

Friends of GAWT News Update

October 2008



The Work Goes On

It is now almost nine years since we set up Goa Animal Welfare Trust in South Goa. We had no money, and no sources of government funding, only a deeply felt belief that there had to be a better way of looking after the many stray dogs and cats found wandering, starving and often injured, on the beaches and in the surrounding villages and towns.

Every day since has been a struggle to make ends meet, and to convert promises of money from Margao Municipal Council into hard cash. It is painful to recall how often, over these years, we looked at each other in despair and said 'We can't go on like this'. What kept us going was the gift of time given to us by local Vets who gave us their skills every week, local volunteers, the generosity of visitors and volunteers from national and international veterinary colleges, together with the practical help we were given locally by private individuals and businesses.

Eventually Margao Municipal Council leased us some land for our first Shelter at Sonsoddo, near Margao, a lease which runs out within the year. They also finally granted us Rs.11,000/- monthly towards running costs. It was not enough but it was a start. Despite continuous requests, they refused to confirm this arrangement in writing, so we had no formal agreement with them, which became an overwhelming problem for us when applying for money from other agencies. In fact we have been refused substantial money from other agencies simply because MMC won't confirm their financial grant.

In the last four years particularly, our hard work has produced a huge upsurge in visibly healthy dogs, particularly on the beaches. Our Animal Birth Control programme (sterilisation), set up in 1999, has ensured a significant drop in unwanted puppies. We set out to offer anti-rabies vaccination to all pet owners, and again this service was, and continues to be, run completely by volunteers giving up their Sundays to stand in the baking sun, giving out help and advice, worm powders and shampoo, to owners who brought their dogs along for treatment, possibly for the first time. For those whose pets were beyond treatment, we offered consolation and an opportunity to adopt a healthy free puppy when they wanted to share their home again.

As our lease was running out at Sonsoddo, we took the opportunity to restructure all our services. We were offered, again through personal friends, a large house with some land in Curchorem.

Weeks of hard work, much of it done by volunteers, meant we could move in fairly quickly, and we have just completed our first year there.

We've appointed a full-time doctor and staff and set up our own Animal Care Centre and Boarding Kennels and a Hospital Wing for private patients. (This will raise for us some much-needed funds). We continue all our usual work with stray and sick dogs of course, both along the beaches and in the villages, including running puppy adoption events and anti-rabies camps. Most heartening of all, our relationship with Curchorem Municipal Council is one of mutual respect and support on both sides. They have been enormously helpful to us in the early stages of the new Shelter. They supported our application to the Animal Welfare Board of India for a realistic grant to ensure continuation of our dog sterilisation project and, thanks to everyone pulling together, we got confirmation of the grant in record time.

Because of continuing financial problems with MCC we are now running down all services at Sonsoddo and expect to finally close it before the end of the year. It is our intention to transform our Curchorem Animal Care Centre into a centre of excellence for animal welfare, and we are already working with Curchorem Municipal Council on ways to achieve this.

We are all feeling excited and positive about our future. But we still need your financial help and support, so please do remember us.

Friends of GAWT 100+ Winners

May 2008

Bryan Kallman	Rs. 300/-
Fiona Heritage	Rs. 500/-
Lillian Van Koch	Rs. 750/-

June 2008

Caroline Hornberger	Rs. 300/-
Geoff Lowe	Rs. 500/-
Habiba Miranda	Rs. 750/-

July 2008

Pete & Jean Holsey	Rs. 300/-
Charmiane Byrne	Rs. 500/-
Andrea Palin	Rs. 750/-

August 2008

Eric Rea	Rs. 300/-
Christine Newall	Rs. 500/-
Grace Kare	Rs. 750/-

New GAWT Information Centre opening in Colva

Before Sonsoddo Shelter closes, we will be opening an Information Centre and office in Colva. You can find it a few metres from Colva Church at the end of the row of shops. The Centre will provide callers with advice and information, as well as a helpline to report dogs injured or in distress. We intend to keep a GAWT animal rescue van permanently at the Centre so that we can react quickly to call-outs. Once picked up, the dogs (or cats) will be taken to our **Curchorem Animal Care Centre**, about 35 minutes drive from Colva. We look forward to welcoming you there to show you how we work.

In time-honoured manner we are looking for volunteers to help run the **Information Centre**, so if you are in the area on holiday, please think about helping us out for a couple of hours, accepting donations, organising animal rescues, taking messages and talking to visitors. We would love to hear from you. You can email us at curchorem@gawt.org or you can call into the Charity Shop for our helpline number (still to be installed at the Information Centre, but promised for opening day).

