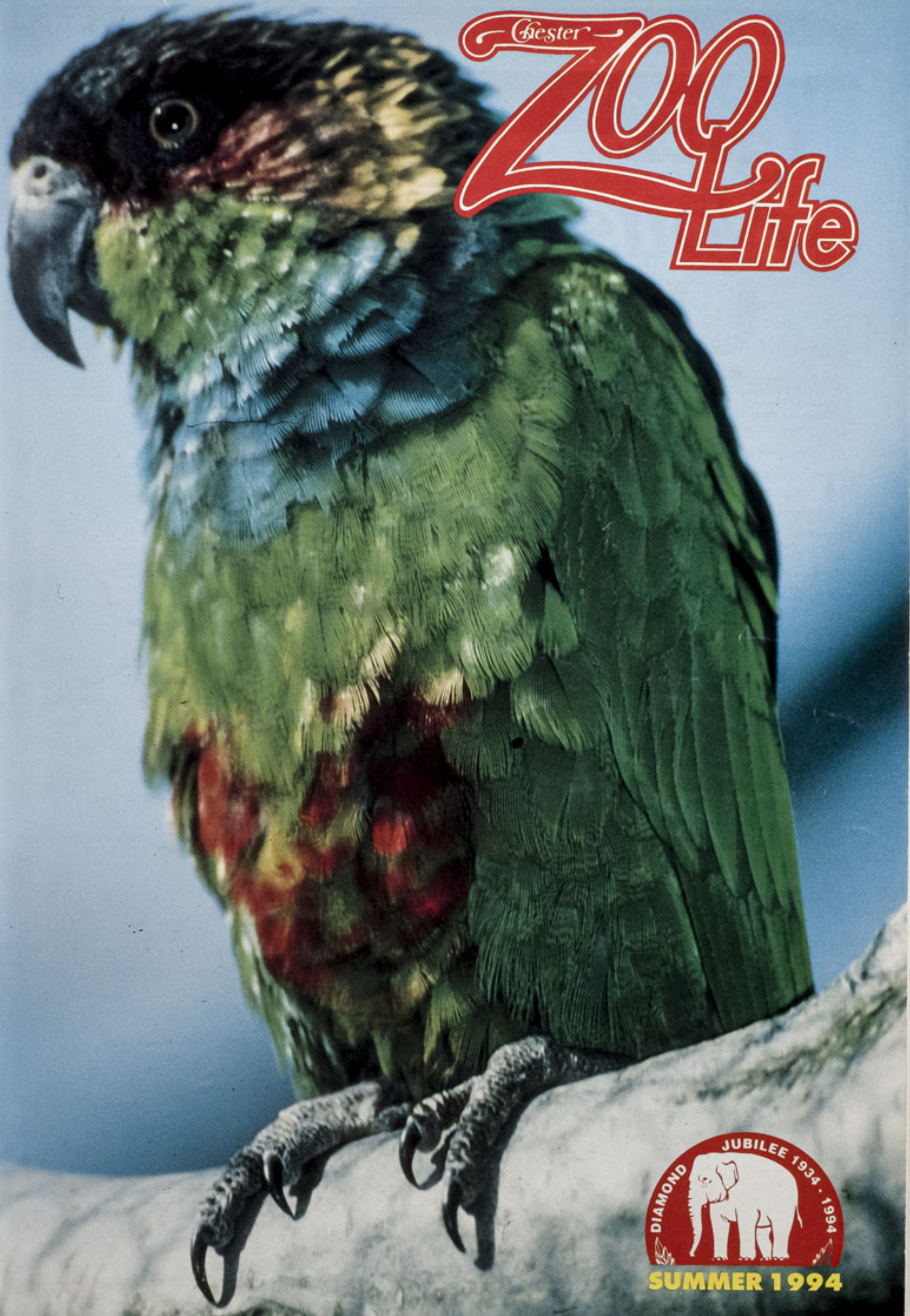


Chester **ZOO** **Life**



SUMMER 1994

Chez Nous



Chester Zoo Life is published by the North of England Zoological Society, Upton-by-Chester, Cheshire CH2 1LH Telephone (0244) 380280 Director: Dr. M. R. Brambell Editor: Pat Cade

This is the Diamond Anniversary issue of Chester Zoo Life. Sixty years ago the zoo, which had then been open for four years in the seven acres around Oakfield House, became the property of the North of England Zoological Society. Forty four years ago, the N.E.Z.S. became a charity.

The zoo grew up in the period before the desperate plight into which much of the world's wildlife is moving, was recognised as being as serious as it is. For the last 15 years I have been working to keep the zoo in the forefront of modern zoo thinking. All zoos must face up to the need to keep abreast of what is required of them: not just about why they are there, but how to do things. Fifteen years ago, bears in small enclosures

were regarded as acceptable by many people. Now it is recognised that a bear wants to graze, to burrow, to be alone for some of the time and be with its mate at others. I am putting very complex matters in simple terms, but the same thinking applies to all species.

Conservation

Our critics will say surely the place for conservation work is in the wild. Yes, of course it is, if only we could be sure that the wild was as safe and secure as television documentaries make it appear. It's a silly criticism because it dodges the most enormous issue facing mankind and its relationship to wild species. I really do believe that without zoos, properly organised and co-ordinated, the world will lose species which could otherwise be saved during the next century.

