

# ZooLife

**SPRING 2005 - ISSUE 21**

CHESTER ZOO'S MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS AND ADOPTERS

**NEWS FROM THE  
ANIMAL TEAMS**

**RHINO  
FUNDRAISING**

**NEW SPECIES  
DISCOVERED!**





# Director's Pen

By Zoo Director Gordon McGregor Reid

Welcome to the first *Zoo Life* of 2005.

If you are a new member or adopter, or if you are a long-time subscriber, I hope you enjoy reading the magazine.

It gives you a round up of news and views from the Zoo as well as features on some of our overseas conservation work as reflected in articles in this issue on our bird work in Mauritius and our field work in China. Our activities and expertise within the Zoo continue to provide the sound foundation for our international conservation work and we are currently working on all five continents in 50 countries.

We ended 2004 on a high with a total of 1,087,000 visitors for the year, an increase of more than 10,000 on the previous year, which is remarkable when you

consider we had some of the worst weather in 50 years!

We also received some notable awards towards the end of the year and I am delighted to report two 'firsts'. We have become the first zoo in the UK to achieve the environmental management standard ISO14001, which is awarded to 'green' companies that show a commitment to being environmentally aware and responsible. Likewise we are the first zoo to receive a Heritage Education Trust Sandford Award, an educational award for excellence normally reserved for stately homes, castles, museums and galleries.

Elsewhere, we were presented with four top awards from the zoo world at the British and Irish Association

of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA, formerly the Zoo Federation) annual awards ceremony, held at Woburn Safari Park.

Zoo staff were delighted to scoop the Research Award for a study carried out by the Zoo's Research Officer on the behaviour of Orang-utans and to also come away with the Marketing Award for the Asian Elephant Survival 'elective pound' campaign. Commendations were received for the Zoo's yellow seahorse breeding programme and for our conservation efforts through the trial release of harvest mice in Cheshire.

During this coming year our emphasis will be very much on building for the future. You will see from page eight that we are underway with a number of new developments. These include the new Asian forest for our elephants, improvements near the main entrance in the Tsavo Black Rhino area, and the re-development of the Orang-utan enclosure through 'Realm of the Red Ape', our single most expensive project. All of this work will noticeably improve the Zoo and we hope to keep the effect on you, our visitors, to a minimum.

Our thoughts over the past weeks have inevitably been with those affected by the Asian tsunami.



Melanie Cowieson, Mark Pilgrim and Dr. Stephanie Wehneit celebrate the BIAZA awards

Zoo staff have rallied to support the Disaster Appeal and you will see on page four that we have contributed funds to two conservation projects in Sri Lanka: an elephant orphanage in Pinnewela in the central hills and a Turtle Project in Kosgoda on the south west coast, which has been completely devastated.

World-wide, Chester Zoo is helping to foster the debate on the ethical treatment of animals, which is an enormously important issue in terms of generating more standardised and considered animal management practices.

This year will see the publication of the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy which Chester Zoo staff have made a significant contribution towards. The document focuses on partnerships between zoos and conservation organisations in the task of conserving nature and the natural environment.

As group Chairman, I am proud that Chester Zoo is hosting the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and Wetlands International Fresh Fish Species Global Planning Strategy meeting in March. This will see 15 of the world's top fish and aquatic bio-diversity experts gather together to consider world conservation issues.

Later in the year, we will be co-hosting an awareness-raising event at the Linnean Society in London which will highlight the plight of the Asian Elephant. The Linnean Society is the world's oldest biological society and it was to this Society that Darwin and Wallace delivered their original 'Origin of Species' papers. Linnaeus' masterwork *Systema Naturae* (1758) is accepted as the foundation for standard schemes of biological classification and represents the dawn of studies in biodiversity. Interestingly, the Asian Elephant is a Linnean species as Linnaeus was the first to describe it.

