

# Zoo Life

Spring 2002 - Issue 9

CHESTER ZOO'S MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS AND ADOPTERS



Inside this Issue: Photo Competition Winners • Bird Review • The Birthday Zoo

## From the Director's Desk

Professor Gordon McGregor Reid



**W**HEN writing the first column of the New Year, there is always the tendency to look back at the highs and lows of the previous 12 months. But all of these have been reported in previous issues of *Zoo Life*, so instead I want to look forward to the exciting plans for 2002. My one reference to 2001 is the extraordinary end-of-year visitor figure. Despite the six week closure in early Spring, we still ended the year as the most visited wildlife attraction in the UK, with a final figure of 971,989 paying visitors! These excellent figures mean that we can go ahead with most of the developments postponed from last year.

I hope that many of our members and adopters will be able to visit during the Easter holidays, to see the first of the new developments, which will be – quite literally – up and running! This is a new Red Panda exhibit, and two of these delightful small animals will be seen in the trees on the Oakfield Lawn, by the crane paddock. Red Pandas share few similarities with their Giant cousins, other than diet – they both thrive on bamboo. Their habitat is the Southern edge of the Himalayan range, from Nepal to the Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan. They have a long, soft, rust brown coat and are about 60 cms long, with a bushy, striped tail of the same length. I have wanted to see Red Pandas at Chester for a long time, and I'm sure they will be a great favourite with visitors.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Another new Easter development will be *Marmot Mania!* The idea comes from watching our Prairie Marmot colony suddenly popping out of their underground burrows. Marmot Mania will enable our young visitors to pretend they are marmots. They will crawl through tunnels and pop their heads up into perspex domes! This learning-

through-fun exhibit is by the Discovery Centre and Children's Farm.

Our biggest project this year is the new *Serengeti Experience* featuring critically endangered Black Rhinos. Work began in January and we hope to have it completed by the summer. The indoor accommodation is a round, African-style building, with a thatched roof, 25 metres in diameter. It will feature individual paddocks and internal public viewing.

The Rhino development plans will mean a house move for the Capybaras and Tapirs. They will join the Guanacos in a new mixed exhibit by the *Twilight Zone*. Their vacated area will be refurbished for relocating the Meerkats from their present accommodation in the Camel house.

### ANIMAL HEALTH CARE

The *Forest Zone* is the first phase in our long-term plans to 'zone' the whole Zoo. The area around the *Spirit of the Jaguar* will be planted with trees and shrubs, and various 'forest' animals will be included in the scheme. An aviary for Hyacinth Macaws will be on the *Arara* picnic lawn, and a new enclosure for Capuchin monkeys will soon open behind the *Tropical Realm*. Eventually the Bush Dogs will also be moved into the 'forest.'

Another much-needed project, nearly completed, is the *Animal Health Centre*. This is going up rapidly on the site of the old car park, by the *Spirit of the Jaguar*. Stephanie Sanderson and her team have been busy sourcing all the equipment needed – much of which will be paid for by the generous donations of members and adopters. Finding equipment that is portable enough to take around the Zoo, and flexible enough to use on anything from a 20g Sebas bat to a 2 tonne Rhino, hasn't been easy! Most of the £11,000 raised by your generosity will go towards a

Chester Zoo Life is published by the North of England Zoological Society.  
Upton-by-Chester, Chester CH2 1LH.  
Telephone: (01244) 380 280  
Director:  
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Editor: Pat Cade

radiograph ('X-ray') machine and the various bits of equipment that go with it.

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Looking further into the year, we plan to begin the next phase of *Islands in Danger* in the Summer. This will be an extension to the building to provide a new Komodo facility. The three young female Komodos, who have been off-show in *Tropical Realm* since their arrival, will be moved into their new custom-built enclosure.

Later in the year, we will finalise a concept and facility plan for a new Red Ape development, based on the existing Orang Utan Breeding Centre.

As you can see, it will be an extremely busy year! My thanks for your continued support. Please visit often during the coming year, and let us know what you think of all these new developments.

▼ A Red Panda at Bristol Zoo Gardens.



Front Cover: This lovely mother and baby shot was judged the best entry in the 2001 Photographic Competition. It is by Ian Maddocks of Altrincham. The rest of the winning entries can be seen on the centre pages.

Meetings and Events previously found on this page have now moved to the Back Cover

## REPORTING BACK – Meetings and Visits Survey

AFTER discussion in the Membership and Programmes Committee about Saturday members' meetings and members' trips and visits, Marketing Office undertook a survey along similar lines to the previous one in 1994. As well as a self completion questionnaire inserted in the Summer 2001 Zoo Life, we organised an independent telephone survey, aiming to add a further 300 responses from members. Information Technology Manager, Philip Morris pulled a computerised random selection of 350 adult members from the membership database.

This proved to be valuable, because the postal response was relatively low, representing the views of 88 members. The telephone poll reached 292 addresses, covering the views of an estimated 370 members. We'd like to thank everyone who helped with these two polls.

The Committee agreed these recommendations, which we presented at the November Committee meeting:

- Members regard their Zoo membership as being good value and have strong positive views on the changes and improvements. There are no significant members' grumbles on what we offer other than maintaining a high level of good housekeeping\*\*.
- The low response to the postal poll indicates that the majority of members are content.
- We should offer much more information on our Saturday meetings. (We have already begun this with a more prominent page in Zoo Life – see the outside back cover of this issue)
- We should consider running some weekday evening meetings\*\*.

- Members like meetings that tell them about the Zoo, and in particular, enjoy being able to question staff and be 'updated' on projects and developments. (Our February meeting did just this with three keepers reporting back on their projects)
- We should test some meetings/activities that cater for parents and younger children\*\*.
- The survey strengthens our belief that UK day or overnight trips will work and we can be confident that these will be supported (as indeed, they have been in the past). Some members are envious of the variety of Penny Rudd's Junior trips! (We have already agreed to look at a two day trip to the Eden Project in Cornwall, and Sarah Bird, Assistant Curator of Botany and Horticulture writes about this on page 21)
- Although there is some support for longer trips, this is still relatively low. Thus, for the time being, we will not plan further trips after the Mauritius expedition in May 2002.
- An occasional 'quality control' members' telephone survey is well worth considering. The telephone researchers stressed that many members appreciated the chance to talk and ask questions. We must sort out any remaining data base flaws.

\*\* These points were also made in the 1994 Survey

### LONDON ZOO

LONDON ZOO and Whipsnade Wild Animal Park have decided to withdraw from the inter-zoo scheme offering free entry to members of other zoological

### CHESTER ZOO 100 CLUB

The winners of the prize draws held recently, were:

#### OCTOBER 2001

£100 Mrs Florence Bland, North Yorkshire  
 £100 Mrs Jane M Henshall, Chester  
 £50 Ms Linda Ash, Liverpool  
 £50 Mr Paul Townsend, Wrexham  
 £50 Mrs K H Parsons, Chester

#### NOVEMBER 2001

£100 Mr Brian Piercy, Chester  
 £100 Miss S C Gladwin, Chester  
 £50 Mrs Maureen Garbutt, Cleveland  
 £50 Miss Barbara Lee, Bootle  
 £50 Mrs Elspeth J Talbot, Hamilton

#### DECEMBER 2001

£100 Mrs Elaine Glower, Liverpool  
 £100 Mrs Gillian Cherry, Buckley  
 £50 Mrs Phyllis Keay, Chester  
 £50 Mr & Mrs D L Milligan, Wirral  
 £50 Mrs Brenda Jones, Buckley

All prize winners will be notified by post and will be listed in the next edition of Chester Zoo Life.

Membership of the 100 Club is still invited. Please contact Lynsey Jones, Development Officer on 01244 650 292e.

societies. However, Chester's members are advised to take their membership card with them as both collections will allow a discount equal to their usual group rate.

At the time of publication, all the other zoos listed are still in the scheme, with two new additions - Colchester Zoo and Woburn Safari Park. Please remember that the deal is free entry for the card-holding member only, and other membership benefits offered by the collections to their own membership are not included.

### DR DAVID COOKE

A TRIBUTE by Council Colleagues John Makinson and Brian Coles.

In David Cooke, who died on 29 October last year, the Zoo has lost one of its most stalwart supporters. He was a man of wide talents and experience who achieved eminence in many spheres – yet rarely spoke about them. He was a qualified pilot but flew as a bomb-aimer during the war, flying over 20 sorties in Halifax bombers in some of the mass raids over Eastern Germany. His squadron lost 50 planes in 16 months. David was lucky to survive when his plane collided with another aircraft in the darkness over the English Channel. With the nose section ripped off, the crew were lucky to make a forced landing in the UK.

After the war he qualified as a doctor and became Medical Officer to the Fighter Squadron at Hooton Airfield. David was a GP in Ellesmere Port for over 30 years.

Together with his wife, Shirley, David was a founder member of the Ellesmere Port Amateur Swimming Club. He was team doctor to the Great Britain swimming team at the 1982 and 1987 Commonwealth Games in Canada and Australia. Last year, the Amateur Swimming Association awarded him its highest citation, the Harold Fern Award.

Photography – particularly wildlife – was another lifelong interest and in 1963 he was awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society, becoming a life member in 1987.

David was a Council Member of the Zoo from 1985 until shortly before his death. His direct and wholesome views were forcefully put but the frequent gruff tones hid a soft and caring interior. He was a compassionate and deeply caring man, who lived a life of service to others and gave great service to the Zoo. We shall miss him and extend our warmest



sympathy to his widow, Shirley – herself a retired physician – and to Lesley, David, Anthony and Michael and his grandchildren.

# Zoo Review

The acclaimed Liverpool poet,  
Roger McGough, has written this poem to commemorate  
the opening of the...

## Spirit of the Jaguar

*A gunshot snaps open the treetops  
Releasing a rainbow shriek of birds.  
For an instant, the jungle holds its breath  
Before exhaling the cat into the clearing.*

*Limping and exhausted, a man-made  
Rosette leaking blood, she dare not stop.  
Ahead, arms outstretched and shimmering  
In the dying rays of the sun, a black river.*

*As shadows lengthen, melding into darkness  
As the yelps of cursing hunters fade  
As the moon rises to no reflection  
As the heartbeat slows to a final dream*

*She hears the call. The hum of a distant engine.  
Suddenly, she is strength and beauty. Rising,  
She steps onto the tarmac, her eyes reflecting  
The dazzling headlights of the oncoming car.*



*The driver at the wheel of the X-type  
Sees and feels nothing, except perhaps  
A sudden surge of power, a newfound  
Sense of freedom. The spirit of the jaguar.*

## Liz in the Limelight!



Cheshire County Council launched a new annual award scheme for 2001, called CATS – Cheshire Awards for Tourism Services. There were several categories, and Liz Child, our Head of Visitor Services, won the title of Young Tourism Manager of the Year. Liz is seen here at the Awards Ceremony in December, held at Crewe Hall.

### LEGACY CLUB NEWS

THE Zoo recently received £10,000 from the estate of Mrs Annie Millar. Mrs Millar was from Cheshire and was a life-long lover of elephants – indeed she had specified in her will that the money was to be used only for elephants.

Sadly Mrs Millar was not known to us, so we were unable to say 'thank you' properly during her lifetime. When people let us know they have made a bequest, we can show our appreciation through the Legacy Pledge Club. We can acknowledge the foresight and generosity of these supporters, whilst of course fully respecting any request for confidentiality. Pledgers have a special guided tour of the Zoo every year and are also invited to certain of our 'openings' and other events, with the chance to meet interesting people like Brian Blessed or Stefanie Powers.

We know that many of the Zoo's long-time supporters and Members will have remembered the Zoo in their will. It is, after all, the only substantial gift most of us can afford to give to a charity. So, if you have mentioned the Zoo in your will, please let us know, so you can become a member of the Legacy Pledge Club and we have chance to say thank you now.

For further details of this club, please contact Hazel Russell confidentially on 01244 650229 or by email at [h.russell@chesterzoo.co.uk](mailto:h.russell@chesterzoo.co.uk).

## STAFF NEWS

*We have quite a few new staff to welcome this time!*

Rachel White, (pictured above) is our new Interpretation Officer. Rachel is stationed in the Education Division, and will be evaluating the Zoo's current interpretation and working on new developments coming up over the next few months.

Sarah Bazley and Jane Fodor, have joined our Presenter Team in Education.

