

SOI DOG

June 2020



post

If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.

Challenge accepted:
John takes on the
60-mile
July dog walk
P.40

Dr. Travis Strong
brings a fresh
pair of eyes
P.16

Risk it for a
biscuit
P.14

Just Gill
– the extraordinary story
of an extraordinary woman
P.2

A day at the
pound
P.64

P.30
Faces of the
Soi Dog sponsor
programme:
Sponsor one,
save many

P.42
CNVR update:
Shining the spotlight
on spay and neuter as
Soi Dog hits 400,000

P.60
Vietnam F1 petition
speeds through the
magic million, but
Covid-19 puts a halt
on the chequered flag



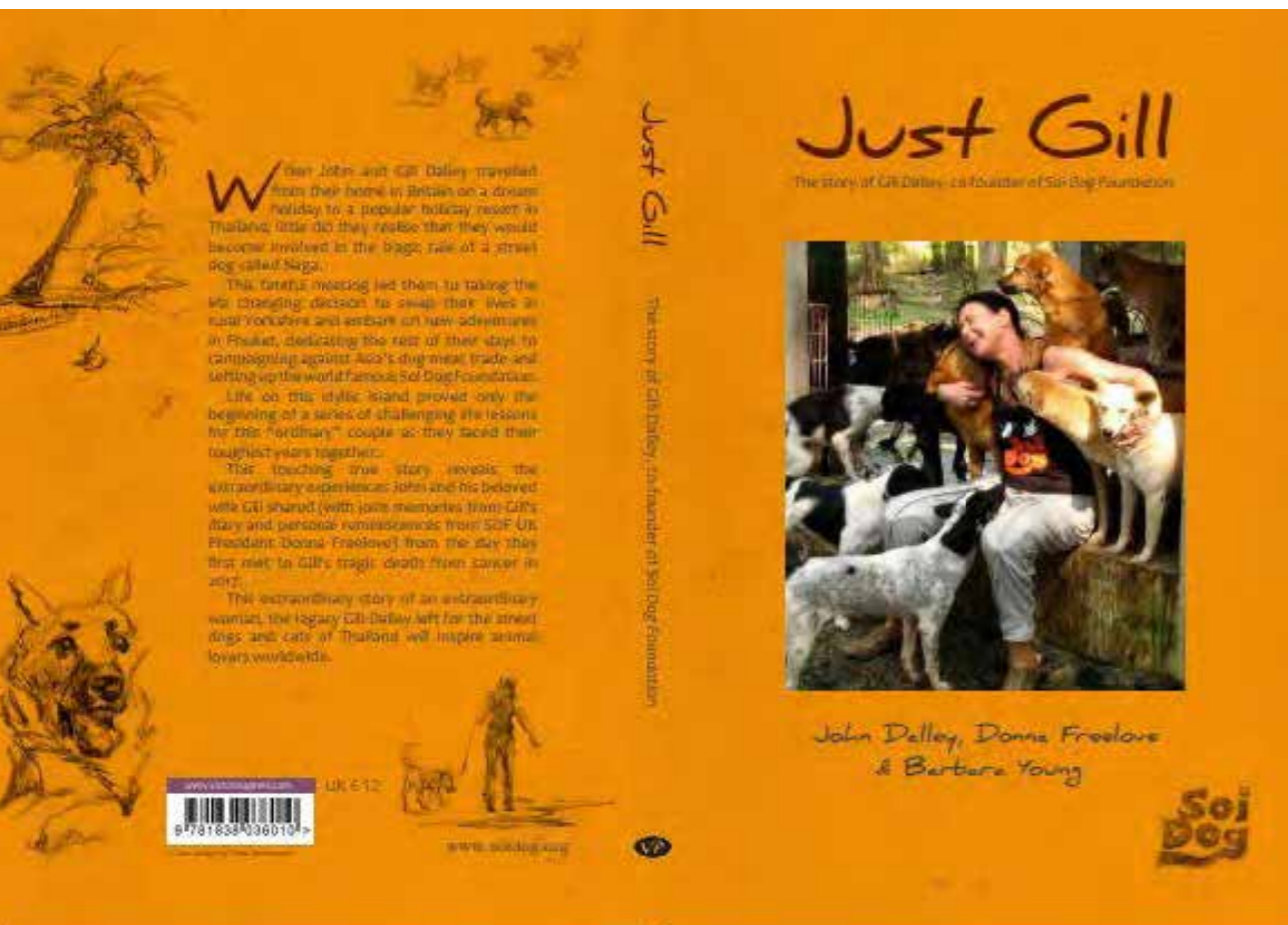
Just Gill – the extraordinary story of an extraordinary woman

Nayomi Gunarathna

June saw the release of a much-anticipated book about Gill written by John with chapters from Donna Freelove, Gill's best friend and president of Soi Dog Foundation UK, and excerpts from Gill's diary.

From her formative years in the UK, to her and John's move to Thailand in 2003, to the birth of Soi Dog Foundation, the book follows Gill's personal trials, tragedies and triumphs as well as Soi Dog's journey from a humble animal rescue to a world-renowned charity that successfully abolished the dog meat trade in Thailand.

The book is available at Soi Dog's official merchandise store [here](#), with all profits donated to Soi Dog:



SOI DOG LEGACY PROGRAMME

Join our legacy programme and leave something to the dogs and cats of Asia

A legacy gift is a planned future gift that designates some part of an individual's estate as a donation to a non-profit. Legacy gifts enable individuals to create a powerful philanthropic legacy by making a direct impact on the causes important to them.

In some cases, legacy giving can be a source of funding from supporters who haven't had the ability to make a major gift during their lifetimes.

By leaving a gift to Soi Dog Foundation in your will, you can influence the lives of thousands of dogs and cats, long after you're gone.

Let your legacy be the future for stray animals.

Email legacy@soidog.org or visit www.soidog.org/legacy to find out more.

Work completed on five new dog runs

Sam McElroy

The Covid-19 lockdown, as we mentioned in the last issue of the *Soi Dog Post*, has had an impact on many areas of the foundation's work – not least of which adoptions, which dried up due to the restrictions placed on travel around the world. The knock-on effect of this has meant the potential overcrowding of an already bulging sanctuary.



A new run takes shape and quickly becomes home to 25 dogs.





As a reaction to this, an emergency appeal for funds to increase the capacity within the sanctuary was launched in March. A couple of areas within the sanctuary were identified as having the potential to house new runs and, thanks to the support of donations which came in from all over the world, work began with the urgent construction to accommodate up to 25 new dogs. The first run officially opened in May and is now home to some of the cheeky teenage dogs who have taken well to their new surroundings, thus enabling us to create more space where they were previously located.

June saw the completion of a further four new dog runs capable of accommodating up to 120 more dogs. The progress was curtailed on April 13th when lockdown came into effect but, now completed, these runs provide the urgent space needed to cope with the inevitable increase in sanctuary population that Covid-19 is causing.

It is unthinkable that Soi Dog Foundation would have to suspend intake of sick and injured dogs or cats and, thanks to the wonderful donations of caring members of the public, we will be able to keep our promise of never turning away an animal in need.

To donate to Soi Dog's emergency appeal, [click here](#).

The various stages of work being carried out on more dog runs to accommodate the inevitable rise in sanctuary population due to Covid-19.

UK supporters take the lead for Soi Dog

Josie Marsh

Soi Dog Foundation is staging its first ever virtual challenge event in the UK. The challenge is to walk your dog, or yourself, 60 miles during the month of July. Run through Facebook, anyone who joined the challenge and set up a Facebook fundraiser received a Soi Dog T-shirt to proudly don whilst doing their miles.



