

# MARIAS ANIMAL SHELTER



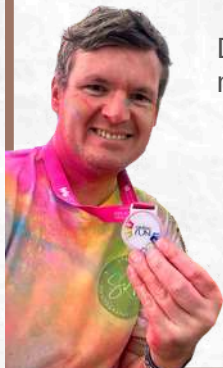
# NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 26: AUTUMN - WINTER 2025

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you for your continued support! In this issue, we focus on helping older animals with special needs, offering tips and success stories that inspire. Your involvement—whether through adoption, fostering, or donations—makes a real difference in their lives.

Together, we're creating a brighter future for these deserving animals!



Do you have something to share for the next issue? Drop me a message with your comments and suggestions!



**STEVEN REES-WEBB**

**SPOTTY**

**EMAIL ME: [HELLO@SRWPHOTO.CO.UK](mailto:HELLO@SRWPHOTO.CO.UK)**

## OUR PATRON

We extend our deepest gratitude to Tony Martin CBE, founder of the Anthony V. Martin Charitable Foundation and patron of our shelter. His unwavering support and dedication have been instrumental in advancing our mission at Marias. As a Commander of the British Empire (CBE)—the highest-ranking Order of the British Empire award given to those who have made significant and positive impacts through their work—we can truly attest to the profound influence he has had on our organisation and the community we serve.



# HOW IT ALL BEGAN...

Whether you've been cheering on Marias incredible work for years or you've just stumbled upon our cosy corner of Cornwall, we'd love to share the heartwarming tale of how it all began...

Back in 2001, there was a charming little pony named Fly. Fly was facing homelessness because her owner, sadly battling cancer, could no longer care for her. That's when Maria, an animal enthusiast studying Animal Care at Duchy College, stepped in. She had no idea that welcoming this one pony would lead her to create a sanctuary that's now a haven for hundreds of animals!

Seeing a desperate need for a rescue centre in Cornwall for unwanted pets and animals, Maria took a brave leap. She decided to open a shelter and fund it herself—a bold move that soon saw everything falling into place.

As luck would have it, the land in the village where Fly lived was the perfect spot for a shelter. With permission granted, Maria, her husband Paul, and an amazing team of volunteers, friends, and family rolled up their sleeves. Together, they built the first sheds, pens, and cosy nooks—transforming a simple plot into a bustling sanctuary.

Fast forward to today, and Marias Animal Shelter is alive with the chatter and clucks of around 100 animals! Goats, geese, ducks, chickens, sheep, guinea pigs, rabbits, degus, gerbils, and hamsters all call it home. Most arrive because they've been abandoned or are unwanted. Some have been neglected and need a bit of extra TLC. Thanks to Marias dedication, many find loving new homes through her successful rehoming programme. For those who need a permanent place to stay, the shelter becomes their forever home.

To keep this wonderful work going, Maria registered the shelter as a charity with the Charity Commission in 2012. Relying entirely on donations, every spare moment Maria has is spent caring for the animals, fundraising, or spreading the word. Unfortunately, the number of animals needing help is on the rise—but with your support, we can make a real difference!

So, grab a cuppa and read on to discover what's been happening at the shelter, along with all the latest news. If you think you can help in any way, please get in touch—we'd love to hear from you!

# LETTER FROM MARIA



**Maria Mulkeen**

We have had such a busy first half of the year. The staff and volunteers have worked so hard to keep things going. Short on the volunteering side and more animals in, have had quite an impact on us mentally and physically. Part of the problem seems to be the financial crisis, but another side seems to be the throw away society. There are genuine reasons why animals need to be surrendered but another reason seems to be that when the children grow tired and lose interest in the animal, the adult instead of

either taking the responsibility themselves or talking to the children about the role they should be playing, end up calling us to have the pet. What does this say to the children, that it's okay to give away the animal, that animals have no feelings or have not bonded or feel safe in their environment they live in. How sad it is when you think about it. Loving and caring for animals to make them happy is so rewarding and beneficial not just to yourself but to the animal. Animals are so intune with humans, but we need to listen and think about what communication the animal is trying to get across to us.