Jo Dudley is our new Accounts Assistant.

In the Estates Department is our new Architectural Building Technician, Anthony Izzard and in the Maintenance Department we welcome Keith Bragan, who is the Plant Fitter/Mechanic.

In the Development Office you will see Lindsay Sharples, who will be working with us for a year on developing the Regional Bio-diversity Project. Gill Bailey has returned to the Zoo, following a period of work experience and is now working alongside Stephanie Sanderson as a Veterinary Resident Assistant. Also, in the Animal Division, Luena Martins is working as a volunteer Research Assistant.

We have two new animal keepers, Helen Boczec, Rhino Section, and Natalie Boyd, joins the Elephant Team.

### Fond farewell to:

We said goodbye to Nick Young, who has started a new job at Toyota. We wish him well in the future.

## WORK EXPERIENCE STUDENTS

WORK experience students are with us all year long. They work for a minimum of four weeks but some stay for the whole year. It is difficult to welcome each student individually as they are coming and going every week. We would like to thank all the students for all their hard work throughout the year; they do an excellent job working alongside the keepers on the sections, and of course, they gain valuable experience and knowledge about the animals.

## Another exotic new arrival – Our first Euros!



Chester Zoo was one of the first major tourist attractions in the UK to agree to accept Euros from the beginning of the 2002. But we didn't think the first one would be presented the first week in January! However, although the money was distinctly 'foreign looking' the family offering it in payment were native species – they had just returned from a Christmas trip on the Continent!

## Priscilla Poses for the Post Office



The Spring launch of stamps featuring Rudyard Kipling Jungle Book animals, was publicised by pictures taken in the Zoo. The kangaroos were uncooperative, so young wallaby Priscilla seen here with Keeper Mark Cleave, was chosen to illustrate the story of The Sing-Song of Old Man Kangaroo!

## A 'Relaxation' of Zoo Directors!

ZOO community colleagues took advantage of a break in the proceedings of the WAZA (World Association of Zoos and Aquaria) Conference in Perth, Australia, to hold an informal retirement party for Geoffrey Greed, of Bristol Zoo Gardens.

Geoffrey is in the centre of this picture, with Chester Director, Gordon Reid, on the right. Far left is Jo



Gipps, ex London Zoo Director, who is the new Director at Bristol. Also included are David Jones, ex London Zoo Director, now working on conservation projects in America; Jeremy Mallinson, retired Director of Jersey Wild Life Trust; John Knowles, retired Director of Marwell Zoo; Roger Wheeler, retired Director of Edinburgh Zoo; Simon Tonge, Director of Paignton Zoo and Mark Edgerley, Director of Marwell.

# Birthday ZOO

This 13 week series on Chester Zoo is currently being shown on Discovery Channel's Animal Planet at 8.00pm on Tuesdays, repeated at 10am on Sundays. The film crew from Tigress Productions spent six months in the Zoo last year, getting to know the keepers and the animals. Ben Wallis, Assistant Producer, writes about the filming experience!

IT ALL seemed a very large task as Keeper Karen Davies, the Director, Barry Hecker and I waited in the rain. We were inside the penguin enclosure waiting for the first penguin of the year to hatch. And this is why we were here to film for a new series for the *Discovery Channel* – the impressive and conservationally important breeding programme at Chester Zoo.

A dedicated team from *Tigress Productions* in Bristol spent most of 2001 filming the animals and keepers at Chester Zoo. *Tigress* wanted to make a different zoo series though – our aim was to be very focused on the important breeding work that Chester does as the UK's largest zoo. We wanted births galore! *Tigress* felt confident that such a series could be produced and that it would more than fulfil its reputation as a leading independent film company.

The Penguin Pool was our first stop. Chester Zoo had been asked to breed as many endangered Humboldt's penguins as possible to be sent to Emmen Zoo in the Netherlands, as part of the international breeding programme. Chester had the necessary experience and dedication to do this, and Keeper Karen Davies was very excited about the first hatching. This, despite the fact that she had raised baby penguins many times before. We felt that we had our first 'star' for the series!

On a very wet Monday morning in April, Barry and I arranged to meet Karen hoping that the first egg had hatched. We had already met up several



▲ Local school children help with the title sequence.

times over the weekend but the egg had still not hatched and Karen was getting more and more excited. We asked her not to look before we arrived on Monday so that we could capture her reaction to the new born on film. But we could tell from her excitement and huge smile that the first of what turned out to be 17 penguins was successfully hatched! Karen did very well on film anyway and *Birthday Zoo* was on its way.

It was a delight to be able to follow the penguin chicks over the next six months. But the series was not only limited to penguins. We found many other keepers and animals who turned into stars. About 50% of Chester's animal collection is endangered and we were privileged to see the births or early years of a great many of these animals. We filmed everything from Asian Elephants to Egyptian Tortoises, Lions to Stick Insects, Jaguars to Sea Horses and Wolves to Frogs.

We came up with some great stories. A baby Wallaby was hand reared at home; the Tawny Frogmouth – a bizarre looking bird from Australia – was successfully reared; the Ring tailed Lemurs successfully gave birth again; and Neo the baby Giraffe continued to be hand reared after hours of dedication from his keepers. Britain's rarest lizard was reintroduced into a secret location in the UK and *Po Chin*, the Asian Elephant, celebrated his first birthday. In the Jaguar

enclosure, the largest of its kind in the world, building work was finished and the search began for suitable cats to start a breeding programme.

Chester's new Jaguar enclosure is stunning. We filmed a lot of the story, including the transportation of one of the spotted cats, *Salvador*, from Poznan Zoo in Poland. It was thought that *Salvador* had never felt grass under his feet before. To see him do this for the first time, and to capture it on film, was a very proud moment, not only for the Zoo but also for the team from *Tigress*. This £2 million enclosure, built in association with *Jaguar Cars*, mirrors the reputation of Chester Zoo – big, very popular and a place dedicated to saving endangered animals world-wide.

I had not fully appreciated the importance of zoos in the worldwide conservation debate until I spent six months at Chester. With the opportunity to see behind the scenes, the conservation work of zoos like Chester becomes very clear. Not only are they attempting (and largely succeeding) to breed many endangered species, but zoos are also co-ordinated in a worldwide programme of sustainability.

My last paragraph has to be saved for the people and animals at Chester Zoo. Without their patience and co-operation, this series would never have been made and certainly would not have been as successful. *Tigress Productions* would like to thank you all!

# IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY...

**Ray Morrison, Maintenance Manager, explains why tales of lions and bears in local woods should not be laughed at!**

FOR anyone like myself who spent their school days in South Wirral, tales of lions, bears and other exotic animals in the woods Eastham may not come as a great surprise. The Zoo Director however, looked more than a little surprised when I mentioned my weekend visit to the 'zoo' at Eastham. I quickly explained that my visit had been to the remains of a Victorian zoo, not a new competitor – to his obvious relief!

Eastham Zoo opened in 1846 and was the centrepiece of the Pleasure Gardens attraction, associated with the ferry crossing to Liverpool. Since the Middle Ages a ferry service operated across the River Mersey between Eastham and Liverpool. The early ferries were run by monks from the Abbey of St Werbergh. By the late 1700's, up to 40 coaches each day arrived at the newly built pier, carrying passengers and goods for the ferry. In 1816, paddle steamers replaced the sailboats, but the demand declined in the 1840's with the opening of a railway link between Chester and Birkenhead Woodside Ferry.

In 1846, the owner of the ferry, Thomas Stanley, built the Eastham Ferry Hotel and the Pleasure Gardens were added to attract more visitors. The gardens were landscaped with

ornamental trees and fountains. Attractions included the zoo, an open-air stage, tea rooms, bandstand, ballroom, boating lake, water chute and a loop-the-loop roller coaster. Entertainers performed in the gardens during the summer, including *Blondin*, the famous tightrope walker, who once wheeled a local boy across a high wire in a wheelbarrow. In 1884, the Manchester Ship Canal was opened by Queen



▲ Part of the old bear pit – all that remains of the original zoo.

Victoria, bringing prosperity to the area and a Jubilee Arch was built at the entrance to the Pleasure Gardens in 1897 to commemorate her Diamond Jubilee.

In its heyday, Eastham Ferry was known as the *Richmond of the Mersey*. But its popularity declined during the 1920's and the last paddle steamer crossing took place in 1929. The Pleasure

Gardens fell into disrepair during the 1930's and the Iron Pier and Jubilee Arch were later dismantled.

Of the Zoological Gardens, the Bear Pit is all that remains of the enclosures that one held a large collection of animals. An advertisement – shown above – mentions: *Wild Animals, including rare and tropical birds; costly*



Arctic seals; Polar bears; African lions; Indian leopards; zebras; elks; argalis; camels; ocelots; cassowaries; black, brown and silver bears; large lion house, aviary and monkey house; seal tanks and bear pits.

Where any of these came from, or where they went to when the gardens closed, is unknown. Eastham's mystery!

The woods were originally part of the Forest of Wirral and have been on the banks of the River Mersey for hundreds of years. Some of the huge oaks may have seen the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth. The carpets of bluebells that spread underneath them are evidence of a woodland that has probably been here since before the Norman Conquest.

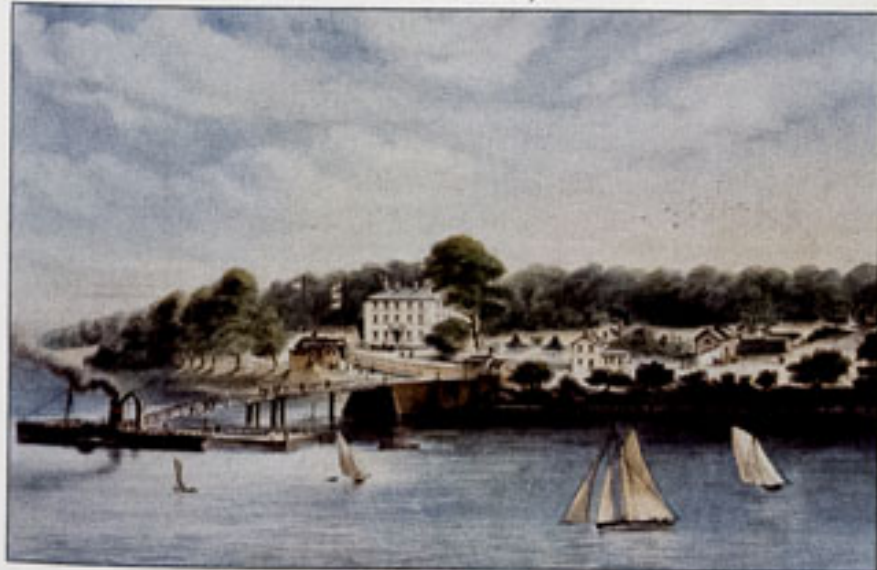
## THE MERSEY ESTUARY

The cliffs at Eastham Country Park provide superb sites for viewing the flocks of waders and ducks on the estuary. Twice daily the tide floods in from the Irish Sea, and as it begins to ebb, Dunlin, Redshank, Turnstone and Curlew can be seen below the cliffs, feeding amongst the mud and weed. Rafts of Shelduck, Mallard, Teal and Pintail can be seen out on the channel. The Mersey Estuary is recognised as internationally important for the tens of thousands of birds which overwinter there. Much of the estuary is now designated a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI) in order to protect the vital wildlife habitat.

In 1987, to commemorate European Conservation Year, the area was designated a Country Park, and today it is once more a popular place of recreation. See it for yourselves! Going towards Liverpool on the A41, watch out for the signs to Eastham Ferry, shortly after the M53 Motorway roundabout.

My thanks for the help from the Rangers' Office at Eastham and Dibbinsdale Country Parks.

▼ *Eastham – Richmond of the Mersey.*  
By kind permission of the Williamson Art Gallery.



# Bird Review 2001

*Dr Roger Wilkinson's annual review of the Zoo's Bird Collection.*

**B**ECAUSE Emmen Zoo required penguins for a new exhibit we produced a considerable batch of young Humboldt's Penguins in 2001. A total of 30 penguins were hatched either in the incubator or under their parents. Of 21 that were incubator hatched all but three were successfully hand-reared and six of the nine penguins hatched under their parents were reared to independence. It was very rewarding to watch the adult penguins encouraging their fledged chicks to join them in the pool.