Soi Dog supporter Stephanie Peel is taking part in the challenge with the lovely Roxy and Ruby.

The Facebook group is the beating heart of the challenge, where all participants are encouraged to support one another and post photos and stories of their progress. The interest has been fantastic so far and, with the help of *Donna*, president of Soi Dog UK, and her team of helpers, the group is already raising tens of thousands of much-needed pounds for Soi Dog.

We hope that the challenge will lift spirits in a country that has been hit hard by the Covid-19 crisis and, with most having been shut away for months, we're sure many people (and their dogs!) will be jumping at the chance to get outdoors, hopefully in the sunshine (though it being a British summer, that's far from a guarantee!)



Peter Russell and a tired-looking Bowin take five during one of their two-mile walks.



Dog meat trade awareness hits the big screens

Chutima Srisawang

In 2014, with the help of supporters worldwide, Soi Dog Foundation together with the Thai government successfully ended Thailand's illegal dog meat trade. Even though laws were in place at the time, thousands of animals fell victim to the trade and were transported across the border from Thailand through Laos to Vietnam. These animals were a mixture of stolen pets and innocent street dogs.

Since the crackdowns, and since thousands of dogs were rescued in the north of Thailand, the trade has been abolished and the consumption of their meat outlawed.

However, we cannot afford to be complacent and we must continue to drive this important message home. With this in mind, we erected billboards across Phuket in March and April reminding tourists and migrant workers from neighbouring Myanmar that the trade and consumption of dog and cat meat in Thailand is unacceptable and carries a hefty fine and/or a jail sentence.

We hope that the billboards, displayed in English, Thai and Burmese, act not only as deterrent but as an education and awareness campaign for tourists and locals alike.



Billboards went up outside popular landmarks, such as temples.





Led by his adopter, Miracle performed a magic trick for the judges. Image: ITV

In May, the anti-dog meat trade message reached an even bigger audience when Soi Dog rescue and trade survivor *Miracle* took to the stage on primetime TV talent show *Britain's Got Talent*.

A truck carrying *Miracle*, and around 1,000 dogs just like him, was intercepted by Soi Dog agents close to the Mekong River on the night of May 5th, 2013 in Nong Yat, Nakhon Phanom province. Thousands more were rescued over the course of four years.

Accompanied by his adopter *Amanda Leask*, *Miracle* stole the show with his audition and left the judges in tears at hearing his backstory and the horrors of the dog meat trade in Asia.

We can't wait to see *Amanda* and *Miracle* move forward in the show, and we hope that *Miracle* will be a great source of inspiration in the fight against this cruel trade which is still rampant in countries like Vietnam and China.

To find out how you can help Soi Dog end this barbaric trade, [click here](#).



Miracle on the night of his rescue.

Risk it for a biscuit

Sam McElroy

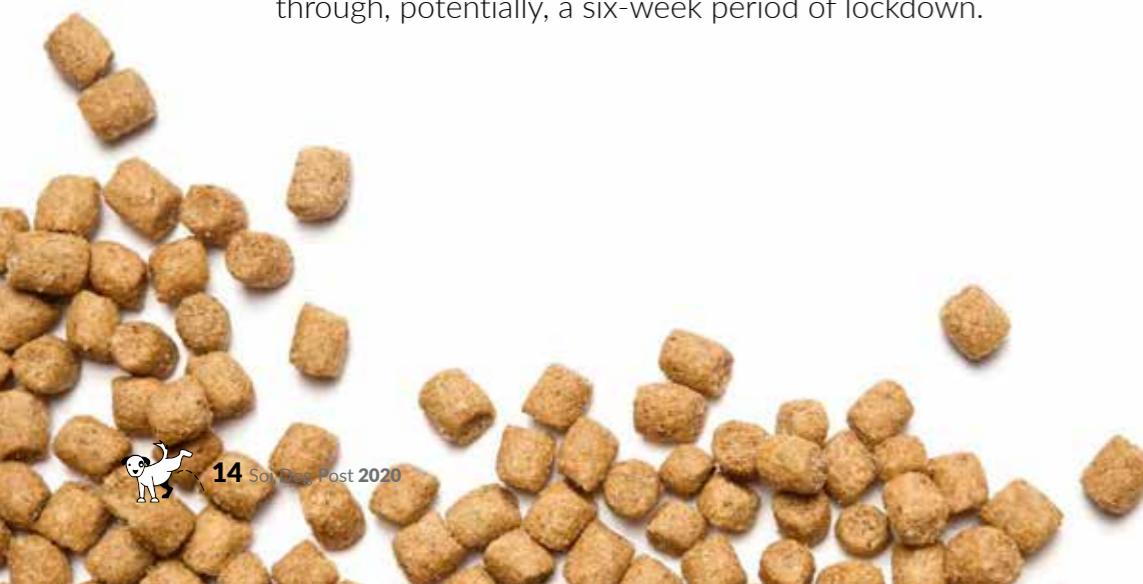
On April 9th, Soi Dog Foundation beat the start of the Covid-19 lockdown in Phuket to deliver over 11 tonnes of dog and cat food to feeders and temples across all sub-districts to ensure no animal went hungry while the island ground to a halt.

Following generous donations made by Soi Dog supporters to raise the necessary extra funds to cover the cost of the food, we were able to fulfil our promise to the stray dogs and cats in a time of great need.

Animal rescue officers and community outreach teams lined up to load bags of food onto their vehicles and departed in convoy, destined for locations throughout the various districts of Phuket.

Soi Dog has always supported the community with food supplies for stray animals through its community outreach programme, but the urgency created by the impending travel restrictions meant we needed to act fast to ensure enough food was delivered to see the animals through, potentially, a six-week period of lockdown.

A queuing procession, ready to leave the sanctuary with over 11 tonnes of vital supplies to deliver across the island.





Dr. Travis Strong

brings a fresh pair of eyes *Nayomi Gunarathna*

Dr. Travis Strong, an animal ophthalmologist (or, for us laymans, eye specialist) visited the sanctuary in February, volunteering his time to train our vets and offer a consultancy for some of our animals who needed an extra diagnosis.

On a week-long tour of Phuket, he shared his expertise with our vets and provided training on how to perform thorough ophthalmic examinations as well as skills in eye surgery and practical lessons in distinguishing between important conditions in dogs and cats, such as uveitis and glaucoma.

