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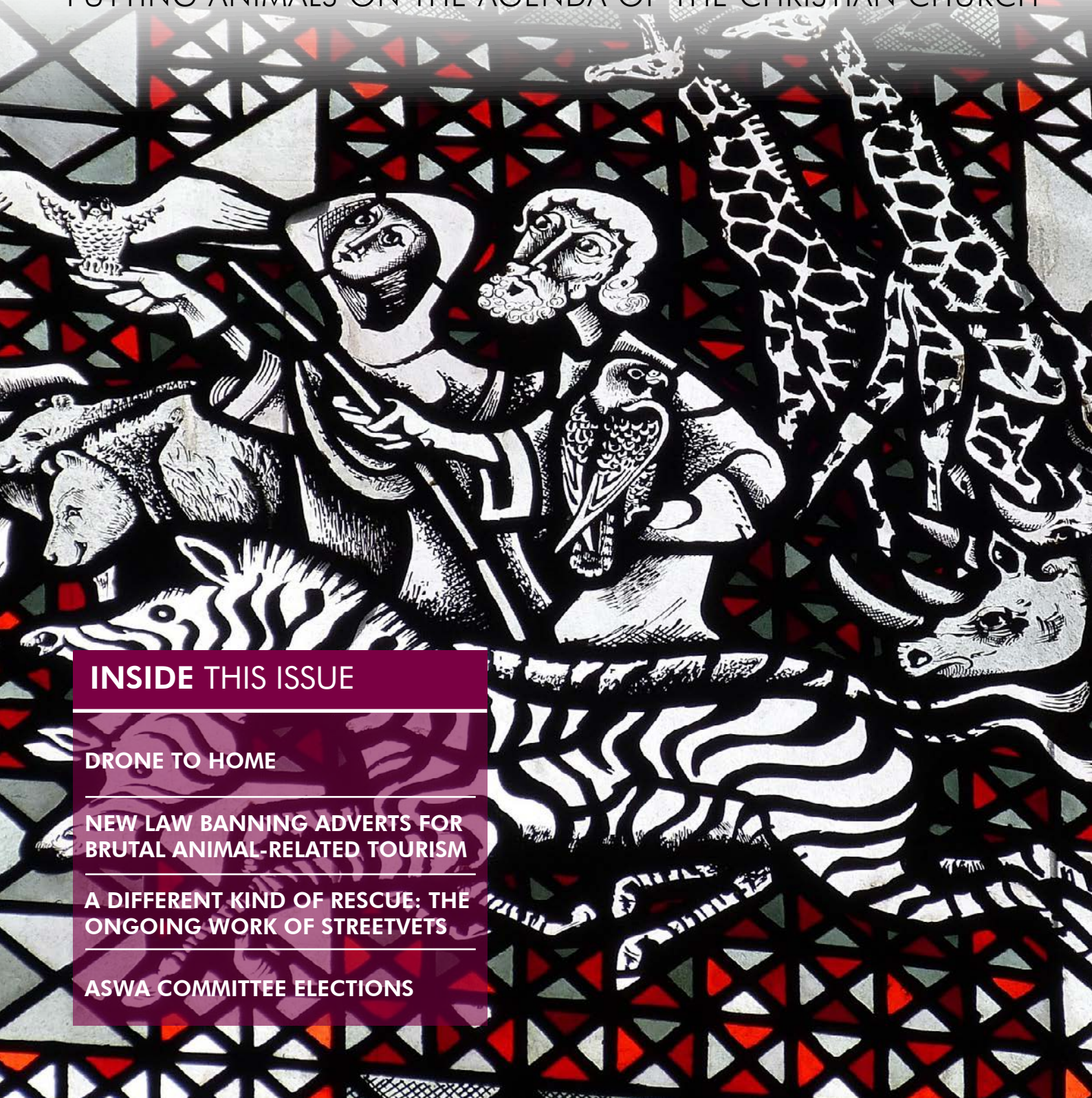
Spring 2024

Price £2 (free to members)



animalwatch

PUTTING ANIMALS ON THE AGENDA OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH



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DRONE TO HOME

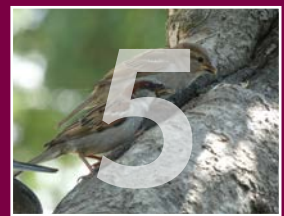
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A DIFFERENT KIND OF RESCUE: THE
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

5th to 8th May

Catholic Concern for Animals' retreat, Ladywell Franciscan Convent, Godalming, Surrey. For more details, please visit <https://catholic-animals.com/events/>.

7th May

ASWA AGM, 7.30pm, on Zoom.