New arrivals in 2001 included a pair of Red-billed Curassows on loan from the Cracid Foundation, Belgium. A conservation breeding and re-introduction programme for this critically endangered bird from the Atlantic rain forests of Brazil is currently being conducted. We also received a pair of Malaysian Peacock Pheasants on deposit from the World Pheasant Association (WPA). This association holds breeding groups of Mountain Peacock and Malaysian Peacock pheasants in the UK in trust for the Malaysian Department of Wildlife and National Parks. Chester Zoo has strong links with the WPA and has held a pair of Mountain Peacock Pheasants as part of this programme since 1995. Since then we have successfully reared nine chicks, including two last year. Earlier this year the WPA was requested to send some new bloodlines to complement the Malaysian Wildlife Department's own stock and save taking further birds from the wild. Last September, a pair of Mountain Peacock pheasants, including a male that had been bred at Chester Zoo, were transferred to the Malaysian

Wildlife Department's Pheasant Breeding Station.

The Satyr Tragopans parent-reared two chicks. Six Green Peafowl and three Common Peafowl were also reared. We had our first breeding success with Vietnamese Pheasants, with one chick foster-reared by a bantam after artificial incubation. Lady Amherst's Pheasants were hatched but none reared and five Crested Wood Partridge were bred in the year.

In *Europe on the Edge* the Waldrapp Ibis reared three youngsters and the White Storks, in a nest easily observable to our visitors, offered much interest caring for their two chicks.

White-headed Ducks nested in *Europe on the Edge* and three of their ducklings were artificially reared. Both female Red-crested Pochards in *Europe on the Edge*, reared their own ducklings. Other waterfowl reared included Black-necked Swans, Mandarin Ducks, Falcated Ducks, Laysan Teal, Garganey, Common Shovelers, Marbled Teal, Smew and a Hooded Merganser. The Caribbean Flamingos hatched and reared five youngsters and the Chilean Flamingos reared four.

Great Grey Owls were bred for the first time. One chick was found dead shortly after hatching, but the temptation to check the nest and take any remaining chicks for hand-rearing was resisted. It was then doubly pleasing when two chicks eventually fledged.

One Spectacled and a White-faced Scops Owl were also parent-reared. The Spectacled Owl sire was a bird that had been fostered by the dam and following the death of its father had been left in the breeding aviary with its foster



*Fischer's Turaco*

mother. This bird proved to be fertile at only twelve months old.

A Tawny Frogmouth chick was reared by its parents and the Blue-winged Kookaburras, which had been in the collection since 1994, bred for the first time. Four chicks were reared from two broods. Fischer's Turacos were bred for the first time, with one chick successfully reared. Two Schalow's Turacos and a Violet Plantain-eater were also reared.

Tarctic Hornbills were bred for the first time. The origin of most Philippine Tarctic Hornbills held in European collections is uncertain and many are considered hybrids. We received a male Tarctic Hornbill from Vogelpark Avifauna, Netherlands in January. This bird was introduced to a hen that had been donated to Chester Zoo by Mike Curzon following the closure of the Tropical Bird Gardens at Rode. Although a clutch of three eggs was laid, the male was not seen to feed her and the eggs proved infertile.

The hen quickly laid a second clutch of four eggs and this time the male fed her in the nest, and three chicks two males and one female - hatched and were reared. The young female was

found dead shortly after fledging when her mother was again showing interest in the nest box and it was suspected that she could have killed the female youngster. A third clutch resulted in a single female youngster which, as a precaution was removed from the parent's aviary shortly after fledging.

Cameras were also fitted into other hornbill nest boxes. After a number of years of failed nesting attempts by our Great Hornbills, we became frustrated because as we didn't know why their breeding attempts were failing, we could do little to assist them. Before fitting the cameras we were really working in the dark. A camera was also fitted in the nest box of the Great Hornbill pair in the aviary inside the Asian Elephant house.

A single season of use has already more than repaid the costs of installing this relatively inexpensive equipment. We learnt that the females of both pairs of Great Hornbills each laid a single egg. The female located in the Asian Elephant area removed all the bark chips provided as nest material and laid directly on the flat floor of the barrel, only to sit with the egg to her side rather than cover it. As a result of this knowledge, Wayne has now modified the nest to include a concave bottom. We hope next year's egg may roll into this and encourage the hen to cover it.

The female Great Hornbill in the *Tropical Realm* aviary behaved quite differently; she did not remove the nest material and incubated her single egg. This failed to hatch and suggests we need to concentrate on problems associated with incubation rather than concern ourselves that the nesting attempt may be failing because of parents not feeding newly hatched chicks.

The camera in the Wrinkled Hornbill nest also gave us reassuring information that the nesting female was not losing condition despite her overlong stay in the box. We learnt that this particular female was laying eggs and showing appropriate incubation behaviour, but these were failing to hatch.

As well as information of direct relevance to better husbandry and management, the cameras give us the opportunity to collect significant

scientific data on the female's moult, parental care and nestling development. We encourage students to take advantage of the research opportunities and have included this on the list of undergraduate research projects offered by Chester Zoo.

Crested Bronzewing Pigeons and Speckled Pigeons were bred in the free flight area of the *Tropical Realm*. More importantly a Mauritius Pink Pigeon was reared by its parents in the Bird Arcade. New to the collection was a pair of Green-naped Pheasant Pigeons from Vogelpark Avifauna and a pair of White-naped Pheasant Pigeons from Barcelona Zoo. A female Victoria Crowned Pigeon arrived from Bristol Zoo and a male from Paradise Park, Hayle. These and the Pheasant Pigeons are now settled into aviaries in Islands in Danger.

The newly received pair of Red-tailed Amazons from Rode reared two chicks in the Parrot House. Other parrots bred included three Yellow-collared Macaws, two Yellow-backed Chattering Lorries, a Duvynbode's Lory and two Mount Apo Lorikeets.

We received three Chestnut-capped Thrushes, which settled well in the free flight *Tropical Realm* and have already made several nesting attempts. In order to increase the productivity in mixed areas where there is competition between breeding birds, we sometimes take chicks from nests of selected species for hand-rearing. In 2001 we did this to supply other zoos with captive bred Red-billed Leothrix, of which six were donated to Paignton Zoo. Three Red-whiskered Bulbuls and two Red-tailed Laughing Thrushes were hand-reared and 15 White-rumped Shamans were bred by a combination of hand and parent-rearing. A Yellow-throated Laughing Thrush, two Emerald Starlings and two Asian Glossy Starlings were parent-reared in the *Tropical Realm*. African Pied Starlings raised five chicks in the *Bird Arcade* aviaries where Azure-winged magpies also raised two young.



▲ Humboldt's Penguin chicks.



▲ White-necked Pheasant Pigeon.



▲ Chestnut-capped Thrush.

Which stone is hiding dinner?



## On the Right Scent

Paul Howse,  
Team Leader 'Twilight'  
continues our series on  
Environmental  
Enrichment

**W**HATEVER animal – Bat, Human or Jaguar – we all have to eat and presentation of food is very important. For our Jaguars at the Zoo, the basic menu is as follows: Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, meat on the bone; Wednesday and Thursday whole chickens; fish on Friday. Whatever their home range, the Amazon Rainforest or the Pantanal, a Jaguar spends a considerable amount of time on the hunt, searching for its next meal.

At the Zoo, we are simulating this by varying the method and time of presenting their food from day to day. Sometimes food is dragged around to lay scent trails that lead to the meal. The food is hidden from view by a loose covering of bark, leaves etc. Sometimes it is pushed into a crack in the rockwork or in some form of container, or even buried. If it is tied to a length of cord and then jerked away as the cat approaches, it has to be 'caught'. Food can be cut into small pieces and hidden all over the exhibit or it can be suspended from a branch. Sometimes it is put on a raft and floated. There are many different ways and variety is the key.

When following a scent trail, the Jaguars will occasionally lift their heads with the top lip curled up and the mouth half open. It looks as if they are waiting for a sneeze to happen! They have an organ in the roof of their mouth that lets them 'taste' the air. This

is known as a Flehmen Reaction and it is often seen when smelling areas marked with urine.

### ESSENCE OF MONKEY!

Not all enrichment revolves around food; the Jaguars' environment has to be rich and stimulating. With the exceptions of mating and rearing cubs, Jaguars are solitary animals. This means that most of the time they do not interact with others.

However, items that smell of other animals always prove interesting, and branches taken from *Monkey Islands* are very popular. Unfortunately a number of plants were destroyed as the Jaguars pulled the branches around. (Oops – Sorry, Botanic Department!) We use smaller pieces now!

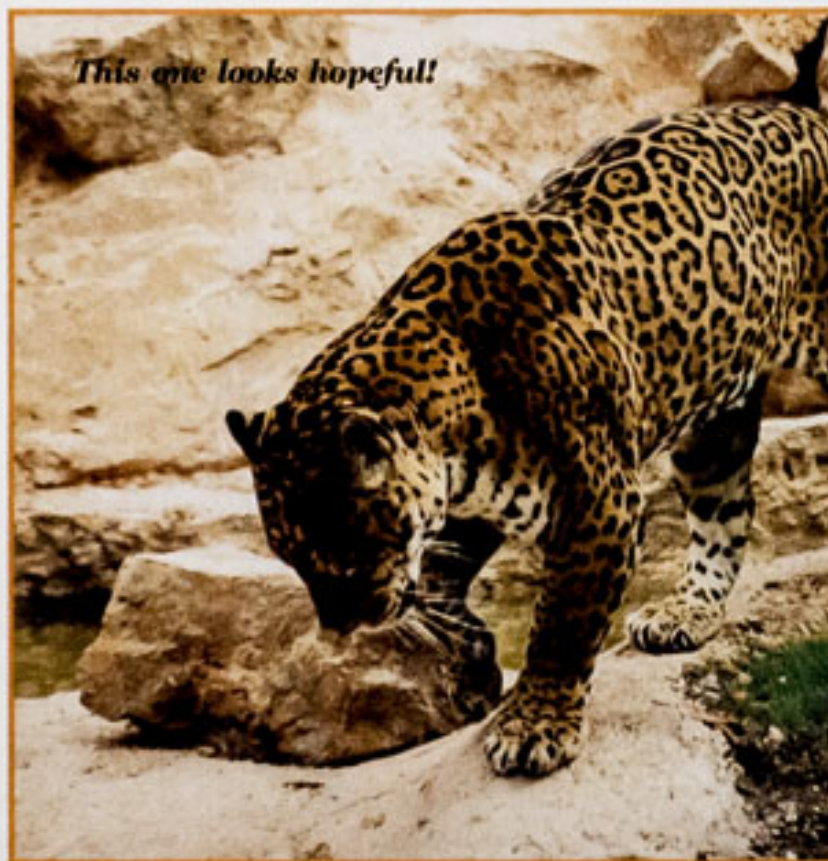
The Jaguars have so far ignored trails made with essential oils – geranium, patchouli, camomile and the like – even though some of them are quite pungent and have been successful with other species. We will keep experimenting.

The way to success is diversity. Almost any new item introduced to the Jaguars, ie sticks, a branch, a bunch of herbs etc., will create interest and interaction but may not be

sustained. That interest can be rekindled by removing the item and reintroducing it at a later date. We try to use only natural materials, as they are in keeping with the surroundings and not demeaning to the cats, but anything new will be investigated.

*Environmental Enrichment* is not a special treat, or a game; it is a vital part of the daily routine and is practised all across the Zoo. It is such a privilege to be involved with these animals and we all want to make sure they have all they need. This includes their psychological well-being, allowing natural behaviour to be displayed.

This one looks hopeful!



# ISLANDS APART

*We often hear visitors ask 'What's an Anoa?' Phil Molyneux of the Giraffe Section writes about a rare and beautiful animal that deserves a higher public profile!*

**S**ULAWESI is not the only island where you can find Lowland Anoa – you can also find them on an island at Chester Zoo!

This small breed of buffalo is endemic to the island of Sulawesi and is often found alone or in pairs. The Anoa is becoming increasingly endangered due to illegal hunting and loss of habitat. This has reduced their numbers to less than 10,000, giving a greater need for captive breeding. With this in mind we set out to obtain a pair of these shy and handsome creatures.