The alternative is that those species will go by default, whilst the "only in the wild" brigade tut-tut as the effect of the inevitable human over-population and resultant conflicts, picks off one after another of the specialised habitats. Where do Mountain Gorillas live? Anybody prepared to say that there will not be devastating political unrest in that corner of the world?

Reintroduction?

As I said in an article for International Zoo News, our job is to keep our

zoos forward-looking, humane, conservationally effective and viable - in terms of both expertise and finance. Perhaps in the future our successors will be able to re-introduce into restored habitats most of the species we are able to pass down to them.

Reintroduction, the putting of species back into their original habitats, is a difficult process, but it is not impossible. Given the opportunity, the animals, the man power and the finance, I am convinced that reintroduction is a realistic but long term goal. The time scales we are talking about, one to two hundred years, are far too short for us to have bred out by accident the wild behaviour patterns of the species we keep. The problem will be to establish the "cultures" of wild populations, but this can be done. The Arabian oryx in Oman are proof of this.

In 60 years time, I hope Chester Zoo will be amongst those places which allowed a greater variety of wildlife to survive than would otherwise have happened. We were well founded and may we continue to be so.

◆ Below: Work is well ahead on the construction of the zoo's new car park, to serve the new entrance, off the A41.

◆ Front cover: A brilliantly coloured Blue throated conure. Photographed by Curator of Birds, Roger Wilkinson.





8 October 1994 - 2.30 pm in the lecture hall. Professor Brian Gardiner, Kings College, University of London. "Jurassic Park Revisited; studies on birds and dinosaurs."

12 November 1994 - 2.30 pm in the lecture hall. Pat Wisniewski, Curator Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust. Mr Wisniewski's talk will be either: "Twenty Years of the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Martin Mere; and

MEMBERS' MEETINGS 1994/95

how I saved the slug in my spare time!"

3 December 1994

Members' Christmas lunch in the Oakfield Restaurant at 12 noon. (Further details in the Autumn issue). Followed by: 2.30 - lecture hall: Talk by Ross Meredith and Steve Hogarth, Chester Zoo Mammal Keepers: "Great Apes at Chester Zoo."

14 January 1995 - 2.30 pm in lecture hall. Mr M. Freeman - "Focus on Bats."

11 February 1995 - 2.30 pm in the lecture hall. Dr D. A. P Cooke - "An Ambition Achieved."

18 March 1995 - 2.30 pm in the lecture hall "The Inconvenient Cat" - Paul and Linda Bottriell

8 April 1995 (provisional date) - 2.30 pm in the lecture hall. "A Review of the Zoo 1978-1995" by the Director, Dr. M. R. Brambell.

May 1994 (date to be announced) - 2.30 pm in the lecture hall. Annual General Meeting.

Members are reminded that a charge of 50p per meeting will be made at the door to offset expenses for bringing speakers and towards defraying the costs of the meeting rooms including tea and biscuits.

THE CHESTER ZOO ONE HUNDRED CLUB

Alan Sykes, Deputy Financial Controller, gives an update on the club's finances.

The "100 Club" was one year old 1st May and seems to have captured the imagination of those members, adopters and staff who enjoy a bit of a flutter. The money raised is put towards specific projects such as "Europe on the Edge" which is letting many of our avian exhibits have much more than a bit a flutter.

The club now has 162 members. By the end of June we expect to have received £10,940 of which half - £5,470 - will have gone to zoo funds and the other half back to the members as prize money. We shall have paid out 55 prizes, including one of £1,000 in June; one of £500 last December, 20 of £100 and 33 of £50. That totals £5,150. The remaining £320 has been kept to one side and is building up towards the next major prize to be drawn next December.

Membership of the 100 Club is still invited. Please contact me, Alan Sykes, if, like the young goats, you like to "gambol."

MONTHLY WINNERS

The monthly winners since the last issue of Zoo Life are:

February '94

- £100 Mrs J. Williamson
- £50 Mr J Barnett
- £50 Mrs F. Bland
- £50 Mr J. Nolan
- £10 Miss A. Collinson

March '94

- £100 Mr J. Nolan
- £50 Mr I. Shingler
- £50 Mr M. Allsopp

April '94

- £100 Miss J. Dixon
- £100 Mr R. Grice
- £50 Mrs Mary Doogan
- £50 Mr Neil Hawkes
- £50 Mrs Pamela Cate

ADOPTERS DAYS 1994

The two dates for this year's annual "Adopta Days" are Sunday 9 October and Saturday 15 October.

Your invitations will be issued nearer the time, with the Autumn issue of "Chester Zoo Life." Come and join us for a day of fun at the zoo - it's our way of saying "thank you" to all our adopters for continuing to support us. As usual, keepers will be available to answer your questions and lots of other activities are planned.

THEME EVENINGS

The Oakfield Restaurant theme evenings are attracting a very regular clientele! Book early to be sure of getting a table! The dates and themes for the coming months are:

3 June - Caribbean Evening, complete with steel band. £19.95.

1 July - Bird Safari - guided tour of the bird collection, followed by vegetarian dinner. £16.95.

15 July - Diamond Anniversary Picnic. Pick up your hamper at the Oakfield, complete with bottle of champagne. £22.00.

29 July - Garden Tour, followed by dinner. £16.95.

19 August - Zoo Safari and Barbecue on the Oakfield Terrace. £16.95 adults, £8.50 children.

21 October - Scandinavian Evening. £15.95.

18 November - Victorian Evening - £16.95.

All bookings through the Party Office - 0244 380280 ext 209.

