many moral issues related to our diets, including Torah teachings on how animals are treated on factory farms and the effects on human health and the environment. The documentary features interviews with leading Israeli and American environmental, health, vegetarian and animal rights activists as well as Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and secular leaders. Although it is primarily intended for a Jewish audience, *A SACRED DUTY* speaks to people everywhere about the ethics of our relationship to the natural world in which we live. JVNA plans to build a major campaign around the movie to get *tikkun olam* (the repair and healing of the world) to become a central focus in Jewish life today, with a shift toward plant-based diets as an essential part of the changes that can help move our imperiled planet to a sustainable path.

The Jewish Vegetarians of North America (JVNA) was established in 1975, after a World Vegetarian Conference was held at the University of Maine. JVNA exists now largely through free weekly e-mail newsletters sent to about 800 people and then are forwarded by at least one group.

If you would like to be involved in the campaign, please contact **Richard Schwartz at President@JewishVeg.com**.

You can get more information about JVNA at www.JewishVeg.com

EUROPEAN NEWS

Tests on goats for military research

After a sustained campaign over the last year and a half, the Southern Animal Rights Coalition (SARC) have finally put a stop to cruel and unnecessary hyperbaric research conducted by the MoD at the QinetiQ laboratory in Alverstoke, Hants. The campaign began after nine goats were rescued from the facility in June 2006.

SARC immediately began weekly protests in Alverstoke, as well as leafleting and demonstrations across the country, ensuring mass local support for the campaign.

They reviewed the MoD's research, and exposed the scandal behind their 'science', as well as highlighting other agencies who had already adopted non-animal tests in this field.

They worked with MP's, including Mike Hancock MP, who helped keep this issue in the political arena. After a few months of the campaign, the MoD announced a review of the tests, as below:

“Written Ministerial Statement- Cessation of Goat Experiments in support of MOD requirement to be laid in the House on Tuesday 5th February

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has today announced the end of its immediate requirement for testing on live goats as part of its hyperbaric research in support of the MoD's Submarine Escape Rescue and Abandonment System (SMERAS).

This research programme has been aimed at improving the accuracy of the information relating to the likely risk of the incidence of decompression illness following escape from a submerged submarine in varying depths and internal submarine pressures. Information obtained from these trials has been used to provide advice to submarine crews in the event of early abandonment of a disabled submerged submarine...

The MoD only conducts animal testing where absolutely necessary and all work involving animals is carried out in strict accordance with the requirements of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. Therefore, all testing using animals is subject to regular review to assess the need to continue with such work.

The MoD has recently reviewed the requirement for further such hyperbaric research. The testing programme was aimed at improving the accuracy of the information relating to the likely probability and consequence of decompression illness following escape from a submerged submarine in varying depths and internal submarine pressures. This requirement has now been achieved, and the review has concluded that the remaining associated areas of uncertainty in submarine escape and rescue relate to events that are considered highly unlikely, and do not therefore need to be addressed by means of animal testing. The MoD has endorsed these recommendations and as a result, it has no immediate need to continue animal testing of this type.”

UPDATE ON IRISH HUNTING – FROM IRISH COUNCIL AGAINST BLOODSPORTS

After much lengthy consideration on the part of the minister, John Gormley, the Ward Union Hunt, described in the last newsletter, was issued a restricted licence to carry on. ICABS welcomed the fact that the type of licence issued means that the deer will not actually be hunted by the dogs

The say: “However, we are very concerned about Condition No. 12 of the licence: that the deer shall be driven by mounted riders “to an end point” (to create a scent for the dogs to follow), which no doubt will terrify and stress the deer, and it should be borne in mind that it is an offence under the 1911 Protection of Animals Act to “over-drive” or “terrify” an animal.

We are also very concerned that given the manner of re-capture, wrestling the deer to the ground, with at least one deer being choked to death during same, this abuse may continue.

ICABS has reiterated its contention that hunting these deer is illegal, and now more so than ever, given the recent legal opinion by Professors Clive Symmons and William Binchy, published in the current edition of the *Irish Law Times*. On the question of the licensing of the Ward Union under the 1976 Wildlife Act, they state that because the deer are captive deer and part of a domesticated herd, the Ward Union deer “are protected under the Irish animal welfare legislation - the Protection of Animals Acts.”

The Ward Union – founded in 1854 - is the only hunt in Ireland to hunt deer.

The Agriculture Minister Mary Coughlan, said that her Department is currently progressing a number of animal welfare-related commitments from the Programme for Government. ICABS welcomes this long overdue move, initiated by the Green Party in government, and the fact that for the first time, non-farm animals will get protection from cruelty. The Council says it hopes this will see an end to appalling treatment of foxes and other wild animals.

