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 our Treasurer:
Ros Lowther, 43, Wirral Gardens, Bebington, Wirral CH63 3BD.
I wish to become a member/renew membership of QCA. I enclose my yearly subscription of £10, or £5 (concessionary) for 2010.
I wish to pay by Standing Order..........................................................................................................................................
I wish to make a donation of..........................................................................................................................................
NAME:........................................................................................................................................................
ADDRESS:................................................................................................................................................
....................................................................................................................................................................
....................................................................................................................................................................
Telephone number, if available: ..........................................................................................................................................
Email address, if available:.............................................................................................................................................
Please make cheques payable to Quaker Concern for Animals.
Please note, we regret we cannot accept CAF cheques.
SIXTH INTERFAITH CELEBRATION OF ANIMALS

Sponsored by the World Congress of Faiths, Quaker Concern for Animals and the Unitarian Faith & Public Issues Commission.

The creatures of the sense world signify the invisible attributes of God, partly because God is the origin, exemplar and end of every Creature - and every effect is the sign of its cause, the exemplification of its exemplar and the path to the end, to which it leads… For every creature is by its nature a kind of effigy and likeness of the eternal Wisdom.

Therefore, open your eyes, alert the ears of your spirit, open your lips and apply your heart so that, in all creatures, you may see, hear, praise, love and worship, glorify and honour your God lest the whole world rise against you.

~ St. Bonaventura.

The service took place at Golders Green Unitarians' church, where our committee member Feargus O’Connor is minister.

Eighty or so congregants, with several dogs, a cat, a hamster and three tortoises listened to readings representing the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Quaker, Sikh, Spiritualist and Unitarian faith traditions.

Feargus O’Connor gave the keynote address, from which come the following extracts.

“Let us pay tribute to those inspirational human voices over the centuries which have boldly spoken out for compassion for all our fellow creatures… Some have been religious and inspired by a living faith tradition; others freethinkers animated by humane feelings and a spirit of loving kindness.”

Feargus mentioned this year’s bicentenary of Charles Darwin’s birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his Origin of Species. “Does the general conception of evolution, as George Bernard Shaw argued, not provide the true humanitarian with a scientific and philosophical basis for ethical conduct towards all our fellow beings?”

“Evolution, according to Shaw, ‘establishes the fundamental equality of all living things… This sense of kinship of all forms of life is all that is needed to make Evolution not only a conceivable theory, but an inspiring one’…

Shaw speaks against vivisection: ‘Once grant the ethics of the vivisectionists and you not only sanction the experiment on the human subject, but make it the first duty of the vivisector. If a guinea pig may be sacrificed for the sake of the very little that can be learnt from it, shall not a man be sacrificed for the sake of the great deal that can be learnt from him?’

‘Vivisection is a social evil because if it advances human knowledge, it does so at the expense of human character…If you cannot attain to knowledge without torturing a dog, you must do without that knowledge… There are hundreds of paths to scientific knowledge. The cruel ones can teach us only what we ought not to know.’ …
“The pioneer animal rights advocate Henry Salt ridiculed the arrogant view that the human species is the very pinnacle of creation and all our fellow sentient beings are here just to be mercilessly exploited, used, slaughtered and eaten.

In a letter to Mahatma Gandhi, also a passionate opponent of vivisection and proponent of animal rights, Salt writes that he cannot see how there can be any real recognition of our common kinship with our fellow beings as long as we continue, in his words, ‘to cheat or to eat them’…

Feargus examined Hindu thinking: “‘We bow to all beings with great reverence in the thought and knowledge that God enters into them through fractioning Himself into living creatures’, we read in the Hindu epic The Mahabharata: an ethic truly in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi himself.

“This lesson is also illustrated in the life and teachings of the founder of the Jain religion, Mahavira, who sought to propagate a religion which would benefit all living beings in a spirit of loving kindness.

“The Native American Chief Seattle wisely perceived what American Unitarian Universalists fittingly call ‘the interconnected web of all existence of which we are a part’.

‘We are part of the Earth and it is part of us.
The perfumed flowers are our sisters.
The deer, the horse, the great eagle: these are our brothers.
The rocky crests, the juices of the meadows, the body heat of the pony and man…
All belong to the same family.
The Earth does not belong to us…
We belong to the Earth.
All things are connected like the blood which unites one family.
Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the children of the Earth.

Human beings did not weave the web of life.
We are merely a strand in it.
Whatever we do to the web we do to ourselves.’

The service was endorsed by messages of support from three parliamentarians: Caroline Lucas, MEP, Leader of the Green Party in England & Wales and Vice President of the RSPCA and the Intergroup for Animal Welfare of the European Union, the Baroness Anita Gale, whose main interests in the House of Lords are issues concerning women and animals, and Angela E. Smith, MP, Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Many thanks to Feargus O’Connor and the Golders Green Unitarians for organising once again such an inspiring and welcoming service, at which QCA was represented by nine members.
Jains support RSPCA

On Saturday, September 12 09, the Manchester Jains organised a packed day of activities to raise funds for the RSPCA – their main fundraiser of the year. On the morning of a very hot and sunny day, I joined some 60 of the Jain community for a 5 mile sponsored walk in the local area. Accompanied by four drummers, we made quite a noticeable group among the shoppers in Didsbury and Longsight, all wearing our Jain-RSPCA T shirts, which bore on the back the words Stop Cruelty to Animals – Live and Let Live.

Back at their Samaj - community centre - we had our free brunch of pizza and pasta and socialised before the Nache Baliye – Dance Competition. The competitors, who had had the benefit of expert training beforehand, ranged from age 3 to 53.

We stayed for a session of Deal or no Deal. To follow, were an auction and raffle, Fire Walk and Glass Walk and then dinner.

Many thanks to our Jain friends for their warm welcome once again and for raising the magnificent sum of over £10,000 for the RSPCA.

~ Marian Hussenbux.

In November 09, during Interfaith Week, Jyoti, daughter of our patron Nitin Mehta, addressed a large interfaith meeting, including government ministers. She highlighted Ahimsa and Vegetarianism.

“Respected friends, good afternoon. My name is Jyoti and I am a practising Jain from Croydon. I am currently one of the youngest Trustees of the Inter Faith Network, and this is the result of a journey which started at university when my interest in interfaith dialogue was really sparked. One of the foundational qualities described in Jainism is maitri, or universal friendship. The idea of universal friendship had always taught me to theoretically extend friendship to people of all faiths. But it was only when I became involved with other faith communities that I could actively practise this friendship. Engaging in interfaith dialogue at university educated me, inspired me and provided me with new friends. This ancient philosophy of universal friendship, maitri, was no longer academic for me, but real and I understood how important it is not just for social harmony, but also for spiritual progression. We are one of

~ Sister Faith Bowman for this version of a stanza from St. Francis’s Canticle. http://www.vegetarianfriends.net/issue10.html
the smallest faith communities in this country, but we are absolutely committed to extending our friendship as far as it can reach throughout society.

“It is interesting to note that our translation of maitri is not just friendship, but universal friendship, and this is because we embrace all living souls, including plants and animals into this companionship. The central philosophy of Jainism is Ahimsa, non-violence. Expressed in positive terms, this means compassionate love. Because we consider nature and animals to be fellow sentient souls, Jains are committed vegetarians, and we see this as key to protecting animals, the environment and even humanity. Vegetarianism is not just a diet for us - it is a way in which we practically express our compassion. By consuming a non-violent diet, this extrapolates for us into a wider aim to be non-violent in everything single thing that we do, in thought, speech and action. As a result of this central philosophy of Ahimsa, the Jain community has for centuries been closely associated with environmentalism, sustainable living and supporting of animal welfare and animal sanctuaries. The Jain community in the UK, including the youth, continue to live by these virtues and share them with wider society.”

~ Jyoti Mehta

REMEMBERING THE ANIMAL VICTIMS OF WAR

Remembrance includes the sacrifice of animals in war.

In 2009, three Remembrance services acknowledged the suffering and death of animals in war and military activity.

On Remembrance Sunday 8 November, Eastbourne became one of the first towns outside London to pay formal tribute to the millions of animals who served and died in two World Wars.

Eastbourne residents and Quaker Concern for Animals members Ann Johnson and Bill Palethorpe laid a wreath of purple poppies at the War Memorial, in memory of all the animals, including working dogs, equines and pigeons serving alongside troops, who have died and continue to suffer in war zones. This took place at the formal wreath laying parade and ceremony, organised by the Eastbourne Combined Ex-Services Association.

There is a personal link, as Bill’s father was buried in a bombing raid in 1944, then dug out alive after being located by a rescue dog.

This commemorative gesture received tremendous support from all sides of the community and was endorsed by a number of local, national and international organisations who signed the wreath’s card. These included: Alexandra Bastedo Champions Animal Sanctuary in West Chiltington, Pulborough; East Sussex Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service; Barby Keel Animal Sanctuary, Bexhill; Eastbourne Vegetarian Society; Viva! (Vegetarians International Voice for Animals) and Quaker Concern for Animals. Animal Aid had the original idea of commemorating animals who died in wars and supply the purple poppies and wreaths.

