

Fewer pets dumped at Christmas

A SHARP reduction in the abandoning of animals over Christmas reported by the Battersea dogs' home, London, has been attributed to effects of the recession and to advertising warning people not to give pets as presents (Rupert Steiner writes).

One hundred and ten dogs have been taken in, 55 per cent fewer than last Christmas. Josephine Henderson, the home's manager, said: "I think the message that a dog is for life and not just for Christmas has finally got through. The publicity over the years must have made an impression."

Economic gloom may also have had an effect, Mrs Henderson said. "Fewer people could afford to go away this Christmas, and so have been at home to look after their pets," she said.

Kathryn Donachie, of the RSPCA, said: "The outlook is good with fewer animals abandoned. It is the first year we have detailed the cost of keeping an animal in our advertisements."

The charity's television advertisements show a little girl asking Santa for a puppy. He explains that it would need to be walked and during its lifetime would cost over £2,000 in food and veterinary fees.

Miss Donachie said that the RSPCA's problems were not over: "Spring will be worrying, when the novelty of those pets given as gifts has worn off. It is then the puppy grows into a dog, starts chewing things and needs costly injections."

The recession has worked both ways. Animals have been brought to the RSPCA due to their owners' homes being repossessed. Miss Donachie said that many of the owners had been heart-broken to give up their pets.

Times 28/12

**SADLY, IT'S NOT JUST
'SANTA CLAUS' WHO WILL BE
WEARING A RED COAT
THIS CHRISTMAS.**



There's nothing jolly about fox-hunters.

Rather than bringing joy and happiness, they bring death and suffering to defenceless animals.

For a special Christmas treat, they set a pack of 40 dogs on to a single, terrified fox. (And you thought this was the 'season of goodwill').

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I wish to donate by Access/Visa Card No.

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Expiry Date / / Signature _____

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To: League Against Cruel Sports, Room 138, FREEPOST, 83-87 Union St., London SE1 1BT.

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**DON'T LET BRITAIN'S
WILDLIFE GO TO THE DOGS.**

Guardian
27/12