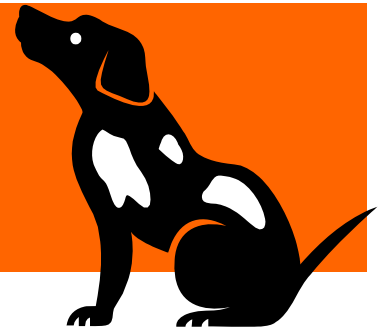


THE LOCAL BARK



NEWSLETTER OF THE PEOPLES' ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY

www.paws-patas.org

Autumn 2009 Edition

2009—Celebrating 20 Years of Animal Welfare!

Like animal welfare groups all around the globe, the Society celebrated World Animal Awareness Week with a series of public events and fundraisers to bring awareness to the cause of animal welfare. The festivities were started off with a Sponsored Dog Walk on October 3rd which ran along the Mojácar beach road. Walkers were sponsored by friends, families and local businesses who all made their pledge in aid of PAWS. The dogs really enjoyed the outing, with several dogs from the PAWS shelter sporting yellow coats which read "I Need a Home". The week finished up on October 10th with a big afternoon bash at the Mojácar Artisan Centre. Ticket holders were given a real treat: a theatrical fashion show and auction, along with food, drink and entertainment by invited guest artist Shirin, who performed some of her oriental dance repertoire.

Pictured (top) models on the catwalk, and (below) all the models who took part.

The Fashion show alone raised almost **€2.000**. The combined total for all the Animal Awareness week was a splendid **€5.078** (to date).



PAWS-PATAS, Apartado 627, 04638 Mojácar,
Almería, Spain
Shelter (Dogs) — 678 490 208
Cats: see article on page 4

Guapo & Guapa – a fable of our times

Ten years ago, at the beginning of a hot August 1999, two five-month-old galgo (*Spanish greyhound*) puppies were loaded onto a plane at Almeria Airport, bound for Amsterdam. They were the first ever PAWS dogs to go for adoption in Holland – and they wrote the first chapter of an extraordinary story, which continues to this day.

Earlier this year Pluto, a podenco cross, became the 1000th dog from Almeria to be homed by PAWS Holland – a quite extraordinary achievement and one worth celebrating. That story has no end in sight, but it did have a beginning ...at 9.25am on a Sunday morning back in mid-May 1999, at the old PAWS kennels next to Vera cemetery, when that day's volunteer turned up to begin cleaning out.

"I knew the score – no galgos or greyhounds in the kennels. They were a magnet for dog thieves wanting hunting dogs, who thought nothing of cutting the wire fence, stealing the dogs – and leaving half the other 40 inmates to escape and get lost again. So I took them home at the end of the morning shift.



– "After cursory inspection our dogs accepted them – indeed Tere (another Paws refugee who'd reared her own brood) started mothering them a bit. Not to put too fine a point on it, they were adorable – gangly, uncoordinated, inquisitive and very friendly and affectionate. We rapidly christened them 'puppy patrol' (after the Andrex advertisement) and gave them the individual names of Guapo and Guapa (handsome and pretty).

"But we had a problem. In early July we were off to England for two months. We'd made arrangements for our own dogs, but there simply wasn't room for two more (still not fully house-trained). I guess that's when the entire co-ordinated efforts of PAWS kicked in!"

A PAWS supporter in England immediately volunteered to pay for their foster care, and they went into a commercial kennel. One of the PAWS vets gave them the requisite injections and an A1 bill of health. Since they clearly were purebred, investigations started with specialist societies. The UK-based charity Greyhounds in Need had been set up in 1995 and its founder, Anne Finch, was actually in Spain at the time – but completely swamped trying to deal with 130 rescued racing dogs at Medina del Campo. The suggestion came back: *"Try our support branch in Holland."*

The brand new Greyhounds in Need, Netherlands (GINN) immediately agreed to take them. A Dutch supporter of PAWS, at her holiday home in Mojácar that August, saw them, fell in love at first sight, and agreed to carry them back with her and hand them over to GINN (she couldn't give them a long-term home herself). And the rest is history.

In this story, and what has followed since, there are far too many amazing individual contributions to tell here. It *will* be told in full and made available within the next year. But two people simply must be mentioned:

In 1999 Resy Haanen effectively was GINN. Her spontaneous reaction – *"We'll take them"* -- followed swiftly by *"Send us more"* opened the floodgates. Although Resy has since moved on from GINN, she remains a tireless, very practical and much-valued supporter of PAWS.

GUAPO and GUAPA (continued)

And then there's the indefatigable Rita Rebel. Rita was a volunteer with another animal organisation in Holland who began working with Spanish dogs very soon after Guapo and Guapa's arrival. She quickly established PAWS Holland – and 1000 abandoned, neglected or cruelly mistreated dogs from Almeria, re-settled in happy and secure homes in Holland is the result of that decision.

These two wonderful women are symbols of dozens more generous Dutch supporters who over the years have sent us (and continue to send) food, blankets, feeding bowls, veterinary supplies and large sums of money. Without these donations PAWS, as it now is, would simply not exist.



It is an inspiring story, which began with the callous act of abandoning two beautiful, innocent dogs. But it sparked uncountable acts of tireless work and selfless generosity, some of which only came with a demand for total anonymity from the donors. As we celebrate 20 years of PAWS existence, most of us are aware of the relentless battering of criticism directed at us from outside – almost all of it utterly untrue and unfounded. And some will doubtless remember a few passionate arguments which have wracked the society from within – because the love of defenceless animals sparks the most profound of human emotions.