It was May 1995 when we received our first pair of Lowland Anoa. With only a handful of UK collections managing Anoa, obtaining a breeding pair proved to be difficult. This would be a first time species for Chester so when London Zoo offered us two young males, we jumped at the chance. *Boris* aged 14 months and *Bonzo* eight months settled well into their newly appointed enclosure at the cattle house. Both had a few more years yet before territorial rivalry might become a problem. The Anoa is not only the smallest breed of cattle in the world; it also has a reputation for being the most aggressive.

We had gained almost three years of Anoa husbandry skills when London Zoo once again made us an offer we could not refuse. They sent an eight year old female called *Astra*, who was successfully introduced to *Boris*. We found *Bonzo* a new home at Edinburgh Zoo. Since then *Astra* has been fortunate enough to have two healthy calves, first *Asterix*, and later *Widget*.

The Anoa has a gestation length of 8-9 months. As the photo of *Asterix* at four weeks old shows, the wait is well worth it!

In 1998, we relocated the pair to pastures new, an enclosure next to the present *Spirit of the Jaguar*, which was previously used to accommodate

Arabian gazelles. This paddock proved to be successful, being located in one



▲ *Asterix* aged 4 weeks.

of the quieter corners of the Zoo with plenty of grass for our Anoa's to graze.

Keepers are always on the look out for suitable areas which can be transformed into new enclosures. One such area was an island opposite the

waterbus station. This met all our requirements for accommodating Anoa: a large paddock space; trees for shade/shelter and quietly situated. But it would also require an awful lot of hard work to make it safe for our Anoa.

Winter 1999 saw the first island plans drawn up and Spring 2000 saw the arduous task of clearing the island of its bramble, ivy, nettles and moss. Electricity and water supplies were needed to supply the new house with lights, heating and fresh water. Also necessary was a hardstanding area. This is a necessity in winter to provide a dry retreat from a wet paddock. An abrasive floor surface also helps to prevent hoof problems. We also required protection for trees, a fence around the island's perimeter and a jetty for boat access. After weeks of levelling soil and months of grass seeding, the island was finally finished.

It was in the autumn of that year, that we moved *Astra* and her calf *Widget* to the island. *Boris* was placed in a temporary house until we were sure mum and calf had settled in. All was well, apart from *Astra* gaining a taste for the island's trees. Tree guards are often not enough. *Boris* was later re-introduced to his family and to his new territory. A whole new island to explore!

Here at Chester we are not only fortunate enough to manage Sulawesi's largest mammal, the Anoa, but we also manage its second largest, the Babirusa – found in the cattle house. This is yet another species threatened in the wild due to hunting pressures and habitat loss.

Little is known on the biology/ecology of the Anoa and Babirusa. In February 2002 I took part in a project that's currently in its third year – the Anoa Conservation Project. This is being carried out by Edinburgh University and aims to investigate Anoa, Babirusa and Warty pig distribution, their habitat preferences as well as assessing relevant threats on location in Sulawesi. A large part of the project this year will involve education with emphasis on conservation in and around schools and villages. I would like to thank Chester Zoo's *Keeper For A Day* Scheme for funding my trip.

## Presentation of the QUEEN'S AWARD



ALTHOUGH the Queen's Award For Enterprise to Chester Zoo was announced on Her Majesty's birthday in April last year, the formal presentation took place at the end of November. The Lord

Lieutenant of Cheshire, William Bromley-Davenport, made the presentation, dressed in full formal uniform, complete with sword.

The certificate, signed by Her Majesty the Queen and the Prime Minister, was presented to Zoo Director, Professor Gordon McGregor Reid. Wesley Evans, on behalf of the Staff Association, accepted the engraved crystal bowl.

In congratulating the Zoo staff, the Lord Lieutenant stressed that this is the highest honour that can be bestowed on a UK business. These awards differ from personal honours because they recognise the

success of management and employees working together as a unit. He said:

'To have a Queen's Award is an acknowledgement that the company is the best in its field. This is the first time the Award has been given to a Zoo and you should all be very proud of this achievement. The Zoo's conservation work with rare and endangered species is well known, and this also recognises the work being achieved with native British species.'

Council Chairman John Makinson thanked the Lord Lieutenant, saying that as the Award is equivalent to a corporate Knighthood, maybe he would like to use the ceremonial sword and tap the Director's shoulders.

The title is held by the recipient of an award for five years from the date of the announcement.



From left: Zoo Director, Gordon Reid; The Lord Lieutenant, William Bromley-Davenport; Wesley Evans, Chair of the Staff Association; John Makinson, Chairman of Council.



The Lord Lieutenant spent time after the ceremony talking to members of staff.

Right: With Jane Woodward, Zoo Librarian.

Below left: A chat with Liz Child, Head of Visitor Services.

Below right: Questions for Mark Sparrowe, General Curator of Botany and Horticulture.





## A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW!

SALLY WALKER is the Founder/Secretary of the Zoo Outreach Organisation (ZOO) India and has been closely associated with Chester Zoo for many years. The Zoo has supported her work in India, with regular grants particularly towards educational materials.

In December, the North of England Zoological Society awarded Sally an Honorary Scientific Fellowship of the Society, in recognition of her substantial and sustained contribution to the advancement of practical science and education applied to conservation in India. Sally is also the Convenor of the Conservation Breeding and Specialist Group for India and South Asia.

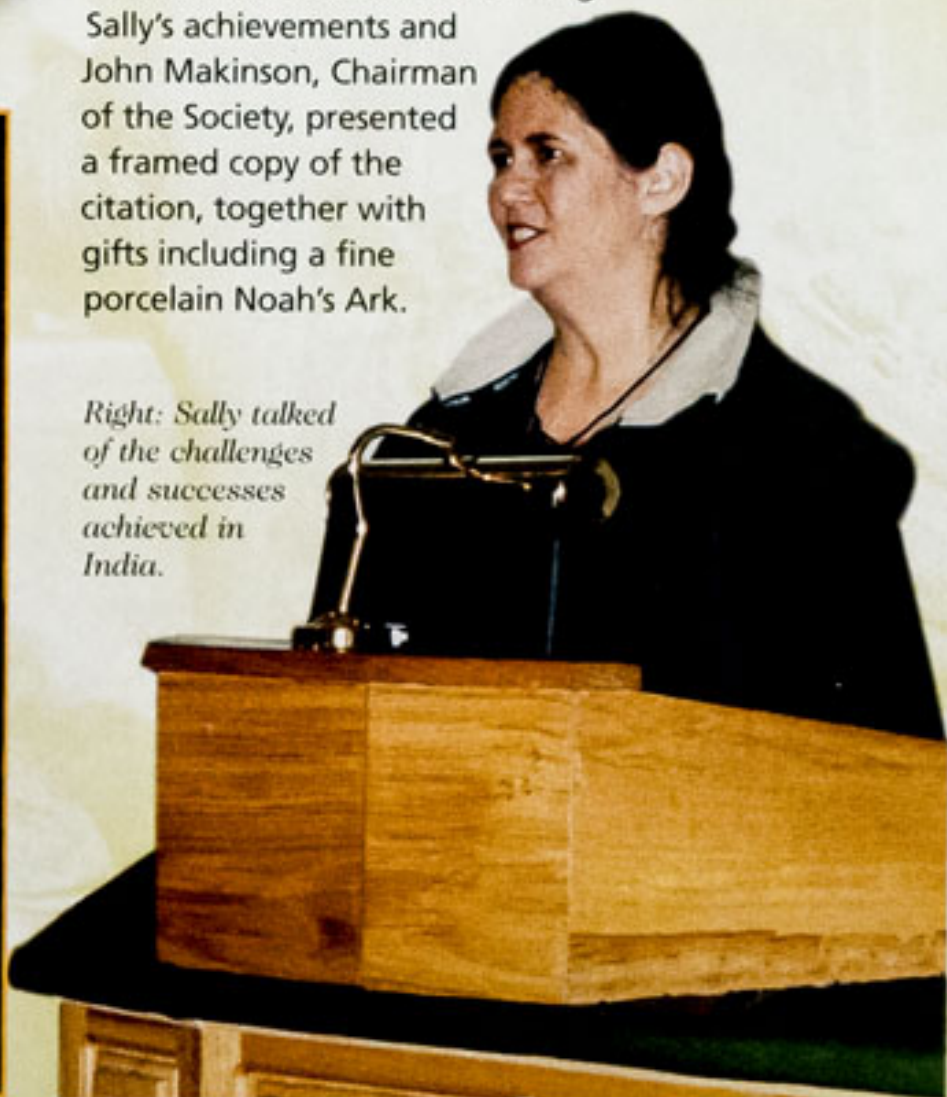
In recent months, Sally has been working with other agencies to get urgent aid to the animals of Kabul Zoo in Afghanistan. She has dedicated the past 20 years to living in India, working for animal welfare of both captive and wild animals.

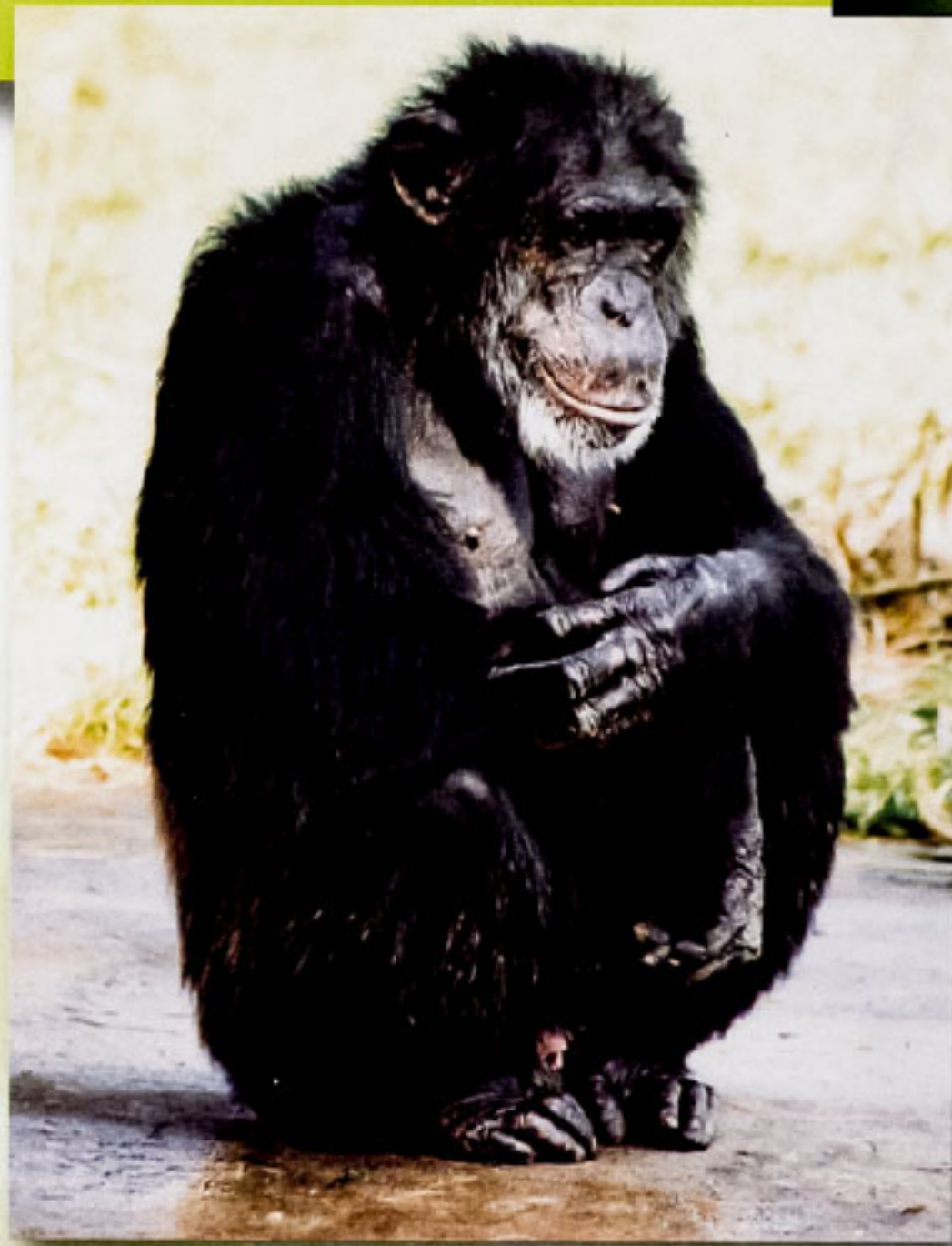
The Fellowship Award took place before Sally's talk at the Member's meeting on 1 December. The Director read a citation detailing Sally's achievements and John Makinson, Chairman of the Society, presented a framed copy of the citation, together with gifts including a fine porcelain Noah's Ark.

