



Somebodies, Not Somethings
Issue 2, Winter 2012

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Welcome to the Winter edition of *Somebodies, Not Somethings*. This issue serves as an end of year review, to recall the highlights and significant events in the lives of the residents at Eden Farmed Animal Sanctuary during 2012. As I finish this newsletter it is New Year's Eve: so this is a time for looking forward to the New Year and what might transpire to help non-human animals through Eden and Matilda's Promise, Animal Rights and Vegan Education Centre, and some other ventures I have planned that I hope will help to add to peace and wellbeing to our lives, both human and non-human.

I am deeply appreciative of all of you, worldwide, who helped to make 2012 a better year for non human animals. To each individual animal trapped in the food production industry, in a laboratory, in a home with uncaring humans, in a pound, a circus or zoo, homeless on city streets or in rural fields, or ruthlessly hunted or evicted from their home, your activism for animal rights is their only hope.

I am sincerely grateful to all of you who helped Eden and Matilda's Promise during 2012. Every help that is given to Eden, regardless of the form that help takes, is highly significant to the lives here. I do not underestimate that you have given of yourselves and I want you to know that what you have given is accepted with sincere appreciation.

No matter how small your help, how little your donation, how trite you imagined your written or spoken words to be, they meant a lot to me, and they are immensely significant to the residents at Eden and to how the work that is done here helps to represent the non-human animals we care about to an uncaring world.

Remember: the best thing you can do for other animals is to be vegan. If you are not vegan then perhaps 2013 is the year during which you will make this small, but highly significant and positive change in your life. Please feel welcome to avail of the support that is offered by Matilda's Promise to facilitate you in your decision to live non-violently.

Veganism is a way of living that seeks to exclude, as far as possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to other animals for food, clothing, and any other purpose. There are vegan alternatives to all our uses of other animals. The changes to our lifestyles that veganism necessitates do not demand much of us. Yet these small changes grant something of monumental significance to other animals: their right to liberty from our oppression.

Happy New Year,

Sandra Higgins

Director

Eden Farmed Animal Sanctuary & Matilda's Promise, Animal Rights & Vegan Education Centre

www.edenfarmanimalsanctuary

www.matildaspromise.org

Rescue & New Residents



Figure 1 Mary

Battery Hens

2012 began with the distressing news that 80,000 to 90,000 egg laying hens were to be killed because the egg production industry failed to comply with EU regulations introducing a new form of caged imprisonment.



Figure 2 Their new home, funded by AFAR

We managed to rescue twenty one of those hens. The vast majority of their counterparts were violently killed.

We are extremely grateful to animal rights organisation, AFAR (Alliance For Animal Rights) and Bernie Wright (<http://www.afarireland.org>) for the donation towards the hen house without which their rescue would have been impossible. This is an example of how the smallest act of generosity can have an exponential effect on the lives of other animals.

We were also extremely grateful to Karen Davis, of United Poultry Concerns (UPC) (http://www.upc-online.org/alerts/120105irish_hens_slaughtered.html) for publicising the plight of the hens and supporting us throughout their rescue.

All of you who donated to their care have enabled them to live at Eden where we could care for them, nurse their broken bones and hearts, and help them recover to the extent that they have today.



Figure 3 Their journey to Eden

The day of their rescue was bright with a sunny blue sky, and despite the cold there was warmth in the sun; one of those lovely, energising January days.

This was in stark contrast to the demeanour of the rescued hens.

Despite the fact that they had never seen the blue sky or felt the warmth of the sun, they displayed no interest in their surroundings. Like any depressed being or broken spirit, they tucked their heads under their wings, huddled together, and slept.

Witnessing their wonder as they adjusted to being safe, their first sight of green grass and freedom, and their recovery as they grew strong, healthy and happy is a joy that is indescribable to us; it must be a relief and a joy that is beyond language to them too.

This morning, when I went outside to clean and feed everyone, it was cold and wet. Yet nothing could detract from the joy I experienced when I saw this group of hens half running, half flying, to greet me. In my life there are few experiences that equal the joy of witnessing such profoundly positive life change in another.



Figure 4 Her first sight of liberty



Figure 5 Hope, who had a broken foot, shortly after rescue



Figure 6 A morning drink: life today at Eden for rescued battery hens

Caged Hens and Eating Eggs



Figure 7 'Enriched Cages': their home for 18 months

The EU ban on battery cages proved of little help to the egg laying hens who are still imprisoned in 'enriched' cages. In July 2012 we were able to rescue another group of caged hens, this time from the new 'enriched cages'. Life in one of these cages is a nightmare beyond imagining; I witnessed the cages first hand, and I witnessed the terrible suffering of the hens we rescued. Several of them did not live; death, for them, was a merciful release. Frieda, for example, was found to have a badly broken leg and probable extensive bone cancer. X-ray demonstrated that she had suffered multiple fractures while caged. Her pain, as she was carried to us by her legs, must have been excruciating. Many of her comrades had prolapses from laying eggs in unnatural quantities. Others had peritonitis and ascites; their bodies were so fluid filled that they were unable to walk.