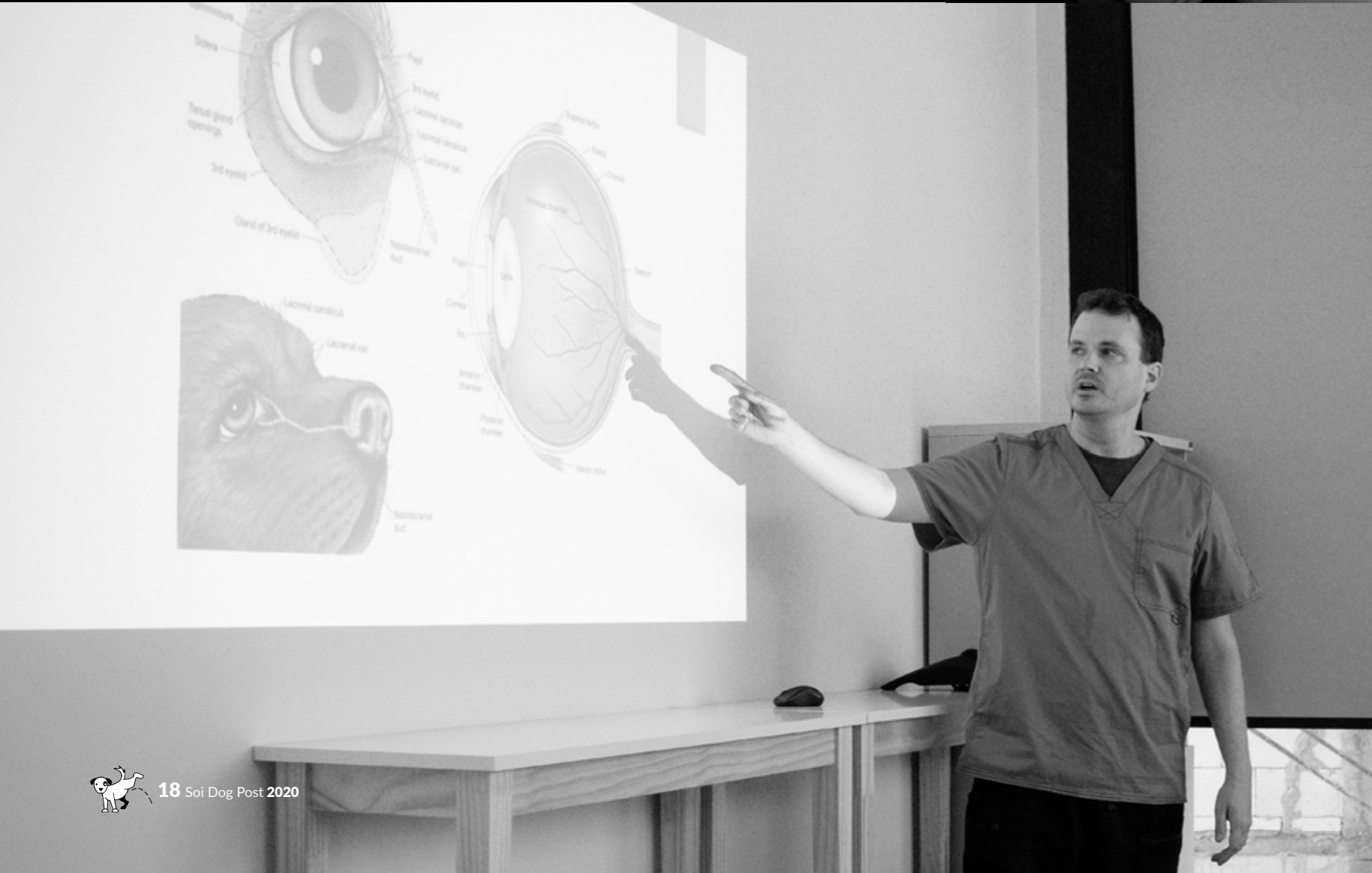
Dr. Strong is a surgeon at the Veterinary Emergency and Referral Hospital in Ontario, Canada. Originally from Chicago, USA, he has been living in Canada for most of his adult life, dedicating his time to his passion for all things ophthalmology.



He offers his free time to shelters not only in North America but also other parts of the world, particularly those in less affluent countries where animal welfare is not a mainstream concept due to poverty and lack of education. Dr. Strong's dream is to be able to help more and more of the animals in countries like these where, in many cases, vets and non-profits are barely able to keep animals alive and do not have the resources or the expertise to deal with complicated issues such as eye deformities and surgeries.



Dr. Strong commended the Soi Dog vets for their dedication and eagerness to learn.



During his first visit to Southeast Asia, Dr. Strong also visited Cambodia and Vietnam where he volunteered at dog and cat rescues as well as wildlife sanctuaries.

But animals and vision aren't Dr. Strong's only callings. After work, he performs stand-up comedy together with some of his colleagues. Naturally, his sets consist of a bit of veterinary humour! He also contributes regular satirical content to veterinary news site *The Cageliner* (cagelinervet.com).

You can find out more about Dr. Strong and follow his travels via his Instagram account [@vegan_veterinarian](https://www.instagram.com/vegan_veterinarian)

Soi Dog welcomes veterinary volunteers. Learn more at www.soidog.org/volunteer

Paws in motion: Inside the team that keeps Soi Dog moving

Dee Nordlander and Marlen Krieger

Set up in 2016, the same year as the opening of the dog hospital, Soi Dog Foundation's physiotherapy team are at the forefront of rehabilitating animals who have suffered severe injuries. The most common conditions treated using physiotherapy include paralysis, hip dysplasia, neurological impairment, spinal injury, orthopedic conditions, weight management and post-surgical care.

Two staff members make up the physio team: 26-year-old vet nurse *Benjawan Wongla (Aiw)* and 25-year-old physiotherapy assistant *Marlen Krieger (Mali)*. Aiw and Mali occasionally receive help from carers or vet nurse assistants, but the majority of the work falls on their shoulders. It can be physically demanding and also heavy on the heart, especially in cases that are beyond their treatment.

However, both agree that the successful treatments outweigh the unsuccessful ones.

*The dream team: Aiw and Mali.
Photo: Justin Mott*





“Dogs and cats that come through our doors, unable to move their legs or even sit up, suddenly get better after treatment, and in that very moment when we see progress, it is the most rewarding feeling in the world, explains Mali.”

Hope is such a powerful motivator, and both Mali and Aiw have an endless supply to offer every single animal that they work with. In the space of a year and a half, Mali and Aiw have helped 281 animals together: 171 needing postoperative care and 110 who suffered paralysis, spondylosis or were too old to undergo surgery.

The team are allocated cases by the vets each day. Using information about the animal's diagnosis, they then decide on a treatment plan accordingly. On a normal workday, the team alternate between 12 treatments (five outdoor and seven indoor exercises), depending on the animal's size, injuries and temperament.

The five outdoor exercises help with coordination and building strength. Slalom exercises, for example, focus on movement and balance by shifting the dog's weight from side to side as they pass obstacles. Cavaletti exercises, which involve guiding dogs over obstacles, help dogs build up muscle in their back legs and improve correct paw placement. The team have a range of other tools at their disposal to help with balancing and weight shifting, including the balance board, balance cushion and a big peanut-shaped gymnastic ball.

The physiotherapy room contains a hydrotherapy treadmill that's used to build muscle, exercise dogs for weight loss and stimulate the nervous system of neurological cases and paralysed dogs. Depending on the individual need of the dog, Aiw and Mali will occasionally stand with them in the water for extra support or correction of their gait. The underwater treadmill can be filled with water according to a dog's height and need of support and can take away up to 80% of a dog's body weight. The dry treadmill is usually for cats, but it also used for dogs with skin issues or open wounds.

Many dogs and cats that come for postoperative care or that experience pain are treated with laser therapy. Aiw explains that this stimulates cell growth and therefore speeds up healing. In some cases, Aiw will practice acupuncture on them, with great results. Nevertheless, the most important tools of the physiotherapy unit are the hands of Aiw and Mali. Almost every dog gets massages and passive range of motion (PROM) exercises.

Massages help relieve muscle tension and are also used for pain management. PROM is the manipulation of the joints to make sure the tissue stays soft after a surgery and the dog does not become stiff. Lastly, Aiw and Mali do assisted standing, sit-to-stand and assisted walking exercises.



