

Winter 2008



The official magazine for  
**Chester Zoo Members** and **Adopters**



The little calf  
**big** making  
strides

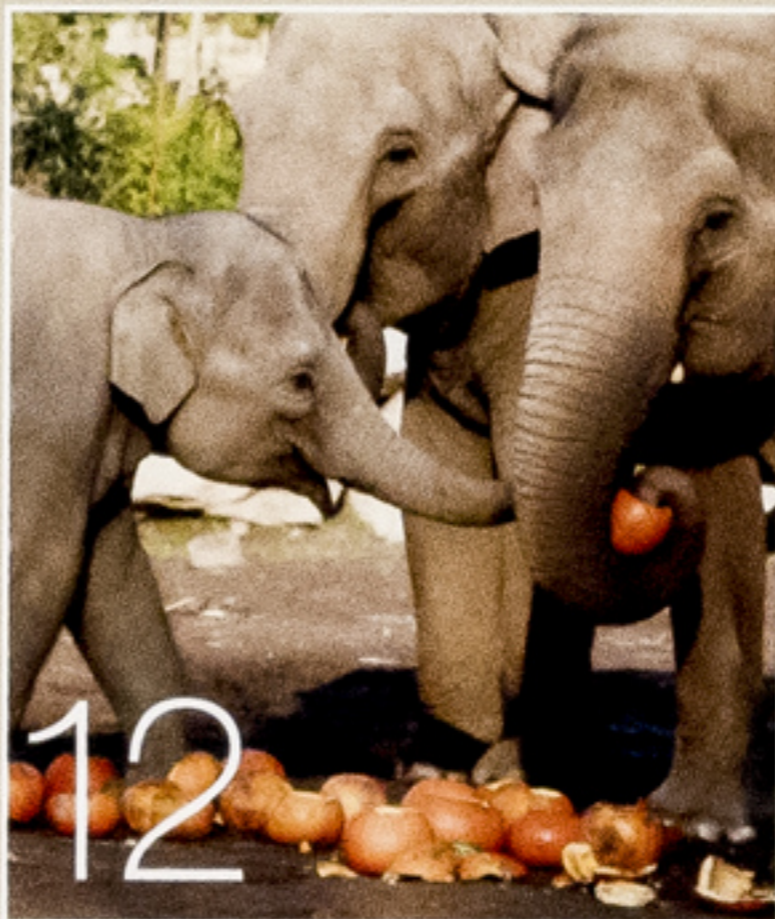
...meet the first Black Rhino to be born at the zoo in 10 years



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# director's pen



Welcome to December's issue of **Z** – the final one for 2008 – and what a busy year it has been yet again.

Firstly, you will have no doubt noticed that **Z** has been given a make-over – we hope you like the new style. Where possible, we have tried to take some of your comments on board and we do appreciate your feedback. We hope this edition finds favour with you.

On the zoo front, it has been a busy 12 months with new attractions opening and the arrival of some exciting species, including cheetahs.

Births and deaths are part and parcel of zoo life and I'm pleased to be able to share some great news with you.

Many of you will be familiar with the story of *Tejas*, the lion cub which was hand-reared by its mum *Asha* and became an overnight star thanks to the *Zoo Days* programme, set here at the zoo.

I think everyone who followed *Tejas'* story and his move to France was touched by his tale. I am delighted to tell you that *Asha* has become a mum to male lion cub *Chakra*, but this time I am pleased to say she is doing all the work herself.

There is good news too at the rhino house where 11-year-old *Kitani* has become a mum for the first time. Our first black rhino calf in 10 years, this is a remarkable achievement not just for *Kitani* but all the animal keepers and vets who worked so hard to enable *Kitani* to get to this point.

On pages 4-7, you will find out more about our other significant births and hatchings, including the arrival of a much-awaited Hyacinth Macaw chick.

By the time you read this, this year's *Frost Fair* event will be well underway and this year it's bigger and better than before.

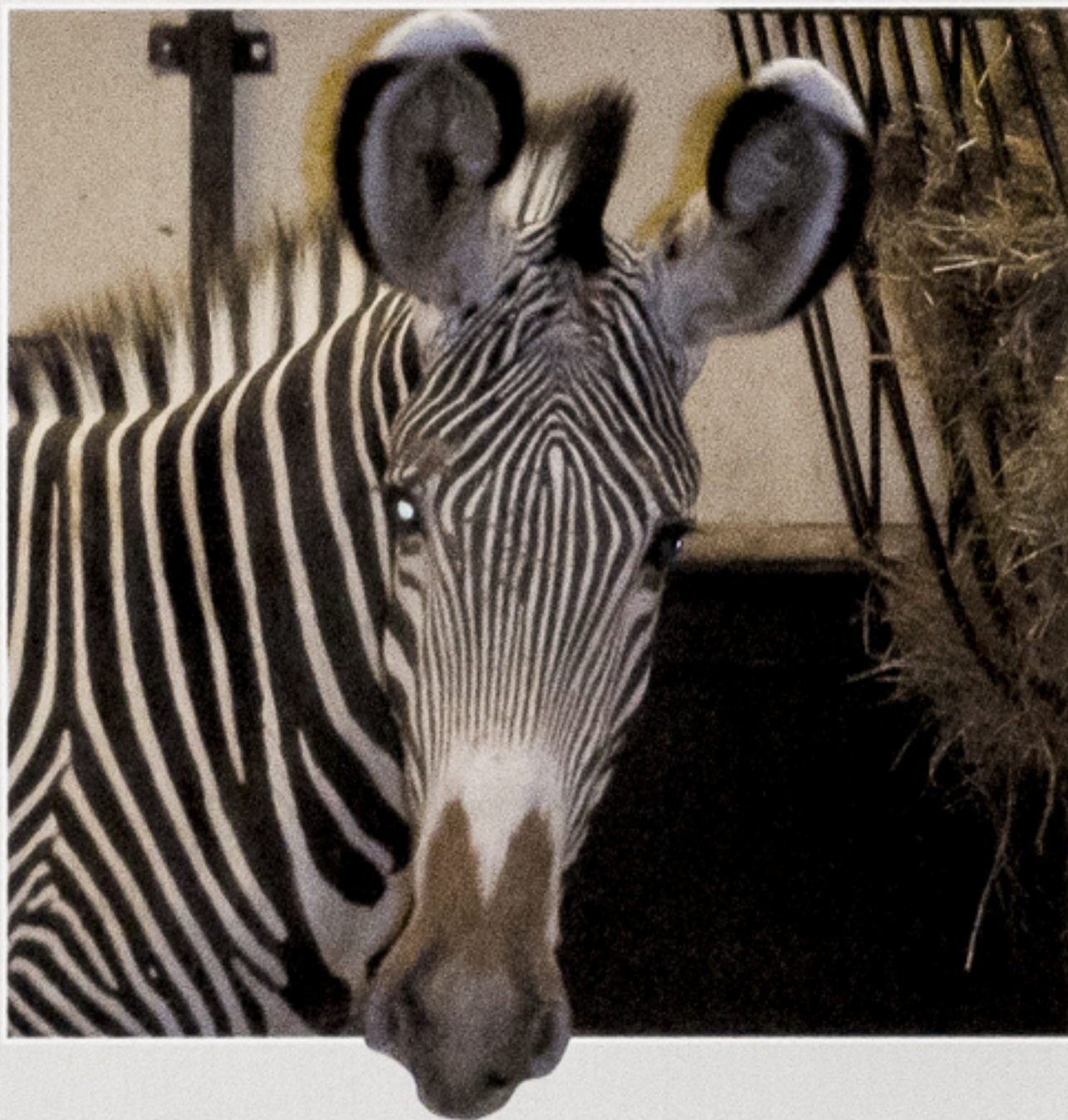
Although our ice rink remains the big attraction you will also be able to enjoy some fresh, new entertainment and also have your picture taken in our exciting snow dome. To find out more about the fun and frolics available, visit our website [www.chesterzoo.org](http://www.chesterzoo.org)

Finally, we look ahead to 2009 and to, hopefully, another positive year for animals and visitors alike. Thank you for your ongoing support through 2008 – we appreciate that, for some, it has been a tough 12 months and your ongoing commitment to us is greatly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordon M.G. Reid". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Gordon McGregor Reid**  
Director General

# Zoo additions



All creatures great and small have been arriving – and leaving the zoo over the last few months.

**Malindi, a three year old female Black Rhino**, arrived from Zoologischer Garten Magdeburg. She is settling in in the off-show facility at Tsavo 2 and is already friendly with her neighbour *Rosie*.

As *Malindi* arrived, we said farewell to Black Rhino *Qunito* who moved to Port Lympne where is settling in well.

**Three Brow Antlered deers** were born on the rhino section. The sex of the babies is not known yet but they are going from strength to strength and can be seen out

and about on the paddock with their mums. A female Philippine Spotted Deer was born as was a Banded Mongoose, which should be on show soon.

**Two Grevy zebras** *Marty* and *Alan* also arrived.

On the giraffe section, it was farewell to *Samara* who moved to Blair Drummond Safari Park and hello to **Rothschild's giraffe** *Aoife*. Also born on the section was a female **Congo Buffalo** called *Be Be* who was born to mum *Isiro* and dad *Kinta*.

## First view of Chester Zoo's **best kept secret...**

**The tiny Asiatic lion cub was born to mum *Asha* after a three and a half month pregnancy.**

However, despite having had a previous litter, this is the first time that *Asha* has raised her own cub. And the dedicated mum, who gave birth outside, is being so protective of her new male charge that, until this picture was taken this morning, only images from CCTV were giving *Asha's* keepers a clue to how mum and her newborn are getting on.

*Asha's* previous cub, *Tejas*, was hand-reared by dedicated keeping staff and became an overnight star thanks to the *Zoo Days* television series. Carnivore team leader Alan Woodward, who helped to rear *Tejas*, was visiting him in his new home at Besancon Zoo in France to mark his first birthday when *Asha* gave birth to her latest cub, *Chakra*.

“We are delighted to welcome the second litter in 12 months but what is most pleasing this time is that *Asha* is quite willing to do all the work and raise her young herself.

“We would far rather this than have to intervene and are quite happy to sit back and let *Asha* take on the role of proud mother.”