It was during this rescue that I fully comprehended the impossibility of trying to help non-human animals by rescuing them from the enormous, powerful, and growing animal agricultural industry. There were 7,500 hens in the facility pictured above. Each of them needed a place at Eden. But few sanctuaries have the resources to cope with that many individuals.

The alternative of the slaughterhouse death awaiting them was brought starkly to life when I viewed the slaughterhouse truck waiting outside.

I watched the 'catcher' put on the gloves he would need to protect his hands from the injuries the terrified birds might inflict with the overgrown claws that developed in 'enriched cage' conditions, and I felt helpless to help them and disempowered.



Figure 8 The slaughterhouse truck



Figure 9 Their journey to Eden

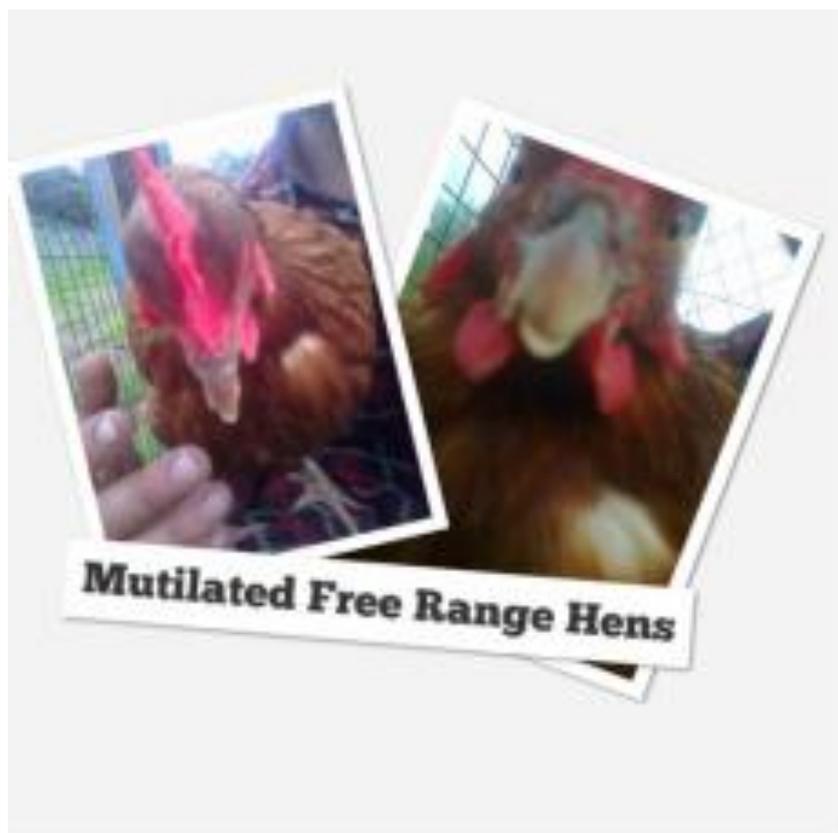
We went home with the lucky few that we had place for at Eden and my determination to do all in my power to stem this problem at its source, instead of after the fact, was renewed. The problem is that hens' eggs are viewed as a source of food for humans. As long as humans consume eggs, egg laying hens will be bred into an existence of exploitation and suffering.

Backyard, Free Range Egg Production and the Hens who Lay The Eggs

The next rescue at Eden was yet again evidence of the detrimental effect that human consumption of eggs has on the lives of egg laying hens, even in the most apparently benign of conditions.

I placed an ad in some free trade newspapers asking people not to kill hens who had ceased laying eggs and offering them a home at Eden instead. Two families gave us the hens that they no longer had a 'use' for.

It was immediately apparent that these hens suffer the same cruel start in life as the hens who end up in



cages. The crude removal of their upper beak is evident, greatly compromising their ability to eat and groom, and causing chronic pain. Their bodies, worn out from egg laying, suffer osteoporosis, fractures, heart and liver disease, and reproductive system disorders, in addition to the litany of problems that arise from egg laying itself. The rate of death in this group was very high; their health is still severely compromised and they are frequently ill.

I remain convinced, from living with these hens and interacting with them on a daily basis, that they suffer greatly from being bred to lay eggs for human consumption; and that therefore, the only way to avoid harming them and violating their right to live without the unnecessary infliction of pain, is to avoid eating their eggs. No one has to love them as I do to avoid harming them. Just be vegan.

Backyard Hens and their Brothers



Figure 10 Timothy, found abandoned and living wild in the countryside with several injured toes

Others may have been bred to be shown at 'poultry' shows, and others may have been bred for the cockfighting industry.

Whatever the reason they were brought into this world, the fact that they were abandoned and left to survive on their wits is indicative of the callous disregard that humans have for these feeling beings. The fact that they survived is indicative of their intelligent capability. This gives me hope that their ancestral essence has survived the crime of human domestication perpetrated against them and that some day they will be successfully liberated from our domination of them.