Two international organisations added their names to the card: The Mayhew Animal Home and Mayhew International and The Brooke. The Mayhew helped facilitate transportation to and quarantine in the UK of the stray dogs from Afghanistan, rescued by Nowzad Dogs,
the charity started in 2006 by a group of Royal Marines serving in Afghanistan. Mayhew
International continues to work in Kabul to improve conditions for animals there. Mayhew
Chief Executive Officer Caroline Yates has sent the message: “In memory of all those animals
who with courage, devotion and loyalty served their owners and their country. Their sacrifice
is not forgotten.”

The Brooke, founded in Cairo in 1934, originally as a hospital for old war horses, by Dorothy
Brooke is the UK’s leading overseas equine welfare charity, improving the lives of horses,
donkeys and mules working in the poorest parts of the world through its mobile vet teams.
Ailsa Herd, speaking of behalf of the Brooke said: “The Brooke supports Ann and Bill with
their special tribute to Animals in War. We had our own Horse Hero campaign culminating
on World Animal Day on 4 October when we held a special tribute and shared supporter
messages at the Animals in War Memorial in London.”

Local media coverage was extensive and Friends were also interviewed by the Press
Association.

~ Ann Johnson and Bill Palethorpe. Eastbourne Meeting.

Quaker Concern for Animals and Catholic Concern for Animals, with the
endorsement of Pastor James Thompson – the Animal Padre - and our committee member,
the Revd. Feargus O’Connor of the Golders Green Unitarians, the Jain group The Young Indian
Vegetarians in London and the Manchester Jain Samaj, laid wreaths of purple poppies at
the Remembrance Service in Warrington. Subsequently, QCA managed to get a letter about
these Remembrance services printed in the Independent newspaper.

Remembrance Sunday in 2010 will take place on November 14. If you wish to participate
formally, as Ann and Bill did, you will need to approach your local council in advance.
Otherwise, they are inclusive events, so anybody is welcome to lay wreaths after the official
service. Why not buy a wreath of purple poppies from Animal Aid - www.animalaid.org.uk
- and bring the sacrifice of our fellow creatures to the notice of your MP, council and
local residents?

This is a commemoration which could become an established date in the calendar and
it would be even more effective as an ecumenical and interfaith event.
MEMBERS’ NEWS

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL – A HOPEFUL STEP

On Oct. 15 09, the Cambridge Evening News reported that the City Council had approved a motion to buy Freedom Food or free range products for all their catering and facilities. Our committee member, Joan Court, leader of Animal Rights Cambridge, was instrumental in getting the support of Labour group Leader Lewis Herbert to achieve this important advance.

The next step is foie gras – the group is calling for this cruel food to be banned in the city. For more information on the campaign, visit: www.animalrightscambridge.webs.com

Animal Rights Cambridge is believed to be the longest standing local Animal Rights group in the UK. The group has campaigned on both local and national issues and opposes all forms of animal exploitation. The group hands out leaflets, conducts stalls and organises and attends protests.

FRIENDLY NEWS WORLDWIDE

Ministry on October 4 09, St. Francis Day, to Brevard Meeting, North Carolina, by Friend Carol Hoke:

• Do I apprehend God in all things, for so full of God is every creature? (Meister Eckhart)
• Do I show a loving consideration for all creatures? (Quaker Faith & Practice, Britain)
• Do I grasp that, to say I love God and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature … is a contradiction in itself? (John Woolman 1772)
• Do I recall the gentleness with which saints like St. Francis of Assisi … treated animals … and that it is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly? (Catechism of the Catholic Church)
• Do I believe that “Life is as dear to the mute creature as it is to a man [or woman]. Just as one wants happiness and fears pain, just as one wants to live and not to die, so do other creatures.” (His Holiness, the Dalai Lama)
• Am I mindful of the words of the Koran: “There is not an animal on the earth, nor a flying creature on two wings, but they are people like unto you.”

In Spain, our member Rosemary Emmett is actively involved in ARCADYS, an animal welfare group of 600 people in Valencia. This is her news:

Therapy with Companion Animals.

ARCADYS, an organisation to promote respect and mutual co-existence with domestic and wild animals, is organising a seminar in Valencia on December 21 09, with the participation of mental and physical health professionals, psychologists and educationalists – and the therapy dogs!
Presentations include an examination of the law pertaining to service dogs – the first of its kind in Spain and Europe - expanding the emotional world of people with disabilities and how dogs can help in the management of autism.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND OTHER ANIMALS

Journeys in the Spirit - Sidcot Children’s Meeting

Sidcot is a large Meeting, averaging around 50 people, including some pupils from Sidcot School, but the numbers of children who come to CM varies a lot from week to week. Five turned up on November 22 09, the youngest about 5 or 6 and the oldest a very lively 13; the other three were 9 or 10.

The youngest and her sister are vegetarian, and another girl has been vegan since birth; the oldest seemed less obviously in tune with animals, although she does have a horse.

We began sitting quietly in a circle and I asked them to think about an animal special to them and to think of something that their animal could do which they would like to be able to do. The eldest girl may have been trying to be a bit provocative in choosing a lion, giving as her reason that she wanted to eat a zebra for breakfast, another for lunch and another for dinner! But it went fairly well, and we had quite a selection of different animals.

I showed them Edward Hick’s Peaceable Kingdom painting, giving them some background about him and his inspiration for the painting having come from Isaiah 11:6–9, which I read out. I had been researching him for the Quaker Tapestry project I’m doing.

I suggested they might like to draw/paint an animal, and then we could get a large piece of paper and stick all their animals on to it together – they were keen to do this, and some of them did more than one animal. I had with me some outline shapes of animals for them to colour in if they weren’t confident or keen to draw, but they were all fine doing their own thing. I had also taken along pictures of animals cut out from old nature magazines and we interspersed those with their artwork. I showed them the picture of the bobcat and the fawn curled up together after the forest fires in California this summer, and a cutting from the Metro of an abandoned baby macaque monkey clinging to a white dove who had ‘adopted’ him – to show that, particularly among the young, the peaceable kingdom was not impossible in the here and now.

While they were all busy drawing/painting, I explained the work of QCA and asked them what they understood about our Peace Testimony; we had some discussion about why we might or might not extend that testimony to animals, who generally speaking do us no harm, and certainly don’t wage war on us. We thought about the animals not fortunate to be part of a loving home, and how they might be suffering. We mentioned animal experiments and caged hens. The two vegetarian sisters told us they have some hens rescued from batteries at home and quite a few other animals as well.

We chose some words to add to the collage. The eldest girl produced a very colourful, large painting of the words The Peaceable Kingdom, which went along the top and asked if she could have the copy of Hicks’ painting. At the bottom, the youngest child copied out Show a Loving Consideration for All Creatures, from Advice 42.
The children were quite pleased to have an ANIMALS NEED FRIENDS badge each (once produced by QCA) and these words went on to the collage as well.

Next week, the collage will go up on the wall in the room where the children meet, which is also where everyone has coffee after Meeting, along with one of the QCA dove fliers, where hopefully they will stay for some weeks.

At the end of main Meeting, the children now go in after Notices and report on their activity. Mostly they find this a bit overwhelming, but the eldest girl delivered a very confident summary of what we had covered, which all worked out fantastically well, because this was the second week of our collection for QCA.

All in all, holding us in the Light proved very helpful, and it went as well as I could possibly have hoped.

~ Many thanks to Jill Greenway for this report on her successful Children’s Meeting based on the animal issue of Journeys in the Spirit.

South Belfast also used these materials with some success - we would be interested to hear if any other Meetings have done so?

As mentioned in the last issue of this newsletter, Journeys in the Spirit is available on free subscription from Friends’ House. Contact the Children’s Officer, Chris Nickolay. chrisn@quaker.org.uk

HAPPY HENS PROJECT IN ALBUQUERQUE QUAKER MEETING

Mikki Aronoff writes: “Inspired by stories of Good Egg initiatives in the UK, as reported and nurtured by Quaker Concern for Animals, and with the lovely study material coming out of Compassion for World Farming, I decided to introduce a Happy Hens project to the children in First Day School of Albuquerque Monthly Meeting, New Mexico. We had earlier in the year done a collaborative multi-session Peaceable Kingdom project, which had as its goal building empathy with all sentient beings. The overall goal of the Happy Hens project was to build empathy with chickens and to understand the difference between factory-farmed chickens and the eggs they produce and chickens allowed to live a normal chicken life and the eggs they produce.

We held three sessions in summer 2009. We met at the very green home of Marcie, the Clerk of the Children’s Committee, whose three boys attend First Day School. After a potluck meal, we visited their massive garden and chickens. It was a perfect introduction to how chickens could live a happy life. On this occasion, we concentrated on getting “up close and personal” with young chicks to geriatric ones (the oldest was 8), the latter happily and naturally living out their last days. None of these chickens would ever be eaten.

Many of the children were already quite knowledgeable about chickens, but I had a checklist of questions ready. We learned that they like to roost off the ground, and that the young chicks were kept in the greenhouse to protect them against marauding raccoons. Marcie demonstrated the wide variety of the different sounds chickens make and told us when they make them. I wondered aloud if chickens have feelings (yes) and if they can suffer (yes). The chickens were all so visibly different from one another.
We were told that they didn’t mind being touched, that they come to humans when food is offered, and what they eat. We learned that breed determines eggshell color, and not their food. Eggs from their hens taste stronger and have darker yolks.