Averagely, it takes 290 litres of water to fill the hydrotherapy unit. Photo: Justin Mott

On average, the team treat around 18 dogs and cats per day. Depending on the severity of the animal's condition, a session can last from 15 minutes to one hour. For example, a paralysis case can last as long as an hour, with 10-15 minutes on the hydrotherapy treadmill (broken up by 1-2 minute breaks), laser and acupuncture for 15 minutes and lastly a 10-minute massage session. Another important factor to keep in mind is the time taken to gain the trust of new animals that come in. Sometimes the bond is instant, but other times trust building is required before any treatment can begin in order to reduce the animal's stress level.



Improvement takes trust and time...and plenty of treats too. Photo: Justin Mott

Despite remembering almost all of the dogs and cats that come through for physiotherapy, Aiw still recalls her very first successful case: *Kamsorn*, an adorably small dog who arrived with only one working leg. Unable to move and with little to no quality of life, Kamsorn was due to be euthanised if no improvements were made. Aiw worked tirelessly with Kamsorn, growing more and more attached each day. The results were miraculous: Kamsorn was able to walk on all four legs and was eventually adopted locally.

“Kamsorn will always be remembered in my heart, and I was so proud of myself and also proud of her amazing recovery, says Aiw.”

There are a number of cases Mali holds near and dear to her heart. But there was one in particular that stood out: *Fanumpa*, a three-week-old puppy with paralysis who was initially a lost cause. The team went through almost all of the exercises with him without much success. One day, Mali decided to put him in a wheelchair, and he seemed to enjoy it. As he began to walk with help from the wheelchair, Fanumpa left the hospital and was placed in a kennel.

“He was the type of dog that hated being alone and, when he didn't get enough attention, he would stop eating and drinking, so he moved in and out of the hospital often,” explains Mali. “I was devastated when the vets found out he had heart failure and he finally had to be euthanised. We worked with him for over a year and he was like our baby.”

Aiw and Mali have learnt and experienced so much from the rise or fall of each individual case. As they recall the names of 15 dogs and cats whose paralysis was cured, they huddle close together to provide a sense of comfort to *Radina*, a dog incapable of movement. It is truly inspiring to watch; a glimpse into the physio team's dedication, hard work and, most of all, genuine love and care for these special needs animals.

**Gotta catch 'em all:
Bangkok CNVR teams focus on the**
**CITY'S FORGOTTEN
DOGS**

Chutima Srisawang

With Bangkok in a state of lockdown in April and May, our CNVR teams in the city found their work increasingly restricted. Social distancing rules meant pet owners and stray animal feeders were unable to enter the clinic in Chatuchak, and temple closures forced our mobile teams to cancel their planned sterilisation clinics.

But every cloud has a silver lining, and our animal rescue officers decided to make the best of a bad situation and shift their focus to the shy, feral and harder-to-catch dogs in the more remote areas of Bangkok.

Living in landfill sites, dense woodland and even under abandoned buildings, these dogs were often a challenge to catch, but our officers didn't give up, crawling into the tightest spaces and over mounds of rubbish to rescue as many dogs as possible.

If that wasn't enough, the officers also travelled to the neighbouring province of Samut Sakhon after receiving reports of a family of particularly shy dogs living in a remote area.

Once caught, the dogs were transported to the Chatuchak clinic where they were vaccinated, neutered and checked over medically. The veterinary team also cleaned their ears, trimmed their nails and bathed them for the first time in their lives.

Our Bangkok teams have shown initiative and determination in their efforts to continue caring for the street dogs and cats of Thailand, and we are hugely thankful for all the support which makes this vital programme possible.



No obstacle is too great for our animal rescue officers!

Faces of the **Soi Dog** sponsor programme

Sponsor one, save many

Nayomi Gunarathna



aka Mr Scruffers

Likes: Wading in water
Dislikes: Interrupted naps

Sponsor Daymon [here](#)

Daymon lived on the streets for 13 years until age caught up with him. This poor blind boy fell into a canal and had to be rescued.

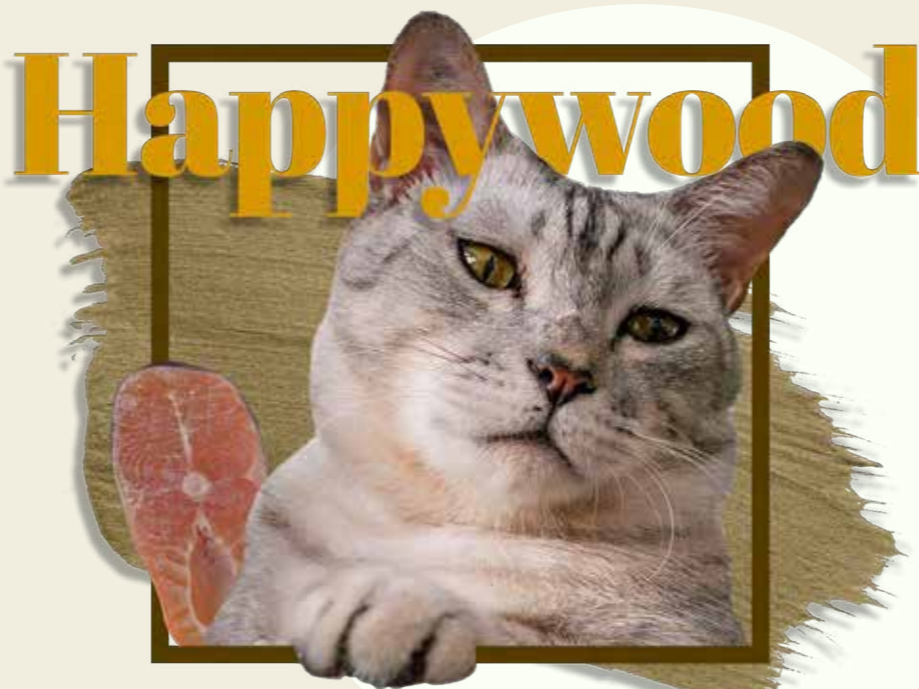
With age comes wisdom but also ailments, and Daymon suffered from a number of illnesses that can be lethal if left untreated in the tropics, including severe anaemia and blood parasites. He has come a long way since then, even regaining some of his sight, but is still in need of constant veterinary care and is unlikely to ever find a home of his own.

Sponsoring Daymon helps not only him but the next desperate animal in need of rescue too.

Happy is exactly the word that describes this gorgeous, goofy silver tabby who is the latest addition to our sponsor programme.

Unfortunately, *Happywood's* story isn't such a happy one as his leg had to be amputated after he was badly injured in a car accident. He also tested positive for FIV and FeLV, two feline diseases that severely restrict his chances of ever finding a home.

Happywood is representative of the hundreds of street dogs and cats who come to Soi Dog in dire need of help every year. In caring for Happywood, sponsors are caring for them too.



aka The Chubby One

Likes: Belly rubs and his weasel toy
Dislikes: The idea of going on a diet

Sponsor Happywood [here](#)

aka Tigger

Likes: Leisurely strolls
Dislikes: Going to the vets

Sponsor Zandonin [here](#)



Zandonin is a familiar face at the sanctuary and a sponsor programme veteran as she has been with Soi Dog since 2016.

Zandonin was also a victim of a car accident that injured her spine and back and left her incontinent. Because of this, she has faced difficulty in finding a home. It's likely she will stay at the sanctuary for quite some time or possibly for the rest of her life.

This sweet girl has a loving nature and a winning smile and deserves to live a wonderful life. Sponsoring Zandonin helps her but also so many other animals who are sick, injured or suffering, as she once was.