Most of the roosters living at Eden were abandoned on the roadside. They are most likely the unwanted results of backyard chicken keeping. Like humans, when hens' eggs hatch there is a 50:50 chance that the offspring will be male. For some reason a lot of people who keep chickens imagine that the offspring will all be egg producing females. Not so. Before long they find they have several crowing roosters, complaints from neighbours, and as the roosters grow and compete for a limited number of hens, they fight. This is when they are abandoned.

Some of the roosters at Eden were living wild for several weeks before we were alerted to their plight. My sister found Fitz 100m from the motorway, in a very frightened and agitated state.



Figure 11 Fitz, found near the motorway; now living with the battery hens who were rescued last January

New Residents

Meghan

Unfortunately, we lost our lovely friend Morgana in March this year. But we were joined by Amy and Meghan. Both were rescued from poor living conditions and slaughter.

Meghan is a beautiful, wild girl. No doubt we will have many stunning photos of her in the coming year. She has a very characteristic personality, and as she has not been bred to be as heavy as the white turkeys she has the advantage of considerable agility. She has a very sharp, hooked beak, that thankfully is not mutilated. She does not hesitate to threaten the cats with it!

Thanks to those of you who support us, Meghan was able to leave her former home where she was being 'fattened for slaughter', and can live for the rest of her life at Eden.



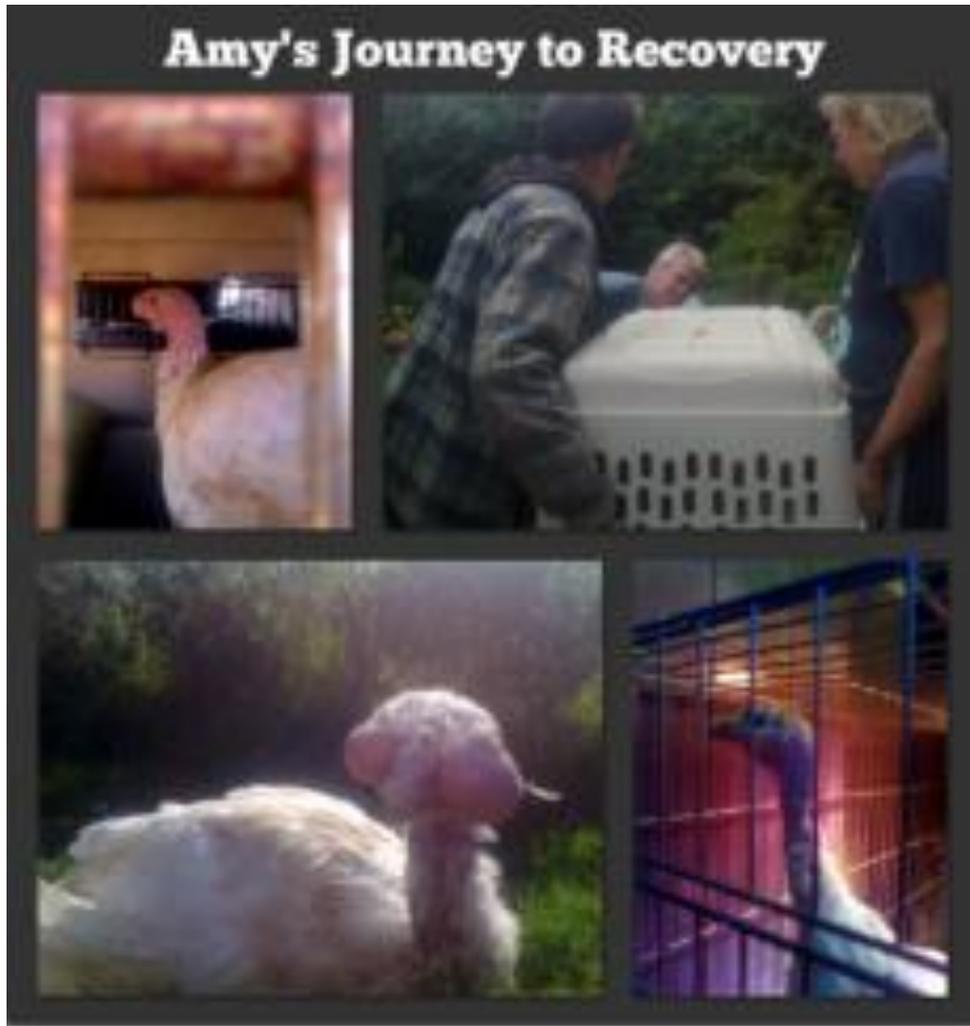
Figure 12 Meghan at dusk. Inset: Her former home, and her 2,499 comrades, all killed for Christmas.

Amy

Amy was rescued from a situation of severe neglect, thanks to the keen eye and perseverance of an animal rights activist. She suffered from mycoplasma, an infection that is very common in turkeys. Thereafter, she developed muscle necrosis and was very ill.



Figure 13 Amy's necrotic leg; this is very common in turkeys bred for food



Amy was taken indoors to our home, and cared for under a heat lamp. She was starving, severely dehydrated, and in addition to her illnesses she had been bullied and isolated by the turkeys she was living with. She required extensive antibiotic treatment, in addition to nutritional and fluid therapy. She is doing fine now, managing to integrate with the other turkeys, although she needs extra care and tenderness.