After a long period of observation, we mimicked chicken sounds and movements — egg-laying, scratching for bugs, bathing in the dust, wing-flapping and flying about.

The children really enjoyed getting to know the chickens and, when asked, all said they couldn’t eat one if it was a pet.

The second session was held in the Meeting House. As we talked, everyone colored in stick puppets representing either eggs in nests, chicks, hens or roosters.

This was the session that dealt with factory-farmed chickens. For children to gain some empathy with how these chickens are treated, I wanted to work with their senses. I asked them all to crowd under the table together and imagine what it would be like to always have to be like that. For those who wanted (and they all did), they could remove their shoes and stand in a wire letter tray so they could get an idea of what it would be like to be that uncomfortable all their lives. Older children were told, apart from the young ones, of the cruelties inflicted on factory-farmed chickens, treating animals as non-living entities in order to turn a profit.

One child spoke about how unhappy she was at a recent visit to the state fair, where she witnessed a hummingbird and a fox cruelly kept in very small cages just for show. Another spoke of chemicals in eggs from factory-farmed chickens.

As the younger children went back to coloring and listening, the older ones were engaged in a discussion of how keeping chickens in factory farms was not congruent with Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship. We asked them to think about what we are saying when we say “There is that of God in everyone.” The idea of factory-farmed chickens as slaves arose. Factory-farmed chickens all looked alike; Marcie’s chickens did not. We talked about the lack of a peaceable existence for crowded chickens, and about keeping one’s integrity by “doing the right thing” for all; about chickens and humans as both part of the animal community and therefore chickens deserve equal treatment. Living in harmony with the earth, as witnessed in Marcie’s sustainable environment, demonstrated simplicity and stewardship.

John Woolman was quoted: “To say we love God and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature is a contradiction in itself.”

At the rise of Meeting, the children talked about what they learned, showed their puppets, and sang a chicken song; I praised them for their empathy.

At the last session, the children worked on a poster. One side of the poster had a drawing
showing happy hens, the other comments on factory-farmed chickens and how their eggs were less healthy to eat. Albuquerque Monthly Meeting is fortunate to have quite a few members who maintain happy hens and bring in their eggs. Lynn brought deviled eggs (wasabi was the secret ingredient!) and others brought hard-boiled eggs so the children could make egg salad (the children always cook something for our potlucks). As the Meeting enjoyed the food, one child whose family used to raise organic chickens, talked to the membership about why it was good for people to eat eggs from happy hens and how horribly factory-farmed chickens are treated. He received a wide applause. We did not discuss what vegans are and how they choose not to eat eggs at all - I regret this oversight.

All in all, it was an enjoyable experience. It's a simple and effective project and brings children to a deeper understanding of the difference between treating animals kindly or cruelly, and experientially closer to an understanding of Quaker testimonies.

~ Many thanks to Mikki Aronoff, a good Ffriend and excellent source of news from the USA, who is also an expert in shadow puppetry, using the medium in her humane education work in schools.

HUMANE EDUCATION IN NEW DELHI

Vasanthi Kumar, Managing Trustee of Stray Relief and Animal Welfare (STRAW) writes:

“We did an educational program in Nai Disha Free School in December 09. Unlike regular schools, a free school has children from slums and such places and their parents are mostly illiterate and take up part time jobs in the construction industry. About 50 kids got to see a movie – Compassionate Citizen (Hindi version) and at the end of it, I found that they had received the message well. Further, two of the boys were asked to elucidate all that they had learnt from the program during their next morning assembly, which I thought was a wonderful idea.

We hope to be carrying out a few more sessions in this school during January.”

www.strawindia.org
EDUCATIONAL PROJECT IN ISRAEL

The extensive humane education curriculum developed by Concern for Helping Animals in Israel (CHAI), one version for secular, and another for Jewish schools, both in Hebrew, is nearing completion.

The necessity for such materials is that many express pride in the principles of their religion, but ignore them when making daily lifestyle choices.

Instilling in students a sense of wonder at nature, empowering them to make a difference and engaging them in critical thinking activities will foster lives that reflect integrity and will bring about enormous positive change.

In the Jewish version, stories from the Torah or tradition are paired with modern day stories. Lesson plans include commandments, holidays and heroes and heroines related to animals, how we define “community” and animal issues in Israel.

Fact sheets, activities and questions for discussion show clearly the effects of our daily choices on the planet and all its inhabitants. Specific steps are suggested that can move us from our present situation towards the ideal world we would all wish to call home – a world of respect and compassion for people and animals.

Some examples of traditional Jewish concern for our fellow beings are:

Moved by caged birds’ longing for freedom, Rabbi Zusya released the birds at the inn where he was staying and left happy, even though the innkeeper beat and cursed him. Appalled by the suffering caused by nobles’ use of spurs on horses during jousts in the Middle Ages, Rabbi Yehuda spoke out in protest; Rebecca repeatedly hauled heavy buckets of water from a well to quench the thirst of camels after their long journey. Rabbi Karelitz lowered himself into a deep pit to save an animal’s life; Rabbi Shlomo adopted and cared for homeless cats and Rabbi Abramtsi stopped his carriage and told his coachman they would celebrate the Sabbath in an open field, rather than beat the horses so they would race home in time for the Sabbath.

Thanks to Nina Natelson of CHAI in the US.

CHAI - Concern for Helping Animals in Israel

PO Box 3341, Alexandria, VA 22302  Email: chai_us@cox.net

THE SOUND OF BIRDS AT NOON

This chirping
Is surely not vicious.
They sing without giving us a thought
And they are as numerous
As the seed of Abraham.
They have a life of their own,
Flight for them is no act of the mind.
Some are prized, others despised,
But the wing itself is beauty.
Their hearts aren’t heavy
Even when they peck at a worm.
Perhaps they’re light-minded.
The heavens were given to them
For dominion over day and night
And the moment they alight on a branch,
The branch too is theirs.
This chirping is entirely free of malice.
Over the years it may even
Appear
To carry a note of compassion.

~ Chana Bloch and Chana Kronfeld.

Translated from the Hebrew by Dahlia Ravikovitch.

INTERVIEW WITH A MEMBER OF THE SOFA CLUB

The SOFA Club – Speaking Out For Animals - in Thorpe House School, Norwich, is an
amazingly successful group of junior pupils working, at the parliamentary level, on a campaign
for the compulsory microchipping of dogs. At the 09 AGM of the RSPCA, nominated by our
QCA advisor and RSPCA Trustee, Angela Walder, they received the Charlotte Wright Award
for their excellent work.

Olivia, a 10 year old member of the club, responded to our questions:

How did the SOFA Club start and why? The SOFA Club started about five years ago with fifteen
girls. This happened at the end of an English lesson, when a small group of girls asked their teacher
(Ms Cole) if they could start an animal action club, and Ms Cole said yes.

What is your greatest success to date? Well, I think that this campaign is probably the most
successful, as we are very close to getting microchipping law!

Do you yourself have companion animals at home? Yes, I have two adult cats, called Mischief
and Magic and a rescued kitten called Misty.

What was the first action you personally took to help an animal? I’m not sure about that,
but I can remember a time when I helped a rabbit, a few years ago. I had just got up and I went
into the living room. There was a squeaking noise underneath the table and lying there was a tiny
rabbit. We knew it wouldn’t live long but we still tried to help it. Sadly, it passed away the next day.

Why do you think it’s important to be compassionate towards animals? I think so because
they can’t speak, so what we are doing is speaking out for them and I’m sure that if they could
speak, they would be saying what we are saying!

Apart from the SOFA Club microchipping campaign, which other animal issue concerns
the club most? Well, we are trying to do some work on puppy farming, which we think is very
important.
As well as Ms Cole, who is your animal campaigning hero? Probably Lyz from Hallswood* as she does so much for animals and we are trying to help her carry on without Keith.

Which is your favourite animal? – (apart from Mr. Bobby, Miss Cole’s greyhound, of course!) I really love all animals, but as I have three of my own, I do love cats.

*Hallwood Animal Sanctuary - for sick and injured wildlife.
Short Thorn Road, Stratton Strawless, Norfolk, NR10 5NU www.hallswood.co.uk

They have a non-kill policy and always try to rehabilitate animals to the wild.

Sue Cole writes: The sanctuary does brilliant work and Keith - now sadly deceased - started us on the microchipping campaign. His wife, Lyz, is doing her best to carry on the work, but the council is trying to close the sanctuary.

Please note: The web site was not available at the time of going to print.

Animal-Human Solidarity: Thoughts from the University Classroom. – David Pinault.

Perhaps the best thing about the teaching profession is that one is constantly challenged to keep learning. So, too, with me. In November 2007 I served as a volunteer at a wildlife rescue center in East Java operated by an NGO called ProFauna Indonesia. There I worked alongside staff from various faith backgrounds—Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian.