6th October

Animal Welfare Sunday

ASWA Annual Service, 10.30am, Bridlington Priory, Bridlington, YO16 7BN
Eucharist with Blessing of Animals.
Preacher: Revd Neil Bowler, Rector, Bridlington Priory

10th November

ASWA Remembrance Service for Animals in War, The Animals' War Memorial, Brooke Gate, Park Lane, London, W1K 7QF, 3pm.
Speaker to be confirmed.



HELLO AND WELCOME TO ANIMALWATCH

Welcome to *Animalwatch*. In this issue, we look at animal rescue of different kinds, whether direct rescue of individual animals or rescuing groups of animals through changes in the law, and the difference this can make in animal and human lives. This issue also includes the announcement of the winners of Animal-Friendly Church 2023 (see 'ASWA News') and information about our upcoming AGM.

We hope that you enjoy keeping up-to-date with news and information on our website. Do check regularly for resources and information about upcoming events. Please do make a note of the dates in our new format Diary, especially the AGM.

Please send any items for consideration for *Animalwatch* to Revd Jennifer Brown, Editor, PO Box 7193, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8GT. Email is even better – animalwatch@jenbrown.org.uk. Please note that, owing to space restrictions, it may not be possible to print all contributions. Please refer to the information about contributions to *Animalwatch* for further details and restrictions on submissions.

Jennifer Brown, Editor

The deadline for the Summer magazine is **Monday 27th May 2024**.

ASWA SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

If you have a group or service that would welcome an ASWA speaker, we would love to hear from you! We often travel a fair distance so please call to discuss it. We usually bring a stall and literature and always liaise with our hosts to ensure the talk is appropriate for their particular audience. Keep the invitations rolling in!

A WARM WELCOME

to our new members. We look forward to hearing from you.

We are pleased to welcome eight new members who have joined since the publication of the autumn issue.

To all our new members we extend a warm welcome and we would ask that you, along with our existing members, encourage others who share your concern for animal welfare to join. Introductory leaflets are available from the Secretary.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANIMALWATCH

We very much welcome contributions to *Animalwatch* from our readers. We are interested to hear about the positive things being done for animals in your churches and communities. We also welcome informed pieces on specific areas of animal welfare, such as items relating to animal welfare law, the history of animal welfare, and theology. Articles should be submitted to the Editor

either as typed manuscripts by post or by email as Word documents, with any accompanying photos sent as high-resolution jpg files. Items submitted as pdf files or email text cannot be accepted. Submissions must be the contributor's (sender's) own original work, and (unless otherwise agreed) not published elsewhere. Items may be edited for length, readability, and

appropriateness of content. Publication of submitted items is at the Editor's discretion. In submitting an article, the contributor assigns copyright for the piece to ASWA. For items submitted by email, please assume your item has been received unless you get a delivery failure notice. The Editor is unable to acknowledge receipt of individual submissions.

ASWA MERCHANDISE

Available from the ASWA web site

ASWA literature: a range of literature on a variety of animal welfare subjects available.

PAWS for Prayer cards: paw shaped cards with a prayer for companion animals printed on one side. £0.20 each.

Egg Cards: egg shaped cards with a prayer printed on one side. £0.20 each.

ASWA bags: handy cotton shopping bag with the ASWA logo. £4 each.

ASWA badges: show your support for ASWA by wearing a lapel badge with the ASWA logo. £1.50 each.

Sticker sheets & books:

Activity sheet with stickers (ravens or bees), £2.00 each.



GOOD NEWS

Good News for Dogs in the UK and Elsewhere

It has been announced that the UK Parliament is to consider a new law on pet theft. Currently, pets are classed in law no differently from other 'property'. If passed, however, this law will make stealing a pet a specific crime, acknowledging the distress suffered by both the animal and the animal's human family when pet theft occurs. Although a Private Member's bill, it has the support of Government and is likely to pass. South Korea has also made great strides for dogs, banning the sale of dog meat and the rearing of dogs for the meat trade.

NEWS & NOTICES

Don't forget, you can follow ASWA on X (formerly Twitter) – @aswanews

You can also keep up with what's new via our website – www.aswa.org.uk.

Check the web site for the latest resources, including materials for children & youth.



Animal-friendly Church award

Is your church animal friendly? ASWA sponsors the Animal-friendly Church award to recognise those churches that take animal welfare seriously as part of their ministry and mission. Churches can apply at any time and those meeting the necessary criteria will be awarded animal-friendly church status. Information is available on the website or from the Secretary.