ZOO REVIEW

ZOO STAMPS

The last issue of "Zoo Life" mentioned our new zoo stamps. These are now on sale in the Fountain Shop, and feature orang utans, elephants and Black rhinos (pictured here).



They are valid for posting anywhere in the UK. Because they are available exclusively at Chester Zoo, they have a rarity value which will almost certainly appreciate.

INCOMING JUMBOS

The elephant staff are busy caring for the largest herd of elephants ever seen at Chester Zoo. At the moment there are nine of them, following the arrival, on temporary breeding loan, of Buria and Rani from Port Lympne Zoo, in Kent. The two females, both 28 years old, arrived the day after Mya returned to London Zoo.

Chester's young bull, Chang, has been very busy playing an active role in the conservation of his species! Hopefully, there will be a positive outcome to this activity in a couple of years time.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Warm congratulations to Curator of Mammals Nick Ellerton, and his bride Caroline Harcourt, on their wedding in May.

TELEVISION FILMING



Zoo keeping staff have been very busy over recent weeks helping television crews with filming in the zoo.

The "Good Morning" programme, broadcast nationally by Granada, brought in a couple of "penguins" - actually girls dressed in penguin suits - to link with an advertising campaign for a brewery. (See picture above.)

Judith Chalmers visited the zoo in March as part of a film featuring Chester for her travel programme, "Wish You Were Here." This programme was shown on 23 May.

A channel 4 programme called "Beat That Einstein" challenged a group of local children to work out the best kinds of animal manure for growing tomatoes! That programme will be screened in the Autumn.

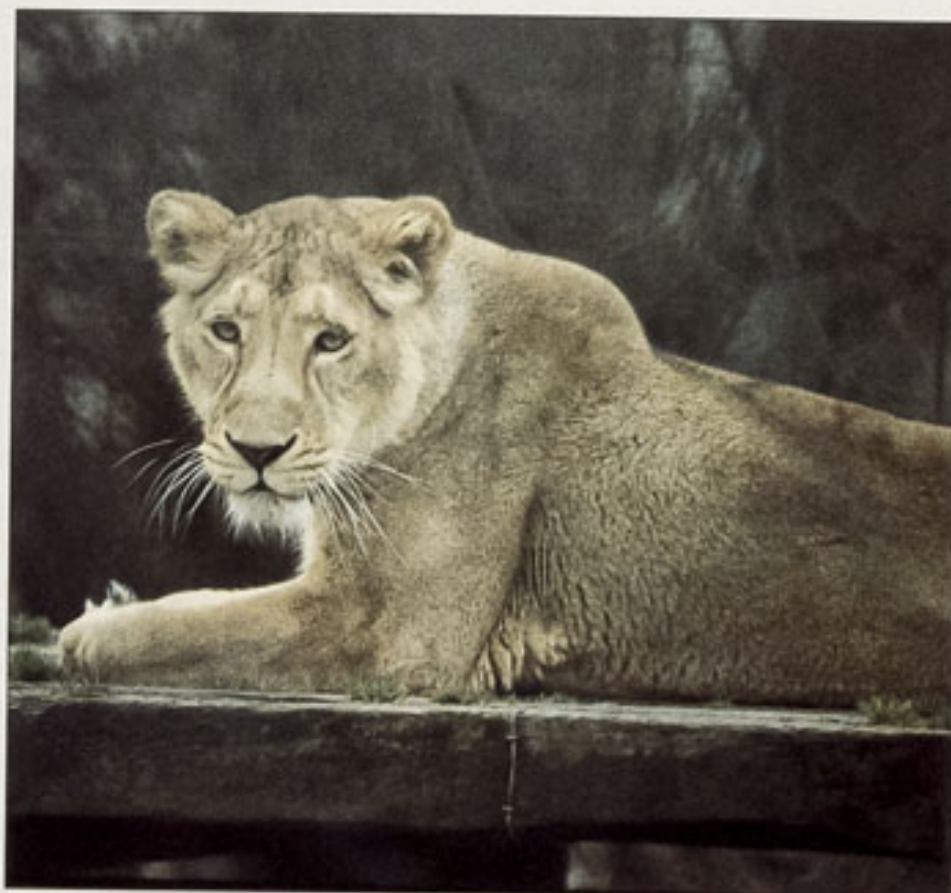
In April, another children's programme called "Why Did The Chicken" featured the zoo's penguins, with keeper Nick Manning.

Some young children of zoo keeping staff are going to be thrilled when they watch "Playdays" on August Bank Holiday Monday! Dave Hall's two youngsters will see Daddy chatting to the show's star - a puppet called "Why Bird." Steve Hogarth and Ross Meredith, keepers in the Ape Section, are also featured in the programme. They are shown (below) telling "Why Bird" all about chimpanzees.





◆ Jake



◆ Chandani

RARE ASIATIC LIONS

The average visitor may not notice the difference - but Chester Zoo's lions have changed!

For many years the zoo has kept African lions. Happily, the African species is one of the few large mammals that is not highly endangered. Asiatic lions, however, are a critically endangered species, now found only in Gir National Park in Gujarat, North West India, where there is a population of approximately 300 lions.

Chester Zoo has always played a major part in international breeding programmes for endangered species, and has gladly offered the area of the spacious lion enclosure for this species.

In March, three year old Chandani and her mate, two year old Jake arrived from London Zoo - the only other UK zoo with this species.

Now zoo staff are hopeful that these rare and beautiful animals will soon play their part in the conservation of their species, and produce cubs in the near future.