*They brand us and they beat us,
they spill our blood like water,
we die, that they may live,
ten thousand in a day;
oh, that they had mercy;
for in their dens of slaughter
they afflict us and affright us
and do far worse than slay.*

~ Mary Howitt 1799-1888. Quaker reformer and poet.

DIGEST OF NEWS FROM FRANCE AND SPAIN

PMAF – Protection Mondiale des Animaux de Ferme – World Protection for Farmed Animals, linked to CIWF, has collected 103,000 euros of the 200,000 they need to set up a farm-refuge in Lorraine.

They are seeking land extending over 10 – 15 hectares, on which the “Animal Farm” will support the actions of PMAF in standing up against the sufferings inflicted upon farmed animals, and take in some 200 of the many victims of true acts of barbarism, giving care and comfort to those who have suffered nothing but cruelty since their birth, and for whom the slaughterhouse was the only way out of their pain.

The refuge will also serve as an educational tool to make the public more aware of how farmed animals are treated. Each animal will become an ambassador to denounce the abuses of intensive farming of which he or she has been a victim. www.pmaf.org

Foie Gras

With several British councils having come out in 2007 against this “delicacy of despair”, the supermarket Waitrose, which gave up selling the product six years ago, is now offering « faux gras », made of geese and ducks which have not been force-fed.

In December, the MP Tobias Elwood sponsored an EDM aimed at banning the sale of foie gras in Britain and encouraging the sale of the less cruel alternative. This now has more than 50 signatures. He hopes that this EDM will stimulate debate and encourage consumers to reject foie gras.

PMAF reminds us that European legislation requires that no animal should be “fed or watered in such a way as to cause suffering or unnecessary harm” and that alternatives to force-feeding should be sought. That was 10 years ago and France has so far done nothing about it.

Michel Vauzelle and the bullfighting schools

There are four schools in France where children and adolescents from the age of 10 can learn to kill bulls. On December 15 07, the Arles school had its Trophy Ceremony. The local Socialist MP, Michel Vauzelle, attended, appearing to take heart from the involvement of young people in such activities.

On a more positive note, the local council of the town of Montignac in Périgord, under their mayor Paul Azoulay, voted in favour of a motion which seeks the abolition of the bullfight in France.

This is particularly noteworthy, as Montignac is the region which boasts the world renowned Grottes de Lascaux, of which the most spectacular grotto is the Bull Room.

Bullfighting aficionados have always maintained that the Lascaux grottoes were the cradle of the corrida.

Montignac is now the third “anti-corrida” town in France. A conference organised in Montignac in September by **CRAC – Comité Radicalement Anti-Corrida** - with the participation of a specialist in cave-paintings, the historian Elisabeth Hardouin-Fugier, who wrote a book on the corrida reviewed in an earlier newsletter, and the Egyptologist Katherine Bourliascos, contributed to the success of this enlightened vote.

~ Patricia Zaradny, www.anticorrida.com

Stop press:

As a result of the dossier of information collected by the Alliance Anticorrida, six members of the French parliament have proposed Resolution 289, which calls for the setting up of a commission of enquiry into the money spent on the bullfight there: its real influence, local economic impact, financial openness and the steady flow of public funds and commercial practices which support it. This call was first made in 1994, which shows once again that we are all in it for the long term.

Again, a very positive move - on February 12 08, Nicolas Sarkozy told Michel Barnier, Minister of Agriculture, that “he was not opposed to the regulations controlling bullfighting being discussed.”

Three working groups have now been set up, comprising MPs, representatives of professional associations and NGOs, as well as the Minister’s people. Starting in March, they will discuss:

- Animals in “entertainment”*
- Animals in town*
- Farmed animals, with particular attention to ritual slaughter.*

As it is recognised by ministers as the specialist organisation proven to be able to set up

constructive dialogues, the Alliance Anticorrída has just been accepted as a contributor to the Animals and Society discussions. A topic of particular interest is entry to the bullfight of children under 15 – a proposal to prevent this already has much public support.

However, in **Spain**, to add insult to injury... **Bullfighting celebrations** only survive through public subsidies.

The claim comes from the Animal Rights Foundation *Altarriba*, which says each Spanish family spends 47€ a year on subsidising cruelty to animals.

Bullfights and other celebrations which use bulls in Spain only take place thanks to 564 million € in public grants.

The money is spent by public administrations on bullfights, bullruns and grants to bullfighting schools.

Altarriba Foundation spokesperson, **Matilde Figueroa**, commented that in the end the bullfighters will almost be public civil servants.

She said that the bulls, but also heifers, horses and other animals are the victims of cruelty for human diversion in Spain, and according to the **National Association for the Protection and Well-being of Animals ANPBA**, the number of animals killed each year is about 60,000.