ASWA Continues to Help Others

ASWA is pleased to be able to show God's love for all creatures by supporting rescues, shelters, and others helping animals. In 2023, we were able to provide funds to support the work of the Uganda Society for the Protection & Care of Animals, and they shelter they run. We were delighted to receive a kind letter from them acknowledging this support. Their, and our, thanks go to you, our members and supporters, who made this possible.

ASWA Annual Service

This year's annual service will be on Sunday 6th October at Bridlington Priory, Bridlington, Yorkshire. Please see the Diary for further details.

Keeping in Touch

Interested in keeping up-to-date with what ASWA is doing? Want to hear about campaigns and activities relating to animal welfare? If so, please make sure we've got your email address so that we can send you occasional updates on what's happening. To join our mailing list, please send your email address to aswamembership@btinternet.com.

ASWA NEWS

New Animal-Friendly Church Winners Announced

Once again two churches have shared the Animal-Friendly Church award. It is wonderful to see churches engaging with animal welfare and to such a high level. This year's winners are St Barnabas, Horton cum Studley (Oxford Diocese) and St Augustine's, Scaynes Hill (Chichester Diocese).

Congratulations to both churches! We hope to include interviews with representatives of our Animal-Friendly Church winners in the Summer issue.

THE VEGGIE TRAVELLER

Travelling has become a regular occurrence for many of us, whether for business or on holiday, but it isn't always easy for the vegetarian or vegan traveller. But, if you know where to look, there's some great food to be had, even in unexpected places.

The Organic Deli, Friars Entry, Oxford

The Organic Deli may just be Oxford's best kept secret. In fact, I may come to regret revealing it here! This charming establishment is located in an alley known as Friar's Entry, just off Magdalen Street in the city centre. Although not exclusively veggie/vegan, they do have a good range of vegetarian and vegan-friendly items on the menu, including their Vegana breakfast plate, several tasty sandwiches, and a range of delicious cakes (many of which are also gluten-free). Most of the seating is upstairs, so you can even burn off some of those cake calories while heading to your table! The staff are friendly and helpful, and the location gives a sense of having discovered a 'hidden' part of Oxford.

Have you found some great veggie friendly restaurants or hotels while travelling, in your home country or abroad? If so, why not write a short review to send to Animalwatch and let others know about them. If you can, send a photo to go with your review.



NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

ANNUAL SERVICE 2023

AUSTRALIA



Iconic animals

Sometimes it's a single animal that captures our hearts. Here is the story of one.

Blue Groper are quite magical fish. I've heard it said that they are the labradors of the ocean! The males are bright blue, are about 1.7 metres long and weigh about 40 kilos. They can live up to 70 years. They are very friendly and inquisitive and will swim alongside divers. How wonderful would that be! One particular Blue Groper was known as Gus. He lived around quiet beaches in Sydney. Gus was about 40 years old. He was much-loved and had celebrity status in the local community.

On 1st January this year Gus was killed by a spear fisher. This, in spite of the Blue Groper being the State emblem fish of New South Wales, and it being prohibited to kill them. The spear fisher received a fine of \$800, even though the penalties range from \$500 to \$22,000. Representations are being made in writing to the relevant Minister by many upset people, and so far over 5,000 people have signed a petition, so hopefully she feels the pressure to increase protection for these fish, and penalties for harming them.

On the broader stage, the Australian Alliance for Animals is doing plenty of work. They have launched a Fair Go for Animals campaign and published a 76-page report on how to fix Australia's broken animal welfare system.

The sheep export to the Middle East issue is moving very slowly. An independent committee was formed, which should have reported last October, but we are still waiting. The MV Bahijah, carrying thousands of sheep and cattle, left Australia for Jordan on January 5th. Its route would have been through the Red Sea. It was diverted because of the deteriorating situation there and was in limbo while decisions were made. The Government has ordered the vessel back to Australia. The RSPCA has called for all live exporters to voluntarily suspend shipping to the region.

Olga Parkes

SWEDEN



Sparrows soon gone.....

The common sparrow is under serious threat over here. We have taken them for granted and thought them invincible but, alas, we now see that they are diminishing and under threat. They are now on the list of birds we need to be more caring of – the so called threatened list.

One of the reasons for this is that farming and agricultural methods have become so specialized and efficient that, after harvest, oats are no longer found for them to eat. There are no horses anymore on farms, and therefore no access to oats from that source for them either. Society has changed. It is with great sorrow that these lovely little birds are now seen on the list of threatened birds.

Lars Lindell, chairman of the Swedish Ornithological Society describes their sad situation and how the use of chemical spraying on crops has caused a biological desert in which no diversity is possible, only planned crops. This is one reason for the drastic situation right now. Over 60 percent of sparrows have vanished over the past 30 years. In many agricultural parts of Sweden they have vanished completely. The sparrows seem to do somewhat better in the cities where hot-dog stands and fast-food places exist, as well as people feeding them.