Here in the Zoo we are sad to have lost our female tiger, *Strelka*. She lived a long and happy life and at 15 died of sheer old age. Her brother *Korda* is the same age and he will live out his days contentedly at the Zoo.

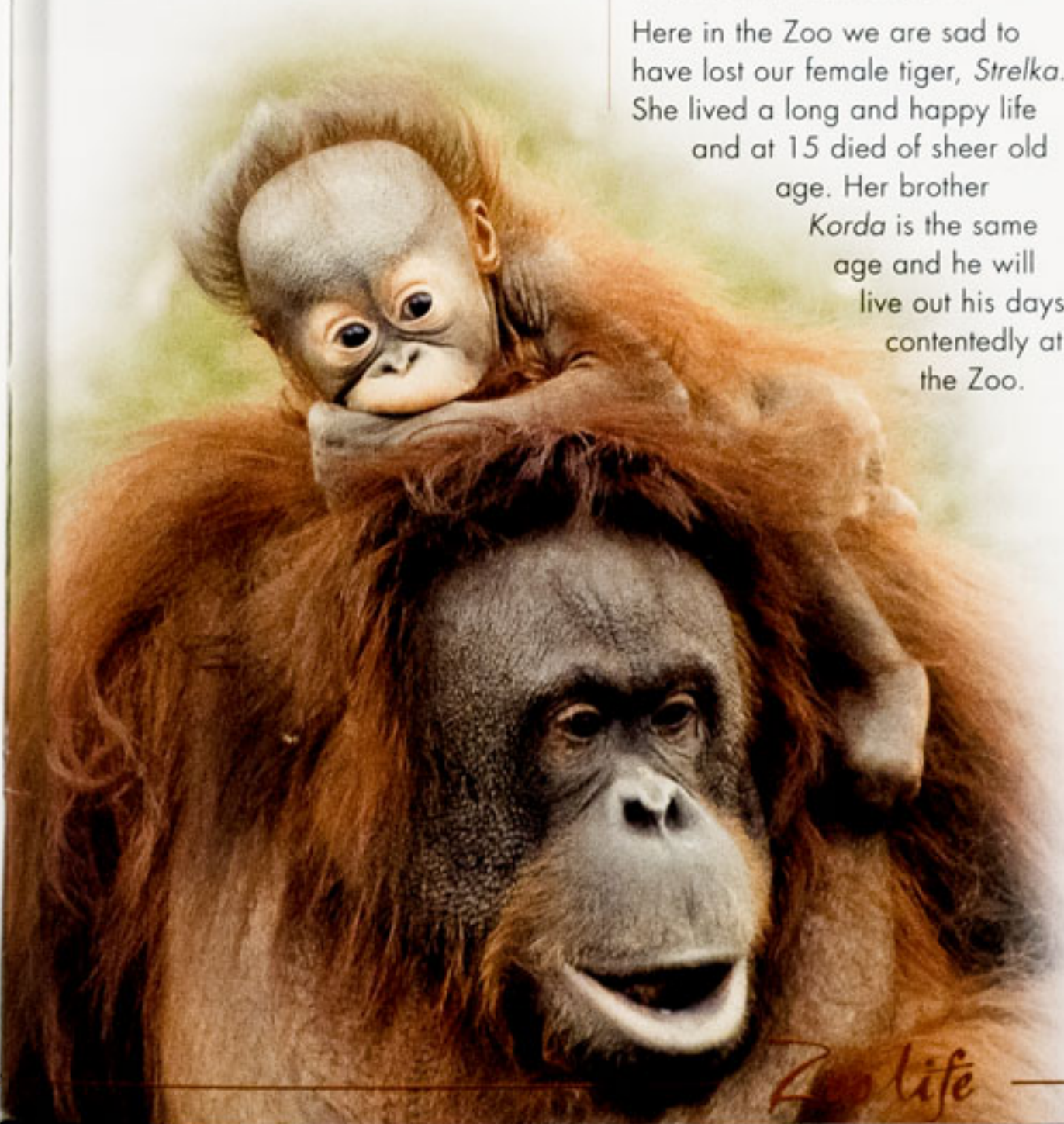
The conservation situation is bleak for large carnivores in the wild, with fewer and fewer 'big cats' roaming free. This makes the management of populations between zoos and natural reserves increasingly crucial. We are grateful to all our adopters and to Asda who are continuing to raise money for our tigers through the nationwide sale of 'tiger bread'. In the first three months alone, ASDA raised a staggering £37,000. Thank you!

