

  
**Friends of GAWT**  
**Christmas 2011** 

  
Christmas Card  
2011



*You go to the beach, meet this awesome, beautiful, male, you become friends, you fall in love. And then you go home and it's back to reality. . but now you're dreaming of him . . . .*

4th September 2011

"So happy I found you!!!" cried the email to our Shelter Administrator. It triggered seven hectic days which began with a search for a dog on the beach around the Leela Hotel. Marion, who emailed us, described him, a bit optimistically, as 'this awesome, beautiful, stray', but she did send a fuzzy photo. A further clue was that he had some kind of problem with one of his paws, and was limping. Marion was so worried about him that she wanted us to find him and organise for his adoption to Qatar or Austria. However, realistically, she thought this might be a mission impossible. We were inclined to agree. . "I know we should have contacted you while there, and believe us we badly regret we didn't". The dog was limping and seemed to be in pain, and it was this as much as Marion's plea which drove us to go find him.

*The drama, passion, humanity and commitment of two people, Grace, our Shelter Administrator, and Marion in Qatar, was caught in the urgent exchange of anxious and stressful emails throughout the rest of that week. In essence they remind us of what defines animal welfare, and the sacrifices we sometimes have to make, to ensure that the quality of life of an individual animal is our primary obligation. We are sending this out as our 'Christmas Card' to everyone, as it catches the spirit of compassion and love..*

6<sup>th</sup> September 2011

We just spoke to Joel and he confirmed the dog's presence at the beach just now. He is waiting for your call. Please let me know. Thanks, Marion

6<sup>th</sup> September 2011

I am trying to make arrangements to go with staff tomorrow to check this out. Our shelter is probably 35-40km away so I have to coordinate with the available resources. I will let you know in a few days what happens. The photos are good. Grace

6<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Spoke to Joel. He says the dog is *not* there now and he cannot guarantee if he will be there when we come. Planning to make trip tomorrow and if we are lucky we will find him. If we don't then we can plan further action. Please give me some time to see what happens. Grace

6<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Sure, I understand. . . . Marion

8<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Hi Marion, We went to the beach yesterday and found your fellow. Two staff going today to try to catch him – I tried yesterday but he is very cautious. He let me pet him and feed him crackers, but that was it. He is now walking on all fours, is well acclimatised to his place and is friends with several of the dogs there. He was sleeping inside the shack and seems to know the fisherman there. If we catch him today, we will give him a good physical and then you will quickly need to make decisions about how to proceed. There are blood samples to go to Europe for testing, and you will need to travel with him. There is a lot of homework.

Remember that he is a free animal, not used to being restrained to one place. He appears to be adjusted to his location, and has made it through at least two monsoons. And now the tourists are returning, the shacks are opening as the season starts. He probably knows this cycle by now. There are also financial considerations and you must decide before proceeding.

I am not trying to dissuade you but I want you to be realistic about what sending a dog that has never lived in a home, or with restrictions, to Europe will entail. Hopefully he will be in our possession by this evening.

8<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Hi Grace - wonderful news. Happy to see he is all well. ☺ Can't tell you how much this means to me and I am extremely grateful for all your efforts.

Similar thoughts were running through my head. I don't want him to suffer by losing his friends or home on the beach and living in a restricted environment. I just want the best for this friendly fellow. The issue is not about (the expense) - it's more about what is best for him. I really want to hear your advice on this. Marion

9<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Hi Marion, great news! We got your boy yesterday and he is at the centre now getting some R&R. We gave him his anti-rabies and combination vaccines, trimmed his nails, and he was dewormed. The Vet feels he is in pretty good condition, and his leg is fine now.

Frankly speaking, I suggest you leave him where he is. If he was under one year old I think things would be different. He is a veteran now of at least two monsoons (we estimate he is about two-and-half years old), and he has made a life for himself at the beach. Although this kind of a life is not what we would want for him, he is content in the life he has made for himself. He has a wonderful personality. The tourists who come to the beach will take good care of him in the short term . . . he is incredibly friendly. I can see why you lost your heart to him. When some of our volunteers come back, I will ask one of them to check on him periodically, if you would like.