How many sparrows are there in Sweden today? Previously it was believed that there were about 500,000 left but today there are many fewer.

Kyrie Eleison, Lord have mercy on us and open our hearts to our little ones, our feathered brothers and sisters. Let us love...Kyrie Eleison, help us love.

Sandra Kinley



Photo of sparrows ©Sandra Kinley. Used with permission

Our annual service was held on Animal Welfare Sunday, 8th October, at St John's Church, Hartley Wintney. St John's is one of the churches in the Benefice where ASWA Secretary, Sam Chandler, serves as Assistant Priest.

Revd Dr Jennifer Brown preached and a good selection of dogs and also one tortoise and a cat came forward to be blessed. You can read Jennifer's full sermon from the service on p9.

We are always looking for churches who would like to host our annual service. If you think the church that you attend would be interested and especially if your church is one of our list of Animal Friendly Churches, please do contact the Secretary.

ASWA will provide a speaker and will help you craft an order of service if required. Ideally, we like to cover all parts of the UK, so as we were in the South of England last year, we will be in Yorkshire this year at Bridlington Priory (see advert). Hope you can join us!

Samantha Chandler



DRONE TO HOME

How it all started

The experience of losing a dog is one of the most emotional, traumatic, and sad experiences imaginable. Luckily, Drone To Home provide an essential service to help people in their hour of need. Drone To Home and its amazing team of highly trained staff and volunteers provide a unique service to reassure all dog owners.

A retired police officer and private security expert, I'm also the founder and CEO of Drone To Home. I started Drone to Home about four and a half years ago and until April 2022 it was entirely self-funded. We've reunited 3497 dogs with their owners since then. I got into this by accident, as just before the first Covid lockdown a local dog went missing. At the time I had a small drone, which I flew as a hobby, and someone asked if I could help. The dog had been missing for three days, and they were desperate. I went out with the drone, and I found him! After that I kept getting called out, and gradually built up a large WhatsApp group of helpers to coordinate searches and share lost dogs on social media.

We got to a point where we were getting 6 to 12 calls a day, and I realised that Drone to Home was taking over my life. I flew drones for a living, working for Nottinghamshire City Council doing thermal roof inspections, but I was so focused on finding dogs that I'd let a lot of my paid work go. Something had to change. I decided to apply to the Charity Commission for Drone to Home to gain registered charity status. By becoming a registered charity supporters could send monthly donations and I could secure business sponsorship. It was hard work, and took about four months to be approved, as I had to prove that Drone to Home was of real benefit to the community, but I had a lot of statistics to prove this. We finally gained approval in April 2022. This was a huge relief, as it meant Drone to Home could continue and grow. Since then, we've featured on TV and in the national press and our social media following has reached over 54 million people, globally! Although we are based in the East Midlands we do travel throughout the UK. We always work closely with owners, and it is our policy to not pass judgement, but to do whatever is needed to reunite people and dogs.

Thermal imaging

I set up a Go-Fund Me page to raise £6k to buy a thermal imaging drone and raised £3.5k in two weeks just from our reputation for finding missing dogs. The new thermal drone found 412 dogs in the first year, so it was worth every penny. It is the same type of drone that police use. We fly at over 160 feet so doesn't affect the dogs when we are searching. The thermal capacity of the camera works the same in the day and night, and if a dog is lost in a corn field for example, it will show up immediately.

So what happens when someone calls Drone to Home and reports their dog missing? One of our amazing volunteers will first of all obtain all the details required so we can assess the situation. Once the details are entered we send an immediate E-poster and all relevant knowledge so you can begin putting things in place before we arrive. We obviously can't go to all missing dogs as we receive around 60 calls a day but we still help and reassure people over the phone and that can be all it needs. We then look at the location and see if we can send one of our trained thermal drone operators.

We find about 98% of dogs and we are not easily defeated, in fact we are relentless and have lots of patience.

William

I spent many years in the police force and learned to emotionally detach myself from some of the awful things I saw. I also suffer with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, which emotionally detaches me. One dog we reunited recently did get to me, however. William is a Labrador who went missing one morning after being spooked by a firework. William ran from a country park and CCTV cameras picked up that he was hit by a tram at 18.02pm on the same day. He was a black dog, and it was a dark night, and William ran straight down the centre of the tracks underneath the tram. Unbelievably he came out the other side and ran off, but we had no idea how badly injured he was.