Kevin Buley, Head of Zoo Programmes

## Shaken but not stirred!



**JAMES Bond and Miss Money Penny may have an enduring onscreen partnership but at Chester Zoo their companionship is helping to conserve a species.**

James and his partner Penny are Hyacinth Macaws, considered endangered in the wild, and the duo have bred successfully for the first time at Chester Zoo.

Their striking chick hatched in May but has now left its nest box, having spent 16 weeks tucked away inside, being cared for predominantly by Penny.

The chick has not yet been named but his dad gets his name from his ring number - 007.



Picture courtesy of Bruce Adams/Daily Mail



## A little calf making big strides

At just a few weeks old, this Eastern Black Rhinoceros calf is still trying to find its feet.

But despite its first few faltering steps, eventually this little calf will make big strides in helping the population of Black Rhinos in the wild.

Born to 10-year-old mum *Kitani* at Chester Zoo on Wednesday October 29, the calf is the first Black Rhino to be born at the zoo in 10 years and the first newborn for *Kitani*.

The arrival is made even more significant as the Eastern Black Rhino remains perilously close to extinction in the wild with only 700 animals left.

A coordinated international breeding programme within zoos has already seen some Black Rhinos returned to Africa to help boost numbers. The new calf will be part of this breeding programme.

The calf was born at 3.45pm in the afternoon – rhinos are generally pregnant for around 15 months

Kevin Buley, Chester Zoo's Head of Zoo Programmes, said:

“Our new arrival may be taking small steps at first but eventually it will have a bigger role to play as part of a coordinated breeding programme.

“We have a very happy team of keepers and veterinary people at Chester Zoo. They have all worked very hard to get to this point and the first rhino birth here for 10 years is a great achievement. However when all is said and done, it was down to *Kitani* to come up with the goods, so to speak.

“For a first time mum, she is proving to be a natural.”

All rhino calf pictures courtesy of the Peter Byrne/Press Association

## Breeding success with shy turtles



Turtles and tortoises, living relics of the age before the dinosaurs, are in terrible trouble. Despite their extravagant body armour and legendary longevity, the vast majority of the 300 or so recognised species are either in decline or already in serious danger of extinction. The threats to the charismatic sea turtles are well publicised, though sadly undiminished, whereas the pressures on freshwater turtles and terrestrial tortoise populations are less familiar. Many are of course threatened by general habitat loss and degradation but introduced predators and grazing competitors take a serious toll, the pollution, extraction and modification of freshwater systems spells disaster for aquatic species and illegal collection for the pet trade threatens a few species highly-prized for their beauty or rarity. However, perhaps the single most serious and measurable threat to the group as a whole is the immense, and entirely unsustainable, trade in turtles and tortoises to supply the insatiable demand for Traditional Chinese Medicine products and luxury food. Ten million or more turtles and tortoises are 'consumed' by this trade each year in southern China – harvesting animals from all over South East Asia and around the globe. Fortunately, many thousands of animals are now farmed to help meet this demand (though the farms bring their own ethical, welfare, disease and conservation concerns) but this respite has come too late for countless species already so rare in the wild as to be impossible to find, or already extinct.

Long before the well-publicised Amphibian Ark was spawned, its predecessor the Turtle Ark was launched. Zoos, aquariums and serious private collectors have been collaborating around the world to establish viable breeding populations of some of the most threatened species, some extinct in the wild, before it is too late. Chester Zoo is part of this initiative and has been steadily building up a collection of threatened South East Asian turtles, some of which we have already successfully bred. The most recent addition is a group of flowerback box-turtles (*Cuora galbinifrons*) which hail originally from Vietnam. Our animals, three adults and five juveniles, all came from Jersey Zoo who has had recent great success in reproducing this sensitive species. With good a diet, plenty of privacy and a little luck we hope to match this success in years to come and build an extensive group of these striking turtles. Sadly however, their timid nature and susceptibility to disturbance means we are unlikely to be able to display them to our visitors.

## High hopes for tree frogs

Earlier this year the zoo received a shipment of tree frog tadpoles direct from the forests of Belize in Central America. Whilst it is no longer the norm to bring animals from the wild, the frogs in question are central to a PhD study focussed on understanding the role of dietary carotenoids (the stuff that makes carrots orange and flamingos pink) in skin pigmentation and the link, if any, to the resilience these frogs show to ultra-violet light. This is very important since long-term conservation breeding programmes are acknowledged to be essential for the survival of many amphibian species but many tree frog species exhibit reduced intensity of colour over multiple generations of zoo management. And why does colour loss matter? Well, frogs that aren't as colourful or as bright as they should be probably won't breed as well since sexual selection is thought to be influenced by the colour of potential mates in some species and, most importantly, we can't ever hope to put frogs back in the wild from these long-term programmes if they aren't the right colour as they'll stick out like sore thumbs' and get snapped up by predators.

The species we have chosen to work with is the striking black-eyed or Morelet's tree frog *Agalychnis moreletii*. Itself a Critically Endangered species, collecting tadpoles means that we have negligible impact on the remaining wild population since 90% or more of tadpoles fail to make it to adulthood in the wild. The tadpoles all metamorphosed successfully in recent weeks and we are now rearing more than 50 baby tree frogs in our purpose-modified shipping container the Amphibian Pod – which is effectively a dedicated amphibian laboratory with state-of-the-art climate control and stringent permanent quarantine controls.

## Snakes thriving in new enclosure

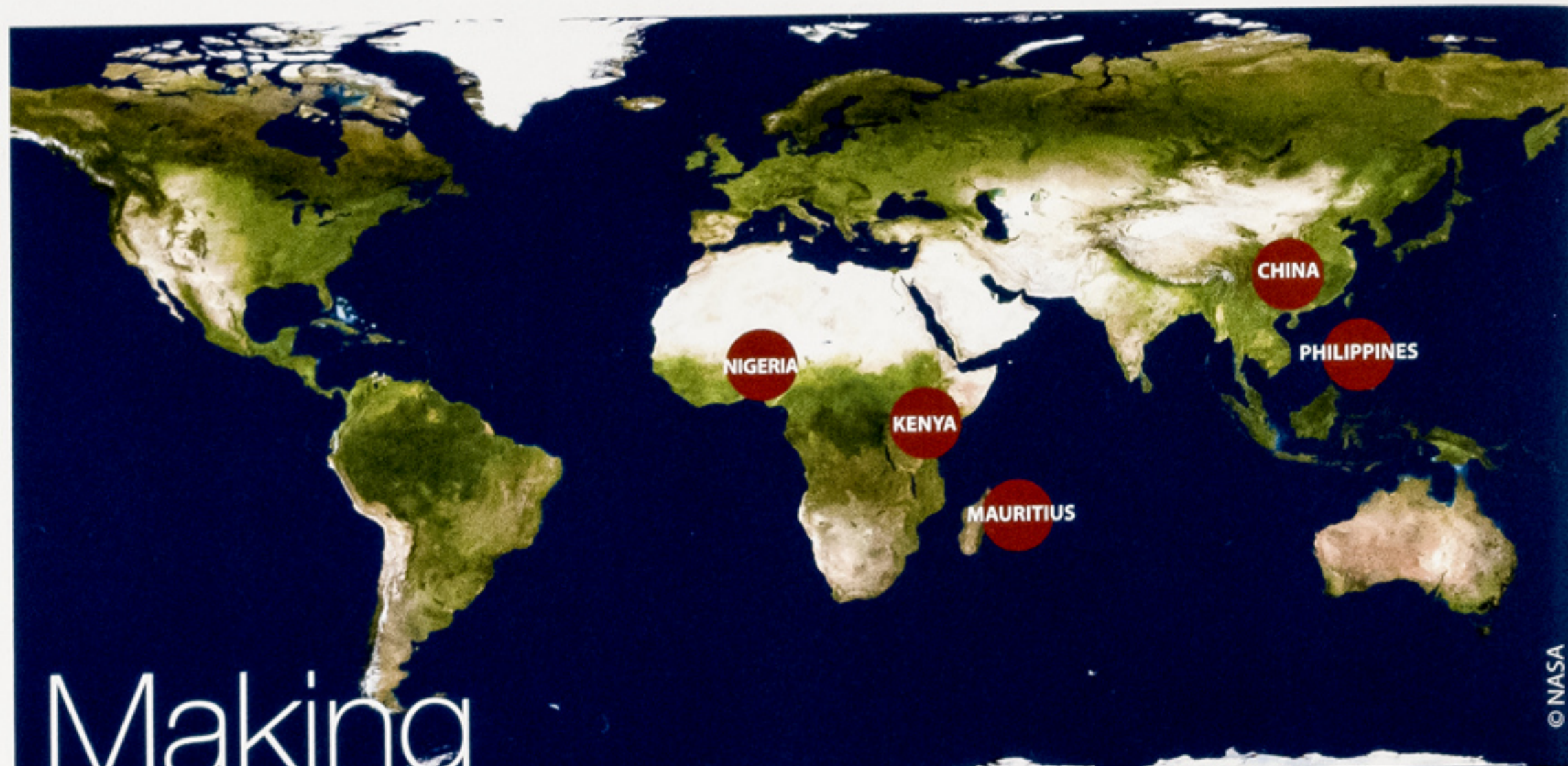
Breeding reptiles successfully in large, naturalistic enclosures can sometimes be tricky, especially for those that lay eggs. Not only does the habitat need to simulate where they would be found in the wild but in order for the animals to be fit and healthy enough to reproduce, the natural climate (day and night time temperatures, daylight cycles and rainfall) must also be replicated. The temperature and humidity are especially important in thermoregulation (maintaining body temperature), encouraging natural feeding and bringing animals into reproductive condition. If all these details are correct and they lay eggs successfully, these must either be removed to an incubator or the enclosure conditions need to be so accurate and stable that the eggs incubate naturally. Fortunately, mother-to-be reptiles tend to 'know' where to lay their eggs, and that isn't always in the nest-box provided by the keepers!