She has a very, very special place in our hearts and we count ourselves blessed that she came to Eden. Thank you to all the people who played such an important part in her rescue and transport to Eden, and who contributed to her care in recent months.

A special thanks is due to other sanctuary directors, and to Jamie London of Animal Place Sanctuary, for help and advice on the health of farmed animals. Help with diagnostic assessment and treatment advice from those of you with vastly more experience than me is invaluable to us and to the veterinary professionals who help us to help the residents.

Christmas day is probably the one day of the year when we are particularly grateful to spend time with the turkeys and to give them one of their favourite dinners - melon - and ponder ways in which we can do something to enable people to see them as individual people, rather than Christmas dinner.

Matilda's Promise

One of the activities that I engaged in during 2012, as part of my motivation to stem the problem facing other animals at its source (i.e. breeding them for our use) was the development of the Animal Rights and Vegan Education Centre, Matilda's Promise. The website was launched on 1st November 2012 to celebrate World Vegan Day www.matildaspromise.org

Matilda's Promise is currently engaged in online vegan mentoring. Please get in touch with us if you need any help in learning more about veganism and animal rights, or if you need support while making the transition to a vegan lifestyle.

There are also some products for sale in the website store, that help spread the vegan message <http://www.matildaspromise.org/index.php/store/>. We are very grateful to have received some grant aid to enable us to produce these products (see The Pollination Project below).

The Film: You Haven't Lived Until You've Hugged a Turkey

The production of the documentary film You Haven't Lived Until You've Hugged a Turkey has been the most prominent activity of Matilda's Promise to date.



Screenings

The premiere for the movie *You Haven't Lived Until You've Hugged a Turkey* was held at the Centre for Creative Practices, Pembroke St, Dublin, kindly hosted by Vegan Ireland.

Since then the movie, and the accompanying five minute trailer, and the talk I gave to launch the movie have been viewed by a large number of people. The movie has been viewed 2,650 times on You Tube, as of today.

The movie was screened for four hours continuously at Festive Pies and Turkeys Lives on 20th December and again on 22nd December at the Dublin Food Co-op. These screenings took place during the ordinary operation of the restaurant and food co-op, thus giving many people the opportunity to learn about the film, the sanctuary, and the work of Matilda's Promise. This new type of educational venture was the brainchild of Irena Koroleva, a committee member of Vegan Ireland, supported by Roger Yates; in my opinion it has been a highly successful form of vegan outreach and I look forward to participating in this type of forum again.

<http://animalrightsireland.blogspot.ie/2012/12/video-dublin-showings-of-eden-film-in.html>

I wrote this film because I thought that if people could see turkeys in the light that we see them at Eden, and witness the deep, affectionate interspecies bond we have with them, they might question the fact that they are usually seen in terms of inanimate objects on a dinner plate. I also wrote the film in light of the latest scientific evidence on cognitive awareness and sentience in other animals, and I included some points on how our use of other animals hurts them, is unnecessary, and damages the environment that we all share and depend on for our survival. I proposed veganism as the solution to these interrelated issues.

I wish to thank all of you who contributed in any way to the film: there are too many people to name individually but special thanks are due to those who supported the film while it was still in its infancy, those



of you who helped me with the practical tasks of producing it, and those who contributed their talents, their work, their words, their experience, and their respect for other animals.

The publicity that the plight of turkeys got on foot of my representation of them in the film and on the Matilda's Promise website was greatly enhanced by the enthusiasm of members of Vegan Ireland. On my behalf, and on behalf of turkeys everywhere, I thank you for your interest and your

support. I know that it is our shared dream that there will be less of these beings bred and violated next year.

Publicity for Eden & Matilda's Promise

Psychology Today & The Sunday Independent Newspaper

The film was mentioned in Psychology Today and in one of our national Newspapers, The Sunday Independent, in a piece written by Fiona O'Connell entitled If You were a turkey would you like Christmas? <http://www.independent.ie/lifestyle/if-you-were-a-turkey-would-you-like-christmas-3334479.html>

Interview: Global Looking Glass

Eden Farm Animal Sanctuary and Matilda's Promise were featured earlier this year in an interview published in Global Looking Glass, an online magazine with a vision to create global social change. The interview, which is in Issue 1, featuring sanctuaries, is available for free download here <http://www.globallookingglass.com/magazine/>

The Species Barrier: Talking Turkeys

I also gave an interview for a very interesting radio show The Species Barrier, run by Marcus and Ruth Dredge who also run Vegan Outreach Lincoln & East Midlands. This show was entitled Talking Turkeys, and it featured some discussion of the movie You Haven't Lived Until You've Hugged a Turkey, along with other issues facing non-human animals and what we can do to abolish their use. It is well worth listening to this and the previous show to hear about speciesism and animal rights issues, and from other sanctuary directors about their work, their dilemmas, their opinions, and their solutions <http://archive.org/details/TheSpeciesBarrier13TalkingTurkeys>

Claude: Photo Contest Winner

Our friend Claude, Matilda's rooster friend, was one of the winners in Mary Britton Clouse's Chicken Run Rescue Competition.