We worked tirelessly to find William, and after three days eventually located him just 20 metres from some train tracks. We've only lost three dogs since starting

and those dogs had been hit by trains. Where William was found, there was no fencing, and he had buried himself into the undergrowth. We knew we had to get him to safety quickly, but it was a very difficult job. In the end I managed to secure him with a dog-catching pole and William was incredibly brave. By some miracle he had not sustained any broken limbs or internal injuries. After a night at the vet's his delighted owner was able to take William home.

10 steps to finding your lost dog

What can you do if your dog goes missing?

1. Search immediate surroundings first, and then work your way out from where s/he was lost.
2. Call your dog's name clearly and calmly; don't frighten him/her by using an angry tone or loud voice.
3. Ask family, friends, neighbours, and others nearby to help search but tell them not call, shout or chase your dog. You just need reported sightings.
4. Make sure one person stays home, whether this is your home, a holiday home, or a friend's house. This is extremely important, as 97 per cent of missing dogs return home on their own, but it can take between two to nine hours. Keep your door and garden gate open.
5. If you have driven to a location to walk your dog, return to the car after waiting around 20 minutes where the dog was last seen. Your dog will find his/her way back to the car within two to five hours. **DO NOT MOVE THE CAR.** Open all doors and the boot and be patient. Lure the lost dog with an unwashed item of the owner's clothing. Having the car doors and boot open will increase the chances of your dog returning home or to the car by following their scent-following instincts.
6. Revisit areas you recently (in the last 24 hours) or frequently walk with the dog – you may find s/he has returned to these familiar areas to search for you.

7. Ask locals if anyone has seen your dog. Check CCTV. Ring doorbells etc. Ask people you come across if they've seen the dog. Provide your phone number to report sightings to you.
8. If you still have not located your dog, expand your search to the wider area or neighbourhood.
9. Who to contact:
 - Police on 101 to report as missing and get incident number.
 - Local vets.
 - Dog warden.
 - Network rail if near a railway: 0345 7114141
 - Register on Dogs Lost and post on local lost pets social media pages.
10. Don't give up! It can be easy to get discouraged, but many worried pet owners have been in your shoes and are eventually successfully reunited with their beloved dog.

To find out more, visit:
www.dronetohome.co.uk

Phil James

Drone To Home

ASWA REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICE

On Sunday 12th November, ASWA once again gathered at the Animals' in War Memorial in Park Lane, London for our annual Remembrance service.

The service was led by ASWA Secretary, Revd Sam Chandler, with over 100 people present. Each year this service attracts more supporters, and we receive so many kind messages telling us how moving people have found the event.

As the original speaker cancelled at short notice due to illness, we were very grateful to The Countess Bathurst of the National Foundation for retired service animals who stepped in and gave an excellent talk.

This is now a firm date in the ASWA diary, so please come along and support us this year when we meet again on Sunday 10th November at 3.00pm. We hold our service in the afternoon so that clergy and those who attend their own church services in the morning can still come to remember the animals in the afternoon. We always lay a special ASWA wreath at

the memorial but please feel free to bring your own wreaths or flowers if you so wish.

Samantha Chandler



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

Trudy James of Doris Banham dog rescue has rightly drawn attention to the problem of dog rescue organisations going the extra mile for all dogs in need whatever the breed or circumstances while lacking support. What about the ethos or lack of it with regard to horses failing to perform or conform to performance standards?

I 'adopt' animals in the care of Hillside Animal Sanctuary and have received and responded to an appeal focused on a Welsh pony who happened to be born blind. She was reported to the sanctuary in 2013 by a man concerned about her walking around in circles, bumping into fences, and nearly falling into a pond with a steep bank. She was in a very muddy and bare field with no clean water. She and other ponies had disappeared from the field a few days later. A month later a call out from Trading Standards brought her and 14 other horses and ponies into the sanctuary saving them from slaughter.

"Blessed are the merciful," and "In as much as you have done it to the least of these..." But this pony is blind and useless in this so-called horse world that puts a premium on performance, show, and competitive standards and perfect form and winning.

In the light of our covenant with and duty to God and duty to care compassionately for his creatures and with knowledge of these animals' minds and feelings, is it not time to stop thinking in terms of performance charts and support all-inclusive horse rescue?

Katherine Watson - Stockport

TALKING POINT

Should we let nature take its course?