Good news, however, that the **United against Cruelty** conference, in February in Barcelona, will be the first time that representatives from such diverse fields as animal welfare, politics, science, art and media gather to share their unique perspectives on the cruelty of bullfighting. WSPA and their member society Asociación Defensa Derechos Animal (ADDA) are hosting the conference, in which delegates will also support a resolution encouraging the Catalan Parliament to push forward with a proposed ban on bullfighting in the region.

You can sign the WSPA petition at:

http://www.wspa-usa.org/pages/2283_oppose_cruel_bullfighting.cfm

FURTHER AFIELD

Regular readers will know that we are ever in admiration of our Australian colleagues and co-religionists and the farmed animal sanctuary *Edgar's Mission* is another wonderful group, whose founder, **Pam Ahern**, is an inspiring writer.

The following, our keynote piece, is by Pam:

Touching people

Two incidents will stay with me forever. We were running a campaign stall at a market just north of Geelong. **Bur**, the sanctuary pig, was having a little kip after a heavy morning campaigning, so I was “working the crowd solo”, although Bur did have the courtesy to flake out on his bed in full view of everyone, thereby still attracting a crowd.

On asking a man with his young daughter by his side if he was concerned about animal cruelty, he replied, “Na, I kill ‘em, I’m a slaughterman”. “Oh well, you’d be interested in our campaign against the live export of sheep and cattle to the Middle East”. He looked at me as if I was mad. “Are you aware that they are also exporting jobs just like yours, abattoirs have even had to close

as a result of this trade?" He stopped in his tracks, paused and thought a second "Ok, I'll sign", he said. He was a huge man, at least 6ft 6, I had to crane my head back to look him in the eye. As we walked to our information table, I asked "So where about on the line do you work?" "I knock em", he punched the words out as if to offend me.

"Oh I see, so what species do you kill?" At this point he just looked at me, a little puzzled by my polite interest. "Sheep". I probed: "Oh right, gee that must be tough, I bet you have to go fast". "Yep, 4500 a day I knock". "That's a hell of a lot, do you ever miss?" "Sometimes". "It must be tough on you, do they get scared?" By now the rough façade was dropping and he was staring me right in the eye, "Shit, yeah mate, they are shit scared and I hate it, I really hate it". "You poor thing, I really feel for you". I didn't know what else to say. Here we were, what many would consider the natural born enemy of the other, but somehow I didn't hate this guy; like him, I hated his job. If our circumstances were different, who knows?

"Yep, you should see their eyes, they're terrified," he sniffed, wiping at his nose with his sleeve "but I gotta feed my family, what else can I do, I gotta feed my family". I wished right then and there I had the answer; I wished I could have offered him a job. He stood there a second longer, his chin quivering, his eyes glazed, sniffing. I looked away, as did the young girl. "Hang in there, mate", was all I could offer, as I gently touched his elbow; he sniffed again and quickly hurried off. Sometime later I saw the same man leaving the market. He looked my way, his eyes still misty with remorse. I looked at him and nodded, "Hang in there, mate".

Clearly this was not the first time he had really thought about what he was doing. It obviously troubled him greatly. I guess it would have been easier for him had I been rude or abrupt; it would have justified his façade. But I was kind; all day I thought of him, I still do, I can only imagine his pain. I remember well reading people do not change because someone is rude to them. I guess it is one of the challenges of what we do; I can sympathize with those who would have loved to have told him he was a jerk, a paid assassin, but what would that achieve? Where was his escape? It's easy for us to condemn him and God knows I hate what he does. I mentally imagined the speed at which he would dispatch my beautiful ovine friends, all forty- three of them, I later worked out, would be dead in less than five minutes, providing his figures were accurate. This guy is sitting on the cusp of change, he is struggling with his conscience and I pray he has the courage to keep listening to it, for there is never a point in a person's life where they cannot say "I am not going to be a part of this any more".

The next incident happened at a country market. An elderly gentlemen walked past Bur and I asked if he was interested in what we were doing. He replied "No, yous are all anti-farmer". "Well no, we're not, but we are anti-animal cruelty. Surely you would agree with that, no one likes cruelty to animals". Taking a brochure he eyed me and Bur, only to return a short while later. "Hi there," I offered, "did you have a chance to read the leaflet?" "Yeah I did, I used to work at a piggery, you know", he said, as he knelt down to talk to Bur. He wasn't looking for an answer, just a chance to talk to Bur. "How you going, mate?" he said as he took Bur's head in his hand. On cue, Bur shut his eyes, put on his "happy face" and pressed his head into the old man's hands.

"But we had to do it, we really had to do it, I hated doing it. What they used to do to those poor sows, aw..." I was having trouble hearing the chap now and I didn't want to interrupt his private moment with a pig. I doubt he had ever had the chance to chat honestly to one like he was now, so I eavesdropped some more, but I think at this point he was oblivious to me.