Chester's African lions have joined the group at Knowsley Safari Park.



PAINTING FACES

Newest attraction for young visitors is the Face Painting Centre, where our trained painters are turning small children into wild animals!

Bird Keeper Bruce West was volunteered for a practice section - much to his colleagues' amusement!



OSCARS ARRIVAL

When a baby camel is born on the night of the Oscar Awards - his name is an obvious choice!

Young Oscar arrived just in time for the pre-Easter publicity, weighing almost seven and half stones at birth!

He is shown here enjoying a bottle feed with keeper Ruth Parker.

BACK TO THE VERY BEGINNING

Zoo Member Gwyn Griffiths has spent a lot of time researching George Mottershead's first venture into zoo keeping, in the years before he founded Chester Zoo. Histories of the zoo refer to Mr Mottershead briefly being involved in an exhibition of animals to the public at Shavington, near Crewe.

In this article, Gwyn Griffiths fills in the details of the Shavington years, and outlines the role played by George Mottershead's partner, Dr William Larmour English.



◆ An early photograph of George Mottershead with young chimpanzees.

By odd coincidence, the name of the property occupied by the Mottershead family at Shavington was "Oakfield." Here, throughout the 1920's, Mr Mottershead developed both his animal collection and his market garden, from which he sold produce initially through a market stall, then through a shop in Mill Street, Crewe.

In 1929 he entered into an agreement with a local G.P., Dr Willie English, who had the twin qualifications of an interest in animals and the funds to develop the venture. Dr English invested capital while Mr Mottershead acted as the "on site" manager of the enterprise.

Dr English was, by any measure, a remarkable man. Irish-born, he had served with the Royal Army Medical Corps during the Great War, returning to become a highly respected G.P. in Haslington. He was widely read and travelled, and took an interest in a huge range of subjects. For example, an interest in veterinary science was taken so seriously that he ended up being presented with a silver and cut glass inkstand for his work on blackhead in turkeys!

Publicity

In August 1929, the first press advertisements for the Oakfield Gardens (the word "zoological" was added from October) appeared locally, claiming a "Large collection of foreign birds" together with an "engaging" collection of monkeys and other animals.

Over the following months, the collection expanded. Species of particular interest in a modern day Chester context included ring-tailed lemurs, Hyacinth macaws and Nicobar pigeons.

December 1929 saw the opening of the "New Monkey House" which was home to Babs the chimpanzee – later to move to Chester. It was also around this time that two American Black bear cubs arrived.

Arrivals during 1930 included a spider monkey, fruit bats, woolly monkeys and a giant tortoise claimed to weigh 2 cwt and to be 300 years old (perhaps not!). This year also saw the birth of a Grivet monkey.

Discord

However, all was not well with the

relationship between Mr Mottershead and Dr English. At the end of the year, Mr Mottershead left, purchasing the Upton Oakfield. This, of course, was the start of the Chester Zoo story, but the Shavington story was not yet an end.

Indeed, it could be argued that "the best was yet to come" as in 1931/32 Dr English invested heavily in livestock, not only for display at Shavington, but also for the aviaries and monkey enclosures at this home in Haslington. Over a three year period, he spent the equivalent of perhaps of £50,000 by to-day's values on animals – a huge outlay for a village G.P.

New arrivals were as varied as boas, crocodiles, a giant tortoise, Vulturine guinea fowl, a cassowary, a Brazilian tree porcupine, a gibbon, a drill and even a Polar bear – the famous Punch, purchased from the well-known travelling menagerie of Bostock and Wombwell.

Breeding Success

In particular, Dr English indulged in something close to a passion for marmosets and tamarins – not only keeping them alive (an achievement found difficult by many respected zoological collections up to the last 20 years) but even breeding them.

His most dramatic achievement was to breed Golden Lion tamarin (*Leontopithecus rosalia*), with four births in 1931/32. Only one previous captive birth had been recorded – at Regents Park in 1872.

The Negro tamarin (*Saguinus midas niger*) was considered a "difficult" species. The reference books suggest that the first captive breeding was only achieved in 1950, again at Regents Park. As late as the 1960's an American university found them almost impossible to keep. Of 83 animals purchased, only eight survived for more than 60 days and they were described as a species "characterised by poor health in captivity." This is all by way of background to explain the significance of 23rd August 1932 when a living youngster was produced by Dr English's pair – almost certainly the first successful captive breeding in the world.

He also achieved success in breeding the relatively "easy" common marmoset (*Callithrix*

jacchus) and hybridised common marmoset with silvery marmoset (*C. argentata*). Two live hybrid young were born, exhibited to the members of the Zoological Society of London at seven months old – and one was to set a world longevity record of two days short of 15 years; a record that stood for some years.

Looking Forward

But Dr English and his collection were of interest beyond their breeding achievements; there was an attitude towards the role of a zoological collection that was decades ahead of its time. In 1932 for example, Dr English wrote a very forward-looking article on the role of education in zoos; he corresponded with, and sent specimens to, the Natural History Museum; he carried out post mortem examinations and passed information to medical institutes. He even imported marmosets by airship on one occasion!

Sadly, whatever the zoological achievements of the collection, commercial storm clouds were gathering. It was the age of the great depression, with unemployment, short time working and wage reductions all squeezing what we now know as disposable earnings. In late 1932, despite continuing additions to the collection, press advertisements hinted at financial difficulties, with almost desperate pleas for greater attendances: - "Unless children come to the zoo it must fail" said a July advert.