Figure 14 Claude, at Matilda's Grave

Claude is sadly no longer with us, but his memory will shine proudly on the walls of people's homes in the calendar in which he features during the month of July 2013

<http://www.chickenrunrescue.org/#CALENDAR>

and

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1015178539885201&set=a.10151428355155201.830500.475016785200&type=3&theater>

Friends Lost



Figure 15 Dorothy (Summer 2009 - 1 December 2012)

It is never easy to write about the good friends at Eden that we have lost. Some died of unknown causes, very rapidly, having lived a few years here, some in tragic accidents, but most of them died because they were violated by human use of their bodies. 2012 was a difficult year because so many of the residents suffered the consequences of being bred for food. However difficult it is to face their loss, it is vital that they are not forgotten. At Eden we witnessed suffering that I can only describe as intolerable. It is slight comfort that the residents were in our care and that we could administer pain relief, and secure veterinary care for them. Very slight.

If they had not been rescued and resident at Eden they would have died more painful, more prolonged, more torturous deaths in farming conditions. Their suffering and their deaths, that we believe were intolerable for them, are standard, daily occurrences on farms all over the world. I know; I saw them dead and dying in the cages that I rescued them from. You know. If you don't know you can read the details of their lives and deaths any day of the week, on social media networks, in newspapers, in animal rights bulletins, in books, on the internet.



Figure 16 Frieda whose suffering I will continue to highlight

Again, many of you supported us financially and by befriending us, thus enabling us to have pay for veterinary care and the pharmaceuticals needed to nurse them , and to have the courage to continue this work when we felt utterly depressed by the extent of death and illness that we witnessed at this time, and the weight of the knowledge that there were so many we could not rescue, who died excruciating deaths, with no one left alive who remembers them.