*Below: Sally Walker accepts a bouquet from Director's wife Sally Reid.*



*Right: Sally talked of the challenges and successes achieved in India.*





▲ Winner print section – Anastasia Hanson

▼ Winner digital section – Paul White



# CHESTER ZOO Photographic Competition

## WINNERS 2001

Our annual photographic competition seems to attract more entries every year - and the very high standards of many of the entries makes judging extremely difficult. The judges for last year's competition were Mark Rossiter, Editor in Chief, North Wales Newspapers; Rosalind Harrington of Bridgeman Garden World and Julie Kaye. They spent many hours rejecting, selecting and reviewing their selections from the 1,000 plus entries received.

### OVERALL BEST IN COMPETITION

The photograph judged overall best in competition is shown on the front cover of this magazine. It was taken by Ian Maddocks of Timperley, Altrincham and he received two return tickets to New York, courtesy of British Airways. He is also the first holder of the new Dr David Cooke trophy.

Gillian Walton of Burnley, Lancs was delighted to win second place in the Digital section - and even more delighted to learn that her ten year old daughter Robyn had won first prize in the Junior Section!



Winner  
slide section -  
Frank Hutchinson ▶

THE

PRIN

1st - A

Prize -

2nd -

Prize -

SLIDE

1st - F

Prize -

2nd -

Prize -

GARD

Best Pr

statue)

Prize:

Best Sl

Prize:

JUNIO

1st - R

Prize -

2nd -

Prize -

DIGIT

1st - P

Prize -

2nd -

Prize -

## THE OTHER WINNERS ARE:

### PRINTS

1st - Anastasia Hanson, Camperdown, Tyne and Wear, (chimpanzee)  
Prize - Holiday Inn three night break for two people.  
2nd - Caroline Ebbrell, Denton, Manchester, (tiger)  
Prize - Max Spielmann film & processing for a year.

### SLIDES

1st - Frank Hutchinson, Congleton, Cheshire (Jaguar)  
Prize - Kodak digital camera.  
2nd - David Sutton, West Derby, Liverpool 0151 220 3416 (3 alligators).  
Prize - Calumet vouchers.

### GARDENS

Best Print: Barbara Haynes, Cheadle Hulme, (Noah and the Four Winds statue)  
Prize: Bridgemere Garden World vouchers.  
Best Slide: Nicholas Turner, Birchwood, Warrington, (Gerbera)  
Prize: Jessops voucher for £75.

### JUNIOR

1st - Robyn Walton, Burnley, Lancs (age 10) 01282 430851 (lion)  
Prize - Borders voucher £100.  
2nd - Martyn Madren, Hunts Cross, Liverpool L25 0LT (age 13) (meerkat)  
Prize - Borders voucher £75.

### DIGITAL

1st - Paul White, 2 Green Lane, Guilden Sutton, Chester (lion)  
Prize - Jessops voucher £75  
2nd - Gillian Walton, Burnley, Lancs BB10 4JP. 01282 430851 (Penguins)  
Prize - Borders voucher £50.



▲ Winner best print garden section - Barbara Haynes

Junior Photographer of the Year - Robyn Walton ▼



# Weddings in the Zoo



**C**IVIL weddings in the Zoo are becoming very popular, with more than a dozen already booked for this year.

The walnut panelled boardroom makes a suitably dignified and very elegant setting for the ceremony itself and the Zoo gardens and animals make a unique background for memorable photographs. Jane Lawson, our Events Officer Manager, has become an experienced Wedding Co-ordinator, and together with the Oakfield staff, enjoys the challenge of producing a perfect day for the couples and their families.

So – if any our members or adopters are planning a wedding, give Jane a ring on 01244 650209. She says weddings are the nicest part of her job!

Our photograph shows the first couple to be married at the Zoo. Jill Barnard-Brown and Jeroen Blom held their wedding here last May.

## ENRICHMENT PERSPECTIVES DOWN UNDER

*In November, Dr Stephanie Wehnelt, the Zoo's Research Officer, attended the 5th International Conference on Environmental Enrichment, in Sydney, Australia.*

**T**HESE biennial conferences are co-ordinated by the non-profit organisation Shape of Enrichment ([www.enrichment.org](http://www.enrichment.org)). The 2001 conference was superbly hosted by Taronga Zoo, Sydney and was attended by approximately 175 delegates from 17 countries. European delegates were comparatively few and Chester and Paignton were the only UK zoos represented. However, it was pleasing to see delegates from countries such as Uganda, Sri Lanka and Mexico. Oral and poster presentations covered a wide variety of enrichment topics including its theoretical basis, organisational structure within institutions and practical enrichment and training methods and their evaluation. As at previous conferences, well over half the presentations concentrated on mammals and of those almost half were exclusively on primates. The number of presentations concerning avi- and herpetofauna was still very few and there was an excellent talk on

enrichment for octopuses! It was also pleasing to see presentations about enrichment for laboratory and companion animals.

A recurring theme was the challenge to fit enrichment into busy keeper work schedules – a problem that we know very well at Chester! It was emphasised that an effective enrichment programme must have a sound structure and I got a number of useful tips on how to improve our enrichment schedule.

An interesting suggestion was that the Taxon Advisory Groups should produce enrichment manuals in the same way as husbandry guidelines. There is a need to define how many and which behaviours should be preserved and encouraged in each species. Food for thought...

Another major theme that occupied much of the discussion over tea breaks was whether training is enriching. As in many other European zoos, at Chester we believe that training is not a suitable enrichment tool (but valuable for some

husbandry and veterinary reasons!). Animals should receive a more natural, species-specific stimulation to exhibit natural behaviours. Delegates were evenly split on the two sides, without much hard evidence to favour either and it seems that this would be a suitable theme for the next conference in 2003.

Despite the exchange of many deep thoughts, the general atmosphere at the conference was light-hearted, and supported by comical pieces between talks. Taronga Zoo staff proved that they are also perfectly capable of entertaining humans!

The conference ended with the election of new members to the international organising committee of *The Shape of Enrichment*. I was voted onto the committee for a term of six years and thus now provide UK and European zoos with a link to this organisation.

My thanks to the 'Keeper for a Day' scheme for funding the trip.

# Those Summer Nights

The clocks will be going forward very soon, and it's time to think about plans for summer evenings! We have a tempting programme of events in the Zoo for those lovely, long, light nights. Booking is essential for all these out-of-hours events and if you would like more information, or to make a booking, contact The Events Office, on 01244 650209, or write to Chester Zoo, Upton-by-Chester CH2 1LH.

## FRIDAY 3 MAY

**TROPICAL REALM,  
CHIMPANZEES AND DINNER**  
£21.95

Enjoy drinks in the Tropical Realm followed by a visit to the Chimpanzees. A tropical dinner in the Oakfield Restaurant rounds off the evening.

## FRIDAY 24 MAY

**EVENING BAT WALK AND BUFFET**  
£15.45

Admission from 4.30pm with a light evening buffet served from at 7.30pm. At twilight, our bat expert will take you in search of wild Pipistrelle, Noctule and Daubenton's bats.

## FRIDAY 7 JUNE

**SPIRIT OF THE JAGUAR AND  
TWILIGHT ZONE SAFARI  
WITH BBQ**  
£19.95

Meet our keepers during an evening visit to Spirit of the Jaguar and enjoy cocktails with the cats. Next stop is the Twilight Zone, followed by one of our chef's famous barbecues on the Oakfield Terrace.

## FRIDAY 21 JUNE

**MIDSUMMER CYCLE AND  
TREASURE HUNT**  
£8.50 Adults; £6.50 child

Admission from 6.15pm; last entry

7.15pm Zoo closes at 9.15pm  
Aquarium, Monkey Islands, Spirit of the Jaguar and Tropical Realm will remain open throughout the evening. Price includes a fish and chip supper. Don't forget your bike!

## SATURDAY 6 JULY

**FAMILY PICNIC AND  
TREASURE HUNT**  
£16.95 Adult; £12.95 child

Admission from 4.00pm. Collect your picnic from the Oakfield Restaurant at 6.45pm and select your favourite spot in the gardens. Dessert and coffee served on the Oakfield terrace. (Please note that the animal houses will not be open)

## FRIDAY 26 JULY

**GARDEN TOUR AND SUPPER**  
£14.95

Enjoy the gardens at their best in the company of our talented, well-informed gardeners! The tour will be followed by a tasty supper served in the Roman Garden, or the Oakfield Restaurant, depending on the weather.

## FRIDAY 9 AUGUST

**LIONS, TIGERS AND SEALIONS**  
£21.95

Quite a different evening! First, learn about our Asian Lions and Amur Tigers with one of our enthusiastic and experienced keepers. Then watch as our

sealions demonstrate their medical training session. The evening will end with a delicious dinner in the Oakfield Restaurant.

## FRIDAY 23 AUGUST

**ELEPHANT AND CHIMP SAFARI**  
£21.95

Start the Bank Holiday weekend with this popular safari evening. Cocktails are taken with the elephants, and your stroll across the Zoo includes a visit to the chimps. Keepers will be on hand to answer questions. Dinner in the elegant Oakfield Restaurant completes the evening.

# The VET SET

In a previous issue of Zoo Life, the Presenters were put under the spotlight, with some probing questions! This time, Lead Presenter Matt Lewis puts on his Jeremy Paxman act to quiz the Veterinary Team – Stephanie Sanderson, Shan Sian and Jane McDonald



▲ Stephanie



▲ Shan



▲ Jane

Which animal in the zoo is the same age as you?

Chilean Flamingo Arks no.2164  
(hmm ... how old's that then? ... Ed.)

I'm slightly younger than Jangoli the elephant, although I don't look it.

Chang the bull elephant – he's 21 this year too!

If you were an animal in the zoo, what would you be?

A meerkat, always looking around

Western Grey Kangaroo

I would like to be like the tapirs...they look so relaxed with no worries in the world.

What's the best thing about your job?

Feeling that I can make a difference for endangered species.

The variety of animals and knowing that I'm helping conservation in some way.

Lots of things! The amazing variety of species, and working with people who are experts in their field.

What's the last thing you do each day at work?

Plan what I am going to do the next day and change out of my uniform!

As I'm walking out, I listen for the lions' roars, think about the highlights of the day and about what I have in store for tomorrow.

I religiously back up our computer system "Medarks". It records full medical data for our animals, and allows us to share information with other zoos worldwide.

Where's the hottest or coldest place you've worked?

I spent 2 months living on a remote coral island off Belize.

Singapore - almost constant 32C and 95% humidity all year.

Africa - night-time and dawn safaris were so cold, but then hot by mid-morning!

What has been your most memorable animal-watching experience?

Coming across lions in tall grass less than 2m from where we were standing whilst on a walking safari in Botswana

Golden Lemurs in Madagascar – normally very shy, but we watched them eat, groom and lie about for an hour.

Sitting in a camp in Uganda watching a group of Mountain Gorillas come close, whilst our clients were in the forest looking for them.

What was the last animal-related book you read?

The Last Panda; G. B. Schaller.

Amphibians – Medical Care and Husbandry

The Set, Ranulph Fiennes

Do you have a top tip for visitors?

Spend as much time as possible watching the animals. They do all sorts of surprising things if you just watch a little longer.

Come back again, especially in winter mornings when it is quiet and spend time just watching a few of the animals.

Allow plenty of time – there's so much to see here.

What animal would you most like to see at the zoo?

Okapi would be nice...

*Homo sapiens* – they help our work for all of the species here!

Okapi, I've seen them in the wild

# BLUE-EYED COCKATOOS UPDATE

Words and picture by Dr Roger Wilkinson



**T**HERE have been Blue-eyed Cockatoos at

Chester Zoo since 1966, when five from New Britain were received together with a larger consignment of birds from Papua New Guinea. We have successfully reared 40 youngsters and established an international reputation as a breeding centre for the species. Chester Zoo holds the European Studbook and young from Chester have been sent on loan to nine other collections including Vogelpark Walsrode and Tierpark Berlin in Germany, Loro Parque on Tenerife, and Umgeni Bird Park in South Africa. These form the core of a co-ordinated international zoo breeding programme.