Our South East Asian red-tailed racers moved to a new enclosure in the *Realm of the Red Ape* building last year. The enclosure certainly looks the part and the snakes appear to be thriving. Recently both of the females have been spending extended periods of time hidden from our sight in an undiscovered retreat and we couldn't work out where or why. However, all was revealed when keepers servicing the enclosure found little silvery ribbons of baby snake skins tangled in the dense foliage. A thorough hunt ensued and four tiny 'snakelets' were discovered, firm evidence indeed that conditions in the enclosure are spot-on.

Perfect miniature replicas of their parents, these spaghetti-thin, vivid-green beauties will be reared behind-the-scenes until old enough and large enough to go back to the enclosure of their birth.



Over the next two years Manchester University student Vicky Ogilvy will study the effects of different carotenoids and varying levels of ultra-violet light to try and perfect husbandry techniques for successful conservation breeding of this and related species. With a bit of luck and a lot of hard work we hope that her results will enable us to establish a successful programme for the very animals in her study as well as other similarly threatened leaf frogs around the world.



# Making a difference



## China Programme

Supporting The Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding Base has been an important part of Chester Zoo's China Programme for many years. The base carries out valuable research on both Giant and Red Pandas, both currently listed as endangered species. Unfortunately, no amount of support could put a stop to the devastating earthquake which hit the Sichuan area of China in May 2008. A huge amount of structural damage and a drop in tourism resulted in a loss of vital income. Chester Zoo provided a much needed emergency donation to the base to enable them to carry out a valuable community education programme.

**FAST FACT**  
May's Sichuan earthquake was the largest natural disaster in the country in nearly 60 years.



## Mascarenes Programme

The Mascarenes are inhabited by a large percentage of endemic species, these are species that are found nowhere else in the world. Chester Zoo has worked alongside the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation (MWF) for many years on conservation projects focusing on endemic species conservation. This year we have continued to support a number of projects including those on the Mauritius Echo Parakeet, Mauritius fody, Mauritius Olive White-eye and Rodrigues Fruit Bat. We have also funded projects focusing on reforesting the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve, creating field gene banks for critically endangered Mauritian plants and, in collaboration with Shoals Rodrigues, conserving the endemic species of the tropical Rodrigues lagoon.

**FAST FACT**  
The famous Dodo was hunted to extinction for food by settlers who landed in the Mascarenes in the 16th century.



## Philippines Programme

The Philippines is one of the Earth's hottest 'biodiversity hotspots'. For over a decade, Chester Zoo has been working alongside Fauna and Flora International (FFI) to support Philippine conservation work. Recent projects have focused on areas such as the Alcoy Forest, Polillo Islands and West Visayan, with key study species ranging from monitor lizards to distinctive hornbills and Panay Bushy-tailed Cloud Rats to the small short-legged Philippine Spotted Deer.

**FAST FACT**  
90% of the original forest cover in the Philippines has been lost due to habitat destruction.



## Nigeria Programme

Preventing illegal activities from being carried out within a national park is an ongoing conversation problem. Home to a huge number of primate species, including the Nigerian subspecies of Chimpanzee, Gashaka-Gumti National Park faces this exact problem. Cattle grazers, slash-and-burn farmers, hunters and illegal settlers carry out activities within the boundary of the park, claiming to be unsure of where the border lies. In 2004, funded by Chester Zoo, work began to construct a border demarcation. This year, we have continued our support for this project. This involves funding the construction of roads to allow better access to the park, enabling rangers to patrol the borders.

**FAST FACT**  
Gashaka-Gumti National Park holds the last remaining population of Wild Dog in Nigeria.



## News on Conservation from around the World



As the EAZA Year of the Frog campaign draws to a close, we take a closer look at the global amphibian situation...

### Bad

Insect bites have always been part and parcel of holidays abroad. However, these may start to become more and more common since the latest amphibian news. Over half of Europe's amphibian species now face extinction by 2050. This is due to climate change, disease and habitat destruction. Amphibians, such as frogs, toads and newts, feed on the insects that destroy our crops and suck our blood, meaning we may start to see the effects of their decline. Those species living in the Mediterranean regions are at a greater risk as the area is expected to become warmer and drier.

### Good

Have you ever wondered if it's possible to bring an animal back from the dead? This thought must have gone through the mind of the scientist who found and collected a mile's Robber Frog *Craugastor milesi*, thought to have been extinct for more than 20 years, in a Honduran rain forest. The fungus, *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (or Chytrid for short) which threatens frog species worldwide was thought to have caused the 'extinction' of this species, but the individual found showed no signs of the infection. This incredibly rare frog is still in grave danger, and only further research into its population size will determine whether the species has a chance of survival.



## Rhino Programme

Poachers are a big problem in Selous Game Reserve, Kenya. In the late 1990's, The Selous Rhino Trust project began, focusing on anti-poaching and monitoring of the Black Rhinos. The project has been so successful that since it began no rhinos have been found dead in the reserve. Having said that, the price of the rhino horn in Yemen is increasing, tempting more poachers into the area. Due to the location of camps, it is believed that poachers are currently trying to locate rhinos. In order to ensure that poachers are found and prevented from carrying out illegal activities, Chester Zoo has provided support to this project for the first time, ensuring that their vital work can be kept going to protect these critically endangered animals.

**FAST FACT**  
Between 1970 and 1992, around 96 per cent of the Black Rhino population was lost due to poaching.

## Grant Support

Other projects which we've supported during the last quarter have included:

- Giraffe ecology and conservation in the Serengeti ecosystem, Tanzania.
- Conservation of the Cape Parrot and associated remnant afro-montane forest, South Africa.
- Identifying habitat corridors that minimize human-wildlife conflict and maximise mobility for the wide-ranging and elusive Bush Dog, Argentina.
- Komodo Dragon Project - Community awareness, habitat and wildlife protection plan for the Wae Wuul nature reserve, West Flores, Indonesia.
- National chimpanzee census in Sierra Leone
- Fish Ark Mexico



GET WITHIN  
A WHISKER  
OF OUR  
NEW TIGER

Animal lovers can get up to the eye of a brand new tiger with a new visitor experience.

Big cat fans who want to get within a whisker of Sumatran tiger *Kirana*, whose Indonesian name means 'beautiful ray of light,' can make the most of an addition to the tiger enclosure.

Two-year-old *Kirana*, described as feisty and inquisitive, has just moved to the 110-acre zoo from Paignton and will be sharing her home with tiger *Kepala*.

Visitors will be able to see the pair out on the prowl in their enclosure but will also be able to see them enjoying a cat nap inside their den thanks to a new window built into its side.

Tim Rowlands, the zoo's Assistant Curator of Mammals, said: "We already have a tiger window which enables visitors to watch the tigers safely but without the need for any fencing.

"This extra window, this time built on to the side of their indoor den, gives visitors a glimpse into what the tigers get up to when they are warm and comfortable inside. It doesn't faze the tigers in the slightest and it's the visitors that are more intrigued.

"*Kirana* is settling in well; she is quite a feisty tiger who likes to climb and is very active. We are sure our visitors will be as equally charmed with her as we are."



Chester Zoo welcomes a  
ewe-nique new arrival

*Flora* the Superlambanana is settling in for a stay at the Zoo, where visitors will be able to see her watching over the Asiatic lions.

*Flora* belongs to local tourism board Visit Chester & Cheshire and is helping to celebrate Cheshire's Year of Gardens 08.

She's had a busy few weeks. As well as making an appearance at the recent Britain in Bloom awards, she attended the Chester Races Summer Finale before heading to the Zoo.

Kevin Buley, Head of Zoo Programmes, said: "We're absolutely delighted to welcome *Flora* for a stay at Chester Zoo. She's a great new addition. She's very quiet, hardly eats a thing and seems to be getting on well with our other residents!

"We're expecting plenty of people to pop in to visit *Flora* and stay to say hello to a few of her neighbours too."

Cheshire Year of Gardens 08 Project Manager Louise Garforth added: "*Flora* is certainly becoming a well-travelled Superlambanana and is a great ambassador for Cheshire's Year of Gardens 08. She is proving popular wherever she goes!

"We're hoping to give everyone in Cheshire the opportunity to visit and have their picture taken with her."

ELEPHANT AND RHINOS  
SMASHING  
TIME



CHESTER Zoo's elephants and rhinos had a smashing time after Halloween.

The 10 Asian elephants and Greater One-horned rhinoceroses, *Patna* and *Batschii*, marked the end of the zoo's pumpkin festival by trouncing giant pumpkin mountains.

The Hollies Farm Shop, Tarporley, donated pumpkins to the elephants and rhinos to give them a special treat.

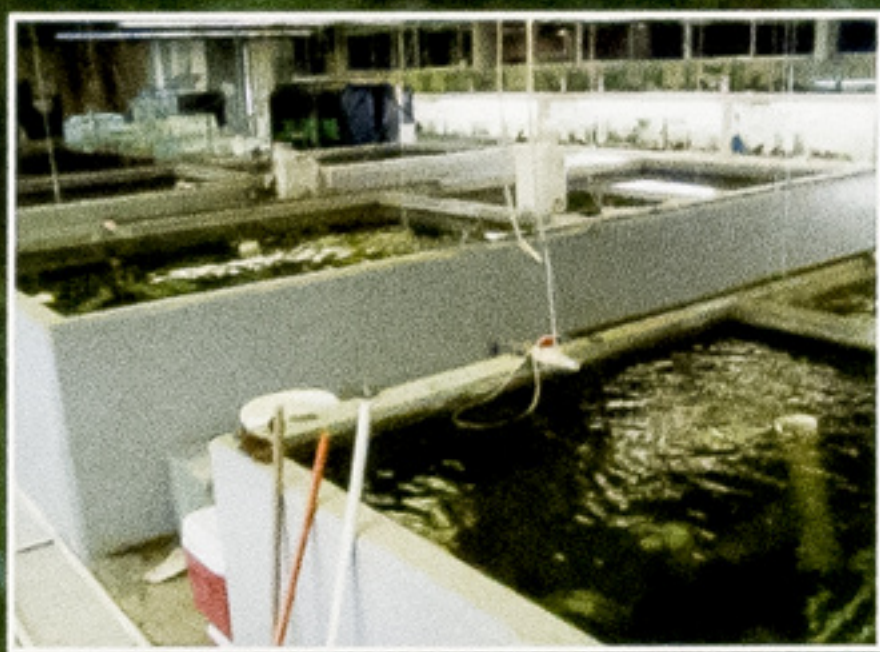
Kevin Buley, Chester Zoo's Head of Zoo Programmes, said:

"The elephants and rhinos had great fun with the pumpkin mountain and it was a surprise for them to walk out onto their island to find a pile of pumpkins waiting. Throughout the year, the elephants and rhinos enjoy a very carefully balanced diet designed to keep them in the very best of health. Additional treats such as this pumpkin mountain provide an unusual diversion."

