



A little apprehension before the first injection



StreetVet founders Jade Statt and Sam Joseph, both MRCVS

# Behind the scenes of the charity StreetVet

John Periam talks to the founders of the charity, which operates in Sussex, to learn about its work

*John Periam is a photojournalist with many features published, including three books. One called a 'Veterinary Tail Uphill and Down Dale' which refers to his experiences as a veterinary salesman in the 60s. He still has strong links to the profession through his equestrian work. In his other role he is a regular contributor to a trade paper for the UK fishing industry.*



John Periam



Sally in recovery mode

How many times do we walk past homeless people on our streets? Like many in the current times it is often something that we take for granted.

The national press works hard to promote their wellbeing and many charities do their utmost to support them in time of need.

However, one thing that draws the average passer-by to glance in their direction a second time is the welcoming paw and waggy tail of that person's beloved doggy companion.

I must admit as writer of this feature that I find it heart-warming while at the same time wondering about the wellbeing of the animal.

I am glad to say I was not the only person to share such concerns.

Another was Jade Statt who qualified as a vet from Glasgow Vet School in 2002.

It was on a night out in London

that she came across a homeless man and his dog in 2016: "I stopped to talk to Dave and his dog Brick and he told me about his dog's sore skin.

"I could see in his eyes how helpless he felt. I thought to myself, 'What would I have done if this was my dog, Oakley?'"

"I knew that if I'd had my vet kit with me I could have treated this dog. There and then, I realised how I could make a difference."

One has to admire Jade for her initial efforts – it was not easy – and she started to find support from others including Josh Coombes.

Josh has become a household name amongst the homeless community and started by giving free haircuts on the street. The rest is history.

"We met over a coffee one day and I soon realised that we shared the same concerns about the wellbeing of the homeless community and their animals and we continue to this day to keep in touch."

Like Jade, fellow vet Sam Joseph felt he could offer more; so one evening in 2015 when he was a student at Bristol Veterinary College he decided to have a walk about with his stethoscope and offer to check over any homeless people's dogs.

"What pleased me was to see their relief when I told them they dog was fit and well."

"I then moved back to London and started to visit the many homeless people in North London with worming tablets and a bag of veterinary supplies.

"It was then that I met Jade who was doing the same thing in Westminster and before we knew it StreetVet was born."

Interest in StreetVet abounded from within the UK veterinary profession and Sam and Jade received lots of support from like-minded vets and nurses to sign up, volunteer and set-up StreetVet locations in their own cities and towns.

Jade went on to say: "Currently we operate in 16 locations within the UK and have over 650 volunteer vets and qualified veterinary nurses."

"StreetVet operates in fixed locations every week, normally in conjunction with a social care provider such as food provision by a third-party partner."

"Stations are held consistently every week so that owners know that they are able to visit at certain times and to have a presence in the community which builds trust and engagement."

Such is the story about Sally. Sally is a very special Staffie and adored by her owner Rob who rescued her as a puppy.

Sadly Rob suffered several strokes and Sally was at his side all the time often being seen at their outreach station at Hackney where they collected food and medications.

It was in November 2018 that Sally was spooked by some nearby fireworks and ran on to

a railway line only to be hit by a passing train.

She was found by an RSPCA inspector with life-threatening injuries and taken to Harmsworth Veterinary Hospital.

She survived the night and we were contacted at StreetVet where we arranged for transport to Wanstead Veterinary Hospital. Sally's injuries were extensive and life-threatening (too many to go into here) which included an amputation of one leg and the loss of one eye linked to severe jaw injuries.

Jade said: "As vets and nurses we often have to counsel owners through the process of caring for pets that have undergone major surgery."

"Linked to this we need to prepare the owner for the psychological impact when they first see their pet after life-changing injuries."

"As a result of this, two of our StreetVets, Rebecca and Emma, wanted to ensure Rob was fully prepared and supported, by driving him to the hospital themselves to visit Sally where they were humbled to witness an overwhelmingly emotional reunion."

"Sally and Rob continue to visit us at Hackney almost every week where we ensure that she is happy, pain free and of course well fed!"



Preparing for on the street treatment



Reassurance to both dog and owner is so important with a little TLC



That all-important examination on the street

The expansion of StreetVet continues with more volunteers joining the organisation every week which as a result allows StreetVet to extend their services into new locations.

StreetVet became a registered charity in January 2019.

A small behind the scenes team supports the vet and vet nurse volunteers, Jade as a clinical director, an operations manager and a general manager.

The success of StreetVet has been supported by the veterinary profession and the wider vet and pet industry. Jade said: "We have also built a strong partnership with Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, they have been instrumental in providing emergency kennels for dogs in London when their homeless owners require hospitalisation."

As StreetVet has grown so has their celebrity support,

StreetVet is delighted to have Paul O'Grady, Sue Perkins and Anna Richardson, CBBC vet James Greenwood and Blue Peter vet Rory Cowlam as their ambassadors.

StreetVet is looking to launch a StreetVet Accredited Hostel Scheme and were recently named as the winner of the Purina Better with Pets 2020 Changemaker prize.

Jade said: "By helping create more pet friendly hostels, we can protect the human animal bond and keep our clients and pets together."

For more information about StreetVet UK visit [www.streetvet.org.uk](http://www.streetvet.org.uk) – it is also a registered veterinary practice within the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and its charity number is 1181527.

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