July marked the sad departure of our wonderful Crisp. As a dog with severe separation anxiety, she left a huge void in my life, despite knowing her for only five years. She was my constant companion, always by my side.

My husband, Paul, and I heard about Crisp when she was just a few years old. She had been mistreated by children, who kicked and hit her, and her family gave up on her.



Meanwhile, one of Paul's customers was looking for a Dachshund, and the timing couldn't have been more perfect. Crisp was initially very nervous, but her new owner cared for her well, including home visits from the vet. She stayed with her owner until they passed away from old age. We had promised Crisp she could live with us if anything happened, and she arrived in October 2020.

Although Crisp had been well loved in her previous home, her socialisation suffered as her owner's health declined, and she arrived terrified and biting from fear rather than aggression. We kept grandchildren and visiting children at a distance. It took months for her to warm up and trust us, and we kept doors closed to stop her escaping. She clearly missed her old companionship; her eyes often looked sad.

After about 18 months with us she began to change. She stayed close to me at first but gradually accepted other people, even approaching children and allowing strokes. She had favourite people at the shelter and would watch them eagerly for treats. Staff, volunteers and visitors laughed at her energetic zoomies up and down the adoption block. Crisp loved walks, especially running in the woods. Despite her age she was lively and very well behaved.

Crisp suffered several health problems including dental disease, kidney failure, dementia, arthritis and spinal issues, and her stomach problems proved persistent. When steroids failed to help, I knew it was time. She passed peacefully and quickly. She will be greatly missed and fondly remembered.



Tulula is a lovely lop who arrived showing aggression, lunging and growling. This was not because she was naturally nasty but because her previous home kept picking her up. She tried to tell people she did not want handling by moving away, and when that was ignored her protests escalated. At one point blankets were thrown over her and she became understandably traumatised.

With us the lunging and growling continued at first, so we gave her space and freedom to run. I would sit quietly nearby and speak softly without trying to touch her.

Gradually she accepted our presence and her behaviour improved. Tulula was later spayed and, thankfully, did not relapse during medication. After a few weeks she moved into the adoption block and completely changed, she became the sweetest, most affectionate bunny who loved to be stroked, though she would nip when attention stopped. Tulula has now been adopted into a wonderful home with a new husband and a family who adore her.

We all need to listen to what our pets are telling us; they give clues if we take the time to notice.

# SHELTER STATISTICS

JANUARY 2025 - JUNE 2025

**113 NEW ADMISSIONS**

**83 ANIMALS ADOPTED**

**18 PASSED AWAY**

**83 WAITING TO COME IN**

**TOP 3 ADMISSION REASONS:**

- 1. HOUSE MOVES**
- 2. STRAY & RESCUED**
- 3. POOR OWNER HEALTH**

# WHY EDUCATION MATTERS

## COMMON SMALL ANIMAL MISTAKES

At Marias we see the same problems time and time again. Many are not born from cruelty, but from simple misunderstanding. That is why education is at the heart of what we do. When owners know how to care for rabbits, guinea pigs and other small pets, animals are healthier and happier, fewer are abandoned, and our limited shelter space can be used for the most urgent rescues.

**Here are the most common mistakes we see and how to avoid them**

### **Housing and space**

Too many small pets live cramped in tiny hutches. Rabbits and guinea pigs need room to run, hop and explore. Instead of buying a hutch, look at sheds and wooden wendy houses. You can also attach a run to them, add extra platforms and levels so they can look out the window.

### **Diet**

A poor diet causes serious problems. Hay should make up most of a small animal's food. Too many treats, or the wrong pellets, lead to obesity and dental disease. Fresh water must always be available, and fruit should be given only as an occasional treat.

### **Social needs**

Many small animals are social and need companionship. Keeping a guinea pig alone often leads to loneliness and stress. Always check which animals are suited to living together and introduce new companions carefully.

### **Grooming and handling**

Long haired animals need regular clipping or grooming, but the wrong approach can be traumatic. Always let an animal come to you, avoid forcing picks up, and learn the correct way to handle them. If an animal is anxious about grooming, seek help from a vet or an experienced groomer.