Mindy Cowap, of The Hollies Farm Shop, added:

"We were delighted to donate our leftover pumpkins to help with the enrichment of the elephants and rhinos at Chester Zoo."





### Mexico

Goodeid fish are a diverse group of freshwater fish, endemic to Mexico, supported by Chester Zoo for many years.

The Fish Ark project is a facility that maintains populations of most of the endangered Goodeid fishes. Colin Grist, Aquarium Projects Coordinator and Aquarist Victoria Dennick travelled to Mexico to research potential new project possibilities and look into in situ conservation projects. Discussions took place regarding the possibility of involving Axolotls in the project. You can get a first hand look at Axolotls in the aquarium at Chester Zoo. An excursion to Lake Patzquaro gave Colin and Victoria a different insight into Axolotls. Nuns at a convent near the lake breed the endemic species in order to use their skin to make syrup, claimed to relieve the symptoms of common colds.



# Staff Go Wild!



### Brazil

Did you know that Chester Zoo has its own Endocrinologist? Endocrinology is a branch of medicine which studies the areas of the body where hormones are released. Wildlife endocrinology is an important conservation tool and can be used to assess the reproductive status and welfare of species. Many rare species in zoos are part of breeding programs to produce an 'insurance population' in case species become extinct in the wild. By using the study of endocrinology, steps can be taken to ensure maximum reproduction.

Sue Walker, Chester Zoo's Endocrinologist, travelled to Brazil to deliver a Wildlife Endocrinology workshop in Foz do Iguaco, Brazil in collaboration with Dr Janine Brown (Smithsonian Institution). Following the course Dr. Neil Moreira from the Federal University of Parana, said: 'We are completely sure about the importance of this workshop for conservation issues here in South America, not only in Brazil, but also in Argentina and Paraguay. You are examples of competence and responsibility in knowledge transfer.'

### French Polynesia

A group of snails found only on the French Polynesian islands was nearly completely wiped out by an introduced predatory snail. Partula, a genus of tree snails containing over 120 species, provide a unique example of species radiation and evolution. The number of species left in the wild dropped dramatically after the introduction in the 1970's of a predatory snail, *Euglandina*, originally introduced to help remove the African giant land snail, an introduced agricultural pest. Instead, *Euglandina* nearly wiped out the native Partula snails. Chester Zoo is part of the International Partula Conservation Programme, a managed breeding programme for these species. Keeper Karen Entwistle travelled to Tahiti and Moorea during August 2008 to carry out field work alongside researchers based on the French Polynesian Islands, surveying the Partula populations.



**Animal Fun!**

# Kidz Zoo!

WWW.CHESTERZOO.ORG

Winter 2008

**ZOO PRIZES**  
to be won!



# Animal Search!

B Y E K I G I B B O N S  
 A S D C O L S A X R V T  
 J C A P Y B A R A A R E  
 A K M C Q H O H U N V M  
 S P E C I E S S H G P B  
 I Z R F O A B E A U X D  
 A W I L G O P H P T F F  
 T D C A N U C I V A E I  
 C V A R E S N I R N A J  
 D E L C A T C E P S N Z

The largest rodent in the world is the \_\_\_\_\_(8).  
 In the zoo they live with the \_\_\_\_\_(6) and the \_\_\_\_\_(6).  
 This is called a mixed \_\_\_\_\_(7) exhibit.  
 All these animals come from South \_\_\_\_\_(7), just like their  
 neighbours in the zoo, the \_\_\_\_\_(9) bears.  
 Other animals that live together in the zoo are the  
 Sumatran \_\_\_\_\_(10) and the Lar \_\_\_\_\_(7),  
 which come from the continent of \_\_\_\_\_(5)

**Match the picture of each animal to the  
 country it is from. Take the initial letter  
 from each answer to find out what sort of  
 animal is a 'Sidewinder'.**



India, Ecuador, China, Australia, Sumatra, Madagascar,  
 Kenya, New Zealand, Nigeria, Galapagos.

**We have two  
 £10 gift vouchers to  
 spend in the zoo shops!**

To be in with a chance of winning,  
 complete the puzzles and send your answers to:  
**Kidz Zoo competition,**  
 c/o Marketing Department,  
 Chester Zoo, Upton-by-Chester,  
 Chester, CH2 1LH  
 by Monday February 2, 2009

Congratulations to last issue's winners  
 Toby Stanton aged 9 from Leeds  
 and Gemma Shaw aged 10  
 from Ashton Hayes

# kidz ZOO!

## PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2009

### THE PALMS' AT STAPELEY SATURDAY 17 JANUARY 2009

This will be a nice gentle visit to start the year and most importantly for January, should be a warm and exciting place to spend a few hours! Apart from the luscious plants, The Palms also houses an interesting collection of animals so please come along to see them. Eights and over are invited to join us and the Bus will leave the Staff car Park at 11.00am and return at 4.00pm and you will need to bring a picnic.

### DISCOVERY SESSION SATURDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2009

This is your opportunity to get to know your own zoo much better. We will split into groups and do different activities such as imaginative enclosure design which will be your chance to create the best living accommodation for a species we choose, and also to have zoo tours. Store-up some questions about the animals and the way we look after them to ask your guides.

Eights and over are asked to join us, meeting outside Oakfield House (near the Lions) at 2.00pm, and parents can collect the youngsters from there at 4.00pm.

### TRACKS & SIGNS SATURDAY 21 MARCH 2009

This is probably one of our most popular events which includes the wide age-range we cater for. This is your chance to see the Zoo from the animals' view of the visitors, as you will be going inside some of the enclosures to search for footprints from which to make plaster casts. March is the best time of year for this as it is normally muddy - but please bear this in mind when you dress in the morning. Hopefully, you will have a souvenir of your day to take home with you.

Eights and over can come along and join in with the messiness, when we meet outside Oakfield House in the Zoo at 11.00am, returning there for collection at 4.00pm. You will need a picnic lunch and it is important that you wear clean, very old clothes and clean wellies please.

### WEPRE PARK SATURDAY 25 APRIL 2009

Wepre Park in Flintshire, actually not too far from the Zoo, is an ancient woodland rich in wildlife and history. Set in 160 acres, cared for daily by the Flintshire Countryside Service, we hope to be shown through this large ancient woodland there by one of the Rangers, and to explore

the ruins of Ewloe castle which is within the park's boundaries. It is a beautiful and fascinating spot, with a stream running through it and plenty to see and do.

**Eights upwards are invited to join us and we will leave the Zoo's Staff Car Park at 10.30am and return at 4.30pm. Bring a picnic and be prepared to be outdoors all day!**

### HAWKSTONE FOLLIES SATURDAY 16 MAY 2009

We have not visited 'the Follies' in Hawkstone Park near Whitchurch for a couple of years, and we felt it was well worth returning to this year. Apart from being a lovely walk through woods and around cliffs, the follies themselves are well worth seeing. You might like to bring a torch as there is a point on the walk when you need to go through a tunnel through the cliff and it is very dark!

**Eights and over should bring along a picnic and we will leave the Staff Car Park at 9.30am and return at 5.00pm.**

### THE GREENWOOD CENTRE SATURDAY 20 JUNE 2009

Back by popular demand! This is one of the Juniors favourite summer haunts and every so often we give-in and visit again! This park, situated in the foothills of Snowdonia, is an amazing mix of environmental park and exciting things to do there - including den-building, and various self-propelled 'rides'. Definitely not-to-be-missed.

**Eights and over should be ready to leave the staff car park at 9.30am and we will return for 5.00pm. Bring a picnic.**



# Junior Members

## PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2009

### HOW TO BE A GOOD ZOOKEEPER! WEDNESDAY 22 JULY 2009

This is a unique opportunity offered to Junior Members to spend a day working alongside a Zoo Keeper. The work can be tough and demanding so we strictly limit this event to those Juniors of 12 or over. We try to match Juniors to their favourite section but places are limited so this cannot be guaranteed. Please arrive prepared to work hard, with clean wellies and an additional completely clean set of clothes to work in. Owing to the Zoo's biosecurity measures, it is important that the clothes you wear to work on the sections have not been in contact with any farm animals, or even your pets at home, since they were last washed.

We will meet outside the Oakfield at 10.30am, and the day will finish for Juniors at 4.00pm. Please bring a packed lunch. Also please note that bookings for this event will not be taken before 9.00 am on Wednesday 8 July 2009, and will be strictly on a first-come, first-served basis.

### SUMMER BARBEQUE THURSDAY 6 AUGUST 2009

Our summer barbeque has become a regular feature for the Juniors' diary as it has proved immensely popular. Perhaps this because it is our chance to be in the Zoo when there are no other visitor noises to distract you and the animals, so it is a different zoo experience. We usually aim to have a speaker to chat to you or to engage in craft activities during the evening, but you can be sure to find it fun and relaxing.

We would like to invite eights and over to join us for a 7.00pm start, when you should arrive at the Ark Restaurant (near the Tigers) via the Zoo's Staff Entrance on Caughall Road. Parents are asked to collect Juniors from the Ark restaurant at 9.45pm please.

### THE FORMBY RED SQUIRRELS SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2009

The National Trust reserve at Freshfield, Formby is one of the best places in Great Britain to see and to get really close to Red Squirrels. The reserve offers visitors an opportunity to explore the beach, sand dunes and coastal pine woodlands as well. The Squirrels will frequently approach within a few feet of visitors. However, there have been a series of devastating disease outbreaks amongst the squirrel populations both here and elsewhere in the UK, so numbers are rapidly decreasing. Take this chance to see them while you still can.

Eights and over are invited to attend and we will leave the Staff car Park at 9.30am and return at 4.30pm. Bring a picnic.