It is with sadness that we learnt of the passing of Dr. Janet Kear, a well-known conservationist who some of you will have known. She helped to set up the Martin Mere Wetlands and had strong links with Chester Zoo. We served on many committees together and I know she will be sadly missed, not only for her expertise and commitment to conservation, but for her warm and enthusiastic personality.

Many of you reading *Zoo Life* for the first time will have had Zoo membership or a Zoo adoption as a Christmas or birthday present or as a gift for another special occasion. This is becoming increasingly popular and it is encouraging to see from the article on page 22 that numbers for both are increasing. The funds generated all help us to mobilise efforts for the care and conservation of our animals and plants.

I am sure you will enjoy your times with us over the coming months. We have much to look forward in 2005 and, as ever, there is always something new for visitors to see.

*Gordon M.J. Rail*



*Zoo life*

# Tsunami Appeal

## How Chester Zoo helped the Appeal

Chester Zoo has responded to the call for fundraising for the Tsunami disaster appeal by donating £5,000 to an elephant orphanage and £2,000 to a turtle conservation project in Sri Lanka.

A further £2,000 will be donated to the turtle project by Shellshock, the EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) Tortoise and Turtle Campaign 2005, which is being co-ordinated by Chester Zoo. Colchester Zoo followed suit by also chipping in £2,000.

All the money that would normally be raised at the Zoo gates for the Zoo's Asian Elephant Appeal during January was sent to the Pinnewela elephant orphanage in northern Sri Lanka, which is home to more than 60 elephants.

The Pinnewela orphanage, situated northwest of the town of Kegalla, halfway between the Sri Lankan capital Colombo and Kandy in the central hills of the country, is one of only a handful in the world. It cares for baby elephants found in the jungle without their mothers and is a successful breeding centre for the Asian Elephant.

Pinnewela has strong links with Chester Zoo. Zoo staff visited the orphanage in 2003 to provide veterinary and other technical assistance to the 'mahouts' who look after the elephants. Student Natasha Beasley from Surrey also spent two months there in 2002 as part of Chester Zoo's Richard Hughes Scholarship Award and the Zoo's Elephant Team Leader Mick Jones has also spent time there.

Elephants in Sri Lanka and other countries affected by the disaster helped with the clear up operation and the search for bodies. It is estimated there are between 2-3,000 wild elephants in the national parks and jungles of Sri Lanka and a further 500 in collections.

Some are known to have saved tourists, who were taking elephant rides when the giant wave hit, by running to the hills.

Chester Zoo's Chief Curator Mark Pilgrim said: "Fortunately the orphanage itself is far enough inland to have escaped the worst of the disaster but many staff have been affected and some have lost family members.

"It relies very heavily on tourism for the money it needs to survive and like the rest of the country it will suffer longer term from declining visitor numbers and from related infrastructure problems while the country gets back on its feet.

"The Turtle project is based in Kosgoda, a small community on the coast, devastated by the tsunami. It is completely dependent on turtle conservation activities, tourism and fishing and needs an enormous amount of support to rebuild.



Chester Zoo's Vet Stephanie Sanderson looks on as Pinnewela staff examine an elephant during a visit in 2003.

"Amid such an enormous human catastrophe, the full effects on wildlife are not likely to be known for some time. Zoo staff have been making personal donations to the general Tsunami Appeal but we also wanted to send some money directly to these projects to help out."