### **Health and neutering**

Dental problems, respiratory infections and untreated injuries are common when owners do not recognise early warning signs. Neutering helps reduce aggressive behaviour and a high percentage of female rabbits die from uterine cancer if not spayed.

### **Environment and enrichment**

Boredom leads to destructive behaviour and stress. Provide safe places to hide, chew toys, tunnels and varied floor surfaces to keep animals active and engaged.

# FROM DESPERATION TO HOPE

## 24 GUINEA PIGS RESCUED FROM NEGLECT

By Anna



On 15th July, the shelter took in 24 guinea pigs from a neglect situation — an emergency intake that left many of us heartbroken. They arrived in devastating condition. They came to us without names, without dignity — but not without hope.

The reason they were surrendered was deeply heartbreaking. The owner was facing significant personal challenges and had become overwhelmed by the sheer number of guinea pigs in his care. On top of this, he was about to become homeless. Despite his clear affection for them, he didn't fully understand how to meet their needs, especially after they began giving birth. Letting them go was incredibly difficult for him.

But with encouragement from Maria and the support of his family, he eventually allowed us to take them off his hands and give them the care they desperately needed.

Crammed into just four tiny cages, they had no access to hay — a vital part of any guinea pig's diet. Instead, they were living on sawdust, which not only causes respiratory issues and damage to feet. Their water bottles were nearly empty, many coated in green algae and bacteria.

Even before we began health checks, it was clear several pigs were unwell. Many had fungal infections, and some were covered in wounds. There was an urgent need to separate males from females to prevent further pregnancies and fighting amongst the boys— and sadly, some of the females were already visibly pregnant.



Every guinea pig was given immediate medical attention, clean bedding, fresh food, and — for the first time in their lives — gentle, loving care.

One of the most heartbreaking cases was a mother we named Dallas, who arrived in especially poor condition. Her ears had been chewed by her cage-mates, and she was extremely malnourished and almost completely bald. She also had a deep abscess on her right front foot, which left her unable to walk. Yet, even in pain, she continued to care for her babies — always holding her injured paw off the ground while feeding them. Amidst all these health challenges, she was also pregnant again.



We did everything we could to help her and ease her pain — daily foot baths, pain relief, syringe feeds, extra vitamin C, and lots of high-fibre food. Her personality was gentle and forgiving; she would hobble toward us each day for her treatments.

Despite all efforts, Dallas didn't survive. She fought so hard, and we will always remember her courage.

Another guinea pig, Virginia, had suffered violent injuries (likely from fighting over limited space and resources and also fungal). With so many pigs confined together, stress and aggression were unavoidable. Her wounds were deep and raw. We applied medicated creams and bandaged her daily so she could heal without scratching. Slowly, she began to trust us.

Today, Virginia is thriving. Her wounds have healed beautifully, and she will be ready for adoption once she has raised her babies and given birth to the last lot of babies she will ever have.

This was one of the most emotionally intense intakes we've ever faced. But even through the heartbreak, we witnessed something remarkable: resilience. These guinea pigs had suffered so much — yet they still responded to kindness. Still reached for hay. Still leaned into gentle hands. Still squeaked for veggies.

Our team came together swiftly to provide emergency care, clean enclosures, proper nutrition, and safe housing. Each guinea pig received a full health assessment, and personalised treatment plans were put in place to guide their recovery.

Many of these guinea pigs are still with us, continuing their journey toward health and safety, growing stronger each day. A few have already been adopted into loving homes, and we're hopeful that many more happy endings are just around the corner. Their lives have changed, not just because of our team's quick action, but because of the community behind us.

Your donations, your shares, your willingness to foster — you made this possible. This case has stretched our resources and left a lasting impression on our hearts. But because of you — your donations, your time, your kindness — we were able to act fast when it mattered most.

Dallas didn't make it, but her babies are safe. Virginia is healing. And the rest? They now have names, space, hay, and hope.



**Thank you for standing with us. When animals cry for help, you help us answer.**

## SPONSOR AN ANIMAL AT THE SHELTER

Did you know you can sponsor one of our permanent residents for only £30 per year?