### THE RED DEER RUT AT TATTON PARK SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2009

Once again, it is several years since we visited Tatton Park near Knutsford at the time of the Red Deer 'rut'. This is a fascinating time to watch the behaviour of these animals and we hope to have a Ranger with us to explain what is going on. We will also visit the Home Farm at Tatton to see what is happening there.

We will leave the Zoo's Staff Car Park at 10.30am and return for 4.30pm. Juniors of eight and over should bring a picnic with them.

### LIVERPOOL MUSEUM SATURDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2009

Liverpool Museum is now called the World Museum and we will look forward to noting the recent changes made in the major refurbishment which has been undertaken over the past few years there. There will be so much to see and do that we will have an action-packed November day.

The bus will leave the Staff Entrance at 10.30am and return at 4.00pm. Eights and over are welcome to come. Bring a picnic.

### THE JUNIORS' CHRISTMAS PARTY FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER 2009

Our annual 'bash' welcomes Juniors of eight and over to enjoy an evening of games, disco music, and a great hot-dog and beefburger supper. You will need to bring along a cushion to sit on – and a torch to find us!

The venue will be the Zoo's Ark Cafe and access can be gained through the Cedar House Staff Entrance on Caughall Road, which is the second staff entrance on the left going from the Upton lights. You should arrive at 7.00pm, with a cushion and a torch, and parents should arrange to collect you from the Ark Cafe at 9.45pm.

### THE JUNIOR MEMBERS SUMMER SCHOOL 2008

Twenty-nine lucky Juniors joined us this year for an action-packed week in the Zoo. It was really great fun, with so much to do that it is actually very hard to pick a 'highlight' as every moment seemed special to someone.

Suffice to say that we explored the gardens, discussed the work of the Keepers with them, shared some close encounters with animals, saw the new Butterfly House mid-build, had some brilliant lectures from the excellent zoo team who covered records, enclosure design, animal behaviour and enrichment, outreach and ex-situ conservation topics, native species, zoo veterinary issues, plus found time to do some live mammal trapping, dormouse box-making, spend a day helping the rangers at Wepre Park with ragwort removal, enjoying our craft pot-making, and had the opportunity to see the Zoo's Animal Health Centre and discuss careers. Wow! An opportunity much treasured by those who took part.

### THE JUNIOR MEMBERS SUMMER SCHOOL for 2009 10 – 14 AUGUST 2009 INCLUSIVE

This will be open to Juniors of 13 and over and details will be available in the Spring Edition of the Z magazine, so watch this space and reserve the dates in your diaries if you think you might want to join us!



Please Note: Bookings must be made for all of the regular monthly Junior 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 Z Magazine and not by individual letter, so please keep up-to-date by reading the Junior Pages in each issue. A charge will be made to cover the cost of those events which involve transport, entry fees, materials or the provision of food, and you will be advised of this at the time of booking.



## David is appointed new Commercial Director

**We have appointed a new director to strengthen our management team and help promote the conservation message.**

David Titmuss, 45, has been appointed Commercial Director. He brings with him a wealth of marketing experience having previously held posts as Head of Marketing at Capital Bank and for the Bank of Scotland Group. Prior to joining the zoo David had also helped to set up and secure funding for The Funding Corporation.

David is looking forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

He said: "As someone who once lived just doors away from the zoo, I have always been, and continue to be, a great supporter of the work that goes on here."

"This is an exciting and challenging role and I'm very much looking forward to increasing our commercial presence and reach whilst promoting and supporting our valuable, world-wide conservation work."

David's appointment completes the 'trio' of zoo directors; Mark Pilgrim is Director of Conservation and Education and Alasdair McNee is Director of Corporate Services. Gordon McGregor Reid is Director General.

David, a keen swimmer, lives in Rossett with wife Vicky, who is the Director of Marketing at The King's School, Chester, and children Daniel 16, and Olivia, 13.



## Zoo welcomes millionth visitor

**ONE family had a million reasons to celebrate when they visited Chester Zoo.**

Francis McMahon was overjoyed when he became the one millionth visitor to pass through the gates this year. Dad Francis of Widnes visited with son Joseph, four, and Olivia, 14 months.

The milestone also caused celebrations as the number of visitors reached the millionth visitor mark earlier than last year. 2007 was a record-breaking year in the zoo's history, with 1.3 million passing through the zoo gates.

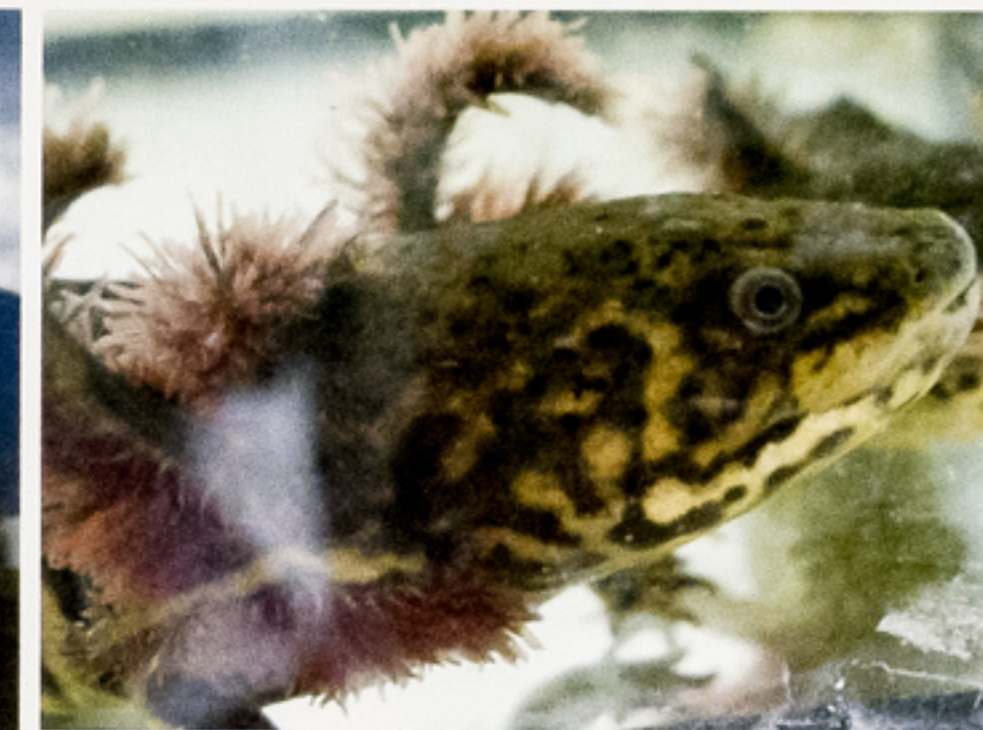
The family were presented with an animal adoption and a toy elephant to mark the occasion.

Liz Thwaite, Head of Visitor Services, said:

We have had another incredible year at Chester Zoo and our visitor numbers have been phenomenal with some months breaking zoo records. In 2006, it was October before we reached the million visitor mark, in 2007 it was the middle of September and this year we've achieved the milestone even earlier.

Our visitor figures continue to go from strength to strength and prove just how popular the zoo continues to be.

**The next Members' Day** will take place on Saturday 25th April 2009. There will be a programme of activities along with the opportunity to meet and ask Keepers questions about their particular sections. Members will need to confirm their attendance by telephoning the membership office on 01244 650208.



# Axolotl conservation in central Mexico

by **Victoria Dennick** Aquarist

Photos by **Victoria Dennick** and **Colin Grist**

**Axolotls are aquatic amphibians with a newt-like appearance and a life history that is, quite frankly, bizarre. They are the Peter Pans of the animal world, in as much that they simply refuse to grow up!**

**I**NSTEAD of going through metamorphosis like the majority of amphibians, axolotls remain in their larval form for their entire lives but, oddly enough, are still able to reproduce. This is an adaptation known as neoteny. This apparent backward step in evolution means that axolotls very rarely, if ever, metamorphose into a terrestrial salamander – in fact some axolotl species have lost the ability to metamorphose altogether and will die if forced (artificially) to change. Neoteny, however, is an adaptation that brings just rewards – a key advantage is that the animal can remain living in a prey-rich aquatic environment but has a ‘get out clause’ should aquatic life become too harsh (assuming metamorphosis can still be achieved by the species in question). Remaining in the larval form also allows the axolotl to retain its extraordinary ability to regenerate tissue; meaning that damaged limbs, gills, skin and even brain tissue can be repaired.

Chester Zoo has long been involved in axolotl conservation in Mexico, giving support to project ‘Aztecs and Axolotls’ at Lake Xochimilco for a number of years. Lake Xochimilco is home to the most familiar axolotl species *Ambystoma mexicanum*, known simply as the axolotl (and which you can see in the zoo’s aquarium). Instigated by the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), the project aims to protect *A. mexicanum* and its habitat for future generations. The key to the project, alongside research and breeding, is to educate and train local people to protect this animal as a natural resource, thereby allowing them to earn a living as wildlife guides teaching others about the axolotls. However, despite the success at Lake Xochimilco, a recent visit to Mexico has highlighted a need for further efforts to be made in order to conserve other species of axolotl.