You can help the Shellshock campaign by buying special merchandise from the Zoo shops, endorsed by Creature Comforts'® Turtle, Oscar. On sale are attractive 'T' shirts, mouse mats, mugs and rulers. Tickets are available for our Shellshock raffle, with prizes including a fabulous Eurocamp family holiday. Please complete the enclosed order form to help the campaign by selling raffle tickets. Alternatively ring us on 01244 650229. Thank you!



# Parrots get a new home

All the latest from the animal teams around the Zoo

This year, rather than have team leaders' reports in the Annual Report, we will be featuring team reports in *Zoo Life* to keep you up to date with all the latest developments through the year.

This issue we are focussing on Parrots and Penguins, Giraffes and Rhinos.

## Parrots and Penguins News

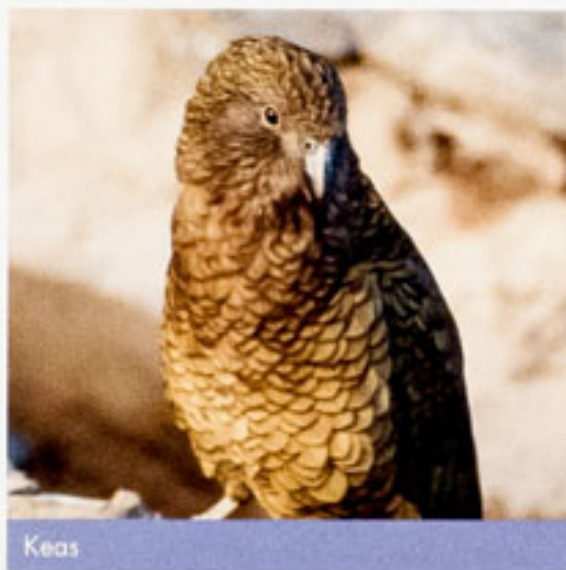
by Team Leader, Andy Woolham.

With the start of a new year it is always a good idea to look back and reflect on the 12 months just past, so here's a quick round up and some of the highlights for the Parrots and Penguins team in 2004.

At the start of the year we were looking forward to moving into our completed new enclosure 'Magnificent Macaws', situated close to *Spirit of the Jaguar*. Here we planned to house a spectacular mix of parrot species such as Blue Throated Macaw, Golden Conure, Red-tailed Amazon, Blue throated Conure and Golden Capped Conure, all of which are endangered species from South America. These birds have now settled in well in their new home and complement the

now well-established enclosure housing Hyacinth Macaws and Illigers Macaws close by.

There were some notable breeding successes in 2004. These include Princess Parakeets (the first time this species has bred here at Chester), Humboldt Penguins, Blue Eyed Cockatoo,



Keas

Greater Vasa Parrot and Derbyan Parakeets. The Keas found their new home to their liking and laid eggs. These hatched but unfortunately the chicks failed to survive. Sadly this was also the case for one of our Hyacinth



Hyacinth Macaws

Macaw pairs, but this is a significant step forward for both the species and we are sure they will go on to become successful parents in the future.

During the year it was decided that to allow work on the new Orang-utan complex the 'Realm of the Red Ape' to begin, it would be necessary to demolish the old parrot conservation centre. It was decided to build an off-show breeding centre to house the birds kept here. Here we hope to breed critically endangered parrot species such as the Red Vented Cockatoo and Blue Throated Macaws. The construction of this centre is now well on the way and we are looking forward to moving in and participating in the future conservation of threatened species. It has been a busy year with many highs and a few lows, but to start the year with another new facility was a very exciting prospect.