The collection ended with a whimper, closing for good on December 31st 1932, with no word of explanation or comment in the local press.

The collection was dispersed, some coming to Chester, a number going to other collections, while Dr English made space for some of his favourites at Haslington. Here he continued to keep smaller monkeys, parrots and snakes until his death in 1945. Breeding success continued too, with the 1933 breeding of douroucoulis seemingly another "world first."

The Shavington collection was short-lived and tiny in size. However it deserves to be mentioned – firstly, for the way it acted as a "starting point" for the Chester collection, and secondly for the achievements in husbandry and breeding achieved there.

Nostalgia!

Announcements of the Zoo's Diamond Jubilee celebrations prompted two visitors to write to the Director with their reminiscences and photographs of the early days of the zoo. Mrs Molly Noble, now in her 80's, who lives in Frodsham-via-Darrington, writes:

"I married in March 1934, and my first home was in Oakfield Drive, facing the fields and gardens of the zoo. Interest was high, and several of us visited daily, with buns. Our first encounter outside was with a pelican, who used to find his way out and hide in hedges. Suddenly he would pop out and open his huge wings!

"The next member to escape was a tapir. He would take a walk and if the gates were open, come into our garden. If, by chance, back doors were open, he would come into the house! It wasn't difficult to get him back home.

"Later, came "our" lovely lioness, Moli. As my name is Molly, that is

what we called her. Her constant companion during the day was a lovely terrier dog. What lovely days they were!"

The other letter is from Mrs Nancy Walker, of Churton, who writes about her first visit:

"We went through the gates of what was a small estate with a large house. Standing in the lodge doorway was an elderly man, maybe Mr Mottershead's father, who took our entrance money (one shilling!) and directed us up the drive to the house, where he said we would see birds on the right and animals housed in the stables and yard on the left.

"After looking at the birds and animals, we sat in deckchairs on the lawn, and then came the highlight of our visit. Mrs Mottershead and her daughter walked along the terrace, holding the hands of a young chimpanzee. It was a happy animal, and enjoyed our attention. I took these photographs (below) with my box camera!

"On that day we saw only two other visitors - now you have thousands! Congratulations!"





◆ Visit by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, when he officially opened the lecture theatre in 1951. The Duke is pictured with Professor Oliver King and, in the background, Mr Ronald Pryor.



◆ The zoo has always been a popular place with the media! This picture of George Mottershead and Gerald Iles, of the old Belle Vue Zoo in Manchester, was taken during a broadcast for "Children's Hour" in March 1946.



◆ In all its 60 years, the North of England Zoological Society has had only two directors – the Founder, Mr George Mottershead, and present Director, Dr. Michael Brambell.



DIAMOND MEMORIES.

There have been many highlights and achievements over the 60 years of Chester Zoo's history.

There's space for only few. If any readers have photographs or memorabilia of the zoo, particularly the early years, our Librarian Lyn Wilkinson would be delighted to hear from you.



◆ The birth of Jubilee in May 1977 was a major event for the zoo.

◆ 1989 – another Royal visit, when the Princess of Wales opened the new Chimpanzee House. The Princess is shown here helping Senior Keeper Niall Ormerod feed chimps.



◆ February 1991 – another conservationally important birth. Emma, a Black Rhinoceros, was born to Esther and Parky.



◆ April 1991. The Duchess of Kent opens the Zoo-fari Overhead Railway.

NEARLY

WILD

SHOTS



◆ Rhino portrait by Chris Packham.

Chris Packham, presenter of several television wildlife programmes, offers some tips on getting the best from your camera on a trip to the zoo.



◆ Chris Packham at work with his Canon camera.

Taking photographs of animals, especially good photographs of wild animals, is never easy. There are two basic disciplines you need to master. Firstly, the art and practice of photography – how your camera works; how different lenses look; film and how to expose it; shutter speed; aperture size; focus . . . the list is almost endless. Secondly – believe it or not even trickier – is getting close to and understanding the animal.

So, if you are a beginner or casual snapper, what better place to begin photography than a zoo or wildlife park. The animals are close to you, all day, they are used to people and are often big and exotic. You can concentrate largely on getting the photograph right and, if you get it wrong, you can come back to-morrow. This is a great way of getting used to looking at animals through the lens, seeing how they move, why and when and judging when they look best for your picture. All great practice for when you get to the jungle outside!

Which camera?

All sorts of cameras are useful at the zoo. Compact or "snappy" cameras need to be used to photograph bigger subjects that are not enclosed, or those in the children's zoo. Think about the best light direction and composition of your picture. Try to exclude unwanted details and hold the camera steady with both hands.

35 mm SLR cameras are the most versatile and in the zoo setting longer or telephoto lenses are most useful. These have a shallow field of focus

which will allow you to photograph animals behind wire with more success. Look for subjects which are well away from the fencing and for fencing which is either black, or in shadow to shoot through. Non galvanised wire in sunshine will flare up and fog your shot.

Try to get as close to the wire with your lens as possible – without breaking any of the zoo's rules. Again, try to exclude any unwanted distractions in your frame – basically the more animal and less background in your frame the better the chance of producing a clear, good looking portrait.

Camcorders

"Shaky vision" is the thing that ruins most home camcorder movies too. If you don't feel like carrying a tripod around, try to find something to rest on or brace yourself against, and try to cut down on using the zoom. Either edit in-camera or at home, and analyse TV programmes to see how it's done properly.