Cisco Meraki and NTT provide further tech for new buildings

Sam McElroy

Something few people think about (other than our IT team, of course) is how the technological development of Soi Dog Foundation is managed behind the scenes.

Quite rightly, daily focus is the welfare of dogs and cats, but an increasing demand on systems could potentially have come at vast extra cost to Soi Dog; something we feel our wonderful donors may not be as interested in. Why should they be? Their focus, too, is on the dogs and cats.

So who takes care of the “behind the scenes”? How do our office-based teams get online? How does our CCTV system link up, and where do the cameras come from? How much does it cost to set up the IT infrastructure?

We answer a few of those questions right here.

Cisco Meraki and NTT, leading companies in cloud-based technology, have recently donated some extra equipment for us to kit out the

new buildings. They helped us, initially, with phase 1 of the shelter expansion in 2018 and have stepped in once again with some more outstanding donations. The kit for phase 2 arrived at Soi Dog in late March, comprising of 11 new CCTV cameras, 10 WiFi access points and a 48-port switch to link them all together.

“The new CCTV cameras, WiFi access points and additional networking hardware has allowed us to kit out the new cat hospital and admin offices with enterprise-grade networking equipment at zero cost to Soi Dog”, said IT manager *Spencer Hardy*. “They have also renewed, free of charge, the three-year subscription on the kit that they sent over to us for phase 1, which is amazing”.

We are eternally grateful to Cisco Meraki and NTT for helping us with this and, in their words and ours, making sure that the focus of Soi Dog and the contributions from its donors remain directly on the welfare of animals.

Digital security taken seriously

Sam McElroy

Staying on the tech theme for a moment, and to highlight the importance of protecting ourselves against online fraudsters, we pay homage to *Digital Shadows* – the digital risk protection experts who help keep Soi Dog Foundation and its supporters safe online.

Their SearchLight product protects us against external threats, continually identifying where our assets are exposed and providing information which helps us understand and tackle the risks.

As recently as April, the company alerted us to a fraudulent website which was under construction with what appeared to be the sole intention of defrauding potential new donors to Soi Dog. Digital Shadows alerted us within hours of the site appearing online, and before it even had the chance to create an active donation button, it was shut down.

Soi Dog takes the matter of online security very seriously and protects its processes wherever possible. Protection, that usually comes at quite a price, is provided to us by Digital Shadows at no cost – helping us stay one step ahead of the fraudsters and keeping our support base secure.

Digital Shadows’ amazing support for Soi Dog proves that dog and cat lovers are lurking everywhere!



Working towards a Greater Good with US-based charitable organisation

Sam McElroy and
Janis Rosenthal

GreaterGood.org (GGO) is a US-based charitable organisation devoted to protecting the health and wellbeing of people, pets and the planet. In addition to creating and operating a suite of signature programmes, GreaterGood.org has given over \$250 million in cash and product grants to charity partners and programmes worldwide that work toward their mission.

The organisation has long been a friend of Soi Dog Foundation, raising over 13 million baht (around 420,000 USD) for us since 2013. Our first project together helped fund the construction of shelters in Buriram province in northern Thailand, where we housed hundreds of our rescued meat trade dogs. There have been many collaborations since then.



In April of this year, GGO promoted a matching-gift campaign for us to raise extra funds to help us increase capacity at the sanctuary in Phuket, much needed due to the extra strain on facilities being experienced under the Covid-19 lockdown. This came to fruition in June when almost 1.6 million baht (50,000 USD) was donated to Soi Dog's emergency appeal.

With no adopted animals being able to travel to their forever homes, and intake numbers continuing to grow, the very real threat of Soi Dog having to turn away animals in need was looming large.

Because of GGO and Soi Dog supporters worldwide, coupled with the fantastic matching campaign – set up thanks to the unwavering and valuable support of *Janis Rosenthal*, president of Soi Dog USA and GGO board member – we were able to commence construction of essential new run space to accommodate some of the neediest dogs at this very difficult time.

We would like to give special recognition to GreaterGood.org CEO *Liz Baker*, Director of International Animal Programmes *Susan Rosenberg*, Chief Marketing Officer *Noah Horton* and Director of Donor Engagement *Dafny Vogel*. They and the entire GGO team have worked tirelessly over the years to support our vital programmes.

Thank you GreaterGood.org for your continued support and for everything you do to help organisations all around the world.

You can read more about them on their website www.greatergood.org



A hands-on visit from Bayer Thai

Chutima Srisawang

On February 17th, Soi Dog Foundation welcomed five representatives from pharmaceutical company Bayer Thai who spent a day at the sanctuary learning about our work.

For many years now, Bayer have been a supplier of pharmaceuticals to Soi Dog and have also donated some products to Soi Dog on an annual basis.

After giving a presentation to our vets and touring the hospitals, the Bayer team lent a hand dispensing Advocate Spot-on to 150 of our resident cats. The topical solution is dispensed monthly to sanctuary residents, and to animals on arrival where necessary, to prevent and treat fleas, ear mites, heartworm, roundworm and hookworm. The team also donated 25 boxes of the solution which was gratefully received by us (and will soon be received more nonchalantly by our cats!)

But it wasn't all work and no play. The Bayer team completed their visit with everyone's favourite activity: walking some of our dogs.

It was great to meet the folks behind the pharmaceuticals, and we hope to welcome them again soon.

Operations Director Sam McElroy welcomed the Bayer Thai representatives on a sunny February day.



WAGNERS and Wagging Tails

The story of mum and daughter who defied social pressure to bring their love to the seniors at Soi Dog

Lisa Wagner

For Lisa Wagner, this was her fifth and her daughter Violet's second trip to Soi Dog Foundation. It's a long way from Vancouver, BC, where they live, but this would prove to be a more challenging journey than usual. In Lisa's own words, she tells us how she and her daughter fought to get to their happy place and bring their positivity from the Pacific West Coast of Canada all the way to Phuket.

Our travel plans started back in December 2018. I'd spent a week volunteering at Soi Dog with my husband, 11-year-old son and 13-year-old daughter Violet. As we sat at lunch on the final day, Violet begged me to plan a return visit. We ran through the plans for the coming months and settled on a "girls-only" trip for March 2020 (Spring Break).

Violet held me to the plan. For months we waited in eager anticipation of our two-week-long girls' volunteer getaway. We found great flights, booked in at an amazing guest house, and notified SDF of our volunteer dates. Violet chose a cooking class she wanted to take, and we booked a kayaking adventure. Other than that, our sole focus would be volunteering.

Happy travellers: President of Soi Dog Canada, Lisa Wagner, and her daughter, Violet.



Then, as our departure neared, Covid-19 started to throw some wrenches into our plans. To our dismay, our flights were cancelled because they routed through China. All remaining available flights were beyond our budget. At the time, there were no reported cases of Covid-19 in Phuket, and we still really wanted to go. It broke my heart to tell Violet the bad news! Amazingly, a very generous person donated enough Airmiles for one plane ticket! With our remaining funds, we were then able to purchase the second more expensive ticket. We were going back to Thailand! This itinerary would eventually also change, but with some fancy footwork, we managed to make it to Thailand nonetheless.

For one week we had a glorious volunteer experience. I'll start out by saying that all soi dogs and cats are wonderful, but there is a special place in my heart reserved for senior and special needs animals. Violet and I spent the two weeks volunteering between two dogs runs filled with dogs of varying special needs. These dogs are often overlooked by potential suitors and can spend years at the sanctuary.