This experience inspired me recently to create a new course for students at the institution where I teach—Santa Clara University. Entitled “Animals, the Environment, and World Religions,” the course compared the scriptures, myths, and doctrines of Western and Asian religions. My students and I examined the problematic history of these faiths in their views of animals, and we considered recent efforts by religious reformers to critique their own traditions.

Easy enough to fault the Abrahamic Western faiths, with their long history of scripturally justified emphasis on human overlordship and exploitation of the natural world. The Asian traditions we studied—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism—at first glance seemed to offer attractive alternatives. Their karmic worldview states that humans and animals alike are caught up together in spirals of reincarnation.

Our study of Asian scriptures and legends, however, revealed a disturbing dimension to these faiths as well. In Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, human-animal kinship is anthropocentrically hierarchic. Incarnation as an animal is believed to be punishment for sins in a previous life; if animals suffer, this is part of their necessary purgation of sins. Traditional teachings in the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain religions deplore violence against animals, but this is primarily for the purpose of the individual human’s salvation and deliverance from the wheel of existence, rather than out of any motivation to improve the systemic situation of animals and the world they share in common with us.

But in our coursework we also examined more encouraging theological developments. In recent years, Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh has taken the lead in articulating a movement known as “Engaged Buddhism.” Critical of traditionally minded “forest monks,” who withdraw from society to pursue individual salvation, Engaged Buddhism takes as a
model the teaching career of Siddhartha Gautama (the historical Buddha), who manifested sympathtic concern for the existential plight of all sentient creatures. Thich Nhat Hanh's movement interprets nirvana as a transformative experience of one's connectedness with the world, an experience that leads not to escape but to greater involvement with the sufferings of those around us.

My students and I compared this Buddhist reformation with twentieth-century theological initiatives in the Abrahamic tradition, beginning with the work of the Jewish thinker Abraham Joshua Heschel. Drawing on the Biblical concept of the shekhina (the “divine presence”—manifested as a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire—that accompanied the Israelites in their Exodus and desert wanderings), Heschel described what he called “the divine pathos.” The Biblical God, argued Heschel, is neither remote from us nor uninvolved with human suffering. Instead God is intimately and sympathetically present in whatever we undergo.

The German theologian Jürgen Moltmann christianized this theology in his book The Crucified God. Here Moltmann argued that Christ's crucifixion should not be understood only as a one-time historical event undergone by the human Jesus of Nazareth. Because of Christ's identity as Son of God and member of the Trinity, the Crucifixion involved suffering within the Godhead itself, suffering that is ongoing and continuous throughout history, in solidarity with what humans undergo.

Here my students and I came to one of the most intriguing concepts explored in our course: kenotic Christology (from the Greek word kenosis, “emptying”; cf. the New Testament Letter to the Philippians, which describes the second Person of the Trinity as having voluntarily “emptied himself” of divine powers in the Incarnation, in order to participate fully in the human condition and its limitations and sufferings).

Christian authors such as Mark Wallace apply kenotic Christology to environmentalism. Wallace describes the third Person of the Trinity as “the Wounded Spirit,” God's ongoing presence in the world, which, since the original event of Pentecost, continues among us in the form of the Holy Ghost—a Spirit that is present not only in humans but also in the environment and all the creatures existent in the natural world. Deforestation, air pollution, violence to animals—all such things, argues Wallace, wound the indwelling divine Spirit—a Spirit that has kenotically, lovingly, and voluntarily emptied itself of divine invulnerability in order to participate fully in this God-created world.

A theme shared by Buddhist reformers and Christian kenotic environmentalists is the spiritual autonomy of animals—the notion that animals have worth in and of themselves, independent of their potential utilitarian value for humans. Some of the authors we examined in our course (such as the primatologist Jane Goodall) also argue that we should be alert to the existence of a spiritual life among animals—that is, that animals, as well as humans, harbor an intuitive awareness of the Divine. Goodall bases this assertion on her field observations of rainforest primates. Those who wish to experience this spiritual dimension of animals, she states, must cultivate a contemplative discipline—a practice largely neglected in the flat-screen, computerized, and denatured world we have chosen to build. Contemplative interaction with nature could help us re-establish kinship and friendship with the non-human souls all about us.
Here Goodall’s work converges with that of the Catholic environmentalist-contemplative Thomas Berry, who writes that rather than regard animals as objects to be exploited, humans must learn to see themselves and animals as beings that are bound together in a “communion of subjects”—a communion that may well help heal the existential loneliness to which humans are all too vulnerable.

And when our course ended, these in fact were the themes my students rated as most valuable in their evaluations of the semester: communion, kinship, and the possibility of human-animal solidarity in the face of environmental crises.

~ David Pinault is an associate professor of religious studies at Santa Clara University (USA) and a member of the advisory board of ProFauna Indonesia. His most recent book is Notes From the Fortune-Telling Parrot: Islam and the Struggle for Religious Pluralism in Pakistan. He may be contacted at dpinault@scu.edu or via the Dept. of Religious Studies, Santa Clara University, 500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, CA 95053 USA.

IN EUROPE

IRELAND

At the end of November 09, the Irish Council Against Blood Sports (ICABS) was dismayed to learn that Irish Green Party leader and Environment Minister, John Gormley, agreed to a coursing licence extension which will allow coursers to continue terrorising hares into the month of March 2010. This is the third year in a row that Minister Gormley has agreed to the coursers’ request for an extension.

The details are revealed in a document obtained following a Freedom of Information request by ICABS… in a letter from the Assistant Director to the CEO of the Irish Coursing Club, it is stated: “In relation to your application for a licence under Section 26(3) of the Wildlife Act, 1976 to undertake coursing outside the Open Season Order, the Minister has agreed to this extension for 1 March 2010 to facilitate the holding of the Irish Cup meeting at Limerick. The appropriate licence will issue to you in 2010.”

In a letter of appeal to Minister Gormley, ICABS has called for the current licence to be revoked, the extension to be withheld and for permanent protection to be put in place for the Irish Hare. The animal is vulnerable in terms of numbers and the minister has made this point himself.

QCA has, yet again, appealed to John Gormley to take action to save their native hare. Our last open letter to him was printed in The Friendly Word, a magazine for Irish Quakers.
However, on a more positive note, in December 09, speaking on RTE TV’s Nine News, ICABS’ spokesperson Aideen Yourell expressed confidence that Minister John Gormley will stand firm and introduce overdue legislation to ban the Ward Union carted deer hunt, on which we reported in the newsletters of Autumn 07 and Spring 08. The RTE report featured ICABS footage showing a deer surrounded by hounds being dragged to the ground during a Ward Union hunt.

QCA says: These are semi-domesticated stags, with their antlers sawn off, kept in County Meath. The object of the exercise is not to kill the deer, though this does happen and there are many instances of injuries, described in earlier QCA reports.

The minister was quoted in the Irish Times of November 21, 2009 as saying that alarm bells started ringing when he received a report which referred to ‘deer going across the road just in front of a car’. After a series of such incidents, including one in December which saw a car crashing into and fatally wounding a hunted deer, these alarm bells should now be sounding at a thunderous volume.

Unfortunately, in the December 19th, 09 issue of the hunting publication Irish Field, the Green Party deputy leader, Mary White, assured hunters that “when the Ward Union are stopped in 2010, we have no intention of banning fox hunting or hare coursing either now or anytime in the future.” She said the Green Party has a “hands-off” policy towards shooting, fox hunting and hare coursing and that there will be no efforts to ban them. She also stressed that the Green Party are not against “field sports” such as shooting. In respect of other parties in Ireland: according to an article in the Meath Chronicle on 9th January 2010, the Fianna Fail councillor, Noel Leonard, claims there is considerable support within his party to ban stag hunting.

He says he will have no problem giving his backing to the Green Party initiative.

http://www.meathchronicle.ie

~ Thanks to Philip Kiernan of ICABS for permission to use this material.

ICABS request you contact Minister Gormley and ask him to stop licensing hare coursing and deer hunting - minister@environ.ie Visit www.banbloodsports.com

SCOTLAND

Save a life: feed a grey

The Grey Squirrel: Native by birth – Condemned by origin

“The state-sponsored campaign of unfair vilification and cruelty against grey squirrels has now reached the point where thousands of these well-loved, friendly and amusing animals are being trapped and clubbed to death. This will include the indiscriminate killing of lactating females, which will mean their kittens will starve to death in their dreys – and it is being called ‘humane’. So what can members of the public, who disagree with this approach, do to counter this bloodshed? Visit: www.grey-squirrel.org.uk

A. Macmillan, Meikle Boturich, near Balloch, Dunbartonshire G83 8LX
amacmil304@aol.com
Returning to Ireland, there is an annual cull competition, which gun clubs say is supported by the Department of Agriculture. Over 2,000 grey squirrels have been killed in the past two years, with prize money of €1,600 going to the club with the most hits.

Bernie Wright, press officer of the Alliance for Animal Rights (Afar), says it’s not the grey squirrels’ fault they have ended up in Ireland, and their mass culling is unjustified. “Man has created this problem and should ultimately take responsibility for introducing non-indigenous species. The grey squirrels should not have to pay with their lives”.