“Aw mate, you really are a lovely, lovely piggy aren’t you, aw I hated it”. Then there was silence; looking down to see what brought this about, I saw the old man just holding the smiling Bur’s head in the palm of his hands. By whatever reasoning I do not know, but Bur was managing to keep still for more than a second; did he know this was a truly special moment for the old guy, or was he just plain tired? A lone tear rolled down the old guy’s cheek, he ever so subtly wiped at it. Trying to move the lump in my throat, I began talking to another passerby, but couldn’t help but hear what I thought were the words “I’m sorry”. A short time later he stood up, turned to me and said “Sure, I’ll sign your letters, show me where”.

~ Pam Ahern, *Edgar’s Mission*. www.edgarsmission.org.au

“The quiet conscience is an invention of the devil”

~ Albert Schweitzer

Wilbur Pig stages one-pig ‘sit in’

More news of **Wilbur** from Pam:

“On the hallowed steps of Parliament House Melbourne, has strode many a fine statesman, but on November 20 07, Wilbur, the celebrity pig, trotted up them to stage his very own porcine protest. With his snout firmly in the air and not in the trough, Wilbur caught wind of the Victorian Greens’ motion to disallow a new code of practice for pigs that would permit his cousins to be subjected to acts of cruelty. Donning his “Stop stalling - Ban sow stalls now” cape, he was quickly on trotter to lend his support. Despite plummeting temperatures and persistent rain, Wilbur soldiered on, showing one and all what charming and intelligent animals pigs really are.

Since finding fame escorting Hollywood starlet Dakota Fanning down the red carpet at the World Premiere of *Charlotte’s Web*, Wilbur has embarked on an equally important mission. Championing the cause of the not so lucky millions of other pigs in this country has been Wilbur’s focus over the last twelve months. I have found that people are appalled when they learn of the conditions under which pigs exist on factory-like farms in Australia. Sadly, this visionary and compassionate motion put forward by **Greens council member Sue Pennicuik** was defeated; this now means that pigs just like Wilbur can be subject to surgical procedures without anaesthetic or pain relief, and to confinement so severe and brutal, that they are denied any quality of life.

Sow stalls, which severely restrict movement and prevent mother pigs from even turning around are banned in England and are being phased out across the European Union. Earlier this year, the largest producers of pig meat in both America and Canada



Wilbur with Pam, Sue, a Green council member, and Glenys

voluntarily announced they would also be phasing out these cruel sow stalls as a result of consumer concerns, yet they and farrowing crates will remain legal in Australia for at least another ten years. Several scientific studies point to severe welfare implications as a result of confining pigs in not only sow stalls and farrowing crates, but also to subjecting them to intensive farming conditions.

Wilbur was joined on the steps of Parliament House this morning by a most formidable ally in **Glenys Oogjes, Executive Director of Animals Australia**, Australia's peak animal protection group, who said: "The Victorian Greens have recognised that this new code exists for one reason only, to continue to endorse acts of cruelty to millions of pigs. These practices would be prosecutable offences, were the animal instead the family dog or cat. The fact that these animals are raised for food is irrelevant. It in no way lessens their capacity to suffer. The Victorian legislation that exempts animal industry operators from the same duty of care to animals expected of all other members of society should be abolished."

US NEWS - CHIMPANZEES

The following very good news is reproduced with thanks to ***Project R&R (Release and Restitution for Chimpanzees)***.

In December 07, **The Chimp Haven is Home Act** passed both the House and Senate. The bill, spearheaded by Congressman McCrery and Senator Burr, will give permanent protection to chimpanzees "retired" into the national sanctuary system under provisions of the 2000 CHIMP Act. Linda Brent, Ph.D., President and Director of Chimp Haven, the national chimpanzee sanctuary, thanked Dr. Jane Goodall, NEAVS, Arcus, NAVS, HSUS and everyone who "work[ed] so hard on behalf of the chimpanzees!" President Bush signed the bill into law on December 26 07.

Theodora Capaldo, President and Director of **NEAVS/Project R&R** noted that, "most significantly, passage of this amendment reinstates the original intent of the CHIMP Act which was to provide *permanent* sanctuary."

Most of the chimpanzees who are "retired" from research are elderly, in ill-health or simply too compromised from past research to be used in future research and therefore unlikely to have ever been called back. However, passage of this amendment is a moral victory in that it acknowledges not only the right to retirement but the right to have rescue from research be permanently guaranteed. Such permanent protection has been already afforded chimpanzees at privately funded sanctuaries like Fauna Foundation and Save the Chimps. It is important that those retired into Chimp Haven, the national sanctuary system, funded in large part by the government, be given the same protection.