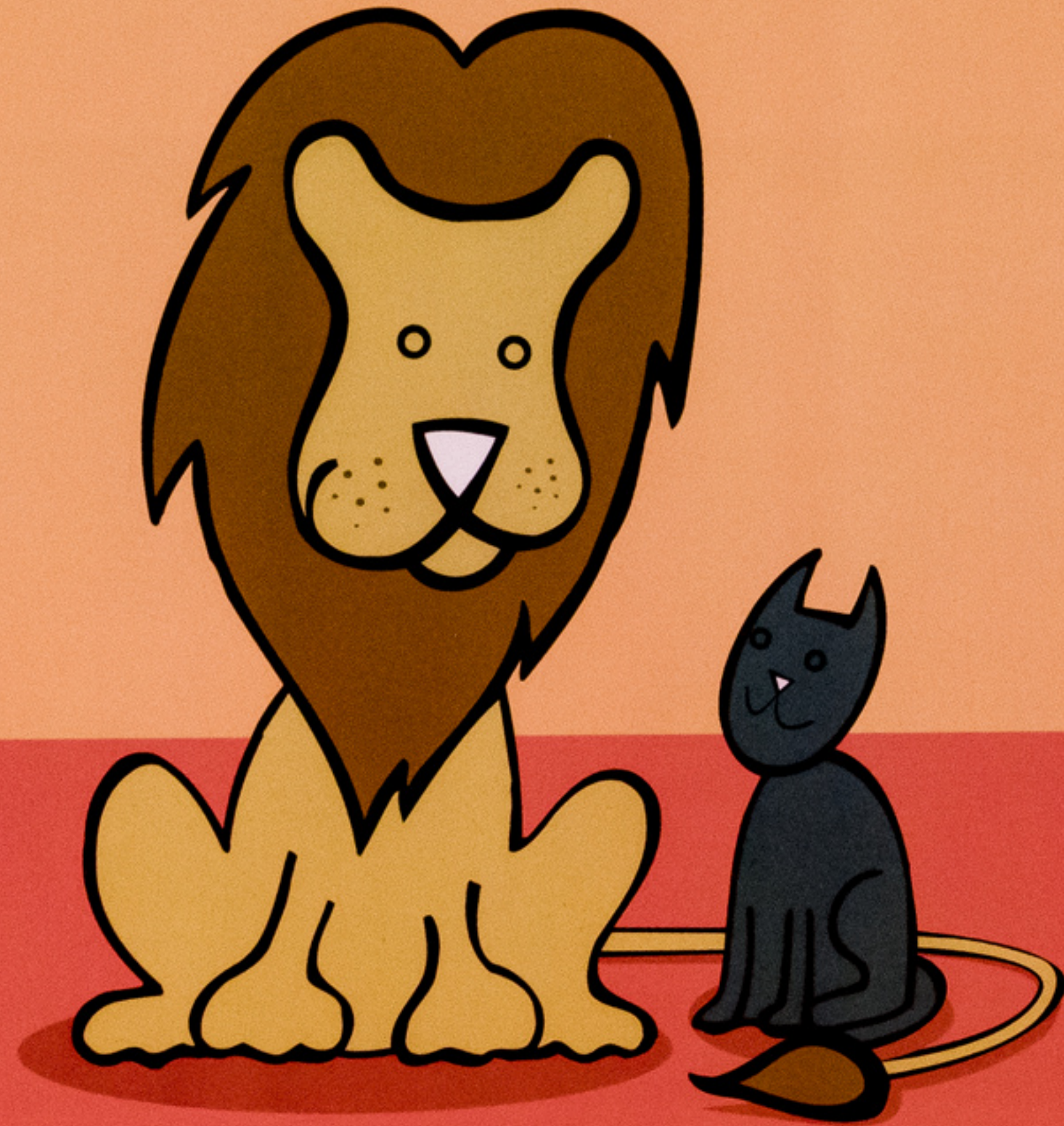
Eleven distinct species of axolotl have been described in the Mexican state of Michoacán alone, each species endemic to its own particular lake and many listed by the IUCN as Critically Endangered. This discovery only emphasises the need to protect these lakes and their unique fauna. Historically axolotls have had considerable commercial value to the local people as a food source but due to dwindling stocks many fishermen no longer target axolotls since they are no longer a viable source of income. It is likely therefore, that the key to axolotl long-term conservation may lie in their commercial value.

Indeed, Lake Patzcuaro is home to *Ambystoma dumerilii*. This species has great value to the nuns of the Franciscan Convent of Santa Ana in Patzcuaro who breed the species in order to make their unique brand of axolotl ‘syrup’ – said to cure throat ailments. The nuns have expressed a desire to release a number of animals each year to help ensure the long-term survival of the species in the wild. Given the knowledge and experience the nuns have in breeding these animals they could well play a vital role in the conservation of this species, with the additional possibility of helping to breed other threatened species in the future.

*Ambystoma andersoni*, a stunning species with green and gold leopard-like markings, is confined to Lake Zacapu. This is one of the species previously targeted by fishermen as a food source. It has been proposed that the wild popula-

tion might be boosted by developing a captive-rearing and release programme whereby the fishermen raise axolotls from eggs collected in the lake. A percentage of the animals can be released back into the lake and the remainder sold to provide the fishermen with an income. However, the economic feasibility and sustainability of such a programme remains to be proven.

Morelia University in Mexico is home to the Fish Ark, a project set up primarily for the conservation of Mexican live-bearing fishes. However, Fish Ark is now Fish and Axolotl Ark as it expands its remit to include some of these precariously threatened amphibians. Chester Zoo has supported the Fish Ark for several years and it is hoped that working in conjunction with the University will allow the accumulation of knowledge about the breeding and rearing of these unique aquatic salamanders, their evolutionary history (through genetic analyses) and ultimately the development of innovative conservation strategies for as many as possible. Among the first steps in this direction are the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise our working relationship, the re-assessment of our Mexican live-bearing fish populations to ensure we are targeting the most needy in our respective collections and the establishment of breeding groups of *Ambystoma andersoni* at both Fish Ark and Chester Zoo.



## Save big cats when you save with the Cheshire.

Open a Big Cat Junior Saver Account today and we'll make a 1% donation to Chester Zoo.

Pick up a leaflet from **Guest Services** or call 0800 195 1514

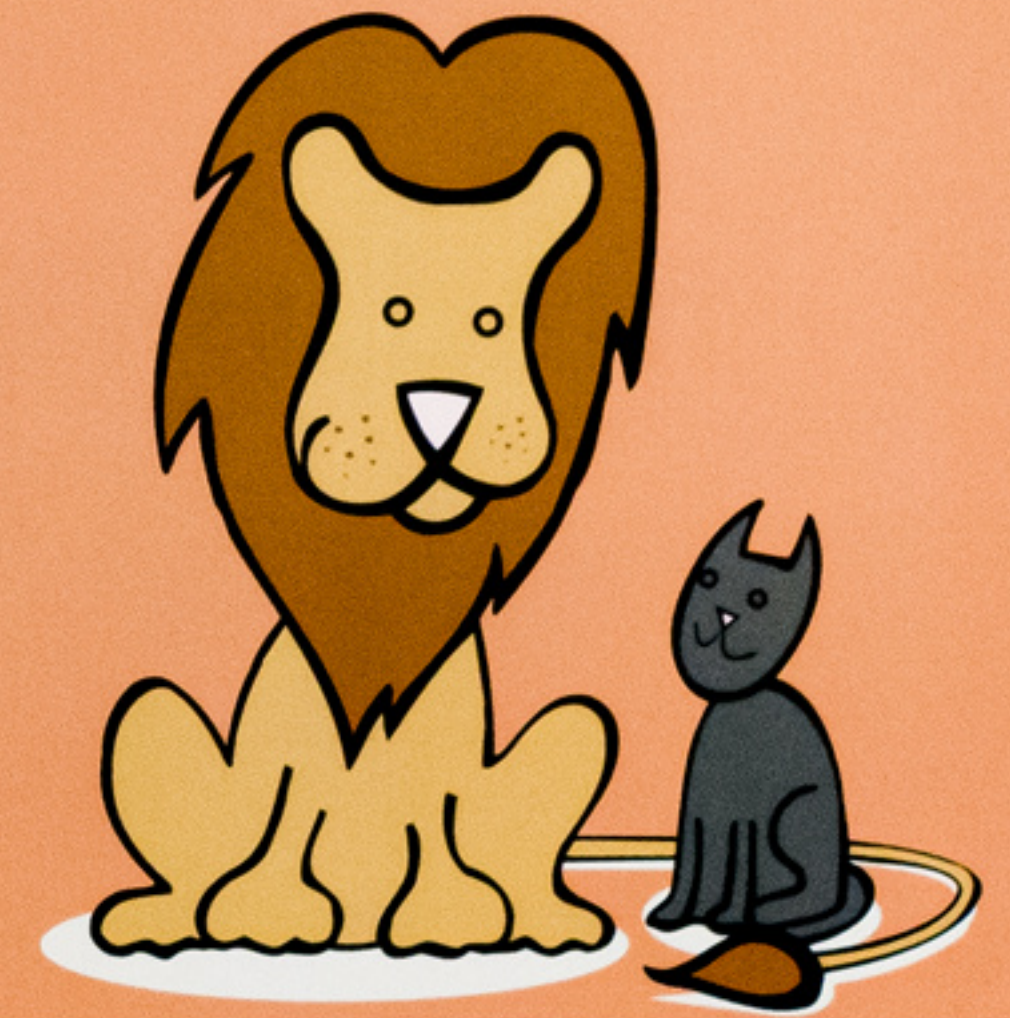
Chester Zoo will receive an amount equal to 1% of the average total balance in the account over the year from Cheshire Building Society. \*Big Cat Junior Saver Account must be opened with a minimum investment of £100 to receive free child place. Additional terms and conditions apply. The account is available up to the age of 18. Instant access subject to withdrawal limits. Lines open 8am-8pm weekdays, 9am-4pm Saturdays. For security and training purposes, telephone calls may be monitored or recorded. Head Office: Castle Street, Macclesfield SK11 6AF. Cheshire Building Society is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (Registered Number 206102). Chester Zoo is operated by the North of England Zoological Society (Registered Charity Number 306077).



**CESHIRE**  
BUILDING SOCIETY

**We bring more value to what you value**

## Cheshire Cats Save for Zoo



Chester Zoo has teamed up with Cheshire Building Society to launch the **Big Cat Junior Saver children's savings account** offering 5% gross/AER\*. The instant access\*\* savings account, which is available at the Society's 42 branches across the region, is open to persons up to the age of 18. At the end of each year the Society donates 1% of the average total balance in the accounts to help fund conservation projects at both Chester Zoo and in the animals' natural habitats.

To celebrate the launch of the Zoo's first children's savings account, every account opened with the minimum required investment of £1 by 31st December 2008 will be automatically entered into a free prize draw to win a Chester Zoo animal adoption. In addition, every account opened with an investment of £100 will receive a voucher for one free child admission to the zoo when accompanied by two full paying adults. The maximum investment is £15,000.

Chester Zoo Development Manager Melanie Cowieson, said: "We're delighted to be working with the Cheshire on the Big Cat Junior Saver Account. As a charity, Chester Zoo always needs to raise funds for the support of its work both at home and abroad and the money donated by the Cheshire from this account will help us continue our vital conservation work."