SPAIN

The bullfight is cowardice itself parading as courage. To torture an animal for pleasure is human malice pitted against innocence.
~ Pierre Rabhi

HISTORIC MOVE TO BAN THE BULLFIGHT IN CATALUNYA.

News from Plataforma Prou:
In the Spring 09 newsletter, we reported on the collection of signatures for the Popular Legislative Initiative to be presented to the Catalan Parliament. December 18 09 saw the first of 3 debates in parliament on this, which aims to have bullfighting banned in the region. 180,000 signatures on the proposition were collected earlier this year, three times the number needed for the presentation of the initiative.

There had been so much media interest in the debate that Parliament received a record number of requests from the foreign press to cover it.

The result of this first voting was: 67 votes for a debate, 59 against and 5 abstentions.

Many of the Spanish media put surveys on their web sites. Results on the web site of the newspaper El País show 70% against the corrida and 30% in favour. On the RTVE television web site, 19.2% consider the corrida to be a well-rooted Spanish tradition, 80.8%, cruelty.


QCA Note: In the newspaper El País of December 11 09, a letter from a reader advocating abolition of the corrida was given a prominent position.

In company with other non-Spanish anti-bullfight organisations, QCA has endorsed a letter to the Catalan MPs, reiterating the arguments against this cruel activity and asking them to ban it in Catalunya.

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

On February 4, 2010 a formal agreement between Perm State Pharmaceutical Academy and the International Network for Humane Education (InterNICHE) was signed. Perm State Pharmaceutical Academy now becomes the tenth Russian higher education institution to sign a contract with InterNICHE concerning the introduction of alternatives to animal labs.
InterNICHE grants the academy computer programs for use in the classroom as an alternative to dissection and animal experimentation in different courses, while the Academy guarantees to stop all animal labs carried out during studies.

Active promotion of alternatives made by VITA and InterNICHE campaigners in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus has resulted in the introduction of alternatives in dozens of universities of CIS countries and the replacement of the annual use of thousands of animals. The progress of this curricular change is described in the new Russian film “Humane Education in the CIS countries” made by VITA and InterNICHE with the support of DAAE (Doctors Against Animal Experiments Germany, www.aerzte-gegen-tierversuche.de/en).

The first institution of higher education to abolish all animal labs was Velikie Luki State Agricultural Academy, which signed contracts with InterNICHE in 2006 and 2009. (Another Russian university who has become a pioneer in introduction alternatives is St Petersburg State Academy of Veterinary Medicine, which signed on October 24th, 2005, a historic agreement with InterNICHE on the cancelation of experiments on animals in the university’s departments of pharmacology and toxicology) But whereas in this and other institutions the animal labs were stopped at the faculty or departmental level, the contract with Perm State Pharmaceutical Academy provides for a total cessation of all animal labs in all departments.

Alexey Skrobanskiy, InterNICHE Russia alternatives adviser and co-ordinator of the Arkhangelsk chapter of VITA, said: “The governing body of Perm Pharmaceutical Academy expressed great interest in the issues of humane education… now pharmacology and other disciplines will be based on modern alternative technologies. This will significantly enhance the quality of teaching, save the lives of dozens of animals, and serve the future promotion of alternatives in Russia.”…

As well as the value of non-animal learning tools such as multimedia computer software, models and mannekins, the benefits of clinical practice as a replacement alternative has been important to stress in Russia. In this humane alternative approach, students assist veterinary doctors in the treatment, surgery and nursing of animals at clinics, rather than inflicting injuries on healthy animals and then treating them.

Alexey Skrobanskiy also visited a number of the Perm Krai animal shelters with a view to helping implement a homeless pet sterilisation program in Arkhangelsk. He also had a meeting with the Chief of the Environment and Wildlife Management Department of the Administration of Berezniki town, which has an official sterilisation program. Properly supervised, such programs can benefit the animals and provide students with valuable clinical skills and surgery experience.


~ Thanks to Nick Jukes, Co-ordinator of InterNICHE, for this optimistic news.
NEWS FROM THE AMERICAS

THE UNITED STATES

In November 09, the Los Angeles City Council, Beverly Hills and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted to ban de-clawing. Santa Monica City Council had already voted in favour of a ban on Oct. 27 and other US cities are looking into prohibiting the amputation. Onychectomy, commonly known as de-clawing, is the practice of amputating a cat’s first paw joints, including the claw at the first knuckle, and it is illegal in many European countries. The councilman who introduced the measure in LA describes it as “a prima facie instance of animal cruelty.”

California is described as being at the forefront nationwide in banning the procedure, which is performed to stop cats attacking the furniture.

“Because each digit is amputated through the joint, this procedure is painful and requires the appropriate treatment of pain before, during and after the procedure,” the American College of Veterinary Surgeons’ website states.

However, the California Veterinary Medical Association said that with modern medical techniques - especially laser surgery - and appropriate pain management, cats are often up and walking shortly after awakening from anesthesia.

“If it comes down to a cat being euthanized, losing its home or losing its claws,” said association president Mark Nunez, “being euthanized or losing its home is a worse outcome.”

QCA note on the last paragraph: Obviously a case of seriously unenlightened views on the part of the general public. But well done to the city councils!

Thanks to IDA for the original of this piece. Visit http://www.idausa.org

Last year 7 greyhound tracks closed in the USA, bringing to 20 the total which have ended racing in the past 5 years. Now there are only 23 dog tracks remaining in eight states and the latest good news is that New Hampshire’s House of Representatives has voted to outlaw the greyhound racing industry there. See www.grey2kusa.org/eNEWS/G2K-011410Email.html for more information.

HAITI

We have all been saddened at the devastation caused by the earthquake in Haiti and, as ever, the animals need help too.

This is the latest update, at time of going to press, on rescue work there – with thanks to Best Friends in the US:

“As animal rescue teams representing the Animal Relief Coalition for Haiti (ARCH) arrived in Haiti, Best Friends Animal Society announced a donation of $25,000 toward the coalition’s relief effort. Best Friends is one of 14 animal welfare organizations from inside and outside of the United States that are part of the ARCH group.

Medicine and equipment needed to treat animals arrived via the Dominican Republic.
The ARCH team also held meetings with officials from the Haitian government, as well as international agencies such as the United Nations, to define the country’s most pressing animal-related problems.

ARCH will identify options for a wide-ranging, long-term plan that includes options for veterinary care, a large-scale vaccination program and services for animal population control.

Gregory Castle, chief executive officer for Best Friends Animal Society said: “We thank the many Best Friends supporting members who have donated to the fund we have set up that is earmarked for Haitian animal relief.”

One of the challenges for the ARCH team will be to put processes in place for basic animal care because even prior to the earthquake, the condition of the animals was not good, according to Ian Robinson, director of emergency relief for the International Fund for Animal Welfare, co-founder of ARCH along with the World Society for the Protection of Animals. Even after 11 days had elapsed, Robinson said the initial team’s arrival this week revealed “a city in ruins.” But the ARCH team, following discussions with government officials, has already made a difference:

*Animal relief has been added to the master relief plan.*

“We had not considered including animals in the plans we’re working up now, but after meeting the ARCH team, we can see that it would be good to do so,” said Jean Marie Claude Germain, the Haitian minister of environment. “In addition to preventing deforestation and protecting our water reserves, we are also discussing the need for a vaccination program in order to prevent the spread of diseases amongst the animal populations.” *(QCA italics)*

Only about 100,000 Haitian dogs out of an estimated population of 500,000 were vaccinated against rabies last year. In addition, the Haitian government lacks sufficient medicines and vaccines to protect livestock against common illness.

The ARCH team will also continue its assessment in the areas beyond Port-au-Prince, implementing immediate veterinary aid to animals in cooperation with the Haitian government.”

~ Best Friends Rapid Response Group, a part of the Best Friends Network.


You might like to visit: www.wspa.org.uk  www.ifaw.co.uk

The RSPCA (International) is also part of ARCH: www.rspca.org.uk

SOUTH EAST ASIA

**THE GADHIMAI MELA**

This mela (festival) originated in the 18th century in Bariyarpur, a village in the south of Nepal bordering the state of Bihar in India. In this region, the community is devoted to the worship of the goddess Gadhimai. One night, a feudal landlord dreamed that all his problems would be solved if he made a blood sacrifice to her. The precedent was established and the mela takes place every 5 years.
Together with many animal welfare organisations, at the end of October, we were informed about this mela, due to take place at the end of November. We made representations to the Nepali government and to the ambassador in London, asking that a ban be imposed. Unfortunately, the many requests fell on deaf ears and the festival went ahead.

The only optimistic aspect of this was that, thanks to the persistent lobbying of Beauty Without Cruelty (BWC) in India, the number of animals planned to be sacrificed was reduced. The Indian Ministry of Home Affairs accepted BWC’s request to ban the movement of animals across the Indo-Nepal border. Website: www.bwcindia.org

Brief report of the festival: by Lucia de Vries

“An estimated 16,000 water buffaloes were publicly killed by 250 licensed butchers in an arena. Visitors were allowed to enter by paying an entrance charge. The animals were not tethered and not restrained. The remaining buffaloes were killed individually, somewhere in a 3 km radius around the temple, by anyone wanting to do so.