Blue-eyed Cockatoos are endemic to New Britain; they occur only on this one island and nowhere else in the world. Exceedingly rare and highly prized in aviculture, there has been uncertainty over the wild status of Blue-eyed Cockatoos, with contradictory reports received from recent visitors as to their abundance. Other island cockatoo populations have been heavily impacted by habitat changes and through trapping for the live bird trade. Both Philippine Red-vented Cockatoos and Lesser Sulphur-crested Cockatoos are now critically endangered. The small numbers kept presently and historically

in aviculture suggest that trapping for the bird trade has not, to date, been a serious problem for the Blue-eyed Cockatoo.

Chester Zoo, through a generous grant from Brian and Elizabeth Livingstone, was recently able to support a field study of Blue-eyed Cockatoos on New Britain. John Pilgrim, under the supervision of Dr Stuart Marsden from Manchester Metropolitan University, worked in New Britain from December 1998 through to April 1999. John was based in East New Britain and surveyed two areas around Wide Bay, initially around Mu and later in the Marunga/Masarou area. The results of this study have been published in *Bird Conservation International*. Blue-eyed Cockatoos were found to be not uncommon in primary or selectively logged forest, but considerably rarer in forest gardens. A group of 40 cockatoos was observed at one site. In the absence of heavy trapping pressure, and given their tolerance of selective logging and the current extent of forest on New Britain, it was concluded that the Blue-eyed Cockatoo was not currently threatened.

I made a four day visit to West New Britain in August last year. I was based at Walinde Plantation Resort, on the eastern coast of the Willaumez peninsula, and mainly visited areas in the vicinity of Walinde. Blue-eyed Cockatoos were not uncommon in what appeared to be disturbed forest habitat near Kimbe close to the Kulu River. One evening at Kilu ridge, our bird-watching group had at least 20 sightings of single or small groups of Blue-eyed Cockatoos.

One tree held a group of nine birds in a pre-roost gathering, making themselves conspicuous by their displays and calls. The displays were similar to those observed in birds at Chester Zoo,

in that the crest feathers were raised to expose the bright yellow feathers below. One displaying bird repeatedly rotated forwards on its branch and bowing. Whilst standing upright and raising its crest feathers, it simultaneously extended its wings laterally and stretched these fully open so displaying the bright yellow under-wings.

On a later evening I saw at least ten Blue-eyed Cockatoos. Again several gathered together in a tree and display was observed. One bird repeatedly fell backwards, clinging to its perch to momentarily hang upside down, before swinging back to an upright position. Display was also seen to involve not only raising the crest feathers, but also spreading and extending forwards the cheek feathers to greatly increase the apparent size of the head.

No Blue-eyed Cockatoos were seen in the oil palm plantations. West New Britain is Papua New Guinea's biggest timber and palm oil exporter. Palm oil plantations represent a major source of income and the oil is Papua New Guinea's fastest growing agricultural success story. The amount of forest cleared for planting may expand in the near future. The long term viability of Blue-eyed Cockatoo populations in the wild will depend on New Britain retaining both sufficiently large areas of forest in and ensuring that low level of trapping of these birds does not increase.

The Blue-eyed Cockatoo would appear to be presently safe in the wild and not in need of the highest level of conservation management. However, with a perhaps uncertain future, and unless precluded by the need for space for currently threatened cockatoos, the long and successful history of Blue-eyes at Chester should help maintain them a place in our bird collection.

# Do You Remember When...?



Marketing Manager Chris Vere was delighted to receive a boxful of old photographs of the Zoo from Mrs Brenda Spencer of Upton, Wirral.

They had been in Mrs Spencer's family for a number of years, and she believes they were all taken in 1957. It is fascinating to see the way things were 45 years ago. None of the pictures were captioned, but perhaps some of our readers have memories of these animals. We'd love to hear from you!



# A VISIT to EDEN

*Sarah Bird, Assistant Curator of Horticulture and Botany, reports on a visit to the acclaimed Eden Project, in Cornwall. It is hoped that a members' trip will be arranged to Eden later in the year.*

*This is the start of something exciting...*

THAT'S the feeling you get when you first glimpse the *Eden Project*, Cornwall's new, and much hyped attraction. Built in a disused clay pit, nothing is visible from the surrounding countryside as you arrive. It is only as you approach the visitor centre that you actually start to see into Eden; and, as you emerge from this building the whole experience is displayed below you. *Wow...!*

Suzanne Thomas, from the Education Division and I visited *Eden* for a conference looking at interpretation of plants – and here is a taste of our visit to encourage you to go.

*Eden* is a living theatre. It provides a patchwork of stories about plants and people from all over the world. The messages are very clear and positive:

*'Plants are brilliant. We need plants, so it makes sense to look after them and where they grow. This is what people are doing to conserve plants, and you can take action and make a difference too.'*

Do not visit *Eden* expecting a botanical garden; you will get quite a shock if that is what you are expecting! It is not a taxonomic plant collection, but more of a green theme park that teaches and inspires; it has something for everyone. That first sight of the project, with its futuristic domes, colourful flags and tents, lakes, train, and swathes of different coloured plants, really takes your breath away. You realise that it is so much more than just a couple of greenhouses. 'Where to start?' is your first question!

There are three 'biomes.' The dome-shaped greenhouses form two of these, and the third is the outdoor landscape – the Cool Temperate biome. This contains, amongst other things, an area of Cornish plants; various large sculptures illustrating themes; a display on beer and brewing, and a selection of plants used for rope and fibre. We particularly liked the *Tea Shelter* – shaped like a large tealeaf, visitors sit under it and have a cuppa, whilst an explainer (rather like our presenters) talks about the origins and cultivation of tea. Visitors are

encouraged to write down the most unusual place or situation where they had drunk tea, to be incorporated into future interpretation. Real tea plants (*Camelia sinensis*) were growing all round the shelter – I did not know you could grow them outside in this country. A company that produces Fairtrade organic tea sponsors this exhibit.

The largest greenhouse is the Humid Tropics biome. It is the largest conservatory in the world and contains 2000 species of tropical plants; the rainforest trees planted in it will grow to their full heights...eventually! Interpretation explains how important the rainforest is to us, describing it as a 'steamy supermarket' and 'global weather machine'. Special displays and exhibits tell you about chocolate, bananas, timber, coffee, chewing gum, Cola and tropical spices.

The main restaurant (which has a turf roof making it almost invisible from outside) links the Humid Tropics biome to the Warm Temperate biome. This contains representations of habitats from the Mediterranean, California, and South Africa – areas that have rain in winter and spring, and hot, dry summers. There are lots of familiar crop plants here, and it is very interesting to see the products actually on the plant – things like cotton, sorghum, olives, tobacco and aubergines.

The theme of looking after the planet is carried through the entire site from the plant displays, to the buildings, cafes and shops. There are even different coloured recycling bins around the restaurants...and people use them! All the crockery and cutlery is reusable or recyclable too.

Personally I found the *Eden* experience inspiring and very motivating. The scale of the project is incredible. When you see what the site was like before the project started, the achievement is staggering. You realise that almost anything is possible if you have the determination...and the money! The impact of *Eden* goes further than the site itself. All the soil used in the project was made from recycled waste, and has created a new local industry.

I think that we could learn a few things from *Eden* to use here at *Chester Zoo*. However, we could also teach them a bit about Guide books and signage! *Eden* calls itself a 'project' as it is continually changing and evolving, and I will certainly be visiting again to see how it develops.



▲ *The Humid Tropics Biome from the top. Wow!*



▲ *The first sight.*



▲ *The Tea Shack.*

## GROWING CONCERNS

Mark Sparrow, General Curator of Botany and Horticulture and his Deputy, Sarah Bird, report on what has been happening in the Zoo Gardens!

**D**URING the cold short days of winter there is nothing gardeners like to do more than sit by the fire looking through seed catalogues, planning which varieties of ornamental or vegetable plants they are going to grow in the coming year. Even if you don't have the facilities, or inclination, to grow plants from seed yourself, the catalogues can give you some good ideas of plants to get from your local garden centre. Here at the Zoo we are pushing the boundaries and trying to grow plants outside, which are not normally considered hardy in this part of the world. We have planted out three species of palm, *Trachycarpus fortunei*, *Trithrinax campestris* and *Butia yatay* and will be adding to this list in the coming year. We have wrapped our Tree Ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*) in hessian and straw and will unwrap

them in the spring. We are also growing a rare plant from the Canary Islands called *Echium pininana*. (These can be found at the end of the Parrot House). We grew these from seed ourselves and if we get them through the winter they

should provide a spectacular display of flowers next summer. So, when you're looking through those catalogues, why not try something a little bit unusual and exotic; who knows, you could be the talk of your street this year!



▲ Part of the stunning display arranged by Chester & North Wales Orchid Society.

## CONSERVATION CORNER

Have you noticed products labelled *Fairtrade* in shops and supermarkets recently, and do you know

what it means?

In Britain the *Fairtrade Mark* is a guarantee that goods have been fairly traded. This means:

- ❖ Decent wages, adequate housing and health and safety standards for workers in plantations and factories

- ❖ Workers rights to join trade unions, or participate in democratic organisations such as producer co-operatives for small-scale farmers.
- ❖ A fair minimum price
- ❖ A social premium on top of the fair price, to improve living conditions in communities
- ❖ A long-term trade commitment
- ❖ Good environmental standards and sustainable production practices
- No child or forced labour

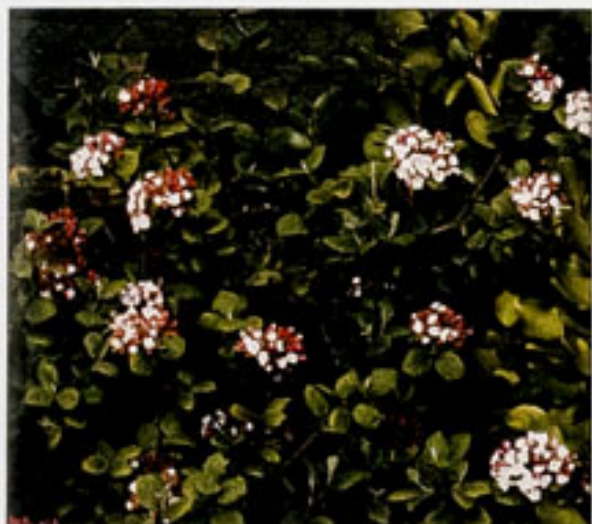
Chester is to become Britain's first **Fairtrade City** and plans to celebrate this during Fairtrade fortnight from 4th to 17th March 2002, so look out for events around the city. At the Zoo, in the *Grow Zone* in March, we will



have a display of some *Fairtrade* crop plants and their products. Come and see what tea, coffee, banana, sugar and chocolate plants look like, and find out where in Chester you can buy *Fairtrade* products. There will also be a special opportunity to sample *Fairtrade* products in the *Ark Restaurant* on 13 March.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

**MARCH:** Laurustinus, *Viburnum tinus*  
**Look out for:** An evergreen bush with clusters of sweet smelling white or pale pink flowers. This hardy winter flowering shrub is very useful in the garden as it can bloom from November to April, and the flowers are not damaged by frost. Laurustinus grows wild in southern Europe, and



▲ *Viburnum*

has been cultivated in Britain since the 16th century. (In shrubbery behind the 'Flight' sculpture, opposite the Zebras).



▲ *Magnolia*.

**APRIL:** Chinese Magnolia, Saucer Magnolia, *Magnolia x soulangiana*  
**Look out for:** A deciduous shrub or small tree with large, conspicuous white or pink tinged flowers that appear before the leaves in spring. This hybrid is the most widely

cultivated of the magnolias. Have a look to see if you can spot the furry buds present before the flowers open. (Oakfield Lawn).

**MAY:** Chinese Hibiscus, Rose of China, *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*

**Look out for:** beautiful trumpet-shaped flowers in shades of red and pink. This tropical shrub is one of the most attractive ornamental plants. The original plant comes from Asia but now grows wild in many tropical regions. There are many different cultivated varieties. Since these plants are not hardy you will find them in the *Tropical Realm* and *Grow Zone*.