It's likely that many of our readers are avid watchers of nature documentaries on television. If that's the case, they are probably aware that naturalists and those who make nature programmes have a 'code' of non-interference, even when an animal they are watching is in need of help. Is letting nature take its course always the right thing to do? Most of us are unlikely to be in the same situations as those who study other animals for a living and those who make nature documentaries. But we are all likely to encounter our local wildlife at some point, even if that's only birds and small mammals in our gardens or local parks. Naturally, there will be times when intervening to save an animal is not the right thing to do, for example if that would deprive a predator of its prey. And there will be times when it's not possible, when a human or even team of humans would not be successful in their attempt to help and might themselves be injured or worse in the process. And sometimes it would be detrimental to the animal, for example a young animal who might then be rejected by its parent(s). And yet humanity has done so much harm to other creatures over the centuries, surely we have a duty to intervene when we can, to make up for some of the harms our species has caused, and simply because helping others – easing suffering, offering comfort, loving one's neighbour as oneself – is the right thing to do. It's hard to know when we should intervene and when we should let nature take its course, but shouldn't we always seek to do, so far as we are able, good and not harm?

MOMENTOUS NEW LAW BANS DOMESTIC ADVERTS FOR BRUTAL ANIMAL-RELATED TOURISM PRACTICES ACROSS THE WORLD



On 27 July 2014 in southern India, I first witnessed what has recently topped a tragic poll as the world's cruellest commercial exploitation – the awful abuse of baby elephants in tourism. The spectacle overwhelmed me and has occupied my mind since. Save The Asian Elephants (STAE) has since devised and pioneered new law aimed at turning tourism towards ethical practices. The Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act became law on being granted Royal Assent by the King on 18 September 2023.

Why is law needed?

Every year millions of animals are harmed and killed for tourism. STAE has identified over 1,200 companies in the UK who profit from advertising nearly 300 brutal elephant venues alone. This results from lack of any effective regulation. Law with proper enforcement and penalties is crucial while time ebbs away for many endangered species.

How will the new Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act help animals?

The Act prohibits travel companies from selling or advertising attractions

or activities abroad which inflict low standards of welfare on any vertebrate animals that would be unlawful if the activity was happening in the UK. The Act's measures can be adopted by many countries where markets in unscrupulous animal-tourism flourish.

Which animals will the new law help?

Numerous species across every corner of the world will benefit. Take Asian elephants – complex, majestic, and ecologically crucial 'mega-gardeners of the forests' which they nourish and sustain. Their sad fate in tourism is to be snatched as babies from the wild, their defensive mothers killed in front of them, isolated and starved for weeks, then beaten, ripped with hooks, and screamed at till their 'spirits break' (called Pajan). Half die in the process.

Add to the list baby monkeys enslaved from the forests to a life of selfies and profile pics, tiger cubs just photo props then drugged and chained for life in tiny cages, 'walking with lions' later sold on for 'canned hunting', dolphins and orcas in tiny featureless pools till death, ostriches seriously injured and in great pain by being ridden – all amongst those to gain from this law whose ultimate goal is to steer the market towards ethical tourism.

When will the new law take effect?

We are awaiting Environment Secretary Steve Barclay MP's proposed list of activities for prohibition under the Act. It will then be an offence to sell

or advertise an activity abroad that appears on Defra's list. Defra has promised to consult with stakeholders including animal welfare groups. STAE is helping co-ordinate numerous groups to ensure the best submissions and evidence are presented to Defra to help as many abused animals as possible, and to do all we can to ensure time is not lost.

How can I help?

Government must act effectively and efficiently – without delays. Please sign cut-and-paste letters at stae.org urging Steve Barclay to move quickly. Meanwhile reject all holidays involving direct contact with wild animals in captivity.

This law, when robustly enforced by Government, can help restore human respect for our fellow species on Earth, reflecting the peerless words about animals in the prayer attributed to St Basil of Caesarea, resonating down 1700 years:

"May we realize that they live not for us alone but for themselves and for Thee, and that they love the sweetness of life even as we, and serve Thee in their place better than we in ours."

For more information or to support STAE, visit www.stae.org

Duncan McNair
STAE

A DIFFERENT KIND OF RESCUE: THE ONGOING WORK OF STREETVETS

ASWA were privileged to host Jade Stott of the charity StreetVets as our speaker at the 2023 AGM. Jade spoke to us about the important work that StreetVets do to provide veterinary care to the animal companions of homeless people in various cities in the UK. The work that StreetVets do can be lifesaving and we heard recently from Jade about Shiva, a young German Shepherd, who suffered from severe hip dysplasia. She was in significant pain

and her condition urgently required surgery. If she could not get the needed surgery, euthanasia would have been the only other option. Fortunately, an anonymous donor came forward and provided the funds required for the surgery. According to StreetVets, Shiva has made an "amazing recovery", and is now a healthy, happy dog.

