

## Work experience Thai-style

**A small article about the Noistar Thai Animal Rescue Foundation, in Koh Tao, Thailand, that appeared in *Off The Record*, inspired new University of Bristol graduates Nathan Lowenstein and Jacky Jonker to visit the clinic. Here Jacky talks of their experiences:**

Nathan and I got in touch with Jayne Chard who runs the Noistar Thai Animal Rescue Foundation from the UK. As new graduates, we wanted to combine travelling with working at the foundation for a few weeks.

Koh Tao is a small island situated on Thailand's east coast. Noistar is the first permanent animal clinic on the island; it was started two years ago. The aim of the clinic is to establish a neutering and nurturing programme (including vaccination and parasite control), as well as providing an educational service for the islanders and visitors promoting good animal management.

Nathan and I stayed in a house provided for volunteers, and worked in the clinic every day. Some days were spent walking along turquoise beaches treating all the dogs in sight for mange, while other days were spent neutering dogs at the clinic, or making house calls. We got plenty of experience carrying out basic surgical procedures such as neutering



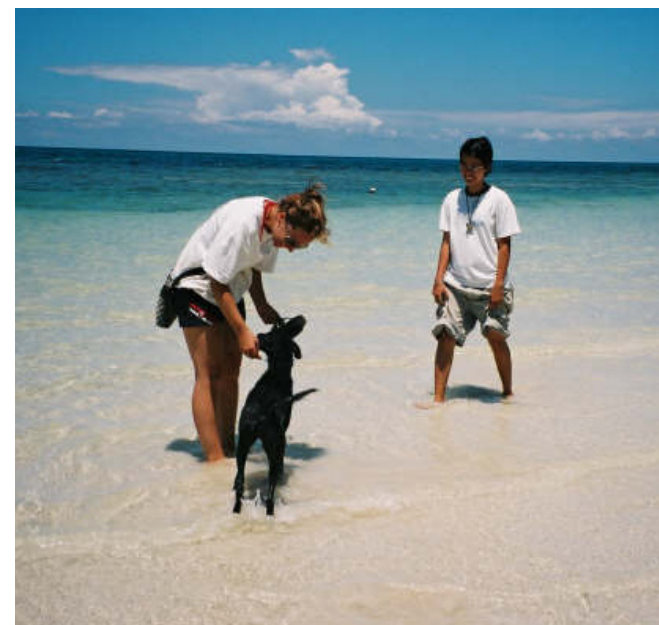
Jacky, Kit (administrator) and Jae (a Thai vet) place a cast on a dog with a broken femur

and wound stitch ups, as well as some first opinion work. We treated everything from six-day-old kittens to dogs with broken femurs and pigeons with broken wings.

The drugs and equipment that were available were basic, making common sense and instinct essential diagnostic tools. Surgery was often complicated by the presence of ehrlichiosis in our patients. This infectious disease can cause bleeding disorders, making tying off blood vessels with out of date suture material a challenge!

Nathan and I were new graduates when we went to the clinic. We gained the basic confidence we needed to cope

with a first job. At university we learn with all the best tools, but when all you have is your hands and eyes, your approach changes completely. The work this foundation does is magnificent and really makes a difference. We thoroughly recommend the experience to anyone who might be interested or able to help. Log on to [www.kohtaoanimalclinic.org](http://www.kohtaoanimalclinic.org) for more information.



The work involved catching dogs on the beach for mange treatment

*The BVA Overseas Group can provide general information and advice to vets and students considering voluntary work in a developing country. A list of charities and organisations requiring veterinary assistance, recent requests for volunteers, guidance notes on working overseas and articles by returned volunteers can be found on the BVA website. For further information visit [www.bva.co.uk/profession/overseas/worldwide](http://www.bva.co.uk/profession/overseas/worldwide) or email Helena Cotton on [helenac@bva.co.uk](mailto:helenac@bva.co.uk)*

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