# Rhino-mania!

Chester Zoo Rhinos - the latest stars of Blue Peter

## News from the Rhino Team

by Team Leader, Chas Mackenzie

There is a lot happening on the Rhino Section. February was an exciting time when a pair of young rhinos, *Ema* and *Jeremy* arrived from Dvur Kralove Zoo in the Czech Republic. *Jeremy* is possibly moving on to a Zoo in France in May but we are holding him until then. Port Lympe Zoo want to swap males with us so we are looking at moving *Baringo* and receiving a five year old male called *Magardi*, who we hope will pair up with *Ema* eventually. February also saw our Rhinos starring in a 'Rhino-mania' feature on Blue Peter, which highlighted the plight of Black Rhinos and the work of charity 'Save the Rhino'.

By mid March we will have a new off-show rhino house along with three new paddocks which will make a big improvement to our facilities. The house has three large pens and, from the keepers' passageway, the barred front of the pens will allow us and the vet team to access the rhinos for training, to obtain blood samples and for general body checks.

The paddocks and house will be joining up with the Tsavo paddocks and the original rhino house. This will give us the flexibility to move the rhinos around more easily.

Our team is responsible for more than just the Rhinos. On the rest of the section, we have moved a pair of Sable on to two other collections; one in Belgium and



The new Rhino House under construction

one in France. The Guanaco group will also be re-located to other collections and they are being replaced by Vicuna, the smallest of the camel family, which is another first for Chester. These changes will most likely have happened by the time you are reading this *Zoo Life*.

Our Grevy Zebra group has increased to six animals who are all males as we are holding a bachelor group as part of the European Studbook TAG programme.

Two male Sitatunga were moved to other collections and we have brought in new blood; a male Sitatunga and a male for the Brow Antlered Deer Group.

During 2004 the Brow Antlered Deer, the Philippine Spotted Deer, Tapirs, Gemsbok and Sitatunga were all successful in breeding.



# All Change with Giraffes

From bears with a sore head to an exciting new addition

## News from the Giraffe Section

By Team Leader, Tim Rowlands

The last 12 months has seen more changes on the giraffe section than any other period I can remember in the last 20 years.

As with the Rhino Team we look after a number of different species and for us the year was dominated by the arrival of two male Spectacled Bears. They arrived on the same day as the enclosure was finished, from a small zoo in Poland. *Stolch* settled straight in while *Valentin* seemed to be struggling to accept that he was now able to use the vast 5000m<sup>2</sup> of his new enclosure. Neither was capable of foraging for food, so this natural behaviour had to be taught to them by the keepers.

Before very long it was noticed that one

of *Val*'s canines was badly damaged.

He was sedated by our vet team and treated by the renowned Harley Street dentist, Peter Kertesz, who, upon closer examination, had to remove 11 damaged teeth. Both the acquisition of the natural feeding behaviour and the dental work have given *Val* a new outlook on life and now both bears can be seen enjoying their new surroundings.

In spring we received our second pure female Rothschild Giraffe from Belfast, *Fey*, who has settled in very well. We hope to move on our two hybrid females this summer and replace them with two young pure breed females from Europe. It should not be too long before Chester Zoo is breeding Rothschild giraffes for the first time.

Our Red River Hogs moved into their purpose built enclosure at the front of the *Tropical Realm* at the beginning of 2004 and this is

proving to be a great success. This has enabled the public to see these wonderful animals up close for the first time.

*Royston*, our male Coati, who we brought in



Coati

from Germany, settled in so well that nine of our females gave birth in April 2004, and we now have 21 youngsters running riot throughout their enclosure!

We bred our first Congo Buffalo for nearly five years with *Lukuni*, a male born in February 2004. He was the 21st buffalo to be born at Chester Zoo.

He was soon followed by a second male, *Tulli*, in June and we are now looking to provide them with a new house and enclosure in 2006.

We have moved our Camels down to join the Onagers and plan to mix them this spring, as well as bringing in new bloodlines from America and Europe for our Onager herd.

This has left the old Camel house vacant in order to allow us to build an enclosure for our long talked about Okapi! More on this in the next issue of *Zoo Life*.



Team Leader, Tim Rowlands

# Building for the future

These are exciting times at Chester Zoo

This coming year will see some significant changes as part of a £5 million investment - one of the largest the Zoo has ever made.

