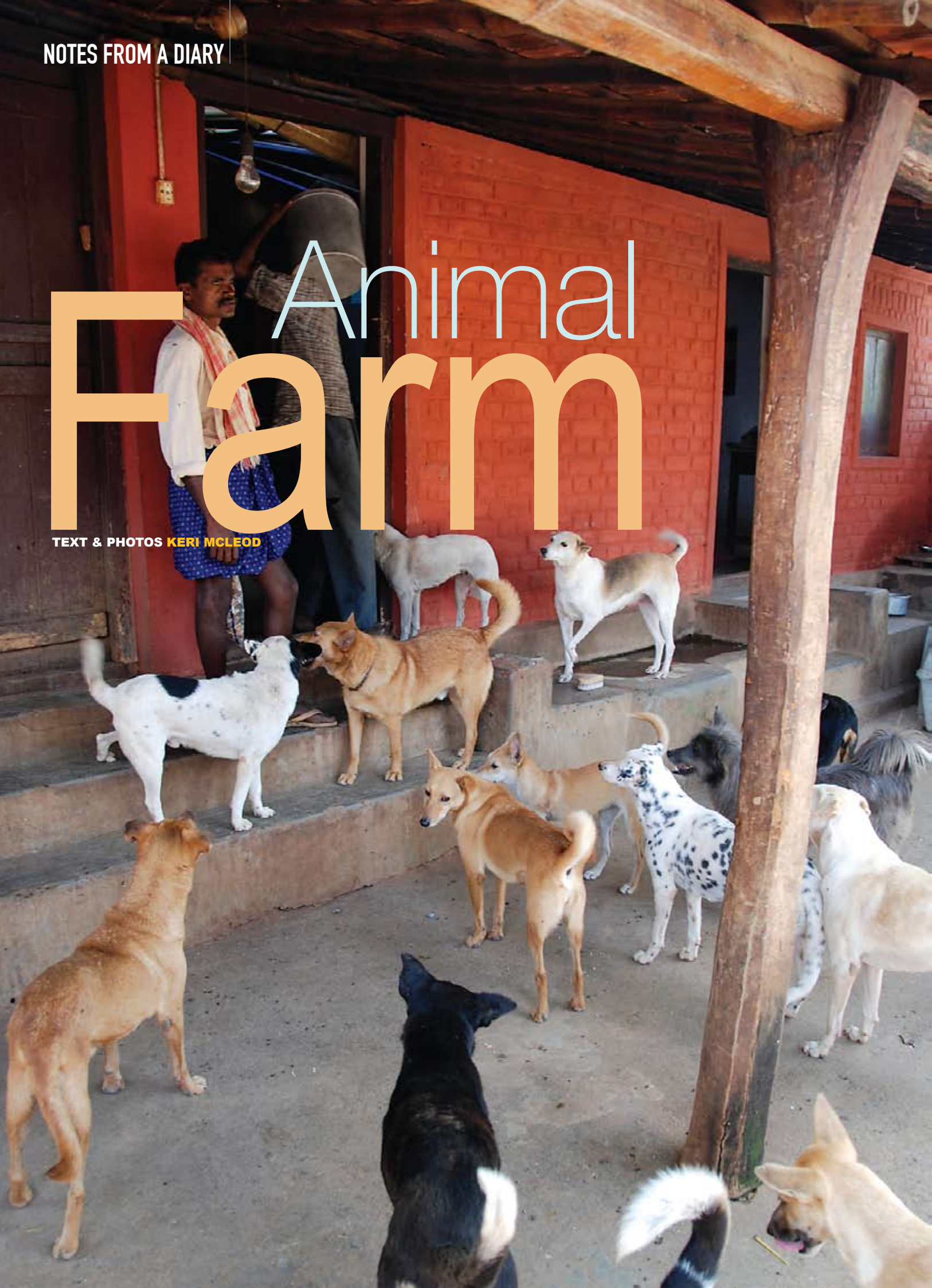


NOTES FROM A DIARY

Animal Farm

TEXT & PHOTOS KERI MCLEOD



OVER Diwali last year, several other teachers and I went to the Mudumallai Game Sanctuary. One day, on a walk towards our destination, we had to pass through private land. We were greeted with a smile and about a dozen dogs. I did not have any idea how many dogs lived there, though I could tell it was a Veterinary Hospital.

The owner was Nigel Otter (seen in picture), who in 1996 founded India Project for Animals and Nature (IPAN) and is the Managing Trustee. Nigel welcomed us onto his land and we stayed there for about an hour talking to him and interacting with the animals. He uses his land – Hill View Farm – and outbuildings as an “orphanage/hospital” for animals that have either been abandoned, abused or injured. He said there was a couple from Bulgaria that brought a monkey they had purchased for Rs 500, just to save it from a life in the circus!

There were tons of dogs around – all well behaved. Horses were being brought to a pasture to graze. “Bunty,” the monkey, hung onto one colleague for about ten minutes. Clearly there was a respect, love and trust from the animals towards Nigel.



Nigel's land is located within the Mudumallai Game Sanctuary, in the village of Mavanhalla, Tamil Nadu. It is part of the United Nations Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve and home to many tribal people such as the Todas, Kurumbas and Irrulas. It also has the largest remaining elephant population in India, as well as hosting bison, langur monkey, panthers and tigers.

IPAN is a non-governmental organisation, which is run completely on donations. Nigel and his wife take in and treat injured and/or abandoned domestic

animals, and injured wild animals from the Mudumallai Game Sanctuary, which are then released into the wild if their health is sufficient. If not, the animal stays there at the shelter. IPAN provides free veterinary services to local villages as it has a jeep ambulance, including free treatment and immunisations.

In addition to those services, IPAN also hosts programs such as birth control for stray dogs. They are returned to their original place of capture within 24 hours, after a very humane surgery takes place.

IPAN also helps to prevent illegal transportation of cattle through the area in overloaded trucks as the overcrowding may result in injuries and deaths en route to the slaughterhouses. They are active in protecting the Mudumallai forest from illegal logging and finally, they provide education to local school children and colleges about humane treatment of animals.

Hill View Farm has over 300 animals – there are 40 cows, 30 bullocks, 25 buffalo, 12 goats, 11 monkeys, 40 dogs, 30 horses, ponies and mules, and 95 donkeys. If you would like to donate, you can contact Nigel at ipannilgiris@hotmail.com or see their website: www.indiapan.org.

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