Let me know what you decide since I want to return him to the beach after the weekend, if you decide to let him go back to his place. Take care, Regards, Grace.

11<sup>th</sup> September 2011

I can read in your words that you really care and do everything possible - I am honoured I got to know you. As for 'Happy' (let's give him this name, what do you think?) I would like to thank you for your advice. As difficult as it is, I agree - I really want to see HAPPY happy! But as you say, Happy seems to have his life on a lovely beach surrounded by friends, tourists and a home with the fisherman, and I really don't want to steal this away from him since he made it for himself and surely it wasn't easy. Although it's really unbelievably difficult to say that and it breaks my heart... but Grace, please promise, if you release him after his R & R and you see the other dogs are attacking him or any other issues let me know so we proceed with the old plan and get him out of there whatever it takes. Also I would kindly ask you to stay in touch on a regular basis if you would allow us to do so, and I so much appreciate what you have done so far.

Now I have teary eyes and hesitate to click the 'send' button... Marion

*And that, dear Reader, seemed to be a win-win conclusion for everyone. Happy stayed free. Marion would stay in touch and make donations to help us monitor his health and happiness, and Grace too was delighted that they had found the dog, treated him and gave him some TLC in the Shelter. Happy would be returned to his beach in a day or so.*

### **But wait . . . .**

**On 11 September 2011 at 4pm (GMT), a message was posted on our Facebook by Amar Bedi: "looking to adopt 2-3 dogs for my recently opened small resort in Mobor . . . any tips?"**

*We immediately put him in touch with Grace, who sent him photos of Happy. They spoke on the phone. Amar thought Happy looked great, and wondered if we could find him two other dogs. . . .*

*Oh Yes we can! By another coincidence we also had young twins, one male, one female, who had been with us for about three months. So now we set about introducing them to Happy in the hope they would become a team.*



Amardeep Bedi  
[www.bamboohousegoa.com](http://www.bamboohousegoa.com)  
An Ecological Resort



**Getting Chilli ready to travel to her new home at Bamboo HouseGoa**



**Amar and Happy have a getting-to-know-you session.**



**We like it here!**

## And here's the best bit

11<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Hi Marion . . . The location is heaven-made because Happy can go out on the beach and visit his friends if he feels like it, but he will have a place to call home. Bamboo House Goa is about 2 & half acres, next to the Leela, with the back facing the beach. Can you believe it!! Amar emailed me immediately after we spoke, asking for a photo because he was really looking forward to this happening. During our conversation, he asked me what kind of food they should cook for the dogs. I thought he would give them left-overs from the kitchen, but he said that they would want to cook specifically for the animals (a very good sign). Grace

*And so about two weeks later Amar collected Happy, and Chilli and Pepper, put them in his car and they all went off happily into the sunset. A big, big day for the twins because it was their first taste of life outside the Shelter.*

*When we checked on them some weeks later we were delighted at how well they had settled in. They live in a stunningly beautiful place, and the beach is just a few metres away, so they really have the best of both worlds.*



*Happy and Milena doing what they do best. She scratches and he squirms in pure pleasure.*



*Now things are starting to settle down and all three dogs are relaxed with Amar*



*Milena, our volunteer in residence at Curchorem, reassures Chilli and Pepper that life is about to get much better.*



*Chilli and Pepper checking out their new home*



*Happy's favourite spot to relax – beneath the same table all day, every day, until it cools down and then all 3 are off to the beach to meet friends and play in the sea. Bliss.*

## *Season's Greetings*

- to all our **Friends**, for your encouraging words, your donations, your fundraising and above all your interest in and support for our work, thank you.
- to all our **Volunteers**, those who live in Goa, and those who come for two weeks or six months, we couldn't do this without you. Thank you.
- to all our **Staff** at the Shelter, who work long and hard hours looking after all our dogs, cats, snakes, goats, kittens, puppies, turtles, and of course our Red Kite. We appreciate your commitment. Thank you.

*Have a great New Year and please stay in touch with us.*