As slow as they might be, we walked them. We pet them, brushed them, hugged them and kissed them. Whatever the dogs wanted, we gave them. Every day these special dogs were so incredibly grateful for our love and attention. Violet was in her glory, red hair shining in the sun, and her smiling face brightening the day of everyone she met. Both of our hearts were full.



Violet and Taku.

By week two, there were a few cases of Covid-19 in Phuket. Soon, the massage and personal service clinics closed. Then, restaurants turned to “take out” only. More and more people started to wear masks. But interestingly, we still felt quite safe. Confirmed Covid-19 cases in Phuket were a mere fraction of what they were at home in Canada. Speaking of home, by this time, our government was requesting that Canadians start to make their way home. Since we still had one week left, we kept in close touch with our airline and felt comfortable that they had several routes to get us home. At this point, the number of volunteers was dwindling at the sanctuary as other volunteers also needed to start making their way to their home countries.

SDF started implementing more and more safety protocols as every day passed. Increased cleaning, optional masks were worn, and volunteers were asked to maintain social distancing. When I approached management with my own ideas and feedback, they were extremely receptive. I always felt that management had the staff, visitors, and volunteers’ safety at heart.



adoptions, and public tours coming to a halt, some of the paid staff’s time was freed up! SDF had a crew of dog walkers ready and waiting for the challenge! The volunteers all breathed a sigh of relief. But of course, we were each sad to leave the dedicated staff team at the sanctuary.

Violet and I learned that same afternoon that our flights for the next day were modified due to in-transit border closures. After some time on the phone with our airline that afternoon, the best alternate route was secured. We walked to the beach, bought our last take-out dinner, and sat on our little balcony reflecting on our experience.

Some might wonder about our choice to stay in Phuket that final week. The truth is, while Thailand is gorgeous, for this trip we didn’t go to Phuket to lounge on the beautiful beaches, take tours, and party. If that was the case we could have cancelled, gone home, and visited another time. We went to Thailand solely for the animals. Animals that before SDF had a difficult start to life. At SDF we felt safe. We had an extremely successful volunteer experience and left truly knowing that we made a difference to those senior and special needs dogs. Quite honestly, had my husband and son been with us, if SDF had let us continue to volunteer, we may have just stayed in Phuket and ridden things out there!



Lisa and her boy, Bowwow.



Bowwow

Masks may cover their mouths, but they smile with their hearts.

After two wonderful weeks of volunteering, at the end of one day Operations Director Sam McElroy broke the news that the sanctuary was closing to the public. These new restrictions ended sanctuary access for volunteers. For Violet and I, it coincidentally was our last day anyway. For others remaining, they had just arrived to help, or were in the middle of a long volunteer trip. We all would be impacted differently, but we had one thing in common, the question: “But who is going to walk and socialize the dogs?” Fortunately, it turns out SDF was way ahead on managing this critical issue. With adoptions requests, international

Alas, Violet and I are home in Canada now. Fortunately, we are safe here, but I do think about those loyal staff back in Thailand daily. Staff who have chosen to stay for the sake of the animals. They are doing what many of us can’t from here – keeping the animals of Thailand fed, safe, and loved. I’m grateful that Violet and I fought for our March trip, and I know that no matter what happens, we’ll be back in Phuket sometime soon! In the meantime, please hug and kiss those seniors for us Team SDF!

To learn more about volunteering at Soi Dog in Phuket, visit www.soidog.org/volunteer



Soi Dog Foundation co-founder *John Dalley* intended to travel to the UK in July and take part in the challenge there, but unfortunately the Covid-19 crisis put a stop to those plans. Instead, he has decided to take it upon himself to walk several dogs at the Phuket shelter the 60 miles during July. If you would like to follow his progress and donate to his challenge, [click here](#).

Challenge accepted:
John takes on the
60-mile
July dog walk

CNVR update: Shining the spotlight on spay & neuter as Soi Dog hits 400,000

Nayomi Gunarathna and Chutima Srisawang

HITTING 400,000

In February, before Covid-19 caught up with us here in Phuket, Soi Dog Foundation reached yet another milestone: neutering over 400,000 animals. In fact, by the end of February, our mobile clinic teams along with Soi Dog-funded projects had sterilised almost 10,000 more, bringing the total to a whopping 409,868 dogs and cats neutered and vaccinated by Soi Dog since 2003.

In anticipation of this milestone, we decided to shine the spotlight on Soi Dog's CNVR programme (Catch, Neuter, Vaccinate, Return) over on our social media platforms across February. In a serendipitous twist of events, February also happened to be Spay and Neuter Awareness month.

Although Soi Dog is neutering and treating more stray animals than any other organisation in the world, not all of our supporters are aware of the ins and outs of the programme. February gave us the opportunity to address this.

After a number of posts that explored the "C", "N" and "V" of the programme, the month culminated with World Spay Day on February 25th. We celebrated with a behind-the-scenes peek into the Phuket spay and neuter suite via a live Facebook stream. Senior surgeon *Dr. Eed* walked viewers around the suite explaining the day-to-day operations, even taking them into the heart of the action in the operating room.



Before lockdown, an average of 50 procedures were performed at Soi Dog in Phuket every day.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

The end of February also saw **Soi Dog** join forces with the **Public Health and Environment Division of a local municipality in Phuket** to run an animal care training day. Members of the community – from the municipality’s mayor, to public health volunteers, to local students – came together to hear our Humane Education Team discuss animal-handling tips, the importance of animal welfare and the prevention of rabies.

The local office of the Department of Livestock Development (DLD) also provided free neutering services for 30 pre-registered dogs and cats at the training day as part of their initiative to control the stray animal population. In the week that followed, our veterinary team worked alongside the municipality to vaccinate a further 256 dogs and cats at a local temple.

30 dogs and cats were neutered and vaccinated at the “Care of Pets and Prevention of Contagious Disease 2020” event.

These are strong signs that the importance of neutering and vaccinating animals is being heard and understood in Phuket.



Soi Dog’s Humane Education Manager Nuttawut Kumngern takes the mic.



ROYALTY AGAINST RABIES

Further north, **Soi Dog’s Bangkok Director of Animal Welfare Dr. Tuntikorn Rungpattana and Deputy Minister of Agriculture Prapat Photosuthon** launched a rabies vaccination campaign in the province of Samut Prakan in March.

Dr. Tuntikorn rubs shoulders with officials at the annual event.

The campaign was launched at a DLD event organised in support of *Princess Chulabhorn’s* national project “Disease-free Animals, Save Humans from Rabies”. The project aims to see rabies eradicated from Thailand by the end of 2020 through mass vaccination of stray animals and by enhancing public awareness of the deadly disease.

Soi Dog’s mobile team neutered and vaccinated a total of 60 dogs at the event and will continue to work in the province.

CNVR FLIES TO HAT YAI

Over in the southern Thai province of Songkhla, Soi Dog met with shelter Smiledog Home Hatyai, representatives from the local municipality and the local DLD office in February to discuss an action plan for managing the stray dog and cat population through a programme of CNVR.

Sharing expertise and knowledge with the local community is a vital part of our holistic approach to animal welfare education.

We were pleased that all parties were on board, and the municipality and DLD have agreed to a CNVR programme across the province.



International Director of Animal Welfare Dr Alicja Izydorczyk and Community Relations Manager Sakdapol Thongjan represented Soi Dog at the meeting.



Our aim to reach half-a-million neutered animals by the end of the year may not be met given the current circumstances, and our hopes for a seventh mobile unit to service Phang Nga and Krabi may be delayed, but our determination to bring an end to the suffering of street dogs and cats of Asia endures!