When we think of animal rescue, we probably think primarily of finding

homes for strayed or abandoned pets, or the removal of animals from situations of abuse or neglect. Those are, of course, important ways in which many animals are rescued. StreetVets provide a different type of rescue, not taking animal companions from their loving humans because they are living on the streets, but providing the care and support they need to live happy, healthy lives with the humans who depend on them for love, security, and comfort.

SERMON FROM ASWA ANNUAL SERVICE 2023

ASWA Committee member and editor of *Animalwatch*, the Revd Dr Jennifer Brown, preached the sermon at the 2023 ASWA annual service, an all-age service on Animal Welfare Sunday. The text of the sermon is below.

Readings: Genesis 2.15-19 and Matthew 20.1-16

Who can remember the story we heard about Adam? Can anyone remember what Adam was doing? Why did God bring the animals to Adam?

Genesis 2.18–19: Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

I think it's very appropriate that this service, in which we mark Animal Welfare Sunday, is also a pet blessing service. It has become fairly common in recent years to say 'companion animals' instead of 'pets', and I, personally, use both terms. But companion animals, more than pets, calls to mind the passage from Genesis that we heard this morning. We heard that God wanted to give Adam a helper and partner. In other words, a companion. And God didn't start by creating Eve. He first brought the animals to Adam. Of course, we humans, just like other animals, need the companionship of others of our own kind (especially if we want the species to continue!). But it's important that the Bible tells us that God gave Adam the opportunity to select an animal companion. God's desire is for all his creatures to live together in harmony and companionship.

When we think of the 'Genesis creation story', we usually think of the creation story of Genesis 1, not the story as it's told in Genesis 2, part of which we just heard. And when we think of Genesis 1, what most often comes to mind is humanity being made in the image of God and given dominion over the rest of creation. In other words, we're the boss. But once we read the story of Adam and the animals in Genesis 2, how we think about being the boss

changes. It's not about controlling and using other creatures, but caring for them, nurturing them, and helping them flourish.

Adam gave the animals names. We give our companion animals names. How many of you have animals and have given them names? And do those names tell us something about the animal? Did you choose the name because of something special about the animal, how he or she looks or behaves?

Some people see Adam naming the animals as Adam demonstrating his control over the animals, but I see it differently. We give our own companion animals names, just as parents give their children names. And when we do this, it's a way of showing the world that the one receiving the name is an individual, unique and special. When we name our companion animals, we often do so based on some characteristic, physical or in their personality, that stands out as unique to that animal. Although Adam was, we presume, naming entire species and not just individuals, I think we are supposed to understand that something very similar was happening. The unique characteristics of each species were noted, and appropriate names given. So this account of the animals being named is a way of recognising the uniqueness, the specialness, the importance, of each species. And, as the story goes on, Adam does the same sort of thing when he names Eve.

So if Adam recognises what is unique and special in each animal, just as he does with Eve, and if God considered animals to be worthy potential companions for Adam, this closes the gap between humans and non-human animals. It makes us recognise that they are, perhaps more than we thought, like us.

"You have made them equal to us!" is the complaint of the workers from the parable that we heard in our Gospel this morning.

They are angry because they believe that they, who have worked the whole day, deserve more than the ones who worked only an hour. Sadly, this is also the complaint that is often made when society gives more recognition to animals and their needs, and gives

them rights of their own. "You are making them equal to us." We humans are often afraid of losing our status, of feeling that we aren't as important as we used to be, or think we should be. I think it's very sad that Christians themselves think this way, believing that because humans are, undeniably, made in the image of God, that is a status that makes us better than other creatures, and is a status we have to jealously guard. I think that we are afraid of losing our special status of being made in the image of God because, deep down, we know that we fail to live up to that image. The image of God in us can be a bit blurry, a bit hard to see clearly.

Thankfully, we have Jesus! Not only does Jesus forgive us for the things we get wrong, he fills us with his Spirit to change us, to allow the image of God within us to be seen more clearly. But we are all works in progress. So it is only in Jesus that we see the image of God with perfect clarity. And, as the letter to the Philippians says, in Jesus what we see is one, "who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself..." Our status of being made in the image of God is not something to be exploited to control and use and dominate our fellow creatures, but is something that, if we let it, can move us to self-giving and to service, to our fellow human beings, our fellow creatures, and the planet.

We see a little bit of that possibility in our pet blessing service today. As God's blessing is given to his creatures gathered here with us today, we recognise their uniqueness alongside our own. We acknowledge how special each one is, and how special and unique are the species they represent. And we remind ourselves that not only do we love these animals, but that God who created them loves them, too, just as he loves all his creatures, human and non-human alike.