You can view all the animals available to sponsor on our website:

**[WWW.MARIASANIMALSHELTER.COM/DONATIONS](http://WWW.MARIASANIMALSHELTER.COM/DONATIONS)**



# easyfundraising

Whether you are looking for a replacement for Amazon Smile or a new way to help us save as many small animals as possible, you need to hear about easyfundraising. It is a free service that donates directly to us every time you purchase online.

Over 7,000 brands will donate, so you can raise FREE donations for us no matter what you're buying. These donations really help us out, so please sign up if you haven't yet. It's easy and FREE!

**MORE INFO ON THE NEXT PAGE** →

**TOTAL RAISED: £1,356.37**

**SUPPORTERS: 97**

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## Marias Animal Shelter

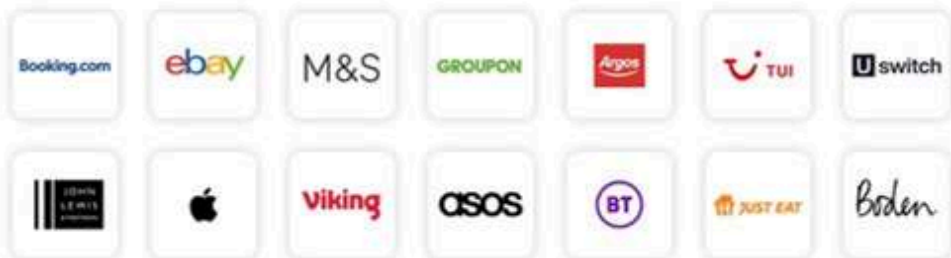
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[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause)
- 2 Search for us
- 3 Your favourite brands donate whenever you spend with them



# DWAIN - A GIANT CONTINENTAL CONUNDRUM

By Dr Jo Reddaway GpCert ExAP



My name is Jo Reddaway and I have a post graduate certificate in Exotic Medicine, I have been volunteering for Maria since I adopted a rabbit, Iris, from her, after sadly losing one of my pair. When I first met Dwain, he had been having trouble with his ear since his arrival at the shelter at just 4 months old.

Despite several attempts to treat this with medications, the problem never fully went away, and gradually worsened.

Ear disease is a common problem in rabbits, far more common in lop eared breeds than upright eared breeds, which is why Dwain's problems were such a conundrum, he had upright ears, so his ear shouldn't really be such a problem for him. The main causes for ear disease in upright eared breeds are ear mites, which present as thick, painful crusts on the ears and in the ear canal, however, Dwain did not have these signs, and an ascending infection from respiratory disease (sometimes termed 'snuffles'), Dwain also did not have any evidence of a respiratory problem.

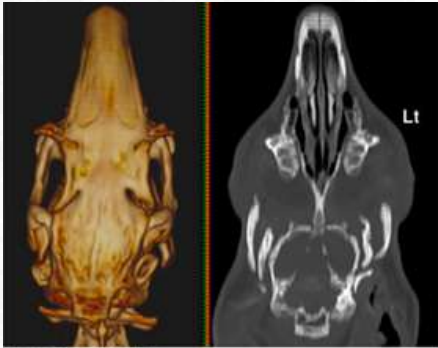
An upright eared rabbit has three cartilages forming their ear canals, however, in a lop rabbit, there is a defect in two of these structures, causing the ear to flop over, this flop narrows and bends the canal, making it impossible for wax which is produced normally to escape up and out of the ear, so it builds up, leading to infection and possible ear drum rupture, risking middle and inner ear infection.

Dwain wasn't a lop eared rabbit, although as his ear problem progressed, his ear had started to flop over itself due to the chronic inflammation, he also didn't have any signs of ear mites, or an obvious respiratory problem, so it was clear he would need to have some further investigations in to the cause so we could treat him effectively. Ears are very complicated structures, so he would need to have a CT scan to show us all of the deep structures and assess the extent of the disease.

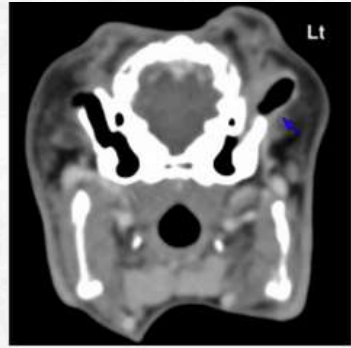
It would also show us if he had any evidence of an underlying upper respiratory problem such as rhinitis. Our colleagues at Rosemullion Vets kindly scanned him for us and sent us the report.