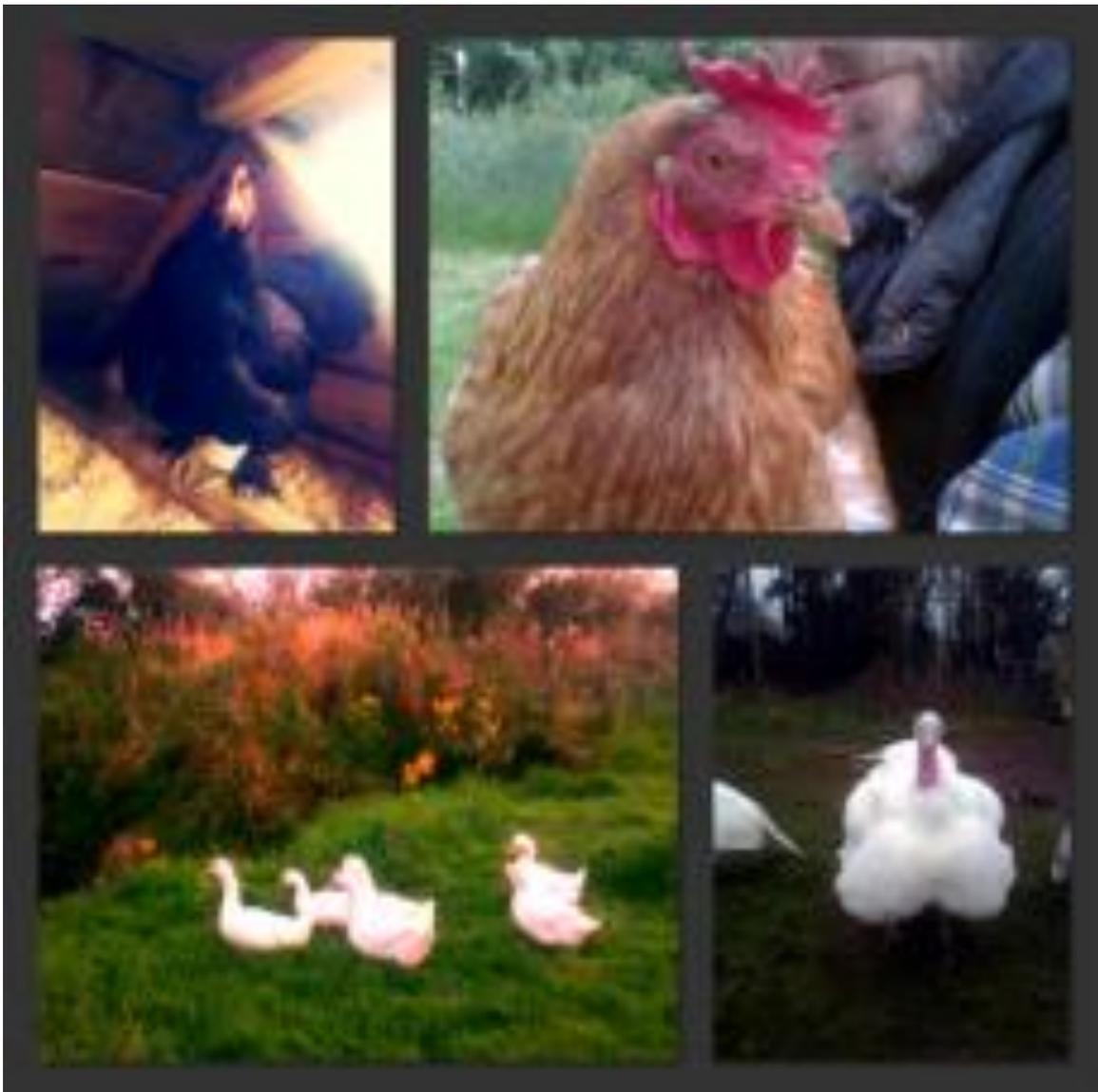


Figure 17 Clockwise from top left: Mamou, Ruth, Dickens and Lydia, and Morgana

I miss them.

I will not let their suffering and their deaths be forgotten.

That is the work of Matilda's Promise.

The Art of Activism

Activism can be a source of immense wellbeing, knowing that you are living your life congruent with your deepest values. Activism can also be a deeply painful, depressing, disheartening way of life. There are times when anyone who listens to the plight of other animals will be prone to the vicarious trauma that is the price we pay while we strive for their liberty. It can be helpful, when feeling despondent about the depths of suffering we witness and experience, to use a creative form of activism. Whatever skill you have, you can use that skill for the benefit of other animals. Maybe you are a good vegan cook; maybe you are a carpenter and can build a home for rescued animals; maybe you are a compassionate listener and can spend time with a human or non-human who is feeling the pain of violation. Maybe you are an artist, a writer, a poet?

Whatever your skill, they need it.

Use it to inspire others.

Use it to make the other animals heard against the silence of a mute, uncaring world.

Susannah

I met you a day before you died
In your own way you showed me you were infinitely wise
and strong
You lived through all your long ordeal with dignity
And a courage that shamed my petty understanding of
pain
And I am lucky that for that little while
I felt all the wasted love in your broken heart.

I loved and love you in a way that changed me utterly
You small survivor of humanity's long war against the
earth
You made me wonder about all the love in the world
That was true and we lost it somehow
Your memory makes me wonder about why we wait
As if tears could break down prison doors and cut through
wire
As if, because of our sadness
The billions of others like you can somehow be free
To run in the sunlight, and blink, dazzled,
At a world so suddenly, astonishingly, new.

As if words alone could light your dim and hopeless eyes
With an empty promise of love you'll never feel
Protecting arms whose warmth you'll never know.

I buried you myself, as a small way of saying sorry
As though our race has any right to ask forgiveness of yours
As if anything could be atonement now
For what we have done.

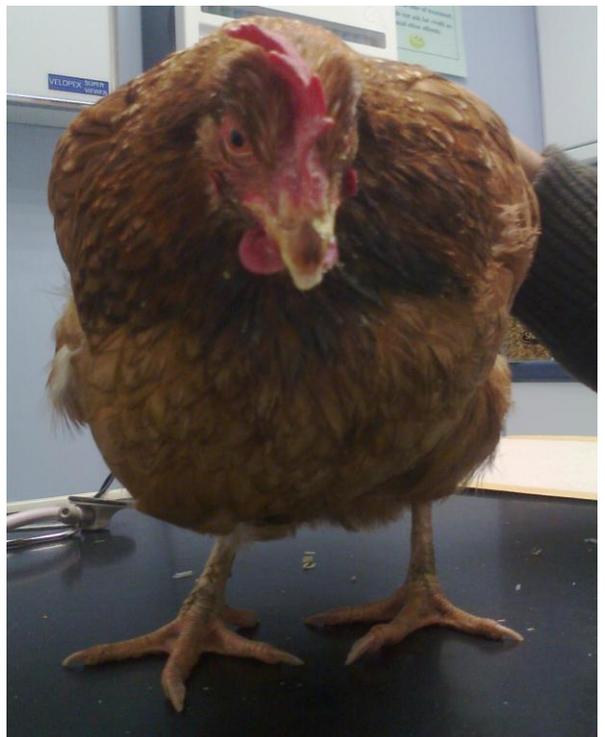


Figure 18 In memory of Ruth, rescued battery hen, who died of on 11 July 2012 of peritonitis caused by being bred to lay eggs for human consumption

Reproduced with kind permission from poet and animal rights activist, Tina Cubberley

Other Notable Events

We were delighted to welcome Dominic Berry to Eden, and indeed, to Ireland. He made World Vegan month very special and very entertaining for all the Irish vegans who were lucky enough to meet him and hear his performance poetry, and his words of wisdom on the status of non-human animals. You can see the highlights of Dominic's visit to the residents at Eden and the interview he gave afterwards here <http://animalrightsireland.blogspot.ie/2012/12/eden-animal-sanctuary-welcomes-poet.html>

Grant Aid

We are delighted to be the first international recipients of grant aid from The Pollination Foundation, at World Peace Earth <http://thepollinationproject.wordpress.com/> and <http://www.worldpeaceinc.com/>. We have been grant aided specifically for the educational aspects of our work, and for the work I hope to do at The Compassion Foundation. I hope to have more news on this project soon. I encourage others to read and be inspired by the compassionate mission of this organisation, one of the few representing our use of other animals in a way that connects the issues into a bigger picture of the most important social injustice of our time. <https://vimeo.com/55899430>

Working Weekends & Internships

We had some very enjoyable times during 2012 thanks to those of you who volunteered to work with us, or who engaged in a residential internship programme with us.