Work has already started on the *Elephants of the Asian Forest* project to build a state-of-the-art elephant breeding facility to replace the Elephant House. This is scheduled to be finished by the end of this year and our grateful thanks go to everyone who has helped to make it possible.

Major work at the main entrance will see the development of a brand new *Tsavo Café* to improve the facilities we are offering to visitors as well as some re-modelling of the Black Rhino area.

Also this year we will begin building our biggest and most ambitious development to date. The new £3 million *Realm of the Red Ape* Orang-utan exhibit will be situated alongside the current Orang-utan breeding centre and will hugely

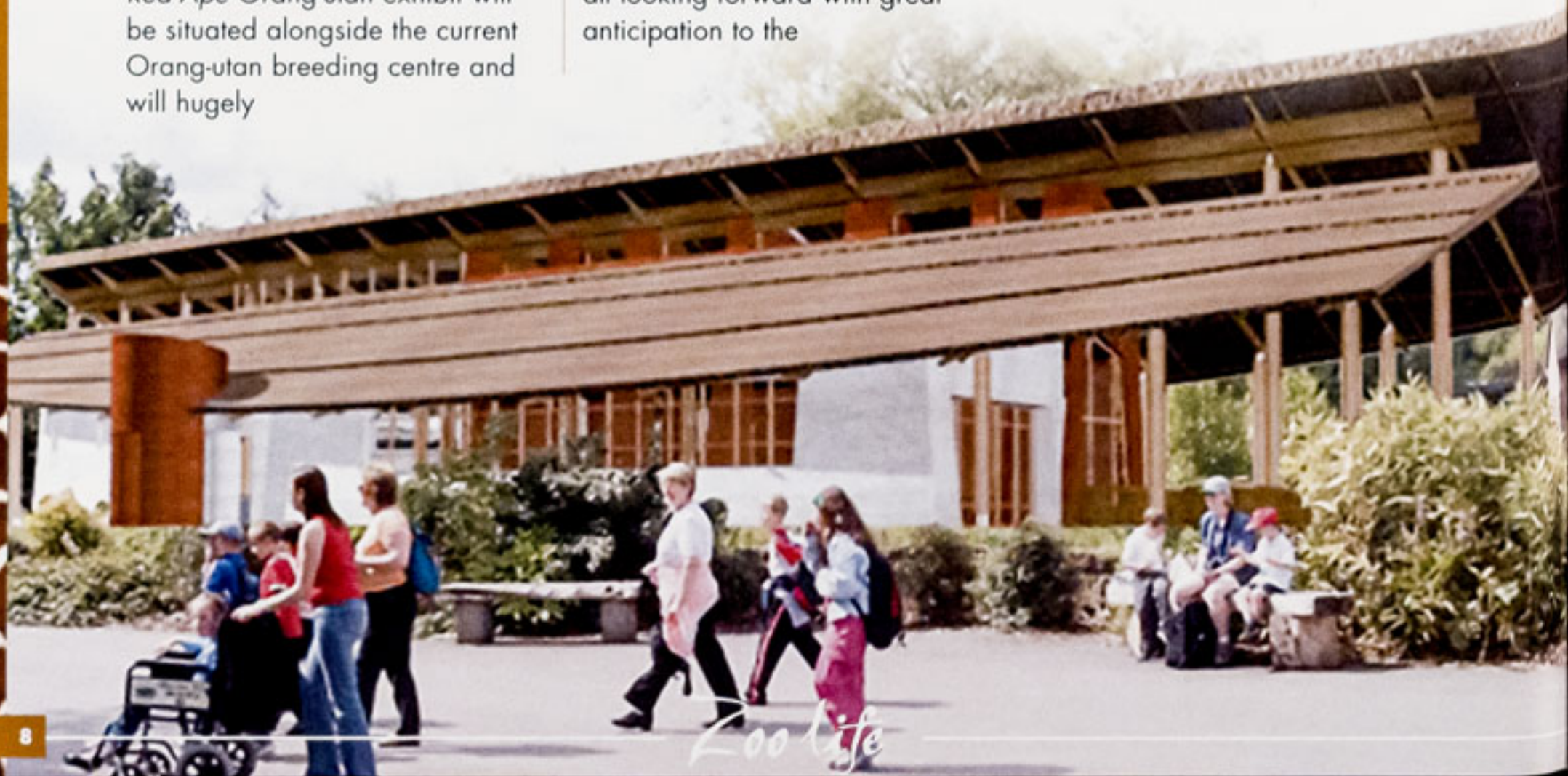
increase the space available both inside and out. The construction of this world class facility will run through to 2006 and will bring much-improved, modern facilities.