Panic, pandemics and pets

Nayomi Gunarathna

With the emergence of Covid-19 came a great deal of concern and misinformation about whether pets could transmit the virus to humans. Tragically, in some parts of the world, this led to owners abandoning their pets on the streets or brutally killing them. There were even reports of animals being dropped from high-rise buildings in China, leaving fragile, massacred bodies strewn on pavements and roads.

In a world where people's priority during a crisis is toilet paper, maybe this shouldn't come as a surprise, but months after these panic-inducing claims were at their height, there hasn't been a single report of a companion animal passing the virus to humans or each other, only reports of pets showing Covid-19-like symptoms from their infected owners.

Follow these steps as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help keep you and your pet safe.



When at home:

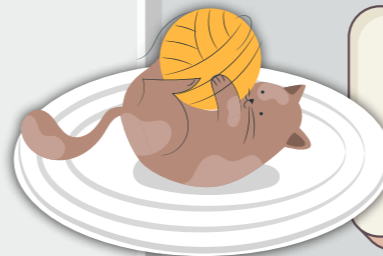


- Wash your hands after handling animals, their food, waste or supplies. Practise good pet hygiene and clean up after pets properly.

When outdoors:



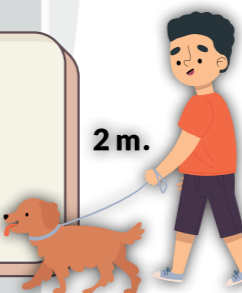
- Minimise interactions between your pets and people or other animals outside the household.



- Where possible, keep cats indoors to prevent them from interacting with other animals or people.



- Walk dogs on a lead, maintaining at least six feet (two metres) from other people and animals.



- Avoid dog parks or public places where a large number of people and dogs gather.



If you or someone in your family is suspected or tests positive for COVID-19:

- When possible, have another member of your household care for your pets during this time;
- Avoid contact with your pet as much as possible, including, petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked and sharing food or bedding; and
- If you must care for your pet while sick, wear a cloth face covering and wash your hands before and after you interact with them.

The story of a **Soi Dog** legend and an **FIV+** prince

Nayomi Gunarathna

**We believe that every dog and cat at
Soi Dog Foundation deserves a home of
their own. For some, it comes quickly.
For others, it takes time.**

Na Tong and *Zatono* fell into the second category,
but their patience and hardships paid off, and they
beat the odds by landing homes of their
own earlier this year.

Soi Dog legend, Na Tong .



Soi Cat veteran, Zatono.



NA TONG

**ANYONE WHO HAS VOLUNTEERED
AT SOI DOG WILL HAVE AT LEAST
HEARD THE NAME 'NA TONG'.**

With his wolf-like face and his independent, confident personality, he was something of a Soi Dog legend.

Over the years, volunteers have left many notes under his name, but here's one from 2013 left by *Paul and Jan* when they volunteered in the run that Na Tong was in at the time:

“ He loves the water and loves digging the sandpit the builders were using. He is very intelligent... Underneath his bravado he is a soft dog that loves to play, cuddle, pretend fight... Over the month [we knew him] he has become much calmer and will chill out and relax with us in the run in the afternoon. ”

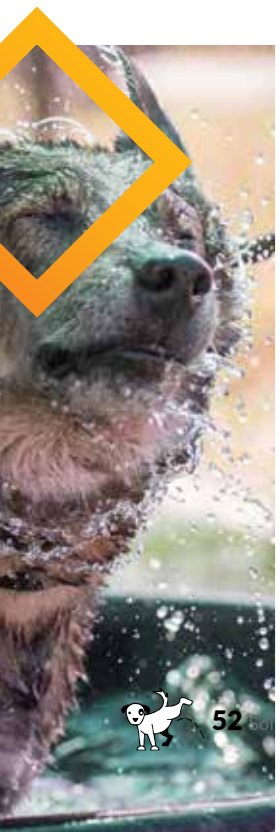
Stories about Na Tong remained more or less the same over the years, even as he celebrated his 11th birthday in April this year (which makes him about 60 in human years). Sadly, Na Tong spent nearly 10 of those years here at Soi Dog.

But life can change for us all, no matter how old we are, and finally Na Tong landed his dream home with no cats, no kids and no other dogs too. He was finally going to be the king of his very own castle. In March, he flew halfway across the world to his new home in Berkshire, UK.

At Soi Dog, Na Tong, a leader of his run, was always the first on walks, trotting around to survey his kingdom early each morning. You would see him in the off-lead area chasing after his favourite toys, marking his spots as the boss he was or enjoying his trademark water games in the bath tubs.



Na Tong, a Soi Dog veteran with the hat to prove it



From what his adopter Adele tells us, it seems nothing much has changed:

“It's five weeks since Na Tong arrived in his forever home and he's settling in brilliantly. It's been great fun getting to know him and he makes me smile every day with his excitement starting with his morning walk, going for walks are his absolute favourite thing.”

Okay, it turns out some things have changed.

“He also loves snoozing on the sofa, preferably having his ears and belly rubbed at the same time and he'll do anything for a piece of chicken! He has daily mad moments and steals things and runs away with them, including his dog beds which he loves ripping to shreds (he's gone through two so far.)”

Adele said the fact that Na Tong had been at Soi Dog for 10 years was enough for her to know that she had to have him.



“I feel privileged to be part of his life... He has brought me a lot of happiness during this corona lockdown and I really can't imagine life without him. It's my mission now to make these years his happiest and healthiest yet and make every day count. As soon as the lockdown is over, we have people to see and places to go and they will definitely involve his other favourite activity: water!”

Na Tong came to us after he was abandoned at a construction site and there were serious threats to his life from the neighbours who didn't want any stray dogs in the area.

Na Tong went on to be adopted locally twice – once in 2010 and once in 2012 – but, for good or for bad, he decided those homes weren't really for him. It was a long, long wait for Na Tong, but he finally found that person who really understands him and can offer him the love and luxury he deserves during the golden years of his life.

Na Tong with his loving pawrent Adele.

ZATONO

ZATONO ALSO FOUND HIS FOREVER HOME IN MARCH THIS YEAR AFTER SPENDING THREE YEARS AND THREE MONTHS AT SOI DOG (THAT'S 1,213 DAYS!)

Zatono's mother was killed by a dog, leaving a litter of four vulnerable two-month-old kittens on the streets. Two found homes locally, but nobody wanted *Zatono* and *Zalalin*, and so they came into the care of Soi Dog.

Sadly, poor *Zalalin* didn't make it, but *Zatono* did, and he went straight to our kitten foster to gain strength. He returned to Soi Dog a few months later hoping to find a forever home. But recurring bouts of cat flu meant he spent the next year in and out of the infectious isolation unit. What's more, he was also diagnosed with feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) which limited his chances of finding a home.

We never want to give up on the animals who come to us, and *Zatono* is a great example of why because, despite his medical history along with being FIV+, it turns out there was someone who was looking over him all along...

Lauren visited us two years ago and was instantly charmed by *Zatono* on her visit to the cattery. Well, who wouldn't be? *Zatono* was such a people cat who was the first to greet visitors to the FIV suite. He loved attention, even if that meant waiting for the bigger FIV residents' meet and greets to end.



Zatono: the most patient attention-seeker.



Zatono was famous for his shoulder climbs. He would delicately clamber on shoulders and perch himself there for as long as he was allowed. Those who were lucky enough to have experienced a bit of Zatono's zest will forever remember this gorgeous ginger panther.