Figure 19 Vegan Ireland Volunteers



Figure 20 Vegan Ireland Volunteers

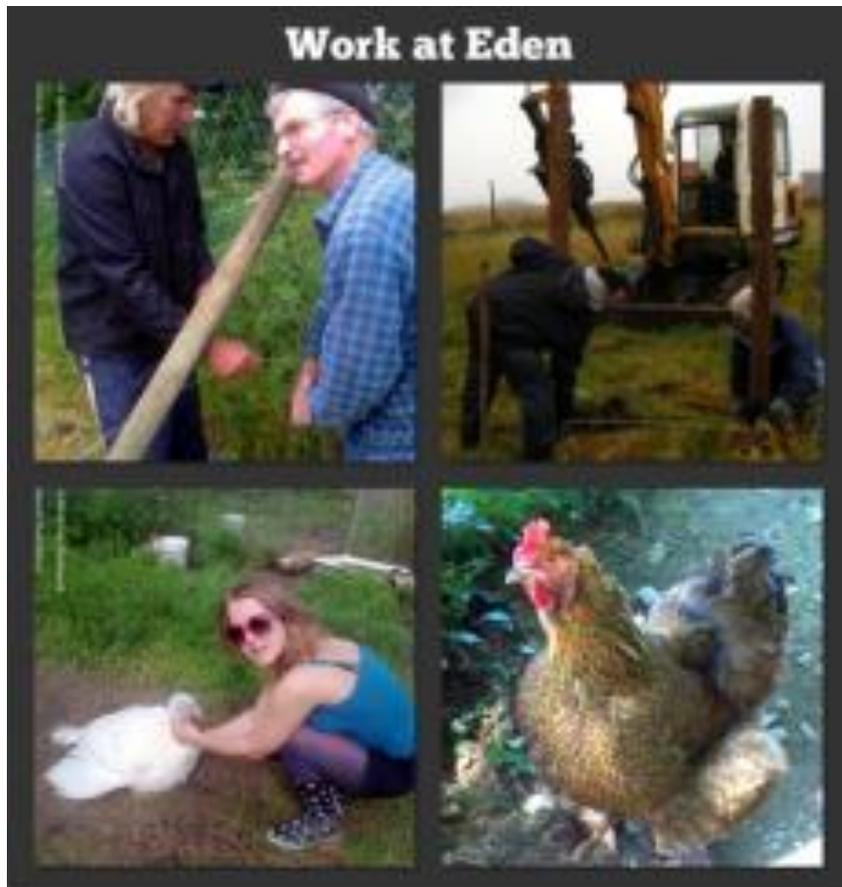


Figure 21 Correction: some of us worked, while some of us just hung around looking gorgeous!

If you would like to do an internship with us please contact us. We are specifically seeking people who are able to do heavy construction work, log building and/or carpentry. Please note that this aspect of sanctuary work is arduous. You must be physically able and willing to engage in this type of work, and to work long hours, in all kinds of weather, in order to be able to help the residents of Eden.



We are currently looking for people interested in working in veganic gardening/permaculture.

We are also looking for interns with veterinary experience.

We require that interns are already vegan and engaged in, or interested in engaging in, animal rights activism.

Titbits

Here are links to some interesting articles and interviews that I came across during the year.

Smart Farmers

Food writer and lecture on The Politics of Food at University College Dublin, sees 'smart farmers of the future' engaged in forestry and plant based agricultural food production to <http://www.thejournal.ie/smart-farms-of-future-590632-Sep2012/>

Graphic Images in Animal Rights Education

<http://strikingattheroots.wordpress.com/2012/11/01/how-do-graphic-images-affect-animal-advocacy/>

What do you think about the most effective way in which we portray the animals on whose behalf we advocate?

Veganism and World Peace

Dr Will Tuttle outlines the ways in which he believes our violation of non-human animals is the root cause of our most significant problems today.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SE13t7LEiJY&feature=youtu.be>

Ethical Veganism and the Neurobiology of Empathy

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/evolved-primate/201005/empathy-is-what-really-sets-vegetarians-apart-least-neurologically-speak>

Are the Irish ready for Veganism?

Roger Yates, in the Irish Times, asks if Ireland is ready to relinquish a tradition of exploitation and embrace a non-violent vegan lifestyle?

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2012/0802/1224321291149.html>

Vegan Ireland and The Abolition of Single Issues

Great interview by Ed Long of Vegan Ireland.