Analysis

Lastly, when you finally sit down to look at your results, study them to discover what spoiled the failures and what produced the better pictures. Only this kind of self critical analysis will turn you from a snapper to a photographer – plus a few more trips to the zoo!

Chris Packham's book "Wildshots" from his Channel 4 television series of the same name, offers more tips on photographing the Great British wildlife, both in captivity and in the wild situation. It is published by Collins & Brown, at 16.99.

Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary

Last year, Vince Smith, one of the zoo's ape keepers, left us to set up a sanctuary for chimpanzees in Mount Kenya. This is his first report back from Africa.



◆ Sophie, who was born in Chester Zoo and hand reared by Vince Smith, is enjoying her new life in Africa.
Photograph by Steve Hogarth.

There are currently hundreds of orphan chimpanzees throughout Africa. Many of these are kept in appalling conditions and are unlikely to reach adulthood. Some of the relevant authorities fail to implement their CITES laws by not confiscating the chimps and instead turn a blind eye to the problem. The reasons for this are usually twofold. They don't have the facilities to keep the chimps if they do confiscate them, and they certainly don't have the finances to look after them.

Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary was established in 1993. The sanctuary is situated some 20 kilometres from Nanyuki and lies in the shadows of Mount Kenya and within Sweetwaters Rhino Reserve. The chimp sanctuary itself measures some 200 acres and is enclosed by a 10 foot electric fence. The area consists of riverine acacia woodland with dense undergrowth.

The Ewaso Ngiro river runs through the heart of the sanctuary providing opportunity to view the chimps by taking part on a boat journey of approximately four kilometres along this meandering stretch of the river.

The prime objective of the project is to provide welfare and a permanent home for needy orphaned chimps. These will come primarily from East Africa. The chimps will be integrated into one or two groups and then, after a period of rehabilitation, will be encouraged to live a life that replicates as close as possible their natural conditions found in the wild.

Once established, the sanctuary will offer the opportunities for non-intrusive behavioural research. After running costs have been covered, profits gained from tourism will go into a fund, which will be used for the long term welfare and security of the Sweetwaters chimps. A percentage of

these profits will also be donated to targeted in-situ chimpanzee conservation projects in Africa, to help with chimpanzee conservation and anti-poaching work.

We currently have four chimpanzees which we plan to increase to around 25. Sophie from Chester Zoo was the first chimp to arrive. She has adapted well to life in Africa. We hope to shortly receive two young chimps from Rwanda which were poached from the Nyungwe Forest Reserve. We have also been approached by the primatologist, Dr Richard Wrangham and the Director of Ugandan Wildlife, Mr Moses Okua, to see if we could assist them by accommodating 10 young chimps from Entebbe Zoo, which is "bursting at the seams" with 31 confiscated chimps. It is hoped that these animals will be used as ambassadors, highlighting the plight of chimpanzees throughout Africa.



◆ Collared Arican

BIRDMAN IN BELIZE

Roger Merry of the bird-keeping staff reports on his recent trip to a part of the world rich in bird-life.

Having long wanted to travel in Central America, a friend's wedding in Florida provided me with the perfect excuse. After all, if I was so close, not even my bank manager could begrudge me the extra flight! Anyway, anything rather than celebrate (?) my 30th birthday in miserable cold Blighty in January. The wedding was obviously the main event, but I did find time to make short trips to the Everglades and the Florida Keys. The well-known wildlife of the Everglades lived up to all my expectations, as did the quality of diving off the Keys. Both areas, however, despite having full reserve status with the backing of the world's largest economy, are suffering from the overwhelming development of Southern Florida – at a rate of 20,000 new people moving in each week, the scale of land drainage and building has to be seen to be believed.

Delicate Balance

Pressure on water supplies from the

ever expanding population is seriously affecting the water table and flow rate in the Everglades, and therefore the delicate balances of an ecosystem far more complex than would first appear. Steady population growths in bird species, especially Brown Pelican, White Ibis and Osprey, witnessed over the last 20 years, have become reductions in the last two or three years. More encouragingly, research into the entire Florida water system has been given new priority and funding, and the whole conservation question is – between the dreadful quiz shows, chat shows and speculation about M. Jackson Esq – getting regular media cover.

Having successfully avoided being shot in Miami, despite getting hopelessly lost returning the hire car, I flew somewhat belatedly (the good life in Boca Raton, Palm Beach, is really very good) down to Belize.

Ecotourism

Belize (formerly British Honduras),

the only English speaking country in Central America, has a population of less than 300,000 and over 30% of its land area has full reserve status and another 20% has partial reserve status. The largest barrier reef in the world after Australia's now has a series of marine reserves along its length, with more planned. It recently hosted the first international conference on ecotourism. The new government has just halted a massive hydro electric dam project to allow time for more research on its viability and its potential damage to the environment. It enjoys a literacy level higher than the UK; a democratic monarchy – H.M Queen Elizabeth II was announced H.M. Queen Elizabeth I of Belize on Independence. All this with a diverse population of Mayan Indians, Mexican Spanish, Caribbean Africans, Mennonite Germans, Chinese and ex-pat Brits!

Belize City - the old capital city (the new one is Belmopan, a bit like a third world Milton Keynes – assuming Milton Keynes counts as first world?) - is, on first sight a vibrant city with an African feel, a mixture of fading colonial buildings and Belizean stilt houses, with occasional open drain to add excitement to walking along the road. However, the whole place shuts at 8.30 – 9.00pm and doesn't reopen until 8.30am. This unofficial curfew is apparently because of the high crime rate. Despite the dire warnings from locals of violent attacks, I saw none and felt no obvious threat, although the night after saying farewell to the cockroaches in my room, a policeman was murdered outside the hotel. The resultant "Wanted Dead or Alive" posters lent a slightly surreal Wild West flavour to the bus stations in which they were displayed. My experience, however, remains of a friendly and outgoing people wherever I went.