Over 50,000 goats were killed by individual devotees at any place and by any means in the vicinity of the temple. Unknown other kinds of animals such as sheep, pigs, rats, pigeons, chicken were also killed.

The animals had not been given food or water for 2/3 days. Some had already died before the killings started and their bodies were simply left with the living.

The killings were promoted and presented as a spectacle. One butcher is quoted as saying: ‘The more animals I kill, the more satisfied I feel. I am helping an ancient tradition to survive.’”

~ Lucia de Vries (Volunteer Director) is a Dutch journalist and social worker who has lived in Nepal since 1992. She devotes a big chunk of her life to animals and disadvantaged children. Lucia has rescued countless dogs and cats as well as the occasional cow and donkey. At present she lives with two rescued strays, Putali and Beta. Her animal adventure blog can be read on:

www.animalnepal.blogspot.com   www.gadimai.blogspot.com

AWNN is a network of reputed animal welfare organisations whose vision is a nation in which all living beings can live in peace.

www.awnnepal.blogspot.com

Many thanks to Lucia de Vries and her group in Nepal. To have to witness and film this spectacle must have been appalling, but their evidence makes it possible to begin effective campaigning against the next festival. QCA is in contact with the Hindu Council UK and the Hindu Academy, whose members are very perturbed at such cruelty. Our Buddhist friends at the Amida Trust have also responded to our appeal to speak out against the practice. www.amidatrust.com

It was the Nepal Non-Violence Buddhist Association for World Peace which organised a vigil on the eve of the slaughter.
The Hindu American Foundation (HAF), whose mission statement is “Promoting Understanding, Tolerance and Pluralism” - described the mass slaughter of animals at the Gadhimai Temple in Nepal, which began on November 24, 2009, as grotesque and nearly unrecognizable in the practice of mainstream Hinduism today.

The ritual proceeded despite the protests of several animal rights activists in Nepal and India and was attended by the local Maoist politician representing the district.

“These marginal practices of animal slaughter are a relic of a violent and superstitious past that continue today largely because they are encouraged by a nexus of underworld gangs, bootleggers and politicians prospering by the selling of meat and animal hide to tanneries,” said Ramesh Rao, PhD, the Foundation’s human rights coordinator. “We add our voices to the outrage and anguish that so many animals suffered in a dark ritual that also hoodwinked the local poor to sacrifice their livestock for cheap.”

While yagna, the ritual of sacrifice in which oblations are offered to the Divine Agni (fire), is acknowledged by Hindus, and there are allusions in Hindu texts to the sacrifice of animals in ancient texts, Hinduism also unequivocally advocates the protection of all living beings, seeing divinity in them. Modern Hindus, making up the largest numbers of vegetarians in the world, therefore perform the fire sacrifice symbolically, using grains, fruits, butter, etc., to propitiate various deities.

“It is unfortunate that the temple in Nepal still allows this feudal, anachronistic and bloody animal sacrifice whatever the local and religious lore,” added Prof. Rao. “Remembering that forty-five million turkeys were sacrificed for Thanksgiving alone, we hope that the world will join us in condemning the sanitized butchering of billions of animals for food with the same zeal that we condemn the orgiastic killings in Nepal in the name of religion.”

QCA has contacted HAF to compliment them on their stance and has permission to reprint this article from their site.

We consider the sentiment expressed in the last paragraph about the western slaughter of turkeys a point well made.

Thanks to Sheetal Shah of HAF for your co-operation.

http://www.hafsite.org

INDIA

Pradeep Nath, President and Founder of Visakha Society for Protection and Care of Animals (VSPCA) has been fighting since childhood to rescue the cattle of his area Krishna and the Cows – courtesy of Eileen Weintraub.
from being taken away illegally for slaughter. Between November 7th and 11th 2009, an intervention was made to prevent a truckload of cattle from going to an illegal slaughter house. With the help of media and other people via an interim measure, VSPCA got them to the Municipality, where rescue efforts - special feed, water and medical treatment was provided. With further legal action, all 18 cows and bulls will eventually be housed at the nearby Simchchalam Goshala (cow sanctuary), as VSPCA shelter currently is overcrowded and fighting an outbreak of Hoof and Mouth Disease. Pradeep Nath is also a lawyer and, if all the bulls are not released into safe custody, another court order will be filed. www.vspca.org

Update on street dogs in New Delhi
Article 51A of the Indian Constitution states: “It shall be the duty of every citizen of India . . . to have compassion for all living creatures . . .” Large numbers of street dogs are fed and cared for in New Delhi, thanks to the compassionate actions of many individuals and animal welfare organisations. We have, in this issue and previously, highlighted the work of Vasanthi Kumar’s group STRAW - www.strawindia.org The Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme she practises is the recommended procedure in the city and elsewhere in India. However, it is not without its difficulties, as not all the animal welfare groups, for various reasons, adhere strictly to the regulations.

To give one example: if a group of dogs, when vaccinated and sterilised, is not returned to the original home, but rather released just anywhere, the dogs resident in that patch will set upon and may kill the incomers. Many complaints were consequently made to Citizens For Animal Rights (CFAR) who investigated the problem.

After taking note of these complaints, The Animal Welfare Board of India, via a letter to all 10 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Delhi copied to Municipal Corporation of Delhi, has warned the NGOs currently doing the Animal Birth Control Programme of the following:
• To follow strictly ABC protocol
• To make sure no cruelty is inflicted upon the dog while catching and releasing
• To pick up and release dogs only from their area and not from anywhere else
• To make sure the dogs are released back in the same areas from where they were picked up
• Other sections of the law pertaining to welfare of dogs while doing ABC.

An excerpt from the letter states: “... Delhi is a unique city in that it has a large and growing number of well informed animal lovers, willing to stand up against all manner of cruelty to animals. If complaints continue to pour in, we shall be constrained to investigate and take corrective steps, including withholding
of payments, and blacklisting, if found justified. Please treat this as most urgent…”
Hence, this may be the last warning to all NGOs of Delhi to mend their ways with dogs while doing ABC.

Local residents complain every now and then about the possible risks posed by street dogs and feelings are fanned in some sections of the press. People feeding the dogs have, on occasion, been verbally and physically attacked by those who, understandably fearful of bites from rabid animals, are opposed to the practice. But the ABC and vaccination programmes are crucial for the welfare of everyone in the city and, in order to be able to catch up the dogs, the organisations need to know where they are; feeding them, as well as being a compassionate act, helps to facilitate this. Feeding now has official support:

In December 09, a consent order was passed – that is, with the consent of the counsel for the petitioners (individuals and animal welfare Organizations), and the counsel representing Delhi municipal authorities, including the Police, and the Animal Welfare Board of India.

The judge set out why street dogs must be fed - 'to keep them confined to a particular place, so as to subject them to sterilization/vaccination/re-vaccination, as the vaccination does not last more than one year’; The judge has clarified that, in the first instance, the ‘sites/spots’ where stray dogs are to be fed shall be identified by the Animal Welfare Board of India; and

The Delhi Police has been directed to ensure that no harm is caused to the volunteers of Animal Welfare Organisations feeding dogs. Anybody can be a volunteer of one or other of the AWOs.

~ Thanks to Rishi Dev of CFAR who allowed the use of this information.

**Monkey in the market**

“Yesterday I was purchasing at Delhi Cantt and I saw this real small monkey baby crossing the street. I got alarmed to see if he was lost or going to get crushed under the wheels. So I followed him... to my surprise he crossed the road, got over the shoulders of a fruit seller and started playing with him. After two minutes he got on to his fruit cart and selected his favourite fruits and ate two bananas. I asked the fruit seller if the monkey was his pet. He told me that he was a wild monkey and comes daily like many others. I asked him if he was creating any problem, then he said that initially they thought it was a menace and didn’t know what to do. Then they started giving him a fruit daily and in return the monkey used to play with him for some time, eat and go away without disturbing any peace. The symbiosis was so casual that it really surprised me to see how simply these poor people solve such complex problems without hurting anyone, which we are unable to even comprehend. The entire Delhi Cantt
market is sympathetic towards monkeys who don’t create any menace because people are not hostile towards them and know that the animals have no space or food available, due to massive urbanisation. So they humbly compensate by giving them freedom of movement and some food. It’s an unspoken coexistence.”

~ Rishi Dev. Citizensforanimalrights@gmail.com

“DANCING” BEARS IN INDIA – EXCELLENT NEWS

After 400 years of cruel tradition, there will be no more “dancing” bears amusing tourists in the streets of India.

The first bear was rescued and taken to the Agra sanctuary in January 2003 and in that year, One Voice and Wildlife SOS set up the anti-poaching network Forestwatch. At that time, there were 1200 “dancing” bears in India.

The cubs captured by traffickers were sold on to the Kalandars, a nomadic tribe who trained them for street shows. They pierced the bears’ noses with a red hot needle and threaded ropes through, which they pulled on to control the bears.

Sloth bears – Melursus ursinus - are an indigenous species classified in annex I of the CITES protocol. In India, exploitation of threatened wild animals was made illegal in 1972, and training them for shows considered an act of cruelty.