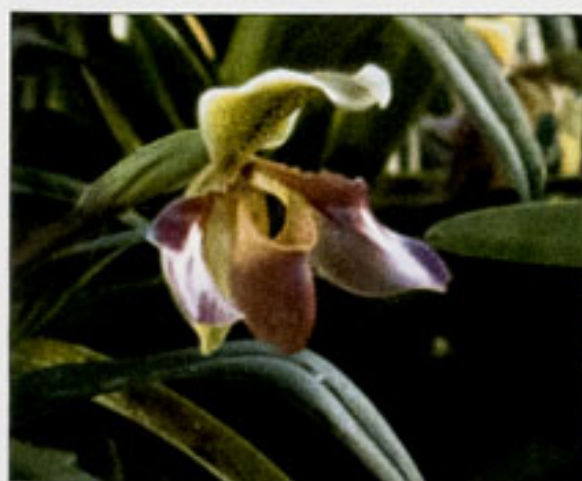


▲ *Chinese Hibiscus*.

## The Grow Zone

The new *Grow Zone*, giving public access to two of our greenhouses, has been very popular. It has been satisfying to see visitors reading the displays, and looking for information on unfamiliar plants they have seen in the grounds.

The rare orchid collection attracts a lot of admiration, and last month we held our first Orchid Festival, with some special displays and demonstrations.

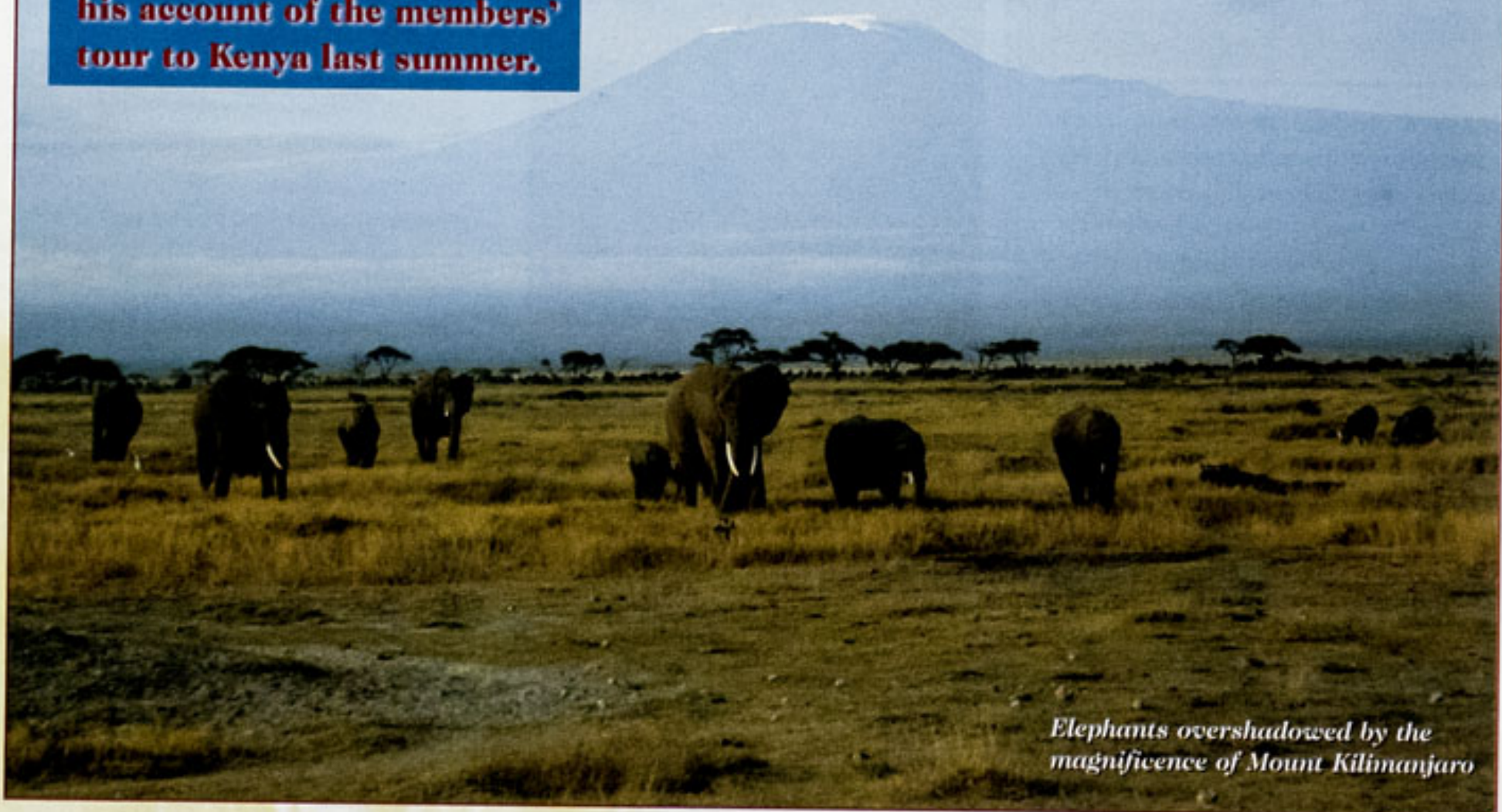


Just one exquisite bloom from the orchid collection in the greenhouse.



# SUNRISE OVER AMBOSELI

Mark Pilgrim continues his account of the members' tour to Kenya last summer.



*Elephants overshadowed by the magnificence of Mount Kilimanjaro*

In the last edition of *Zoo Life* I described our time in Tsavo National Park tracking Black Rhino. The second phase of our trip began on the dusty, bumpy road to Amboseli, just as the sun was rising.

The distinctive red dust of Tsavo gradually changed to grey as we headed across the lava flows to the southern foothills of the Chyulu mountain range. The contrast in the landscape inside and outside the National Parks clearly shows the importance of these areas as havens for Africa's wildlife. As we bumped across the plains of Amboseli National Park, the dry thorny scrubland of Tsavo transformed into grassy plains, making viewing the animals easier. The views of zebra, ostrich, giraffe and enormous tusked elephants, under the backdrop of the snow capped Mount Kilimanjaro, is like being part of a familiar film set.

### Storks in Flight

Mount Kilimanjaro dominates more than the scenery of Amboseli; its

melting snow feeds underground rivers, which form swamps on the plains and these provide permanent watering holes for animals. We enjoyed great views of elephants, lions, hippos, Crowned cranes and Greater flamingos around these flood plain springs. A real bonus was to see Saddle-billed storks in flight and a very young Spotted hyena near to its den entrance.

From Amboseli we tracked across open plains until reaching the Rift Valley escarpment, which gave us incredible views as we descended to the Rift Valley floor and on to Lake Naivasha

You do not need to be a bird lover to be overwhelmed by the bird life around this lake. Birding here is both easy and intense, as the quantity and diversity of birds is stunning. I had fabulous views of Giant, Pied, Grey-breasted and Woodland Kingfisher with the space of 30 seconds, along with Fish Eagles and another very impressive fisherman, the Goliath Heron. Our hotel was within walking distance of the lake and in

previous times had been a colonial hunting lodge. The English style rose-garden and neat lawns seemed very out of place here, especially when the hippos helped to keep the lawns short at night! Above my room was a noisy roost of Fischer's lovebirds. I kept and bred these little parrots in my bedroom as a teenager and to see them collecting nest material from the lawn outside my lodge was great.

### Rolling Grassland

That evening we fed the mosquitoes on a boat trip to Crescent Island in the middle of the lake. This brought us very close to both Pink-backed and the larger White Pelicans – not to mention the hippos and crocodiles. Only one day and night at Lake Naivasha meant a lot of travelling and the next day we were off again, this time to the Masai Mara reserve. Seemingly endless rolling grassland punctuated by rocky outcrops characterise the reserve. We were fortunate to witness the



▲ *'It was a bonus to see a very young spotted hyena'.*  
Photo by  
Kath Edwards

beginning of the migration, one of the most spectacular events in nature. I cannot begin to describe the scale and numbers of animals involved and you have to see it to appreciate it.

The movement of these huge herds of wildebeest and zebra attracts the carnivores and we saw large numbers of lions. I was disappointed to miss out on leopards even though I meticulously examined every likely tree that we passed. Following on are the hyena and vultures and at times the trees were heavy with griffon and Lappet-faced vultures.

**Fascinating Insight**

While in the Masai Mara we had the privilege of visiting a Masai village and we were kindly shown around by Mary, one of the women of the village,

who gave us a fascinating insight into the lives of these very special people. I was touched by the incredible

cheerfulness of the young children of the village who to my narrow western view, seemed to have so little. The gift of a Chester Zoo biro was never so appreciated. We learned a great deal about the Masai way of life from Mary and to my surprise it was to be one of the highlights of the trip for me.

The members of this tour were as diverse as the landscapes we visited and I thoroughly enjoyed our evening discussions and enthusiastic recollections of the day's safari.

Although we covered a great deal of ground and experienced a large variety of landscapes, we touched only the surface of the experience of Africa and I'm sure that our whole group came away from the trip with unforgettable memories. I for one will most definitely return.

▼ *Masai villagers pose for Mark Pilgrim's camera.*





**Zoo Life**

# JUNIOR MEMBERS



## Meetings and Field Trips

### Saturday 23 March 2002 – Tracks and Signs

A popular return for this event after we had to miss it last year. This is the Juniors' opportunity to go into animal enclosures and make plaster casts of animal footprints. We choose March as it is usually muddy then, but this does not put off hardy Juniors who enjoy this unusual day, and most of you will have a 'souvenir' to take home with you!

Over 8s are invited to join us when we meet outside Oakfield House at 11.00 am, returning there for collection at 4.00 pm. You will need a picnic lunch, and it is important that you wear very old clothes and wellies.

### Saturday 27 April 2002 – Shugborough House and Home Farm

Shugborough is a beautiful stately home in Staffordshire, and the Spring is a perfect time to visit the Home Farm, to see the wide range of rare breeds of cattle, goats, chickens, pigs and sheep. Juniors will also have the opportunity to meet the Shire Horses and to have a ride on the horse drawn trailer. Traditional cheese making and bakery skills will also be demonstrated. A day not to be missed!

Over 8s are invited and we will leave the staff car park at 10.00 am, returning at 5.00 pm. Bring a picnic.

### Saturday 18 May 2002 – The Middlewood Way

As we had to miss this event last year, this will be a new experience. We will travel to Macclesfield and walk along a few miles of the well known Middlewood Way, which was once a railway line and which is now a nature reserve. We will be accompanied by a Ranger.

Over 8s are welcome to join us, bringing a picnic, when we leave the staff car park at 9.30 am. We should be back at 5.30 pm.

### Saturday 22 June 2002 – Anglesey Sea Zoo and Pili Palace

It is always an enjoyable day when we visit the Isle of Anglesey, and both the Sea Zoo and the Butterfly Farm (Pili Palace) have proved very well worth a visit in the past.

The bus will leave the staff car park at 9.00 am, returning at 5.30 pm. Over 8s are invited to come along and bring a good picnic because it is quite a long day.

### Wednesday 24 July 2002 – Day With A Keeper

Undoubtedly our most popular event of the year, when Juniors of twelve and over have the opportunity to spend a day working alongside a Zoo Keeper. The work can be tough so we have to strictly limit this event to over 12s. We try to match Juniors to their favourite sections, but places are very limited so this cannot be guaranteed. Please come prepared to work hard, with wellies and a good picnic.

We will meet outside the Oakfield at 10.30 am and the day will finish for Juniors at 4.00 pm. Please note that bookings for this event will not be taken before Wednesday 10 July 2002 from 8.30 am, and will be strictly on a first-come first-served basis.

### Friday 16 August 2002 – Summer Barbecue

What finer way to spend a summer evening than having a barbecue at the Zoo after all our visitors have left! There may be a surprise speaker or a tour of the Zoo, but you can be sure to have a relaxing evening.

Over 8s are invited to join us starting at 7.00 pm when you should arrive at the staff entrance and walk over to the Ark Restaurant. Parents are requested to collect Juniors from there at 9.45 pm.

### Saturday 21 September 2002 – Twycross Zoo

This is likely to be a fascinating day visiting Twycross Zoo, which houses one of the finest primate collections in England, and will be an excellent opportunity to learn a lot about another Zoo and how they do things. It will also be a long day and so please come well prepared, with a good picnic.

The bus will leave the staff car park at 9.00 am, returning at 6.00 pm. Over 10s are invited to join us.