To help make this happen the old parrot house is being demolished and a new off-show breeding centre built to replace it. Some of this site will become part of the new *Red Ape* development and part of the area will be landscaped.

We are working hard to keep the effect on visitors to a minimum and within 18 months the Zoo will be noticeably changed. We are all looking forward with great anticipation to the



exciting new look and if you have any questions or queries don't hesitate to contact us.



Zoo life

# Fundraising Focus

How YOU can help - where there's a will there's a way

For Kevin Whitehead from Animal Supplies and Rhino keepers Rosie Scott and Chas MacKenzie, 2005 will be their toughest year yet! They are set to take up the biggest challenges of their lives on behalf of *Save the Rhino International*.

In April, Rosie and Kevin will be running the London Marathon.

far from easy! The area consists of arduous hills, unstable walking surfaces and intense heat. June is mid-winter in Africa, with temperatures ranging from sub zero at night to 30 degrees by day. Neither has ever done anything like this before so we wish them luck!

It's a gruelling task. Every step will be raising funds and awareness for the plight of Rhinos. *Save the Rhino* is a registered charity, currently supporting projects in Africa and Asia. They raise awareness and funds for conservation projects to ensure the survival of the Rhino species. The main problem facing these magnificent creatures is their horn, which is made into ornaments and traditional medicines and sold on the black market. Poaching and habitat loss has reduced the world Rhino population from 500,000 in 1970 to a mere 18,000 today, placing them on the critically endangered list.

Kevin, Rosie and Chas will be taking part in many activities to raise funds for *Save the Rhino*, including bag packing, car washing and street collections in Chester. A Rhino Weekend is planned for April 9th and 10th and there will be a Rhino talk in the Lecture Theatre (more details on this on the Members and Adopters talks page).

If you wish to donate to their appeal, please send a cheque made payable to 'Chester Zoo' to: Save the Rhino, c/o the Development Office or alternatively, you can donate online at [www.justgiving.com/chesterzoorhinos](http://www.justgiving.com/chesterzoorhinos), a simple, fast and totally secure method of donating. Your help and support will be greatly appreciated!!

## Securing the future for the next generation

Included in this edition of *Zoo Life* should be a leaflet on becoming a lifetime supporter of Chester Zoo. As members and adopters of the Zoo, you already contribute to our vital conservation work as a charity (registered charity number 306077). Did you know that you can now do more to help without it costing you a penny by mentioning Chester Zoo in your Will?

By doing this, you will be ensuring that our crucial work continues long into the future.

Chester Zoo wouldn't be what it is today without the foresight of generous people who left a gift in favour of Chester Zoo in their Will. In the book *'Zoo Without Bars'* by June Johns (1969) which tells of Chester Zoo's early days, it is very clear that a Miss Tompkins-Grafton was one of these people. The book says: "She died later the same year, leaving £18,000 to the Zoo, a legacy that was to lift the Society out of the red and set its course for future expansion. All debts were paid, mortgages and debentures cleared, and forty acres of land adjoining the Zoo were bought for future extensions. Without the heavy halter of debt round his neck, Mott [Founder George Mottershead] was able to concentrate more on animals and less on finance."