The results showed that Dwain had been born with a slightly asymmetrical skull, and this had caused his affected side to be smaller and on a slight angle, he thankfully didn't have middle ear disease, and his ear drum was intact, although it was close to rupturing due to the pressure of his wax build up, he also didn't have any other significant changes, and had no signs of rhinitis.

Given his case was a little unusual, I sought some advice from the RWF head Vet Richard Saunders on the best course of action for Dwain, I was aware that we needed to make the biggest positive impact on him possible, without doing too much that we may cause him problems, and balance that with wanting to ensure he had the best chance at adoption and an ear problem free life.



*Asymmetry of the skull.*



*Thickened wall of the left external ear canal.*

A few weeks after his scan, my colleague Dr Richard Hazard (CertAVP Zoomed) and I, admitted Dwain for a lateral wall resection surgery at Plymouth Vet Group (RWF Gold Accredited Practice), where we removed part of his cartilage in order to allow room for the wax escape, and we flushed his ear clean to remove the infected material in his ear canal. He was provided with advanced pain relief during his surgery and recovery, and excellent post operative care from our Small Mammal trained nurses, he surprised us all by eating and looking for attention almost straight after he woke up!

Dwain was the perfect patient and took everything in his stride! His recovery was completely uneventful and I was delighted when Maria told me he had not bothered with his ear since his surgery!



Thanks to Maria and her team's dedication to his post operative care plan, Dwain had made a complete recovery, and was recently adopted into his forever home with new BunWife Polly! He was a joy to have as a patient and it was a privilege to provide this advanced level of treatment and care to a patient in need.

# ARE YOUR ANIMALS READY FOR WINTER?

## Practical tips for outdoor rabbits and guinea pigs

Cold and damp weather is tough on small animals. The good news is that a few simple tweaks now will keep them warm, healthy and comfortable all season.

Start with space and routine. Rabbits must have permanent access to a large exercise area. Our minimum is 12ft by 7ft for a bonded pair. A hutch is not acceptable but if you already have one, adapt it to make it longer. Hutches were only made so it would be easy to grab a rabbit for food. Sheds and large wendy houses are perfect. Guinea pigs need at least 5ft by 2ft for a pair, ideally with a run attached so they can roam. Keep them in one environment. Do not bring them into a heated house at night and put them back outside in the day.

Make housing warm, dry and draught free while keeping ventilation. Raise the sleeping area off the ground and pack it with plenty of fresh eating hay so they can burrow. In severe cold, move the set up into a naturally lit, car free garage or shed. Secure runs on all sides and the top, and protect the edges so nothing can dig in or out. Keep guinea pig accommodation on a single level if you can.

Do quick winter checks every day. Water freezes fast, so check bottles and bowls several times. Diet should be hay led, with a small handful of leafy greens and a measured nugget food. Avoid muesli mixes. Weigh weekly and call your vet early if you see sneezing, runny eyes, reduced appetite or changes in droppings. If you add warmth, use only purpose made heat mats.

Companionship and enrichment matter in winter too. Rabbits and guinea pigs are social animals and should live with their own kind; never house guinea pigs with rabbits. Offer hides, tunnels and simple foraging so they stay active and generate natural warmth as they explore.

Keep jabs up to date. Nobivac Myxo-RHD PLUS covers myxomatosis, RHD1 and RHD2. Because a highly virulent RHD2 variant is circulating, ask your vet about adding YURVAC RHD. It is given in addition to the usual vaccine, typically at least two weeks apart.

# LEAVE A LEGACY OF LOVE

Thinking about the future is never easy, but writing a will is one of the most practical and loving things you can do for the people and causes you care about. If Marias Animal Shelter has a special place in your heart, including us in your will is a powerful way to make sure your compassion keeps helping animals long after you are gone.

We rely on donations to pay for food, vets, heated bedding and long term care. Gifts left in wills allow us to plan ahead, pay for ongoing medical treatment and respond to large rescues. Even a small gift can make a huge difference over time.