Nowadays, thanks to global action, all bears have been saved from slavery, and the poaching of cubs for “dancing” has decreased considerably.

As well as Agra, there are now bear sanctuaries in Bannerghatta, Bhopal and West Bengal. Apart from Forestwatch’s work, carried out in close collaboration with government agencies and the wildlife police, the project – also supported by the British group International Animal Rescue (IAR) and the Australian Free the Bears – includes a programme aimed at retraining the Kalandars in exchange for giving up the bears. This is a unique opportunity for them to improve their quality of life by legal work and to integrate themselves into Indian society. The existence of the sanctuaries, where the bears live in semi-liberty, has also been significant, making it possible to suggest to the authorities how to look after the bears seized.

Muriel Arnal, president of One Voice, says: “When I cut the rope of one of the very last “dancing” bears, it was an emotional but immensely hopeful experience. This historic victory is proof that political will, allied to NGO action, can bring an end to all barbaric traditions, even the most strongly rooted.”

Thanks to One Voice for this report. www.one-voice.fr – in French.

As for bear baiting in Pakistan, WSPA’s Christmas 2009 appeal raised the £227,118 needed to build the new sanctuary they had planned. Building work is now underway on the land obtained near to the town of Balkasar in Pakistan.

Dr Fakhar-i-Abbas and his team at WSPA member society, the Bioresource Research Centre (BRC) can start planning to rescue the seventy bears known to be still forced to fight in bear baiting events.

Visit www.wspa.org.uk
THE MIDDLE EAST

Tel Aviv Bans Horse-Drawn Carts

The Code of Jewish Law states:

When horses drawing a cart come to a rough road or a steep hill, and it is hard for them to
draw the cart without help, it is our duty to help them, even when they belong to a non-Jew,
because of the precept not to be cruel to animals, lest the owner smite them to force them to
draw more than their strength permits. (Rabbi Solomon Ganzfried, Code of Jewish Law,
Hebrew Publishing Co., N.Y., 1961, Vol 4, Ch. 191)

CHAI’s 10-year campaign to get cart horses banned from the streets of Tel Aviv achieved success in November 09 when the city announced that it has banned the practice.

From 1999, when Tel Aviv officials refused to take action in response to CHAI’s complaints about the problem of abused horses in the city, CHAI rescued and rehabilitated severely abused horses to raise awareness of the plight of these animals, demanding routine inspections and licensing.

In 2001, CHAI’s sister charity in Israel, Hakol Chai, made an undercover video of the killings of a horrendous animal abuser, which was screened on TV and the business was permanently closed down in 2003.

When the city continued to refuse to investigate the condition of other horses in the city and remove those being abused from their abusers, Hakol Chai called for a complete ban.

In 2005, Hakol Chai’s attorney wrote to the Ministry of Transportation and Mayors of cities around Israel, urging them to ban the practice of horses pulling heavy carts. Cart horse owners began to lobby the Mayor’s office to prevent the enactment of a ban, so the Mayor was reluctant to take action. Hakol Chai and CHAI organized an international letter-writing campaign, asking that appeals be sent to the Chairperson of the Education, Culture, and Sports Committee in the Knesset, the Minister of Education, Culture, and Sports, the Minister of Transportation, and the Mayor of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, asking them to ban the use of horse-drawn carts to haul heavy loads through busy city streets.

In 2007, Hakol Chai made presentations in Tel Aviv schools to raise awareness among students about the suffering of cart horses and the need to protest against their treatment. At an annual conference for Tel Aviv schools participating in the “Breakthrough” program, in which students worked to make a difference on a social or environmental problem of their choosing, students of the Democratic School showed a film shot by Hakol Chai documenting the horse/donkey abuse problem in the city and promoted the cart horse case to a panel of local authorities, including the Tel Aviv municipal veterinarian. Posters were posted throughout Jaffa, where these animals are used as beasts of burden.

In December 2007, for the first time, the Tel Aviv City Council called a special session to address the problem of horse abuse in the city. The municipal veterinarian agreed with Hakol Chai that abuse cannot be prevented through regulations, especially since the city had
neither the funds to regularly inspect the horses, nor a facility to house them if they removed them from their abusers. The Mayor still refused to ban the practice, saying he would make greater efforts to enforce existing regulations. Hakol Chai activists demonstrated, joined by the Green Party and other organizations.

At the end of 2008, CHAI / Hakol Chai’s campaign in Israel became part of an international coalition of organizations called *Horses Without Carriages International*. In June 2009, Hakol Chai staged a civil disobedience demonstration at the entrance to City Hall, carrying signs saying “Horses and donkeys are not vehicles,” “Animals are not cars”, and distributed hundreds of pamphlets to pedestrians on one of the city’s busiest streets and to city employees.

In November 2009, Tel Aviv’s Mayor, at long last, banned horse-drawn carts from the city. CHAI’s Director, Nina Natelson said: “We are pleased that there will no longer be sights of thin, injured, beaten cart horses in Tel Aviv, and we will continue pressing Mayors of other cities in Israel to issue similar bans.”

**CHAI - Concern for Helping Animals in Israel**
PO Box 3341, Alexandria, VA 22302
chai_us@cox.net

---

*For those, O Lord, the humble beasts that bear with us the burden and heat of the day, and for the wild creatures whom Thou hast made wise, strong and beautiful, we supplicate for them Thy great tenderness of heart, for Thou hast promised to save both man and beast, and great is Thy loving kindness, O Master, Saviour of the world.*

~ *Saint Basil, Bishop of Caesarea.*
BOOK REVIEW

The School of Compassion: A Roman Catholic Theology of Animals Deborah M. Jones. Foreword by the Rev. Dr. Andrew Linzey. Gracewing, Leominster 2009, pb., 316 pages.

With 1.1 billion adherents, Roman Catholicism is the world’s single largest religious body. On that basis alone, the appearance of a serious and convincing examination of human-non-human relations within that body, aiming to improve them, must qualify as one of 2009’s most important and most welcomed publishing events and must be deserving of the widest possible readership. By this, I mean a readership beyond the church itself, for the cultural legacy of ideas and beliefs that have informed Catholicism are nearly one and the same with those making up western thought as a whole, Christian and otherwise.

The School of Compassion divides into three parts, the first of which examines the main tributaries to the Roman Catholic tradition: Hebrew and Greek thought; the theologies of the church fathers; the lives of the saints; church teachers and law-makers. Deborah Jones focuses only on those ideas that actually proved of lasting influence, which allows her to move at speed through centuries of developments; her engrossing survey will be appreciated by anyone interested in the intersection of animal and religious issues.

The exaltation of reason - umbilicated to the idea of an immortal soul - as the property definitively separating man from beast, proceeds from Greek philosophy (particularly Aristotle) and Origen through Augustine, then Aquinas, to reach its apex in Descartes and the instrumentalism that cartesian dualism bequeathed to today. The mere mention of Aquinas tells us how deeply this rationalism - the spur, ironically, to the secular materialism which is the most visible threat to the church today - is embedded in Catholic theology. But there are also ideas which move against this rationalist thrust: a focus on body and matter and world - what we might today identify as an ecological focus - finds early voice in Irenaeus, himself a “pioneer of Catholic orthodoxy”, which is echoed not only by Celsus and Pelagius but also by the later Augustine. There is also what we might call a kindness or kinship strand exemplified by St. Basil the Great and many others, but extending beyond the saintly examples into the magisterial realm, as Jones shows in a discussion of Pope Benedict XV's upholding of Pius V's much-resented bull on the corrida. Incidentally, one of the many pleasures this book affords is the discovery, or re-discovery, of a whole roll-call of Judeo-Christian animal champions, stretching from before the beginnings of the church until the present day, at all levels, and comprising, to note just a few, the Psalmist, St. Basil in the fourth century, the Alexander Pope of Of Cruelty to Animals, John Hildrop, Bentham, Newman and Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI; the former made many pronouncements on our mutuality with animals (which has earned him the opprobrium of many creationists) and the latter, a condemnation of factory farming.

Against this deepened and enriched picture, the ‘caricature’ of the tradition can be seen against its reality, that of a tradition which did not self-generate and is not homogeneous or wholly unequivocal, even in its most dogmatic and categorical instances, such as in papal proclamations. Counter-trends and tensions emerge from behind the stable facade of official doctrine and the latter is revealed to be mostly a matter of interpretation and emphasis. And what is primarily interpretation is, of course, open to reinterpretation.
A case in point is Genesis 1:26 - And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. No one passage has proven more detrimental to animals than this one, but do the key terms “likeness” and “dominion” actually mean what they have been traditionally taken to mean? Is the latter a “divine mandate to use nature entirely for the benefit of human beings?” and is the former an indication of the gulf separating man (and God) from beast? Or, the author asks, might we not link the two concepts to form an injunction that man’s rule must proceed from and imitate God’s? And have we not in practice unwarrantedly de-contextualised 1:26? After all, in the prelapsarian world, dominion would not have extended to the killing of animals for food (Genesis 1:29). Have we derived an ‘ought’ from an ‘is’ with regard to dominion, interpreting in what we believe to be our favour from our latter day standpoint at the top of the pyramid? And why has the ‘yahwist’ creation account of Genesis 2:7 and 2:19 - a much better deal for animals - been more or less dropped?