Reserves

On escaping the crime torn (sic) Belize City with the help of local buses and Shanks's pony, I managed to visit several reserves around the country, including Guanacaste, Pine Ridge, Cockscombe Basin and Bermudan Landing Baboon Sanctuary as well as Mayan ruins and some of

the farmed countryside. Far from the usual "hear lots, see nothing" of previous experience, the rainforest of Belize proved to be very successful bird watching and indeed bug, beast and reptile watching, country. Lacking a decent field guide I have returned with copious, if largely illegible, field notes in faint hope of putting names to faces. Of the flagship species, only Baird's tapir and Scarlet macaw eluded me and I didn't really expect to see either. Great Curassow (which I not only saw – but almost ate!) were of interest, given Chester's track record with another of the family, the Bare faced Curassow, as were Crested Guans, which brought back early memories of the birdhouse, when we had three pairs. Blue crowned Mot Mot, another Chester species, proved impossible to photograph, but incredible to watch. Toucans and Aracari, along with four positively identified hummingbird species, three Trogons and the almost hand-tame Jacamar were probably the stars of the show, with the liquid gurgling of Oropendola and the dawn chorus of Howler monkeys the most evocative sounds.

Belize Zoo

Obviously I had to visit Belize Zoo, and while small compared with Chester, it only exhibits Belizian endemics in naturalistic and attractive enclosures. Wonderful interpretation signs accompany the exhibits, mixing education with a sense of humour. Most impressive was the zoo's obvious role in the education and conservation of the country. Everywhere you go, there are posters explaining the pressures facing Belizian wildlife and the importance of conservation. All are designed and produced by the zoo. They maintain close links with schools throughout the country and every newspaper has articles by or about the zoo. A research team exploring Southern Belize is headed by zoo staff. Staff exchanges with American zoos are a regular event – the latest resulting in a small aquarium. The Director recently organised a visit by the head of W.W.F. America which led to government level meetings and new or improved backing for several projects throughout the country. For

an organisation with an obviously limited potential for gate generated income, this degree of involvement and enthusiasm was an inspiring example from a remarkable country. My dominant impression of Belize over and above the reggae version of Auld Lang Syne on New Year's Eve, swimming in a tropical river on New Year's Day, or even the superb diving off the Cayes, is of a country with the opportunity and apparent intention of continuing its development without destroying its rich natural heritage. The general awareness of the mistakes and damage experienced in other countries bodes well for the future. Overdraft willing, I hope to return to see more of the region next year.

◆ Brown Pelican



JUNIOR NEWS



◆ Baby Zee Zee takes her first photocall with Mum, Mandy, on Chimpanzee Island.

ANGLESEY SEA ZOO AND BUTTERFLY PALACE – Saturday 25th June 1994

This should be a lovely way to spend a summer's day in Wales. The Anglesey Sea Zoo is well worth a visit and after that we will picnic outside before going on to the Butterfly Palace. The bus will set-off from the staff car park at 9.00 am, returning at around 6.00 pm. Over eights with picnics invited.

DAY WITH A KEEPER – Wednesday 27th July 1994

Juniors of over twelve years of age are invited to spend a day working alongside Keepers, learning about their job and some of the animals they look after. We will meet outside the Oakfield at 10.30am, and the day will finish at 4.00 pm when Juniors will return to the Oakfield for collection.

JUNIOR MEMBER'S FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS

JUNIOR MEMBERS' BARBEQUE AND MOTH TRAPPING –

Friday 19th August 1994

It has been a few years since the Juniors last surveyed the moth population in the Zoo and Jon Delf, Senior Member and 'entomologist extraordinaire' will be bringing several moth traps for us to catch the moths in and then will help us to identify them before they are released. This will be a late night as the moths do not appear in numbers before darkness falls, so we will set up the moth traps then have our barbeque supper, after which we will inspect the traps to see what we have found.

Over eights (who can stay awake!) are invited along at 7.45 pm, and you should be warmly clothed. Parents can walk Juniors over to the Jubilee lawn from the staff entrance and should arrange to collect youngsters at 10.45 pm.

AINSDALE NATURE RESERVE AND SOUTHPORT ZOO –

Saturday 17th September 1994

This will be the Juniors first visit to Southport Zoo, after which the lovely sand dunes of the Ainsdale Nature Reserve near Southport beckon us. The nature trails and wooded areas will reveal their treasures under the observant eye of the Reserve's warden. September may be breezy by the sea, so come equipped for cool weather. Over eights invited.

The bus will leave the Staff Car Park at 10.00 am, returning at 4.00 pm.

THE RED DEER RUT AND HOME FARM AT TATTON PARK –

Saturday 22nd October 1994

After a visit to the rare breeds at Tatton's Home Farm during the morning, we will meet up with the Park Rangers who will take us into the Deer Park to observe the Red Deer Rut and then take us to look at the Deer Farm. Picnic and wellies please. The bus will leave the staff car park at 10.00 am returning to the Zoo for 4.00 pm. Over tens invited.

Details of the Winter trips for 1994/1995 will follow in future magazines.

DIAMOND JUBILEE JUNIOR MEMBERS' COMPETITION.