### Saturday 19 October 2002 – Risley Moss Nature Reserve

Risley is not far from Warrington and this visit will be an excellent opportunity to visit a real 'moss' and learn about some of the animals and plants that live in these wetland areas when we are shown around by one of the Moss Wardens.

Over 8s are invited to join us for the trip and should meet at the staff car park at 10.00 am, and we will return to there at 4.30 pm.



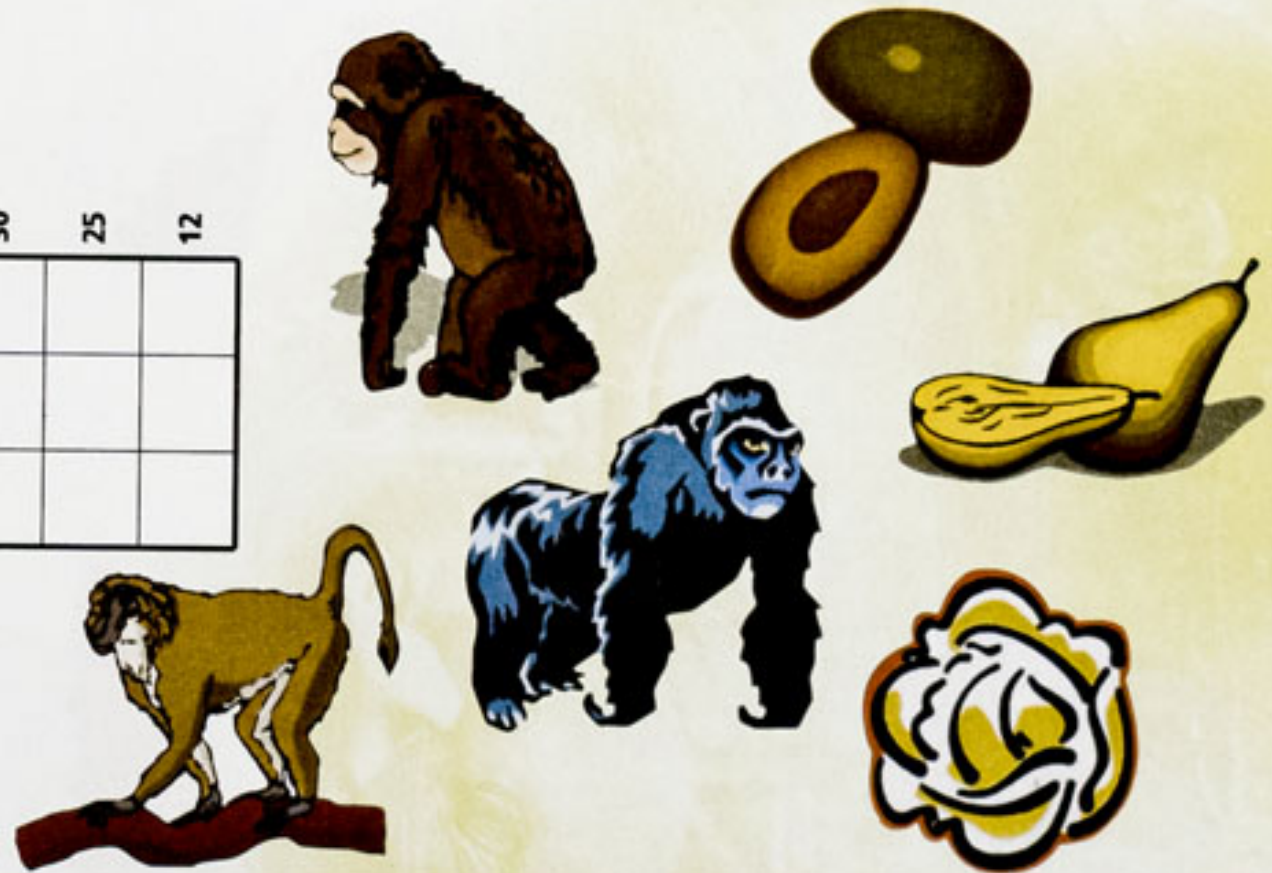
# Junior Puzzle Page?

## MATCH THE KEEPERS WITH THEIR ANIMALS!

Here's a logic puzzle. From the clues, can you work out which keeper looks after which primate, how many of those animals are in the zoo and what is their favourite food?

1. Anthony looks after the primates whose favourite fruit is pear. There are more animals on his section than on the Gorilla section.
2. Caroline's charges do not like mangoes best; on another section there are 25 Primates who do love mangoes.
3. Brian looks after the Chimpanzees.

	Baboons	Chimpanzees	Gorillas	Pears	Mangoes	Lettuce	30	25	12
Anthony									
Brian									
Caroline									
30									
25									
12									
Pears									
Mangoes									
Lettuce									



Keeper	Primate	Favourite Food	Number in zoo
Anthony			
Brian			
Caroline			

**CLUE:** If you haven't done a logic puzzle before, put a tick in the grid where you know something is true - eg where Brian and chimpanzee meet - and a cross where you know something is false.

Bookings must be made for all events. Please ring Penny Rudd at the Zoo on 01244 650215, not more than two weeks before the event you would like to attend. Places are offered on a 'first-come-first served' basis and may be limited.

This list is provisional, and in exceptional circumstances we may have to alter dates and venues.

You will be informed of any such changes in Zoo Life - not by individual letter - so please keep up-to-date by reading the Junior Page in each issue.

A small charge will be made to cover the cost of those events which involve transport, materials or the provision of food and you will be informed of this at the time of booking.

Send your answers to:  
**Junior Puzzle,**  
 Chester Zoo,  
 Upton-by-Chester,  
 CH2 1LH.  
 Closing date is 10 April 2002.  
 The first correct entry opened will win a special presentation pack of the new Royal Mail Jungle Book stamps.

The correct answers to the **'JIGOSAURUS'** competition in the last issue are:

Tongue - snake; Head - Alligator; Tusks - Babirusa; Antlers - Reindeer; Neck - giraffe; Front legs - zebra; Back legs - sealion; Body - Jaguar; Back - tortoise; Tail - cheetah.

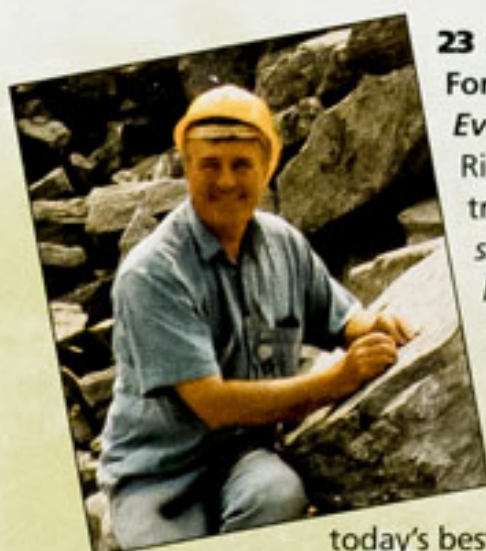
**THE WINNER IS**  
 GILLIAN FERRIE of Upton, Wirral.

# FREE TALKS FOR MEMBERS & ADOPTERS

All these talks will be in the lecture theatre, on Saturdays, at 2.30pm

## Alarming lizards, five-footed fish' and a 700 million year old 'Woodlouse'....?

In the first half of 2002 we bring you an especially exciting programme of free talks with a distinctly 'Jurassic' feel. We anticipate that all of these speakers will attract a wide audience, so we invite members and adopters to send for their tickets in advance. Applications to the Membership Office, Chester Zoo, Chester CH2 1LH, stating which talks you would like to attend, and number of tickets required for each. Please enclose a sae for return of your tickets. Tickets are free, and tea and biscuits are provided for a charge of £1.00.



**23 March:** Professor Richard Fortey. *Trilobite: Eyewitness to Evolution*

Richard Fortey found his first trilobite fossil when he was 14. 'A shiver of recognition whisked me back across 500 million years' He invites us to share this journey, through millions of years of evolution, through the humble eyes of the woodlouse-like Trilobite. Richard is one of

today's best communicators of science and his book dominated the non-fiction best seller list for months. A great opportunity to meet one of the world's leading palaeontologists.



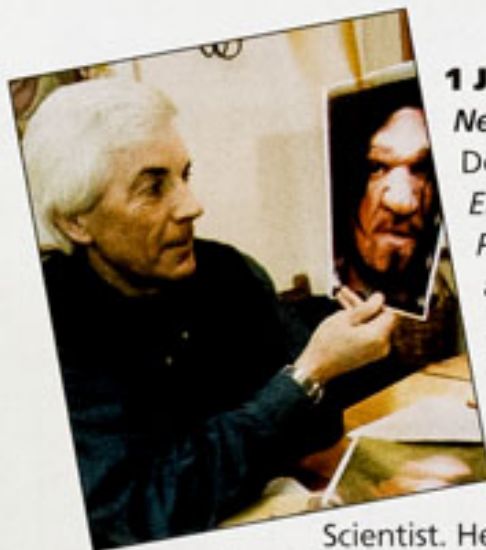
**20 April:** Deborah Cadbury – *The Dinosaur Hunters*

From her best selling book, recently serialised on Radio 4, Deborah Cadbury will tell us of the bitter feuding behind the first dinosaur discoveries. She describes the viciously competing explanations of these first fossil discoveries and the three men involved. The naturalist who presented Biblical arguments; the poor country doctor, uncovering bones in Sussex, obsessed with the ancient reptiles; and the eminent anatomist who took all the credit for the discovery and gave us the word – *Dinosaurs!*



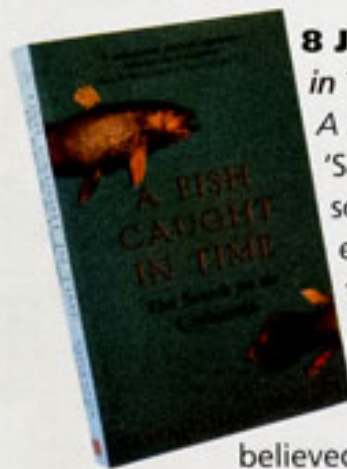
**27 April:** Colin Tudge – *What Conservation Ought to Mean*

Colin Tudge's talk will reflect his most recent book, *The Variety of Life* – a survey and celebration of all the creatures that have ever lived. He has also authored a host of other works, including the thought provoking *Last Animals at the Zoo* (a book every zoo visitor should read!) This will be a unique opportunity to hear one of Britain's leading science writers, who has long been associated with Chester Zoo.



**1 June:** Douglas Palmer – *Neanderthals R Us...?*

Douglas Palmer is the editor of the *Encyclopaedia of Dinosaurs and Prehistoric Creatures*, which includes a contribution of Chester Zoo's Council Member, Professor Brian Gardiner. Douglas teaches Natural and Earth Sciences at Cambridge University and writes numerous articles for *Science* and *New Scientist*. He is the author of many books on paleontology, including *Life Before Man* and *Atlas of the Prehistoric*. Forthcoming books include *Mapping Human Prehistory* and *Petrified Life*. In his talk, Douglas will be challenging assumptions as to the relationship between anatomically modern humans and Neanderthal man.



**8 June:** Samantha Weinberg – *A Fish Caught in Time*

A review by Zoo Director Gordon Reid 'Samantha Weinberg recounts the stuff of scientific legend. She brings to life the excitement and controversy that followed the discovery in 1938 of a bizarre five-footed fish, with strange lobed fins and a unique tail structure, off the coast of South Africa. It was, in fact, a Coelacanth, believed to be extinct for 70 million years! In addition to her skilful charting of the competition to acquire further specimens and of the debate as to the precise place of the species in evolution, I especially appreciated documents and photographs not seen in other publications. The drama has continued up to this present day with the finding of a completely separate species of Coelacanth in Indonesia – a discovery, whose prediction your humble reviewer had a modest involvement in! Samantha's story is as much about human and political relationships and intrigue as it is about biology and our understanding of evolution. I am thoroughly looking forward to her visit and talk.'

**FREE BOOKS FOR EARLY BOOKERS!!**

We have four copies of each of the books written by Richard Fortey, Douglas Palmer, Deborah Cadbury and Samantha Weinberg to give away. The senders of the first four applications for tickets for each of these lectures received will be able to collect their prize books on the day of the lecture. No-one may win more than one book.