Special highlights of 2007 include:

- the end of federal funding for breeding chimpanzees for research
- the transfer of more chimpanzees from the former Coulston Foundation to sunny Save the Chimps Florida
- the rescue by Fauna Foundation of chimpanzees used as children in cognitive behavioral studies
- the construction of a new chimpanzee sanctuary, Chimpanzee Sanctuary Northwest

- the publication of our two papers on the inefficacy of chimpanzee research and the traumatic suffering they endure *and*,
- the train that will carry all of them to permanent sanctuary moving full steam ahead.
www.releasechimps.org

In November 07, **Washoe Chimpanzee** died at the age of 42. Washoe gained public attention for her ability to learn sign language — the first non-human to acquire a human language. Her adopted son Loulis was the first to acquire a human language from another chimpanzee.

Washoe was born in Africa, around September of 1965. Captured in the wild, she was taken from her mother and brought to the United States for the Air Force. Later Drs. Allen and Beatrix Gardner acquired her for their language research. She was cross-fostered and raised in the Gardners' home, as if she were a deaf human child. She moved to the University of Oklahoma in 1970, then to Central Washington University's Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute (CHCI) in 1980. Washoe was the matriarch of her chimpanzee family and was known for her humour, intelligence and kindness toward both her chimpanzee and human family and friends. The four chimpanzees at the Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute - Washoe, Loulis, Tatu, and Dar – had acquired extensive American Sign Language vocabularies and lived together as a social group. They gestured and vocalized as free-living chimpanzees do and also used American Sign Language in their interactions with humans and with each other to answer questions, make requests, and describe activities and objects. <http://www.friendsofwashoe.org/>

THE AMERICAS - Venezuela.

An Animal Protection Bill was proposed in the Venezuelan National Assembly by the Deputy Luis Tascón in March 07. It would allow for the prosecution of traffickers in wild animals, eliminate ritual sacrifice, make the ill treatment of companion animals an indictable offence and ban shows which insult and kill animals. This clause, if eventually passed, would effectively ban bullfighting in this high profile South American country.

It does not explicitly ban bullfighting, as it allows it to exist 'if it is performed without breaching this Act' - which, in this case, means not harming the bulls in any way. It is doubtful that the bullfighting industry will accept a purely 'visual' show if they cannot actually harm the bull at all, which may drive bullfighting out of Venezuela altogether.

This law seems to be backed by supporters of President Hugo Chavez (who does not appear to like bullfighting), and due to his victory in the last elections, it is now more likely that this Bill will become an Act. Cuba, a political ally, banned bullfighting a long time ago. Though, unfortunately, cockfighting is still permitted there.

An important step forward is that in the last parliamentary session of 2007, the Venezuelan National Assembly appointed the young MP, Gabriela del Mar Ramírez Pérez, as Ombudswoman.

Gabriela is openly hostile to the bullfight and all activities which involve the torment or degrading treatment of animals and over the past two years has worked with animal rights groups, becoming the main spokesperson of the cause in Parliament.

An advocate for women, children and the family, Gabriela has also been the prime mover of the Bill for the Protection of Animals, which to date is still being discussed in the National Assembly. Thanks to www.animanaturalis.org for this news.

Guatemala

Mayan Families Healthy Pets.

The New Year in Guatemala has been a busy time for *Mayan Families*, which the clerk learned about through *Best Friends* in the US.

Selaine writes:

“For the last two days, our headquarters has been swamped, processing sponsored school children for the 2008 school year. We have well over 500 children to get fitted with uniforms and supplies. During this process, interviewers gather information on all family members, including pets. Once approved for assistance, a family qualifies for all 14 of Mayan Families’ programs. The development of this database will speed up intake during our spay/neuter clinics, because the information will already be recorded and families pre-approved for assistance.

When Mayan Families Organization formalized the *Healthy Pets* program in March 2007, no one would have guessed that by year’s end we would be proudly posting the following numbers:

	Projected	Actual
	March – Dec. 07	
Spay/Neuters	90	266
Rabies/combo vaccination	100	160
Adoptions	not projected	42
Animals in Food Program	Begun in Sep.	23
Total animals seen/treated		459

This last figure includes fractures, mange treatment, long-term boarding due to illness, or lack of a foster home.

We would like to achieve the following by the end of 2008:

The spaying/neutering, vaccination of 500 dogs, the same number seen and treated, 100 dogs in the Animals in Food Program and an equal number adopted. We hope to enlist and train volunteers for 15 foster homes.

50 US dollars sterilizes, vaccinates and de-fleas 2 animals. It also covers any follow-up treatment they may need, but since our vet, Dr. Miguel, has been using the small incision technique, our post-op infections and problems with popped stitches has decreased dramatically.