We want to involve Junior Members in our 60th birthday celebrations by getting you to do some work!

Can you write a poem to mark the occasion? It can be about any aspect of the zoo you like. Perhaps you have a favourite animal, and would like to write your poem just about that. Or perhaps you will choose the history of the zoo as your subject. The gardens, too, could be a source of inspiration. Maybe you have a favourite place in the zoo, like the Tropical House or the Children's Farm.

Whatever you choose, please be creative and send us your poem.

There are two age groups: Group A: Juniors under 12 years old on 31st December 1994. Group B: Juniors from 12 years to 18 years. Age will be taken into account by the judges.

There will be a prize of a radio cassette player donated by Britvic for the prizewinner in each group, and the winning poems will be published in the Winter issue of Chester Zoo Life.

Please send your entries with your name, address and age to: The Editor, Chester Zoo Life, Chester Zoo, Upton-by-Chester, CH2 1LH. Closing date is 30th September 1994.



JUNIOR MEMBERS' TRIP TO CHOLMONDLEY CASTLE

A coach-load of Juniors had a great day out at Cholmondley Castle in April, visiting the Home Farm and all the animals there, followed by a nature ramble. Penny Rudd took these pictures of Juniors getting to know some of the farm animals.



Arrivals ○ Births ○ and Hatchings ○

JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1994



◆ Bison calf pictured a few moments after birth, in April.
Photographed by Anthony Hayward.

MAMMALS

Rodrigues Fruit Bat	<i>Pteropus rodricensis</i>	0.1.8	born
Seba's Short-tailed Bat	<i>Carollia perspicillata</i>	0.0.1	born
Silvery Marmoset	<i>Callithrix argentata melamura</i>	1.2	received
Black Ape	<i>Macaca nigra</i>	0.0.1	born
Black Spider Monkey	<i>Ateles fusciceps robustus</i>	0.1	born
		1.0	received
Ring-tailed Lemur	<i>Lemur catta</i>	0.0.6	born
Talapoin Monkey	<i>Miopithecus talapoin</i>	1.0	received
Chimpanzee	<i>Pan troglodytes</i>	0.1	born
Dwarf Mongoose	<i>Helogale undulata</i>	1 litter	born
Asian Lion	<i>Panthera leo persica</i>	1.1	received
Asian Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>	0.2	received
Bactrian Camel	<i>Camelus bactrianus</i>	1.0	born
Blackbuck	<i>Antelope cervicapra</i>	7.0	born
Nilgai	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>	1.1	born
Axis Deer	<i>Cervus axis</i>	0.1.1	born
Pere David's Deer	<i>Elaphurus davidianus</i>	2.1	born
Bison	<i>Bison bison</i>	0.0.2	born

BIRDS

Emu	<i>Dromaius novaehollandiae</i>	0.0.1	hatched
Humboldt's Penguin	<i>Spheniscus humboldti</i>	0.0.2	hatched
Black-necked Swan	<i>Cygnus melanocorypnus</i>	0.0.5	hatched
Hawaiian Goose	<i>Branta sandvicensis</i>	0.0.2	hatched
Crowned Plover	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	0.0.5	hatched
White Eared Pheasant	<i>Crossoptilon crossoptilon</i>	1.1	received
Superb Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus superbis</i>	0.0.2	hatched
Pink Pigeon	<i>Nesoenas mayeri</i>	1.1	received

Regent Parrot	<i>Polytelis anthopleptis</i>	1.1	received
Musschenbroek's Lorikeet	<i>Neopsittacus musschenbroekii</i>	0.0.1	hatched
Stella's Lorikeet	<i>Charmosyna papou</i>	0.0.1	hatched
Blue-streaked Lory	<i>Eos reticulata</i>	1.1	received
Black-winged Lory	<i>Eos cyanogenia</i>	1.1	received
Yellow-backed Chattering Lory	<i>Lorius garrulus flavopallatus</i>	0.0.1	hatched
Blue-eyed Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua ophthalmica</i>	0.0.2	hatched
Red-crested Touraco	<i>Tauraco erythrolophus</i>	1.1	received
Red-winged Starling	<i>Chycognathus morio</i>	0.1.0	received
Red-eared Bulbul	<i>Pyconotus jocosus</i>	0.0.2	hatched
Rothschilds Mynah	<i>Leucopsar rothschildi</i>	2.2	received

REPTILES

Madagascan Tree Boa	<i>Sanzinia madagascariensis</i>	2.1	received
Indian Cobra	<i>Naja naja</i>	0.0.9	hatched
Plumed Basilisk	<i>Basiliscus plumifrons</i>	0.0.35	hatched
Leopard Gecko	<i>Eublepharis macularius</i>	0.0.31	hatched

AMPHIBIANS

Horned Frog	<i>Ceratophrys cornuta</i>	3.3	received
Surinam Toad	<i>Pippa pippa</i>	13	received
Poison-arrow Frogs	<i>Epipedobates trivittatus</i>	6	bred

FISH

Lake Victoria Cichlid	<i>Haplochromis obliquidens</i>	60	bred
	'zebra uganda'		
Lake Victoria Cichlid	<i>Haplochromis argens</i>	45	bred
Lake Victoria Cichlid	<i>Haplochromis pyrrhocephalus</i>	38	bred
Freshwater Stingray	<i>Potamotrygon mototo</i>	3	bred

Key: Col. 1 = Male, Col. 2 = Female, Col. 3 = Young or

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