Lauren fell in love with Zatono but, as she had her own non-FIV cats at the time, she wasn't in a position to adopt.

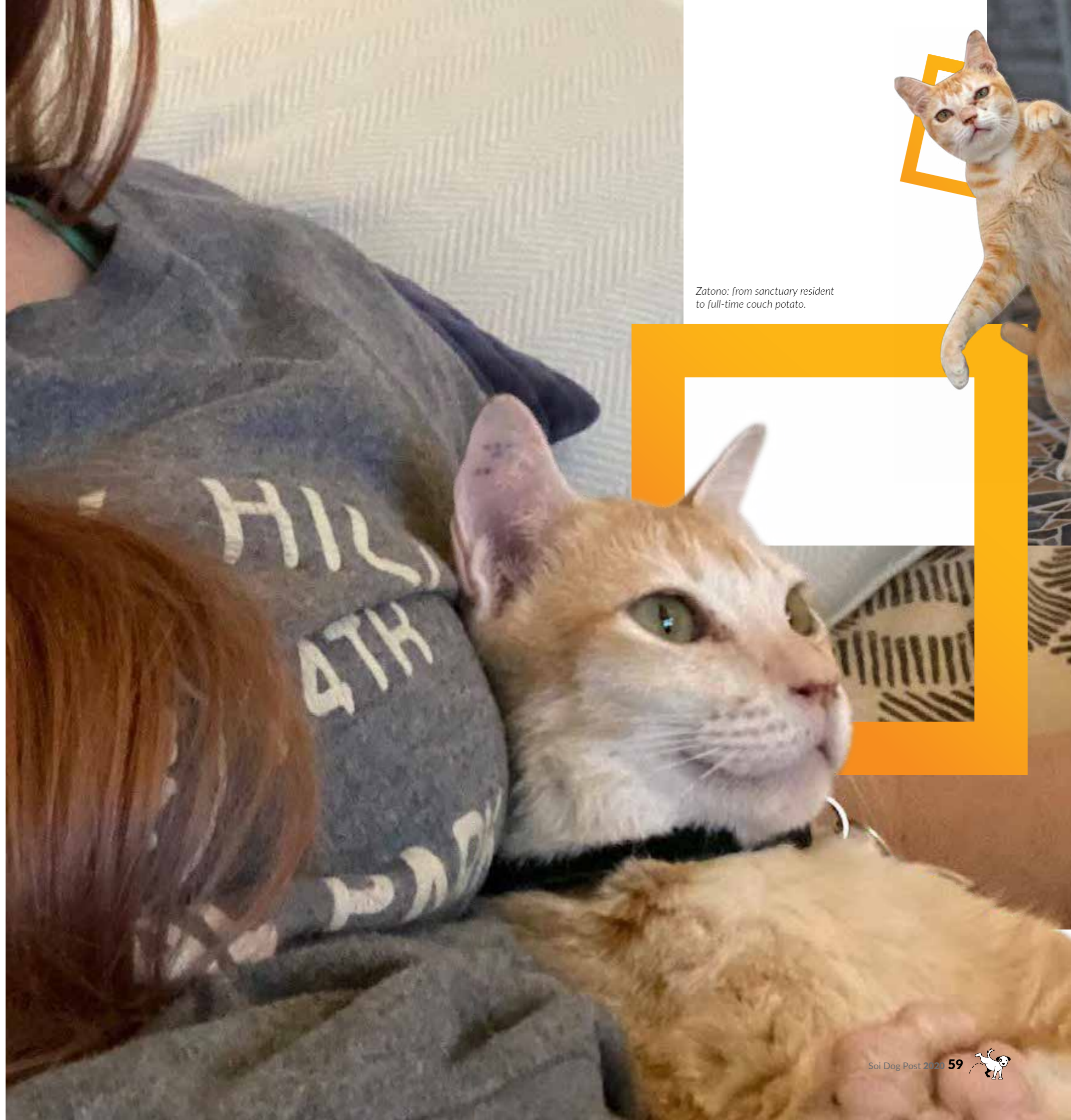
Zatono has been on and off of our website over the last two years, depending on the status of his health, but shortly after he was given the all-clear for adoption by our vets and graced the website again, Lauren saw his profile. She had sadly lost her cats a few months before. When she saw Zatono was available, she made a decision to give him the home she couldn't two years previously.

Since flying to Seattle, USA earlier this year, Zatono has enjoyed plenty of lap time and loves to watch TV with Lauren on the couch. She describes how he has recently found his voice and has started his own cat chat show.

Na Tong and Zatono are examples of rescue animals that, thanks to amazing supporters and animal lovers, we refuse to give up on.

Finding the perfect match takes time, but we are over the moon knowing that dogs like Na Tong and cats like Zatano are able to finally experience the love and warmth of a family, despite the journey and the time it took to get them there.

You can meet some of our adoptable dogs [here](#) and our cats [here](#).



Zatono: from sanctuary resident to full-time couch potato.





The plan to deliver the letter to the head offices of F1 in London was delayed by the outbreak of Covid-19 and the banning of group gatherings and non-essential travel in the UK.

The inaugural Grand Prix event due to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam in April was also a casualty of the global pandemic, though, and provided us with the opportunity to gather even more signatures.

Fear not: we will deliver the letter in person to F1 HQ when a relaxation of the restrictions permits.

Thank you to everyone who has already signed the letter. With the added awareness that the emergence of the coronavirus has raised about wet markets and the trade in wildlife in Asian countries, so many more people have become conscious of the horrors that exist. And for Soi Dog, and the fight against the evil dog meat trade, this can only be a positive.



Vietnam F1

petition speeds through the magic million, but

Covid-19

puts a halt on the chequered flag

Sam McElroy

Launched in 2019, Soi Dog Foundation's Vietnam dog meat trade petition letter, due to be presented to the Formula 1 Group to earn their support in trying to bring about a ban on the trade there, reached the milestone of one million signatures in late March 2020.

HELP STOP THE HORROR IN HANOI!

Sign now

1,107,833 PEOPLE HAVE SIGNED

Add your name now. Help reach 1.5 million signatures.

A day at the pound

Amy Bryant

As life in Phuket slowed to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic, Soi Dog Foundation's efforts to care for the vulnerable and the voiceless continued. This included those beyond our sanctuary.

In March, two veterinary teams visited the local government dog pound to carry out annual vaccinations of the dogs housed there. Vaccinations not only stem the spread of disease within the pound but, with the animals fit and healthy, it also increases their chances of being adopted.

With around 800 dogs at the pound, each with their own personalities and behaviours, it was quite the task that required clever strategies and a team of athletic dog catchers. Once caught and vaccinated, the dogs' fur was marked with a safe, soluble spray paint to help the vets ensure that every dog was covered.

While Soi Dog does not agree with the unnecessary impounding of stray dogs, we do feel an obligation to help those who reside at the pound. In addition to annual vaccinations, we dispense bravecto twice a year to prevent flea and tick infestations and perform an average of 30 sterilisations on new intake dogs every month. A veterinary team also visits on weekly to provide treatment to animals in need, transporting around 20 dogs a month to our hospital in cases of sickness and injury.



The dogs were vaccinated against six diseases, including rabies, canine distemper and parvovirus.



www.soidog.org



The legacy Gill left for the street dogs and cats of Thailand,
who had no-one else to turn to, will live on eternally

Gill Dalley
1959-2017

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