Remember too that we have a very good **Charity Shop** in Colva, beside World Linkers internet shop and opposite Walls Quality Ice-Cream Parlour. There you can buy or borrow books and DVDs, and choose from a wide range of gifts to take home with you. They are always happy to accept donations too. If you have any holiday reading, shoes, clothes or towels you are leaving behind, we would love to have them, as the income from the Charity Shop is vital to us for everyday overheads.

Above all, wherever you are, please continue to support us so that we, in turn, can offer our beach dogs and cats a reasonable quality of life.

ER

When Julie and Bob Gooderham's cat Sandy arrived home on Sunday, 24th August, it was clear he was sick and in great pain. The problem was in one of his legs. Their vet Dr Jenny Viegas was unable to visit and advised them to try GAWT. Since it was a Sunday, unfortunately most vets are not available, and GAWT's facilities are also closed. In desperation, they drove on to the Curchorem shelter, all the time trying to raise someone from GAWT by phone since Sandy was getting worse.

Eventually, although the Shelter was closed, our medical assistant, Sitaram, came in from home to give first aid. However, when Sitaram examined Sandy he discovered that he had been bitten by a venomous snake, a bite that requires anti-venom and experienced veterinarian care.

He contacted Dr. Jenny again to explain the situation and ask advice. Although she was returning home, she asked them to take the cat immediately to her surgery in Colva for anti-venom treatment.

A seriously ill Sandy and owners arrived in Colva at 8pm. Dr Jenny discovered that he had in fact two viper bites on his leg. He was treated for over two hours, until nearly 10pm, by this wonderful vet.

Over the next six days Sandy was given treatment, and has made a good recovery. Bob told us "*Without GAWT's help and assistance and the extraordinary care Dr Jenny gave him, I don't think Sandy would be with us today. He is one very lucky cat.*"



The Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW) is an agreement among people and nations to recognise that animals are sentient and can suffer, to respect their welfare and to end animal cruelty - for good. The British Veterinary Association (BVA) celebrated this year's World Veterinary Day on 26th April by signing up to the [Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare](#) (UDAW).

The Declaration, which represents the world's first international agreement on animal welfare, recognises that sentient animals are capable of pain and suffering, deserving consideration and respect, and calls for effective animal welfare legislation to be developed and enforced around the world. It is hoped that the Declaration will ultimately be adopted by the United Nations.

The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.

Mahatma Gandhi

Home Sweet Home

All the fun of ownership without any of the problems!

We frequently pick up older stray dogs and cats, usually ill and starving, from the beaches and streets, and take them back to the shelter where they get intensive TLC (tender loving care) and medical treatment before being returned to their own patch which - for any stray or wild dog (and their pack if they are lucky enough to have one) is of vital importance, and we go to considerable efforts to ensure that we meet this need. However, there are times when, for various reasons, a rescued dog or cat cannot be returned to the streets, and it then becomes a member of our 'home dogs and cats' at the Shelter.

Reasons for this include vulnerable animals who are unable to fit back into the street scene because they have been too long with us; dogs prone to re-infection of their serious wounds; dogs who have had a leg amputated, or have become deaf through ear wound infections and lost or abandoned dogs who have no pack and no survival skills. Of course, we have limited space at the Shelter, but we make a huge effort for really deserving cases.

Some of these survivors are with us for years, and we have to find the resources to feed them and renew their vaccinations regularly. Many of them are also bathed on a daily basis, at least in the initial few months, because of skin diseases. But it is good to see them roaming around, playing, sleeping, and generally having fun each day. Watching them brings us great amusement. We don't keep them kennelled, so they have freedom to move around.

We have calculated that the minimum cost to us to keep these as home dogs is £50 each year (Rs. 5000/-) and we are looking for sponsors for some of them (see below) to help us bridge this gap in our funding. If you have always wanted to own a dog, but for some reason you can't, then perhaps being a 'distance' pet owner is an answer for you. We would very much appreciate any help you can give us. Here are three of the most deserving cases.

FANNY: Fanny was found wondering on the road near Manovikas.



He had basically given up and was standing in the middle of the road unsure of which way to go. He was brought to the shelter treated and sterilized. As a permanent resident at the shelter, he has made a niche for himself, and has lots of friends.

PSYCHO: He is a particular favourite. He came as a young dog (maybe around 10 months old). He had been adopted from us as a puppy but his owners never really understood him. They said he was "biting too much".



Actually, he nips at your hand (never hurting you, just grabbing on) to get attention. He is a big cuddly dog who wants a lot of loving, which he always returns. His personality can go from very friendly to just plain aloof, and he stays away from people if he is not in the mood. That's the reason for his name. He is usually the first one to greet all visitors.

PINKY: In addition to "home" dogs, we also have "home" cats. Pinky is the kitchen assistant and official taster of all the food prepared for the animals at the Shelter. He spends most of his time around the home dogs and probably thinks he is one of them - he doesn't seem to socialize with the cats.