You do not need to be wealthy to leave a meaningful legacy. Common choices are:

- Residuary gift: a percentage of your estate after other gifts. This keeps pace with inflation.
- Pecuniary gift: a fixed sum of money. Simple to arrange.
- Specific gift: an item such as property or shares.

## How to include us in your will

We recommend you speak to a solicitor to make sure everything is correct.

Give them our details so your gift reaches us without delay:

*Marias Animal Shelter*

*Registered charity number 1147719*

*Address for wills and legacies: 44 Parkengear, Probus, Truro, Cornwall, TR2 4JT*

Suggested wording for your solicitor

*"I bequeath [amount or percentage] to Marias Animal Shelter (Registered Charity Number 1147719) of 44 Parkengear, Probus, Truro, Cornwall, TR2 4JT for its general charitable purposes."*

If you would like to talk through options first, we are very happy to help. Your call or message will be treated with respect and confidentiality.

## Contact us

**Phone:** 07980951540

**Email:** [mariasanimalshelter@hotmail.com](mailto:mariasanimalshelter@hotmail.com)

**Website:** [www.mariasanimalshelter.com](http://www.mariasanimalshelter.com)

Thank you for thinking of Marias. Your kindness will help animals receive the care and love they need for years to come.

# SPECIAL APPEALS: CLOUD AND GINGER



Cloud has been with us for a year now and we are still searching for the right home for him. He arrived from a hoarding situation with his companion, who sadly did not recover. Cloud is a very quiet boy who often watches the world go by. He will respond to voices and is curious, but can be anxious when people enter his pen. Cloud has a long coat which is easy to maintain with a few clips a year, and clipping would suit him better because he dislikes grooming sessions.

## What Cloud needs

- A calm, patient home where he can take his time to settle.
- An owner willing to clip his coat occasionally rather than force long grooming sessions.
- Gentle handling and a quiet environment, ideally with someone experienced in small animals.

Ginger has also been at the charity for a year and was one of the worst affected by the hoarding case. He was initially shy but, with careful socialisation, has grown into a confident boy who will come out to say hello and see what snacks are on offer. Ginger keeps getting overlooked and would thrive in a quiet house with room to explore and a female companion.



## What Ginger needs

- A quiet home with room to explore and gentle handling.
- A female guinea pig companion to keep him company.
- A patient adopter who will give him time to settle and enjoy a safe, calm environment.

If you can offer Cloud or Ginger a loving home, please get in touch on 07980 951540

# THANK YOU TREBONNEY FISH & CHIP SHOP, ROCHE

**A huge thank you to Trebonney Fish and Chip Shop for their fantastic ongoing support.** They kindly donate all proceeds from the sale of their carrier bags to Marias Animal Shelter. That generosity makes a real difference to the animals in our care and to the work we can do in the local community.

About Trebonney

Trebonney is a quality fish and chip takeaway and restaurant, serving traditional fish and chips made from the finest pure white Icelandic cod and tasty chips from locally grown potatoes. They also offer a selection of burgers, pies, chicken chunks and wraps. We're grateful for their commitment to great food and to supporting local charities.

## NEW OPENING HOURS

Starting from Monday 4 November Trebonney will be increasing their opening times so you can pop in more often.

- **Monday: 16:45 to 19:45**
- **Tuesday: 11:45 to 13:30 and 17:00 to 20:00**
- **Wednesday: 11:45 to 13:30 and 17:00 to 20:00**
- **Thursday: 17:00 to 20:00**
- **Friday: 12:00 to 14:00 and 17:00 to 20:00**
- **Saturday: 12:00 to 14:00 and 17:00 to 20:00**
- **Sunday: Closed**

## HOW YOU CAN HELP THEM AND US

Drop by and treat yourself to a meal. Every carrier bag sold helps Marias. Share this with friends and family so more people know about the donation scheme.

Follow Trebonney on social media to see their offers and to support local business that supports local causes.