Our clinic on 26 January 08 treated 27 animals, taking the total number of animals sterilized through Mayan Families Healthy Pets to over 300 in less than one year. The



Ishmael, a young helper, with his pups

organization also announced that the Humane Education program is scheduled to launch in Capulin Elementary school on February 6, with a training session for all the teachers. Classroom activities and lesson will begin shortly thereafter. A brigade of older students is also forming in another local school, to assist in clinic advertising and to keep journals on the animals in their neighborhood. These journals will help to distinguish street animals from those with homes, as well as physical condition, sex, identifying marks and daily activities.”

Thanks to Selaine d'Ambrosi for this hopeful news.

Contact her at selaine.atitlan@gmail.com and at the site via:

www.network.bestfriends.org/guatemala/news/

China's crying need for animal welfare laws

Jill Robinson, founder and CEO of *Animals Asia Foundation* writes:

Over the past 20 years, I've seen enormous developments in the animal welfare movement in this region. In China especially, where once there was only a handful of groups addressing the plight of animals, today there are more than 50 local associations - representing hundreds of thousands of people striving for change.

Effective grass-roots programmes are now translating into solid solutions for animals. But these programmes would not survive in the long term if they detracted from the health and well-being of people. This is always a consideration in our work. For example, when we call for an end to dog culling on the streets of the mainland, we are also working with the authorities to address the problems of rabies and how to protect the community at large.

The eyes of the dogs and cats that haunt us from their cages - in live animal markets across the country - are our inspiration for persevering until the last market has closed. But, again, solutions are hard to find.

Since 1991, our Dr Dog programme, which operates in 10 cities throughout Asia, has not only inspired compassion for animals at the most basic level. It also helps thousands of people through the medically proven benefits of companion animal therapy.

When rescuing bears from the horrific bile farms of mainland China, Animals Asia factors in compensation for the farmers. This not only ensures the closure of these facilities, but allows the farmers to walk away with dignity; empowering them to finance new ventures to feed and clothe their families. Millions of dollars are being injected into educational programmes across the country and into projects on site at our sanctuary, which is now home to over 215 endangered moon bears.

But the solutions we provide will be virtually worthless in the long term unless urgent attention is given to introducing animal welfare regulations. That omission is seriously harming the animals and the country's image.

The bear bile industry is allowed to continue unimpeded, despite evidence that it compromises the health and welfare of one of China's most endangered bear species - and causes an agonising death for the victims of the trade.

As we approach next year's "Green Olympic Games", we implore Beijing to recognise that bear farming conflicts greatly with its message of protecting the country's diverse and precious flora

and fauna. We call on leaders to declare a date by which it will end.

We, in turn, pledge to help by providing practical and financial assistance that will benefit both the bears and stakeholders alike.

Local groups in China are struggling physically and financially, running shelters for stray dogs and cats, or rescuing stolen pets that are on their way to meat markets. We can offer practical guidance and veterinary expertise, but this is simply not enough.

They, and we, need help at a political level. On World Animal Day, we implored Beijing to join us in finding solutions for a better future for people and animals alike.

~ Thanks to *South China Morning Post* Oct 04, 2007

Jill Robinson will be speaking at the Chinese Banquet organized by Animals Asia and QCA at the Yuet Ben restaurant in Liverpool on June 24 08, at which we are hoping to welcome members of the local Chinese community.

The Yuet Ben is the oldest Chinese restaurant in Liverpool, which has the oldest established Chinese community in Europe. www.animalsasia.org Contact the clerk for more information or to register your interest

ANIMALS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

From December 13-15 2007, animal people gathered in Cairo to attend the **MENAW – Middle East Network for Animal Welfare** – Conference, hosted by the *Egyptian Society of Animal Friends (ESAF)*, led by Ahmed El Sherbiny. Of some 100 participants, over half were from Egypt and other countries represented included Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria, Morocco, Palestine, Iran, Tunisia, Turkey, Somalia, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, India, Bangladesh, Mauritania, and Kenya.

The purpose of the conference was to focus on the unique challenges facing animal welfare groups working in Islamic societies.

It could truly be said that the Conference was already a success even before it started, because bringing together so many Middle Eastern animal groups had never been done before, and the Conference laid the groundwork for future advances.

Among the opening presentations was an exploration of some of the teachings of Islam that relate to animals:

“The Prophet saw a disfigured animal. He was sad, and said, ‘I have forbidden humans to harm animals.’”

Another Islamic teaching is “God has given beauty to animals--horses, camels, and donkeys.” And, “Islam does not condone a violent end for animals.”

Egypt was one of the first countries in the world to pass animal welfare legislation, in 1902.

However, though everyone attending the Conference was very aware that there are a great many problems in the treatment of animals in Egypt and the rest of the Middle East, the overall impression was one of optimism and a feeling of encouragement at the gathering together of so

many people who are so genuinely dedicated. They are doing great work and are already affecting the quality of life of many animals.

The work of **Robert Blumberg**, who along with **Ahmed El Sherbiny** co-founded the **MENAW organization**, was recognised.