Jennifer Brown

ASWA COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

It's Election time again! There is, however, no postal voting form in this issue of *Animalwatch* because at the time of going to press the number of candidates for committee places does not exceed the number of vacancies. The candidates looking to stand are the Revd Dr Jennifer Brown, Revd Lynn Hurry, and Revd Olivia Maxfield-Coote, all standing as Committee Members for a further three years.

ASWA committee members are trustees, which means they have legal duties and responsibilities. The tasks of the committee are to manage the day-to-day running of ASWA, including the planning of ASWA services, commissioning and producing informational material, managing the budget, organising fund-raising events, and the production of *Animalwatch*, to name but a few. You will find information about the candidates here:

Jennifer Brown: Jennifer has been an ASWA member since 2001 and has been editor of *Animalwatch* since

2011. Jennifer is a Church of England priest and combines self-supporting ministry in the Diocese of Oxford with being Director of Training for the College of Preachers. She sees care for our fellow creatures as very much a part of the Christian calling and is committed to promoting good theology on animal welfare and creation care. She has published in the *Journal of Animal Ethics* and is co-author of the chapter 'Who is my neighbour? The human animal in creation.' In *Climate crisis and creation care: eco-economic sustainability, ecological integrity, and justice*. She lives in Oxfordshire with her husband and dog.



Lynn Hurry: Lynn is the Vicar of St Mary-at-Latton Church in Harlow, Essex. She shares her home with a number of rescued animals and has a special love of rats. She grew up in a large family



where there were as many animals as children, and so they've always been an important part of her life. She supports a number of animal organisations and has a particular interest in Hedgehogs and encouraging people to think carefully about how they can help save them from extinction. She believes animals to be our healers and teachers, made in the image of the Creator.

Olivia Maxfield-Coote:

Olivia has been an advocate for animal welfare for as long as she can remember and has been a member of ASWA for over 10 years. Animal theology has been a large part of Olivia's studying from her first degree. She was ordained in 2015 and is currently serving in Epping where she is surrounded by the wonderful forest and the wonderful life that dwells within it.



THE BIBLE AND...

Rescuing Animals.

This Bible study is designed to help an individual or small group to explore what the Bible says about animal rescue.

Genesis 6.13-7.5

"And God said to Noah, 'I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth. Make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above; and put the door of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks. For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kinds, and of

the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every kind shall come in to you, to keep them alive. Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them.' Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

Then the Lord said to Noah, 'Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and its mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and its mate; and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive on the face of all the earth. For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.' And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him."

Here, at the start of the story of Noah, which will be familiar to many of us, we see that God values the wonderful diversity of creation. God instructs Noah to build the ark, not just to save himself and his family, but for the express purpose of bringing into the ark representatives of 'every living thing, of all flesh ... to keep them alive.' This is an animal rescue mission. The world

needed a fresh start. God, of course, has eternity. God could have sat back and waited for life to get going again, but that would not honour the goodness that God both saw and declared in creation (see Genesis 1). And so Noah is given the mission of rescuing breeding pairs of every kind of animal, so that they might be saved and not be lost. God's concern is not just for humans, but for all of God's creatures, and for the complex and interdependent system that we all together make on the earth.

Questions for Groups:

What do you think about the notion that the story of Noah is really a story of animal rescue?

Do you find it uncomfortable that only representatives of each species were saved and that, apart from them, 'every living thing' was 'blotted out'? Is there, perhaps, a lesson in this that even though we can't save every individual animal that is suffering, neglected, abused, or at risk, we have a duty to rescue those that we can?

How might putting the animals, rather than Noah or his family, at the centre of this story change how we think about the place of non-human creation in God's plan? Might it change how the Church approaches animals and issues of animal welfare?

ANIMAL WELFARE SUNDAY 2024



ASWA Annual Service

Bridlington Priory, Bridlington YO16 7BN

Sunday 6th October at 10.30am

To include Eucharist and Blessing of Animals

Preacher: Revd Neil Bowler
Rector, Bridlington Priory

All welcome

For further details, please visit our website

www.aswa.org.uk

or by post PO Box 7193, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8GT, UK.

E: secretary@angsocwelanimals.net

ARE YOU AN ANIMAL FRIENDLY CHURCH?



Christians have a sacred duty to care for God's Creation

The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals is now awarding 'Animal Friendly Church' certificates to churches which practise and promote a compassionate attitude towards God's creatures.

Applicants will also be automatically entered into our annual '**ASWA Animal Friendly Church of the Year Award**'
The Winner will receive a hamper full of ethical and useful goodies for your Church and a plaque to display on your wall.

For further details visit our website

www.aswa.org.uk

or apply in writing to: PO Box 7193, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8GT

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