But amid those thoughts, spare one or two for gangly little Guapo and Guapa, and all those they represent. ***That is what we do. That is who we are.***

UPDATE – TEN YEARS AFTER

After considerable research, PAWS managed to trace one of the two galgo puppies in Holland. Guapo was adopted by Anne-Marie and her family in Holland and renamed Thomas. Anne Marie writes:

“We have loved him from the first day he arrived with us. We think he is a very special animal, the perfect ambassador not only for PAWS but for the whole Galgo breed. He is really gentle, and friendly with everybody – but he has needed a lot of exercise!”

Sadly now Thomas is suffering from bone cancer. Amputation of a leg is not possible because a second leg is now affected. He has been OK on painkillers, but the family know the cancer is not going to get better and accept that his remaining time with them may be limited. In some ways It is a sad end to the story, but they prefer to remember the ten wonderful years they have had with him, and are grateful to have had him.

Efforts are continuing to trace “Guapa” but her new owners moved some years ago without leaving a forwarding address.



What Does PAWS Do For Cats? A Lot!

A team of thirteen volunteers (plus spouses and friends) work steadily to care for the animals inside the cattery and within the community. They care for the kittens at the shelter, manage the feeding of those in feral cat colonies, take animals in to the veterinarians for medical care, spaying and neutering. As we go to press there are currently 18 cats in PAWS' full time care.

The main aim of the group is in the Neutering Program, which helps control the population of animals within the community.

All this effort takes time, money, enthusiasm and support. To help fund this project the group organizes its own fundraising events, and this autumn saw an extra push with a jumble sale and an autumn fair to help raise monies for all the kittens in the cattery that needed to be neutered. **If you would like to adopt, donate or volunteer, please contact:**

637 817 982, 664 246 728 or
950 592 983
strewth69@hotmail.com
diane.mojacar@yahoo.co.uk, or
c.c.wheeler@hotmail.com



The Importance of Micro-chipping—Trixi's Story

"Trixi" (the name given to her upon arrival at PAWS) was found by a caring person at the Huerca Overa bus station. She had obviously come from a home and seemed lost. As the shelter was full to bursting, a foster care home became available to her, where she spent seven weeks before her real owner happened to see her photo on the PAWS' website. If only "Trixi" had been micro-chipped she could have been reunited with her owner sooner (evidently, the dog

had been stolen). Micro-chipping is important not just because it is a legal requirement in Spain but it can also save a pet from much trauma and distress as well as heartache for the owners. A lost dog with a microchip has a

greater chance of being quickly reunited with its owner. Micro-chipping is also necessary for entry and re-entry into the UK, so while you are having your dog micro-chipped, ask your veterinarian to

start PETS Passport Scheme proceedings and have your pet blood tested. Yes, we know that many say that "they are never returning to the UK" but nobody knows what lies just around the corner so it is best to be prepared. Once the requirements are completed for the PETS Passport Scheme (which takes 6-7 months), with the annual rabies vaccination, the pets are ready to go - - for always. We at PAWS believe you owe this to your loved ones.

A WORD FROM THE PAWS CHARITY SHOP ...

A huge thank you from all PAWS' members to the volunteers who keep the PAWS shop running. Despite the recession, the shop has had a successful year. Without this steady income the shelter would simply have to close. In an effort to beat the recession they have added an extra opening day (Thursday). The shop was also open throughout August, except for a few days' refurbishment.

Opening hours are:

**Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday
10.30am-1.30pm**

As a new special attraction there is a 'designer label' rail with items of great quality at credit-crunch prices.

Many thanks also to **Bruce James** who repainted the shop premises free of charge "as a tribute to the wonderful work which PAWS does."

Please note: There have been unfortunate incidents where bags of clothes and others gifts to the shop, left in the corridor outside when it was closed, have been rifled and some of the better items stolen. Would people donating items for sale please try to bring them in during shop opening hours **when-ever possible.**

Can You help us to cut costs?

Every euro and every cent spent by PAWS on administration diminishes our ability to care for abandoned, sick, injured and hungry animals. In this recessionary year your committee has looked more carefully than ever at our admin costs and how we can trim them.

One obvious way to drastically reduce our communication costs is by making far better use of the website (annual cost €80) and email (free) – rather than notifying the entire membership of everything by surface mail. We estimate that probably 80-85% of you have regular access to email and the internet. ***There is no intention – and never will be – that any member who does not have internet access will be deprived of full communication by post. But***

A database of those members who do have email addresses would enable us to send out regular 'group' emails of news about fundraisers, special events, developments at the kennels etc. It would have a link to the website 'events' page (currently not much visited) where much fuller details would be posted.

We can't do this without your help. If you are reading this and do use email – then send us one. All you need do is put your name in the 'subject' bar and send it to:
database@paws-patas.com Nothing more is needed.

As one of example of how much better we can serve you – there were no photos in the monochrome version sent out by post to the membership – because of the extra space required and colour printing adding to the cost. This is a fuller version (with updates not available at printing time). And you're reading it at no cost to PAWS! **"Help PAWS help the animals."**

Over the next year there will be a gradual overhaul of all the website content and functions. This is just a first tentative step!

HOLIDAY SHOPPING THROUGH PAWS

Give a gift to a friend or loved one (or even to yourself!) and help PAWS at the same time.

All proceeds from the new winter collection go directly to PAWS.

Assorted t-shirts from only 6.50€

Leather doggie key rings – 2€

Bum bags – 3.50€ Shoulder bags – 5€

Wallets – 2.50€ Back packs – 3€ Visors – 3€

Also available – polo shirts, sweat shirts, caps

To order: e-mail chrisandpaul@greswolde.com
or phone 628596937.

See them on the web: www.paws-patas.org
Wishing you all a very happy holiday season.