Karen McCormick, Chief Executive of Cheshire Building Society, added: "Being able to handle money is a core skill for life and a children's savings account is the first step on this journey. Parents, grandparents, relations and friends, can all become great role models in encouraging a positive attitude towards saving by saving first, not spending!"

"Our relationship with Chester Zoo, whose determination is to sustain our environment, goes hand in hand with the Society's determination to build for a better future."

\*The 'gross rate' is the contractual rate of interest payable before the deduction of income tax at the rate specified by law. AER stands for the Annual Equivalent Rate and illustrates what the interest rate would be if it was paid and compounded once each year.

\*\*Instant access subject to withdrawal limits.



**CESHIRE**  
BUILDING SOCIETY

# fundRAISING



## Funders back local wildlife!

Thanks to donations from the Heritage Lottery Fund & the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Chester Zoo in partnership with rECOrd will be running a new volunteer recorder training project, **Count Me In!** The project aims to inspire people to watch local wildlife, equip them to record native species, and increases their understanding of the local environment of Cheshire.

This new project involves pooling both organisations' resources and skills to present a series of activities and workshops to create the volunteer wildlife recorders of the future. The project has been jointly funded by HLF and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and will run over the next two years.





## Schoolboy raises money for the Zoo

We are pleased to announce that 11 year old **Jack Williams** from Warrington has managed to raise £455 for the zoo. Development Manager **Melanie Cowieson** received the cheque from Jack and presented him with a certificate of thanks.

Jack has been fundraising for Chester Zoo since November last year with the help of fellow classmates. He used his initiative and successfully carried out many fundraising activities including colouring competitions and word searches. He even ran a fundraising stall for the zoo at his school.

We want to take this opportunity to thank Jack and his school at the time, St Catherine's Primary School, and say very well done for raising so much money and taking the time and effort to think about Chester Zoo.

## Ring the changes in 2009!

Many Chester Zoo supporters will be receiving new mobile phones for Christmas and will wonder what to do with their old ones. Now you can donate unwanted phones to the Zoo who will recycle them, not only raising vital funds for our conservation work, but also reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills. It really couldn't be easier to help and it will cost you nothing, not even the price of stamp! All you need to do is put your phones in one of our freepost envelopes.

And if you bring your phone into the zoo whilst visiting during January and February 2009, you will get a discount voucher in return. Simply bring your phone and hand it in at the Guest Services pavilion just inside the main entrance.

If you would like more information on Chester Zoo's recycling scheme or want to request recycling envelopes, please contact the Development team on [development@chesterzoo.org](mailto:development@chesterzoo.org) or call 01244 650229.

### CHESTER ZOO

## 100 Club

The winners of the prize draws, held recently, were:

#### July 2008

Miss Susan Wilks, Prescot	£100
Mrs Lynda Anne Birch, Helsby	£100
Dr Philip Robinson, Chester	£50
Mrs Sarah Curtis, Chester	£50
Mrs Sandra Soul, Northwich	£50

#### August 2008

Miss S C Gladwin, Chester	£100
Ms Viv Braddock, Chester	£100
Mrs Catherine Sullivan, Wrexham	£50
Miss Elizabeth Williams, Wrexham	£50
Mrs C McGarva, Chester	£50

#### September 2008

Mr Gareth Petty, Wrexham	£100
Ms Paulene Jones, Thingwall	£100
Mr & Mrs D L Milligan, Heswall	£50
Mrs Patricia Cade, Hooton	£50
Mr Gwyn Griffiths, Crewe	£50

Membership of the 100 Club is still invited.

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

Please inform us as soon as possible if you change address.

If you wish to participate, please contact the Development Office on 01244 650 292.

## Winter Raffle reminder

Tickets are still on sale for Chester Zoo's amazing winter raffle. You should have received a book of tickets in the September issue of Z and if you haven't had chance to do so yet, please return stubs and monies before **9th January 2009** when the draw is due to take place. There are fabulous prizes on offer including a Eurocamp family holiday, a Keeper for a Day experience, a Land Rover Driving experience and an M&S luxury hamper. Tickets cost just £1 each so if you are able to sell any additional tickets then please contact the Development team via [development@chesterzoo.org](mailto:development@chesterzoo.org) or by calling 01244 650229.

# The perfect CHRISTMAS Wish

A BRAND NEW WAY TO HELP CONSERVATION

So what are 'Wildest Wishes' gifts?

As members and adopters you'll know that Chester Zoo's vision is to be part of a diverse, thriving and sustainable natural world. To help us accomplish this, and to provide you with the perfect Christmas gift for people who care about wildlife, we've created 'Wildest Wishes', our feel good gift range.

'Wildest Wishes' gifts are a chance to show you care – both for your friends and family and for the planet. When you purchase a gift from our 'Wildest Wishes' range you are helping to secure the future for endangered species around the world by supporting Chester Zoo's many conservation projects.

## HOW TO BUY :-

Simply go online  
[www.chesterzoo.org/wildestwishes](http://www.chesterzoo.org/wildestwishes)  
 and choose your perfect Christmas gift.  
 Hurry now - the last day for guaranteed  
 Christmas delivery is 15th December.

**£40**  
 A 'purrfect' gift  
 for Cat Lovers



**£20**  
 The Milk of  
 HUMAN KINDNESS



**£30**  
 Paint and polish -  
 an elephant pedicure



The ideal Christmas gift  
 THE NORTH OF ENGLAND ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
 Chester Zoo, Upton-by -Chester, Chester CH2 1LH

Tel: 01244 650229 or visit [www.chesterzoo.org/wildestwishes](http://www.chesterzoo.org/wildestwishes)  
 Registered charity No. 306077

# Wildest Wishes



Book  
now online!

[www.chesterzoo.org/frostfair](http://www.chesterzoo.org/frostfair)



# FROST FAIR

27th November 2008 -  
11th January 2009

- outdoor ice skating rink • Festival gift stalls
- Journey through Lapland to meet Santa
- Live Entertainment and fun activities for the children

To book or for further details  
call: 01244 650240 or book online.

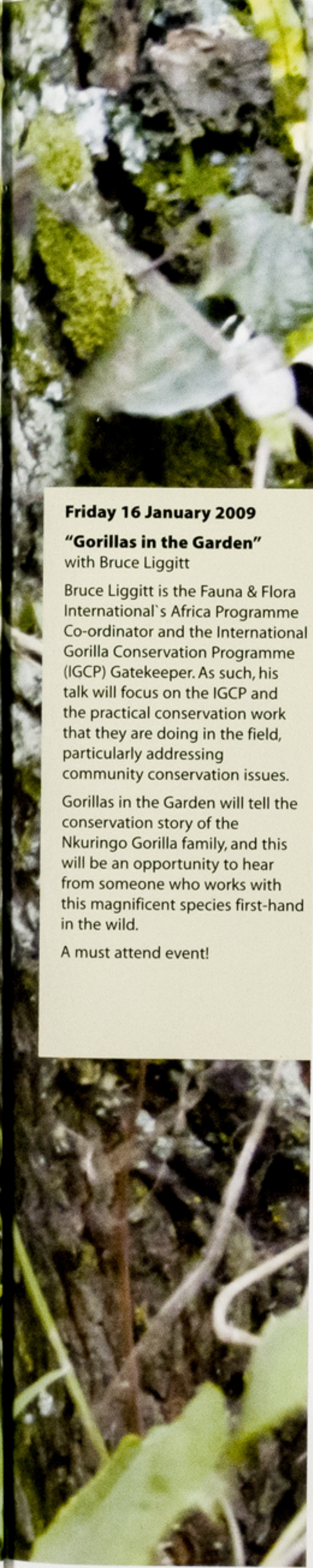
Chester  
Festivals

Chester  
ZOO  
IT'S REAL!

Tiger image courtesy of Photodisc, Inc. Chester Zoo is a Registered Charity No. 306077



© S.P. Hill (2006)



**Friday 16 January 2009**

**"Gorillas in the Garden"**  
with Bruce Liggitt

Bruce Liggitt is the Fauna & Flora International's Africa Programme Co-ordinator and the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) Gatekeeper. As such, his talk will focus on the IGCP and the practical conservation work that they are doing in the field, particularly addressing community conservation issues.

Gorillas in the Garden will tell the conservation story of the Nkuringo Gorilla family, and this will be an opportunity to hear from someone who works with this magnificent species first-hand in the wild.

A must attend event!

FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL (NORTH WEST GROUP)  
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS ASSOCIATION WITH CHESTER ZOO



**FAUNA & FLORA**  
*International*  
Conserving wildlife since 1903

**SPRING PROGRAMME 2009**

Please note that FFI evenings are a unique mix of 'entertainment' and learning focussed on conservation. They are informal, informative and fun, and are open to everyone, so please do feel free to come along.

**Friday 20 March 2009**

**"The Elephants of Amboseli"**  
with Winnie Kiirul

Winnie is a Kenyan born Wildlife ecologist who has worked in conservation for the past 15 years and has vast experience having worked with Kenya's Wildlife Management Authority, the Kenya Wildlife Service as a Senior Research Scientist. Winnie has travelled the world gaining international exposure on issues such as the global wildlife trade, captive animal industry as well as environmental practises and policies around the world. She continues to play an important role in CITES. She has been instrumental in developing, within KWS, a highly efficient capture and translocation team to ensure the humane translocation of elephants and other animals. Her talk will focus on her work developing conflict mitigation strategies with particular focus on human-elephant conflict around Amboseli National Park in South West Kenya which is a small National Park holding a population of about 1500 elephants that roam freely in the rangelands and farmlands outside the park and thus the need for a sustainable conflict resolution strategy in conjunction with local communities.

**Friday 24 April 2009**

**"The Lizard Wizard"**  
with John Bendon

FFI is not all about the cuddly stuff – although John Bendon may view his beloved Iguanas differently to some others.

John is a Member of the International Union of Conservation and Nature's (IUCN) Iguana Specialist Group. In fact he is an amazing artist whose main work with these creatures has involved him travelling the world to meticulously record on paper the scale patterns of individuals to determine individual, regional and sub-specific variations. During the 30 or so years he has spent doing this, John has had the unique opportunity to study in detail the behaviour of several species of Iguana in many locations around the world. This is your chance to hear more about his important work, and to view some of his drawings.