In Part Two, Jones turns to the Catechism (CCC) by which the core teachings of the Church are communicated to its adherents. Here she finds that orthodoxy surrounding animals, as reflected specifically in CCC 2415-2418, is of course anchored in anthropocentric interpretations such as that of Genesis 1:26 and is generally neglectful of the examples of holiness supplied, for instance, by the Desert Fathers. But that is not the whole story, for the tensions resident in the tradition as a whole are there, muted, in the CCC. Nowhere amongst the animal paragraphs, for instance, is there any reference to man’s superiority by dint of his rational faculty. More positively, references to St. Francis and St. Philip Neri in CCC 2416 provide a corrective to the over-reliance on “purely scholastic theology” and testify to the enduring quality of the kinship strand. CCC 703 favours the creation as described in Genesis 2:7 (and Pelagius). The ‘Irenaean’ strand cited above, on the other hand, survives intact throughout more or less the whole of Roman Catholic dogma.

Before its publication in 1992, the major catechism was that of Trent in 1566, wherein animals were really only chattels. Where there has undoubtedly been progress, hope in further progress cannot be misplaced. Platitudinous, ambiguous and theologically underweight it may be, but the CCC still contains dormant concepts of stewardship and of the integrity of creation and, above all, gentleness that require only amplification and definition to fulfil their promise of justice and something approximating species equality before God. Following a review of historical and contemporary thinking on the subjects of animal rights, animal liberation, gender issues, stewardship, and thomism, the author supplies her own explicit revisions of the CCC’s four pertinent paragraphs in the book’s conclusion. Her versions are geared in a very pragmatic way toward concrete betterment of animals’ lives, while leaning theoretically on Linzey’s notion of ‘theos-rights’ and on the ‘eco-thomism’ formulated by Judith Barad et al.

The even-handed and even-tempered manner in which this book opens up possibilities for reinterpretation is particularly impressive, and it gives the lie to that aforementioned caricature of animals’ friends as unreasonable, weepy or dangerous. Jones’s approach is one of incremental, patient reform toward a goal that would find no detractor amongst the
friends of animals but which wastes no time in witch-hunting those who may have profited from the established dogma.

This is a work, then, that asks and does not demand; a work of amelioration, not condemnation, seeking to provoke thought and feeling rather than to arouse indignation. A work, in other words, Christian in spirit, and one which beseeches the world's largest Christian community to dare become more Christian itself: a school not only of compassion, but of truth. To quote the author who cites words addressed to farmers in the nineteenth century by one Cardinal Donnet, “This energetic start gives a hope that, from theory, the ideas of compassion may pass into conduct, which is more powerful than laws.”

* * *

End Notes:

GEN 2:7
And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

GEN 2:19
And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

PELAGIUS
There is no creature on Earth in whom God is absent... When God pronounced that his creation was good, it was not only that his hand had fashioned every creature: it was that his breath had brought every creature to life...

CCC 703
The Word of God and his Breath are at the origin of the being and life of every creature.

~ Many thanks to QCA member Thom Bonneville, previously of Rhinelander, Wisconsin, now an attender at Muswell Hill Local Meeting.

BUDDHA IN A CAGE

For Deepavali or Festival of Lights, October 2009

In this magisterial pronouncement (which may not be a poem)
I declare that my Buddha is not fashioned exquisitely of stone, wood, porcelain or metal and yet is gilded by sorrow and offertory of pain, resembling every animal in the world undergoing torture.
Today, especially, he seems to be a black bear in a lamentable cage welded shut by his tormentors who milk him constantly for bile and blood, eventually to slaughter him and ‘harvest’ alike his body parts.

Even so may a living Bodhisattva be dissected into seeming diminution and apparent oblivion by Satanic human greed nihilistic, can-n-i-ballistic--

I can offer my suffering Buddha no incense or flowers as he rages silently, bitterly in his abominable Chinese cage but in my heart light a clay lamp and fold my hands to him in sorrow, homage, admiration and gold-leaved adoration for the Bear-Bodhisattva’s Passion is a generic geoglyph that may be read only by divinities from far above.

~Vasumathi Krishnasami, Bangalore.

CORRESPONDENCE

Printed in The Friend of January 15 2010

At least mention the V-word

Turner prizewinner Grayson Perry has just gifted a large etching to Eastbourne’s Towner art gallery. ‘The Map of Nowhere’, depicts the artist’s body amid signs, symbols and texts, both personal and political. Among them is a small group of oddly-clad people alongside the intriguing words ‘Quaker vegetarian chatter’.

By contrast, although a substantial proportion of editorial text on ‘the environment’ has recently appeared in the Friend, rarely (if at all) has the ‘chatter’ included vegetarianism.
This is despite the fact that western dependence on a carnivorous diet plays a significant part in destroying the natural world through over-production of food animals. There’s the destruction of rain forests in order for animals to graze, their massive consumption of grain, soya and water, the millions of tons of damaging methane produced, and the fact people in the developing world starve alongside fields of food destined for the meat industry. According to the vegetarian/vegan organisation VIVA!, a vegetarian diet requires less than half the agricultural land currently in use, a vegan diet less than a quarter.

So why aren’t more Friends discussing in print – or even mentioning – the V-word? Maybe Grayson Perry is trying to tell us something!

At the 2009 Yearly Meeting Gathering, Friends raised environmental concerns as to the generous portions of meat available in the restaurant compared to the limited ‘vegetarian/vegan option’. Apart from this catering glitch, it was generally agreed that that gathering in York was superbly organised. Hopefully the menu will be rectified for the next event – perhaps the novel introduction of ‘the carnivore option’.

~ Ann Johnson, a member of Quaker Concern for Animals

CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF SPECIAL DAUGHTER - ANDREA WADDELL

Sonia our dear and valued committee member, writes:

My darling daughter Andrea was murdered on 15th October last year, in her flat in Brighton. You would expect my brain to have accepted this fact by now, but part of me is still waiting for her daily telephone call – and of course I still think ‘I must tell Andrea this, or show her that’ at regular intervals.

Andrea was 29 years old when she died, and for the last 16 years of her life she had suffered considerable ill-health and pain, as a result of scoliosis and fibromyalgia. She was born a boy, and also struggled with ambivalent gender feelings, eventually having the gender change operation, after which she became our beautiful daughter, Andrea.

She graduated in Philosophy from the University of Durham and then went on to gain an MA in Social and Political Thought at the University of Sussex.

We, as Andrea’s family - father, mother and brother- were privileged, in that she would sometimes tell us when she was in pain or depressed – but she never tried to make capital from her condition, and to the world she always showed a cheerful face. She was passionate about animal rights, and I was so pleased to see her described on one internet site after her death as a ‘vegan animal activist’! But she was also vitally interested in people, and wanted to help anyone who was disadvantaged in life. She knew a number of homeless people in Brighton, and would often take them food. After her death, we were told many tales of how she had helped people. For instance, there was the man she met at a regular demo outside a Brighton bomb factory. He was lonely, but Andrea took him under her wing and introduced him to many of her friends, and turned his life around. There was the man whose girlfriend of many years had walked out on him; Andrea helped him through the period of pain. There was the woman whom our daughter saw one day in the street, depressed and unhappy – and Andrea took her by the arm and said ‘It can’t be that bad’ and befriended
her for ever after. And there was the homeless French girl whom Andrea took into her flat for some weeks. Even at her funeral, we heard about the elderly woman who said ‘I had to come, she was so kind to my dog one day!’

Andrea’s best friend wrote, after her death: ‘You were the most dazzling, brilliant and cheeky rebel I ever met. You were funny, intellectual and glamorous. Your philosophy was an eternal source of inspiration for me. I’ll try to be more like you: confident, daring, light-footed and refreshing, like a cup of peppermint tea!’

We are so proud of her. We will love her and miss her for ever.

**NB** The collection at Andrea’s funeral was for the **Lord Dowding Fund**, whose objectives are to support, sponsor and fund better methods of scientific and medical research, without the use of animals.

*From QCA: We have been holding Andrea and her family in the Light. They have been incredibly brave and we are all with them at this time. Please keep them in your thoughts.*

---

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**QUAKER CONCERN FOR ANIMALS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

At **Friends’ House**, 173, Euston Road, London.

Saturday, May 8 2010. Refreshments at 10.30 a.m.

At 2 pm, our guest speaker is **Lesley Docksey**, Newsletter Editor of *The Movement for the Abolition of War*, on:

**Earth Wars: links that need to be broken and those that need to be realised**

**The 2010 Ecumenical Animal Welfare Retreat**

From May 17 – 19 2010

At Holland House, Cropthorne, Worcestershire. WR10 3NB

Details and booking: Irene Casey, 32, Pinders Farm Drive, Warrington. WA1 2GF

**7th. Interfaith Celebration of Animals** at Golders Green Unitarians on Sunday September 5 2010.

Details available nearer the time from Feargus O’Connor at ggunirev@aol.com or Marian at mhussenbux@btinternet.com.

**Remembrance Sunday** is November 14 2010