Dr. Chinny Krishna received a lifetime achievement award for the spectacular work done by *Blue Cross of India*, the first of the modern shelters in India, which began in 1964.

Josephat Ngunyo was recognized for his work in Kenya. He is an inspiration to many, especially throughout Africa and Asia, for his work leading young people to help wildlife by freeing animals from illegal traps.

Dr. Kristen Stilt, Professor of Law at Northwestern University Law School, and also an Arabic scholar, took us through a proposed animal welfare law, pointing out both the good points and changes that needed to be made to avoid unintended consequences.

Faith Maloney of Best Friends gave an overview of companion animals to a very responsive audience--showing slides from Best Friends, stressing the importance of spay/neuter and covering, as well, the many ways that humans are helped by animals – for therapy, as aids to the deaf and the blind, as police and rescue dogs.

Dr. Mohammad Rashedul Alam of the Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University in Bangladesh, spoke about animals and agriculture in his country, giving an eye-opening look at the treatment of cattle, especially at the transport conditions of those that are shipped from India to be slaughtered in Bangladesh.

The donkeys of Darfur was the topic of **Mohamed Majzoub Fidiel**, who pointed out how essential donkeys are to the livelihood of the poorest people there. He told how the UN Agency WHO had delivered food to the people of Darfur, but then did not allow people to give any of the food to their donkeys.

Quite apart from cruelty to animals, this lack of logic would mean that people whose donkeys are their livelihood would, without their donkeys, have to remain in the camps dependent on aid for survival. His group, the **Sudan Donkey Sanctuary**, stepped in, buying hay locally, then delivering it to feed the donkeys.

~Thanks to **Best Friends** for this report.

INDIA

Rishi Dev, an associate member in New Delhi, tells us about the 4th. Dwarka **ANTI- RABIES CAMP**, organised on December 29 07 by the animal protection group and shelter **Sonadi Charitable Trust**, with the collaboration of the Delhi municipal council and volunteers. The local BJP councillor, Rajesh Gahlot, supported it and has promised to publicise and start an awareness campaign at their own cost.

“We realised that most dogs, that were generally seen roaming in Dwarka sub- city, near New Delhi, during the day, belonged to and got back to the villages of the outskirts by evening. Most dogs were caught easily, sleeping in these villages during early morning, sleepy afternoons or evenings.

The main reason this happened was because the villagers gave them food, love and protection regularly, more than the people in the main part of the city, where people like us live, who have no time for anyone.

Also, there were no cases of any hostility towards them, despite the large population of dogs in these villages.

This also proves that hostility is more of a human-related behavioural problem than related to the dog population or anything else. So, in short, we got a whole lot of volunteers to offer their street dogs for free vaccination. All the 192 dogs vaccinated were marked with a red ribbon.

The camp continued for three days, as the list of people keen on getting their street dogs vaccinated within these villages had grown.”

Four more vaccination camps were planned. Some 10 volunteers would give a demonstration of how to catch and vaccinate dogs with, this time, a target of 400+ animals.

The aim is to make vaccination a matter of priority and also make the citizens self-sufficient in carrying this out in their own areas, with a little help from each other. Rishi says: “We can’t wait forever for NGOs, the council or any other agency to wake up. If they are willing to participate, then well and good, and we will support them...”

SONADI CHARITABLE TRUST, together with the New Delhi authorities, has been organising free rabies vaccination camps in Dwarka, monthly, since September 2007. The Phase I project will continue until all dogs are vaccinated. Thereafter, in the second phase, all dogs would be sterilized in a similar campaign, using the latest techniques of spaying and with help from the same agencies.

STREET DOGS

Again, **Rishi**’s theme is self-sufficiency:

“Please do not take in street dogs if you can’t keep them, or if you can’t wait for some kind soul to adopt them.

You may give them everything, but you take away their independence. They must learn the natural instincts to survive.

For those who take a religious view, we are here to follow the path of Good and God and not play God. If She/He has sent them here, She/He knows how to find ways and people to help.

I myself have four street pups outside my house whose pictures I have not sent out, because I have adopted them on the street. They play and survive on the street with their mother. I only make sure no one hurts them, I feed them twice a day, vaccinate, give them a temporary roof and protection. Out of the eight, four died on the street, but I didn’t bring the others home, because I don’t have space and can’t keep them forever. Now after a month, the four which survived have become street smart. Such is life and we all die.

So in my view, let’s do our best, even within the shelters, but don’t let’s pamper them.

Instead, encourage more people to adopt them on the street itself.