# DOROTHY'S STORY

By Emily & Steve Marshall



“At the beginning of 2022, you made a Facebook post about a little lost bunny and a friend tagged me in the post. I had never heard of Marias Animal Shelter before. I fell in love and from the second I laid eyes on her, I knew she was supposed to be part of our family. I reached out about adopting her, went through the process and a few days later, I brought her home. There were a few hiccups for the first few months - medication changes and dose titration but finally her head tilt was gone for good and she had a real zest for life.

Her companion passed away suddenly about 3 months after bringing her home and we adopted Keith from the shelter. Dorothy and Keith had a love at first sight bond. They got along well through bars, first face to face meet same day. Overnight, Keith jumped over the baby gate and they were inseparable from that moment.

A year in, Dorothy was not getting around so well and put on weight. I had a monthlong battle with the vet practice who told me her mobility issues were due to weight gain. I was adamant it was the other way around - she had gained weight due to mobility issues. We finally managed to get an appointment with the bunny specialist vet at the practice and she was diagnosed with arthritis in her spine and hips. She never let this get in the way of anything.

# DOROTHY'S STORY

By Emily & Steve Marshall

Over the next 2 years, we titrated her pain meds and doses in order to keep her comfy and she ran, climbed, and jumped. Enjoying snuggling on the sofa and demanding treats. She never let anything get between her and food. She used to love it when I had shopping delivered as this meant that, when she failed to get out the door, she could root through everything for whatever she fancied. She felt safe and happy, demanding (or taking) anything she wanted.

Keith made her braver than she might otherwise have been due to her deafness and she loved "sneaking out" through the gate and saying hi to the other bunnies. In turn, she reinforced to Keith that people can be trusted.

We knew she was getting towards the end but one night, she curled up with Keith on her comfy, soft heat mat and didn't wake up.

Dorothy might have only been with us for 3 years but she had the best life in that time and she made our lives better for being a part of our family. She was the brightest, most loving soul and we loved her so much.

We will miss her every day but still have 5 bunnies, all of which are adopted and 3 of them through you. When we have the money for the adoption fee, we will look for another bunny to bond with Keith.

I want to thank you for the work you do and for the difference you make in the lives of the small animals you rescue. I'm glad we stumbled across the rescue and have been able to adopt 5 gorgeous bunnies from you in the space of 3 years. I wish we were able to do more to support the shelter but we've done what we can when we can. I know Clifton Villa Vets in Truro donated the hay and food we had earned through Healthy Pet Club membership that we didn't use and we've dropped off bags of greens over the gate when I've seen an appeal. I know it isn't much.

# CAN YOU HELP MARIA RESCUE AND CARE FOR SICK AND UNWANTED ANIMALS?

Any amount you can give will go towards giving an animal a clean and warm bed, food, care and medical treatment while we try to find them a new and loving home.

## DIRECT DEBIT

**Could you spare a small amount each month? £2? £5? £10?**

You can setup a “recurring direct debit” directly through your bank either online or by giving them a call and using our bank details below.

## BANK TRANSFER

Make a quick and simple transfer directly to us, this is the easiest method and ensures that 100% of the money goes to the shelter:

**ACCOUNT NAME: MARIAS ANIMAL SHELTER**

**SORT CODE: 30-88-22**

**ACCOUNT NUMBER: 18735760**

## ONLINE

Donate online with a credit or debit card using PayPal (No account required), follow the link on our website:

**[WWW.MARIASANIMALSHELTER.COM/DONATIONS](http://WWW.MARIASANIMALSHELTER.COM/DONATIONS)**

## CHEQUE

To donate by cheque please make them payable to “Marias Animal Shelter” and post them to our admin office:

**MARIAS ANIMAL SHELTER, 44 PARKENGAR, PROBUS, TR2 4JT**

# HOW I ENDED UP WITH SIX PIGGIES INSTEAD OF ONE

By Janet Welch



A few months ago I was left with just one piggy, about five or six years old, so I went looking for an older companion for her. Maria had a four year old boar available but, by the time I enquired, he had been chosen the day before. There were three lovely girls aged four, four and five, so I adopted them instead. The bonding went well, but three weeks later my original girl sadly passed away.