<http://human-nonhuman.blogspot.ie/2012/07/the-abolitionisation-of-single-issues.html>

Animal Rights Ireland Blogspot

Links to other Vegan Ireland work during 2012 available here:

<http://animalrightsireland.blogspot.ie/>

Biophilia and Compassion for All Living Beings

Recent research supports the biophilia hypothesis (that we have an innate love of living things), but interestingly not biophobia (an innate fear of things or beings that are potentially dangerous, e.g. snakes). Unfortunately, the authors of the study ask questions about how animals can be further used and exploited to benefit humans (e.g. as 'pets' or to enhance learning). The more interesting question is where, on the path from childhood to adulthood, do we lose this biophilia and our sense of compassion for all living beings?

<http://www.bps.org.uk/news/children-prefer-real-animals-toys>

I will leave you with our best wishes for a progressive and Happy New Year for all lives, human and non-human and some shots of the residents at Eden who you have helped liberate from human oppression.

Our shared wish for 2013 is for a radical change in the human view of non-human animals: from somethings to somebodies.

Never give up this dream.

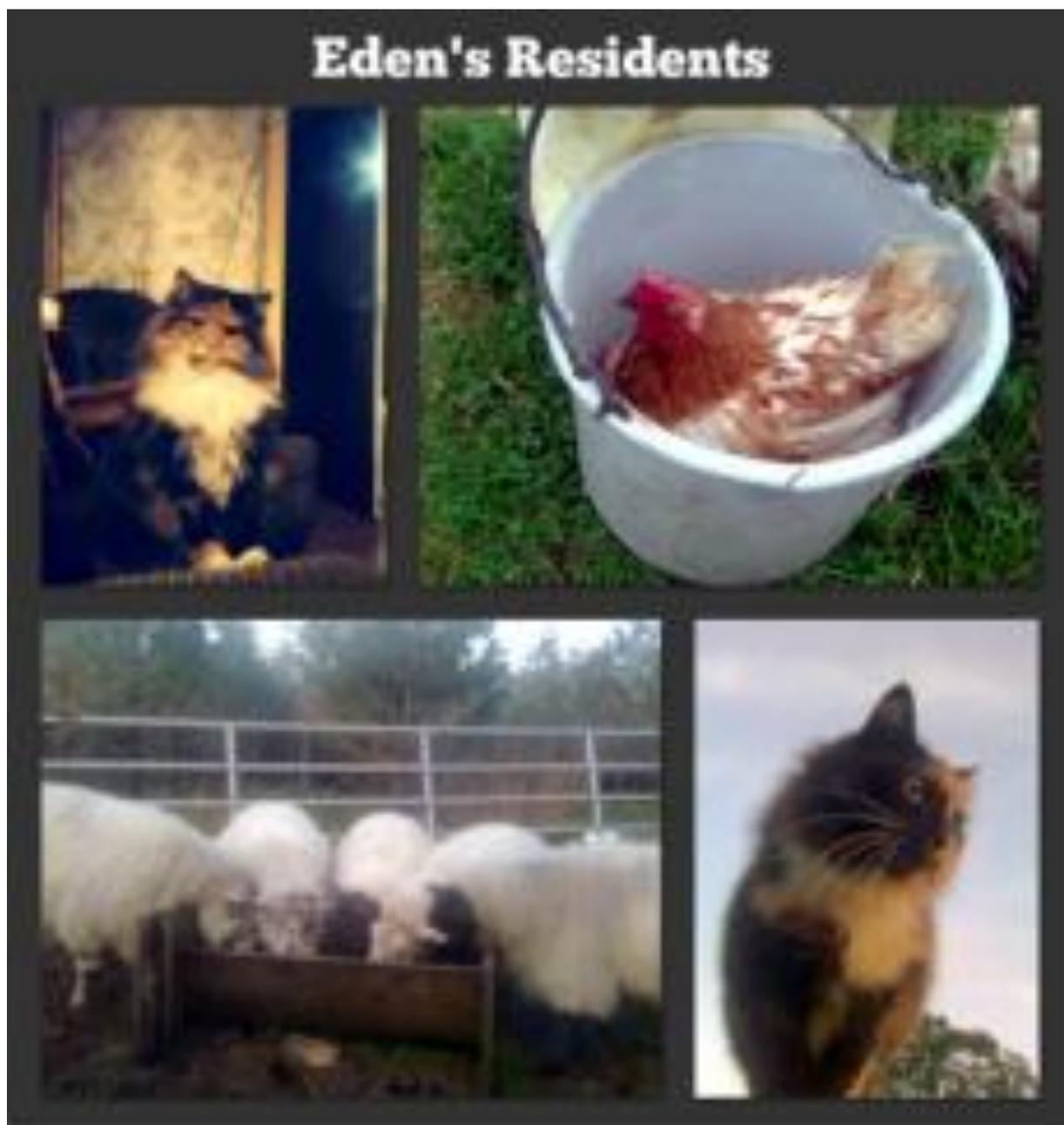


Figure 22 Clockwise from top left Jenny, Alice, Lady Molly, Willow, Pip, Lily, Florence and Cara



Figure 23 Joy, a rescued caged hen



Figure 24 Rescued caged hens at Eden



Figure 25 Left to right Marjorie, Dorothy, Jenny and Sany