Tickets for these events may be available on the door, but advance booking helps keeps costs down. Please call Penny Rudd on 01244 650215 to reserve tickets. Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start at Chester Zoo's Russell Allen Lecture Hall, off the A41, just before the Park & Ride. Easy parking! Members and non-members of FFI are welcome to attend; tickets cost £8.00 for FFI Members and £8.50 for non-FFI Members, with a concession of £5 for students. All ticket prices include a buffet and wine.

# Talking Conservation!

Winter Season 2009

**Welcome** to our new season of Members' Talks which, as usual, brings you up to date with the work being carried out by the North of England Zoological Society, both in Chester and further afield. Our talks are designed to give you a more intimate insight into how we care for our animals and the work involved in ensuring that they receive the best possible healthcare, diet and enrichment. We hear daily news bulletins of what is or what isn't beneficial to our own health – and this can be confusing enough, but how do we start to determine what animals should eat in a zoo environment? Dr Andrea Fidgett's talk will open the window to the fascinating world of zoo nutrition.

It isn't all about working with our own animals though as we endeavour to achieve our mission 'to be a major force in conserving biodiversity worldwide'. We do a great deal of conservation work in the field and our Members' Talks are our opportunity to show you how your support really helps endangered species. Our 2009 season promises to bring you exciting updates from our various worldwide projects and we look forward to meeting you.

Wednesday 14th January 2009 at 7.30pm

## 'What not to eat – the science of zoo nutrition'

Dr Andrea Fidgett

On the plains of Africa and in the Amazon rainforests, the inhabitants live off what's growing and living around them. But in a totally different environment, where living off the land isn't an option, what do zoo animals need to eat to stay healthy? We humans are told that variety is the key to a healthy diet and the same is true for zoos' residents. As the saying goes, 'you are what you eat'. Diet plays a vital role in maintaining health and fending off disease and is not simply a source of calories. Our knowledge of the nutritional needs of zoo animals is miniscule but we must provide nutritional support for all stages of life. So just what exactly is a 'square meal' if you are a Komodo dragon? And do hyacinth macaws have to follow the five-a-day rule? This presentation will explore what is involved in menu-planning for the 450+ species at the Zoo.

**Andrea Fidgett:** Based at Chester Zoo since 2002, Andrea remains the only full-time nutritionist employed by a UK zoo and has lectured at universities and zoos in the UK, Europe, South Africa, India and China. Following her Zoology degree Andrea spent three years as a research assistant at Jersey Zoo. Investigating diet and mortality in endangered parrots there led to her 'niche' as a comparative wildlife nutritionist, via an MSc in nutrition and a PhD in avian ecology. Between further degrees she also helped designed 'ZOOTRITION', diet management software for zoos.

Tuesday 10th February 2009 at 7.30pm

## The Snail Trail – The Search for Partula in Polynesia

Karen Entwistle

Partula snails have been kept at Chester since 1989, as part of a breeding program to help save them from extinction. The program now involves 15 zoos worldwide which currently maintain 22 species, most of which are extinct in their natural habitat, due to the release of the predatory rosy wolf snail. A handful of Partula species can still be found in small populations in particular valleys on Tahiti and Moorea. The field studies are an essential part of the success of the breeding program, the numbers of Partula in the wild are closely monitored as are the numbers of the rosy wolf snail that still threaten the Partulas existence in the wild. Another important part of the in-situ work is the planning and preparation of small reserves where Partula can be released into a protected habitat.

**Karen Entwistle:** Karen has worked in the Herpetology Department for 7 years. Before joining the zoo she studied at university and volunteered at Bolton Museum Aquarium. 5 years ago Karen was given the opportunity to take over the care of the Partula Snails after assisting in their maintenance for two years. In August 2008 she spent two weeks assisting Dr Trevor Coote in his field studies.

just for  
members

Wednesday 18th March 2009 at 7.3 pm

## Wildlife Crime Unit in Medan

Andy Wolfenden

Andy Wolfenden worked at the Blue Planet Aquarium for two years before joining Chester Zoo's Aquarium four years ago. With a big interest in developing natural methods of environmental enrichment for big cats, he joined the Carnivore keeping team three years ago. His 'Paramount of playtime: big cat enrichment at Chester Zoo' talk proved to be one of our most popular Members' Talks in 2008.

Tuesday 7th April 2009 at 7.30pm

## The Assam Haathi Project

Scott Wilson

Asian elephants are having to exist in an increasingly human dominated landscape. In Assam, human elephant conflict leads each year to loss of crops, damage to buildings and injury and death to rural villagers and elephants alike. The Assam Haathi Project is working closely with affected communities to reduce this conflict, help improve livelihoods and promote the conservation of elephants.

**Scott Wilson:** Scott joined the Chester Zoo Conservation Division in 2002. As Conservation Officer he has a very diverse role including helping to develop and manage Chester's growing portfolio of conservation outreach activities worldwide and managing the GIS components of Chester's conservation programmes.

Scott originally studied Marine Biology & Zoology at Bangor University, and went on to complete an MSc in Conservation Biology at Manchester Metropolitan University. Between studying Scott's previous jobs have included working for the Zoology Department of the Ulster Museum, Belfast; as a Team Leader for the Sea Turtle Protection Society in Greece; and as a teacher in Zimbabwe for VSO.

After each talk, you are invited to join us for light refreshments where you will have an informal opportunity to ask questions and to chat to staff and guest speakers.

There are always spare places at the Members' Talks. Our Lecture Theatre seats up to 170, so why not encourage your fellow members to join us and learn more about the important conservation work Chester Zoo is involved in?

At selected talks, there will be items for sale from our projects overseas – perfect gifts, supporting vital work.

All of our Members' Talks are held in the Geraldine Russell Lecture Theatre (near the Zoo's Main Entrance off the A41) at the times stated above. The talks are free of charge and are provided to keep you abreast of Chester Zoo's conservation work which your membership supports.

### Interested in attending?

Please call Kate in Education on 01244 389 444 or e-mail [k.brankin@chesterzoo.org](mailto:k.brankin@chesterzoo.org) to book.

## Members' Questions

**Q:** Have the Saturday afternoon talks stopped?

**A:** We haven't taken the decision not to hold our Members' Talks on Saturday afternoons, but it does prove difficult to get speakers for a weekend talk. When booking speakers, we always give them a selection of dates, including Saturday afternoon or weekday evening slots, and ask them for their preference. It is usually the case that they choose a week day. However, when speakers are happy to talk on Saturday afternoons, we will book them in.

**Q:** Will any Members' Trips run in 2009?

**A:** None are planned. We planned three for 2008 – a London weekend (London Zoo and the Wetlands Trust, Barnes); a long weekend in Holland touring Dutch Zoos; and a field trip to Kenya. Disappointingly trips generated little interest and unfortunately all three had to be cancelled as running them wasn't viable.



THE PERFECT SETTING  
FOR  
CHRISTMAS LUNCH OR DINNER  
AND NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

**Christmas Menu 2008**

Parsnip, sage and apple soup,  
finished with crème fraîche & carrot purée

Roasted baby beetroot, blood orange, walnuts & asparagus  
served on a bed of mustard greens, drizzled with orange oil

Smoked salmon fishcakes,  
placed on mixed crisp salad leaves,  
accompanied with a sweet chilli and red onion salsa

\*\*\*

Topside of beef studded with fresh horseradish & garlic,  
sealed and slowly roasted in tarragon butter and served  
with a rich red wine, cherry tomato & mushroom sauce

Roast Cheshire turkey served with thyme and cranberry  
stuffing, chipolata, bacon roll & traditional trimmings

Peppered Tuna steak, pan fried in citrus butter  
served with a homemade tartare sauce

Crispy cheese pastry tart layered with goats cheese,  
red onion confit  
topped with chargrilled vegetables  
& roasted vine tomatoes (v)  
(This dish must be pre-ordered)

All the above dishes are served with  
seasonal vegetables and potatoes

\*\*\*

Selection of desserts

**New Year's Day Menu 2009**

**Thursday 1st January 2009**

**£20.95**

£15.95 per child (under 15 years of age)  
Price includes admission into Chester Zoo  
(10% off for the Zoo member cardholder)

Roasted tomato & red pepper soup  
finished with fresh cream & herbed croutons

Cointreau & orange pâté  
served with a winter fruit chutney, toasted French bread  
& salad garnish

Baby mushrooms sautéed in garlic butter, fresh cream,  
topped with a herb crumble

\*\*\*

Skinless chicken breast stuffed with smoked bacon & leeks  
finished with a mature white cheddar cheese sauce

Fish pie made with pieces of plain & smoked haddock,  
salmon & baby prawns  
bound in a creamy white wine sauce, topped  
with a puff pastry crust

Mediterranean vegetables coated in garlic, tomato sauce,  
wrapped in a herbed pancake,  
sprinkled with fresh mozzarella

\*\*\*

Desserts can be added at an additional price of £4.95

**Christmas lunch**

served from **Monday 1st December up to and including Wednesday 24th December**

**£24.95 per adult - £16.25 per child** (under 11 years of age)

Price includes admission into Chester Zoo and Frost Fair.  
(10% off for the Zoo member cardholder)

**Christmas Dinner and Disco**

**Friday 12th December £34.95 per person**

Private evenings can be catered for. Minimum number of guests required: 90

Weekend lunches are popular so book now for a 12 noon or 3pm sitting on **01244 650 209**

To make a booking or for further information please telephone:

**The Events Office, Chester Zoo, Upton, Chester CH2 1LH**

**Tel: 01244 650209 / 281 events@chesterzoo.org www.chesterzoo.org**



Chester Zoo, Upton-by-Chester, Chester, CH2 1LH

Tel. 01244 380280 Fax. 01244 371273 Email: info@chesterzoo.co.uk Web: www.chesterzoo.org

Founded in 1934, the North of England Zoological Society is a registered charity and receives no Government funding. We need your help and support to raise funds for the care and conservation of rare and endangered animals both in the Zoo and across the world.

Registered charity No. 306077