I try giving incentives to tea vendors, in terms of daily tips and business, if they promise to take care of the dogs during their working hours, and with most people that works. I feed the ones that live away from my house from the same tea vendor’s stall (milk and treats), so it gives the guy business and money and the little ones food. It’s been my experience that the guy protects the dogs himself, as they become his clientele. And the little ones don’t wander here and there, as they get their food from him. Once these pups are 4-5 months old, they are damn smart... and

then after vaccination and spaying later on, they go their way and new ones come. Please give this thought. It will not only make everyone happy, but also spread awareness amongst lower income people. So let's teach them how to love and protect their street animals and also promote their own business. In no time, you will have a gang near your house which will come in very handy when you are not available." www.freewebs.com/rishidev000/

COMPASSIONATE YOUNG ARCHITECTS – an update on Street Dogs

Rishi writes: "The mother and four pups (mentioned above) used to live at a large construction site, sleeping inside the unfinished building.

Recently, when I went to feed them in the evening, I found that they were sleeping outside in the cold, as the store in which they used to stay was getting painted. So I was deeply concerned about them sleeping in the open and decided to find a cosy corner in the compound for the night, with empty cement bags and other stuff to provide warmth. When I came the next morning to feed them, I found them playing near some labourers' children.

As I started feeding the pups and the bitch, one of the children asked me "What have you got for us to eat, while you are feeding these pups? We are also children and would like something." I felt ashamed at his comments.

So I told those kids that I would get them treats every day if they promised to take care of these dogs. Now these pups were without a home, so they should take care of them. I also showed them how to cuddle a pup without getting bitten and what not to do. They promised that they would get on the job of taking care of them, if I promised treats.

I returned in the evening, with the thought of finding a better place for them to sleep. Since it was dark and no one was around, I started looking for the pups. The bitch was sitting there coolly, but I couldn't find any pup. I started searching and panicked that they had got lost on the large site.

But then I remembered to whistle, to which they used to come running.

What I saw next was the most amazing moment. One small head popped out of a box-like pile of structure in the dark, and after that came running three other little heads.

There was a makeshift house which had come from nowhere, properly made, and the mother was coolly sitting outside that house, inside which the pups were warmly sitting.

The two little heroes, **Rameshwar** and **Bhuwaneshwari**, had made this structure all by themselves for the pups and the bitch.



Rameshwar and Bhuwaneshwari by the kennel they built

After I gave them sweets and appreciation, even their poor parents felt proud that their children had done something commendable. So by one such incident, a lot of people got together for the cause and learnt that there was something so commendable in helping and loving animals that the rest of the better off world appreciated greatly. If one can spread awareness, humility, compassion and love, there is nothing else required to do to help animals. Children are the best learners and teachers, so let's start with them. And please don't look at what class and economic background they belong to.

I have learned from this incident that a small incentive, education and encouragement can make children do things one generally imagines beyond their capabilities. I must admit that even I could not make such a beautiful house for the dogs as these little architects and builders had constructed."

Rishi Dev

~RISHI DEV ARCHITECTS AND ASSOCIATES

From: **DEVOTIONAL POEMS FOR FIRST-DAY SCHOOLS,**
Published by the General Conference of Friends'

First-Day Schools, Philadelphia, 1872.

Don't kill the birds, the little birds
That sing about the door,
Soon as the joyous spring has come,
And chilling storms are o'er.

The little birds, how sweet they sing,
O let them joyous live;
And do not seek to take their life,
Which you can never give.

Don't kill the birds, the pretty birds
That play among the trees;
'Twould make the earth a cheerless place
To see no more of these.

The little birds, how fond they play;
Do not disturb their sport;
But let them warble forth their songs
Till winter cuts them short.

Don't kill the birds, the happy birds
That cheer the field and grove;
Such harmless things to look upon,
They claim our warmest love.

LOCAL NEWS – STOP PRESS

A QCA member wrote the following letter to the cabinet of **Wirral Metropolitan Council**, to support a local campaign in favour of their buying only free-range eggs. The letter made a big impression on the recipients.

Dear Councillors,

I have never written to a councillor before.

I was in the Land Army during the war and am now 87.

When I worked on a farm, I realised hens are beautiful and dignified creatures. They spread their wings over their chicks in order to protect them.

I now read in the newspapers that we Land Girls are to receive a medal.

I would rather have

YOUR VOTE FOR CAGE-FREE EGGS.

Kind wishes,

Peggy Watson. Wirral.

On January 10 08, the motion went through unanimously and Wirral became the third council to ban eggs from caged birds.

Please contact **Compassion in World Farming (Good Egg Awards)** if you would like to get your own council involved, or call the clerk. Thanks to a very helpful and supportive councillor, this was an easy process. However, it did take place against the background of all the media coverage of the mistreatment of hens highlighted by the chefs Jamie Oliver and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall.

A REMINDER OF OUR UPCOMING EVENTS

QUAKER CONCERN FOR ANIMALS DAY IN WALES

At Bangor Meeting House on Saturday, April 5 2008.

QCA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, May 10 2008 at Friends' House, London.