I had also been keeping an eye on two more piggies called Biscoff, a five year old female, and Spud, a one and a half year old male. They are both Teddy breeds. I rang Maria to ask if I could adopt those two as well and mentioned that I would be happy to offer a home to one of the single males so he could live with the three girls I had already taken. Maria matched me with Gus, who has some dental problems, and he has settled in beautifully.



Gus now shares life with the three girls, Diamond, Coffee and Coco. Over the last few months I have introduced everyone gradually. They mix together in the garden during the day and sleep in the garage at night. It has been lovely to watch them turn into a friendly little herd and get on so well together.

Thank you, Maria, for trusting me with these wonderful piggies. My plan was to find one companion, and somehow I ended up with six very special friends.



# MARIAS ANIMAL SHELTER AND THE BBC MAKE A DIFFERENCE AWARDS 2025



Our founder Maria Mulkeen started Marias Animal Shelter 25 years ago because she could see animals in need and nowhere to help them in Cornwall. Today our houses and pens at the centre near Probus are home to more than 100 rabbits, guinea pigs and other small animals. We offer advice, emergency care, and a rescue and rehoming service. For some of our residents this becomes a forever home, our oldest rabbit lived with us for 17 years.

Running the shelter has become our life. As Maria says, "I could see all the animals that needed help and there was nothing in Cornwall." The longer we have done this work the more we have seen how important education is. Many of the cases we deal with are born from misunderstanding, not malice, and some of the things we see are truly shocking. We try to change that by teaching people how to care for small animals and by offering a safe place for those who need it.

We were pleased to see the community spirit celebrated at the BBC Radio Cornwall Make a Difference Awards on Tuesday 2 September 2025 at the Falmouth Hotel. The awards recognise people and groups who go the extra mile for their communities, and it was heartening to see volunteers and charities from across Cornwall honoured for their work. Congratulations to the Animal Award winner Maxine Young and to the other winners who do so much for their communities.

The Make a Difference Awards are a reminder that small groups and volunteers keep local services running. Like many grassroots organisations, we rely on donations, foster carers, volunteer time and kindness from our neighbours. The awards underline how important that support is, and how much we all benefit when people step forward to help.

If you can spare time, space or funds, please consider supporting us. You could volunteer, foster a small animal, donate towards vet bills, or simply spread the word about responsible pet care. Every bit of help makes a real difference to the animals in our care.

# DEATH'S-HEAD HAWKMOTH



One of our supporters stumbled upon this caterpillar. It was found in a dangerous place so could not be left where it was so she took it home to nurture. It would not have survived our cold climate outside.

## HERE ARE SOME FACTS:

The *Acherontia atropos*, commonly known as the Death's-head Hawkmoth, is one of the most iconic moths in the world, famed for the skull-like marking on its thorax and its unique behaviors. It belongs to the family Sphingidae and is found across parts of Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

The Death's-head Hawkmoth is a large moth with a wingspan ranging from 9-13cm. Its forewings are mottled brown, gray, and black, resembling tree bark for camouflage, while the hindwings are bright yellow with black bands. The most distinguishing feature is the golden skull-like pattern on the thorax, which has given rise to its eerie reputation.

This species is widely distributed, occurring in: Africa, its primary range and breeding ground; Europe, where migrants are often spotted and breed in the summer months; and the Middle East, where stable populations exist in warmer regions. The moth prefers open, warm habitats such as grasslands, gardens, agricultural fields, and forest edges.

Adults feed on honey, nectar, and occasionally tree sap. They are notorious for raiding beehives, using chemical mimicry to avoid detection by worker bees. Unlike most moths, *Acherontia atropos* can produce a loud squeaking sound when threatened by forcing air through their pharynx, likely as a defensive mechanism. This species is a strong flier, capable of long-distance migrations between Africa and Europe.

The Death's-head Hawkmoth has long been associated with superstition and folklore due to its skull-like marking and eerie squeaking. It has been featured in literature, art, and popular culture, most famously in the movie *The Silence of the Lambs*.

**Difficulty** - Easy (2/10)

**Host plants** - Privet; Lilac; Ash; Potato; Tomato; other Solanum

**Conditions** - Room temp. is sufficient but they do enjoy some warmth

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