For more information on how to go about mentioning Chester Zoo in your Will, refer to the leaflet enclosed or contact Lynsey Jones on 01244 650292 or [l.jones@chesterzoo.org](mailto:l.jones@chesterzoo.org) for a chat in complete confidence.



Chas, Rosie and Kevin get ready for the London Marathon. Kevin gets the short straw and has to do the full 26 miles as a rhino!

"This time last year there would have been no chance of us even considering running a marathon!" says Kevin.

"Working at the Zoo though brings us into close contact with *Save the Rhino* so we decided to run the marathon to raise much needed funds for them. The marathon is no easy task but just to make life even more difficult I will be doing it wearing a 7ft tall rhino costume, being herded around by Rosie!"

Rosie will be teaming up with Chas to take part in a desert trek in Namibia in June. This may sound like an idyllic holiday, but it's going to be

# Jaguar Meet Jaguars!

...from cars to cats

Three years on from the inauguration of our relationship with the prestigious car maker Jaguar, we were proud to welcome some of their staff back for a keeper experience.



Jaguar Car staff at Chester Zoo

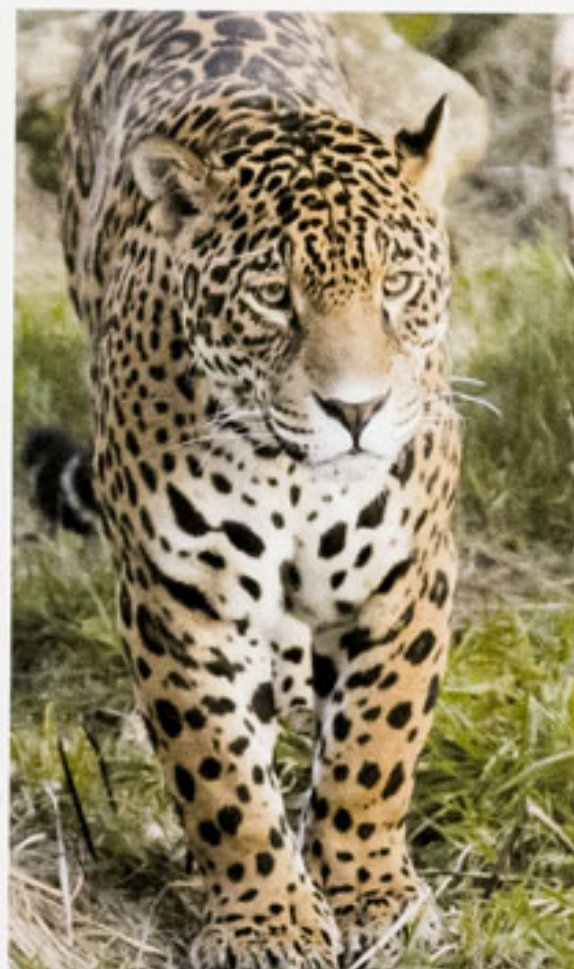
Lucy Marsh (Corporate Affairs Manager at Halewood), Kate Birkenhead (Communication and Public Affairs at Halewood), along with Juliet Speirs and Fern Seager (both Communications Officers at Browns Lane) worked on the Jaguars and Bats section. Here are some of the comments they made on their memorable day:

**Kate:** "Being a Zookeeper for the day was a great experience. The bats, cockroaches and spiny mice made me feel a little uneasy but feeding the jaguars was brilliant!

They were so graceful. It was fascinating getting so close to Sophia and Salvador and seeing them getting on so well.

Hopefully, there will be a new member of the family by the next time I visit. I'd like to thank Paul (Howse) and his team for looking after us so well."

**Juliet:** "When I found out we'd start the day in the Twilight Zone, I was rather anxious as I'm not fond of bats. I managed to put out the food but really didn't fancy the Sebas bat cave!"



**Fern:** "My most challenging experience was cleaning out the 'bat hospital' enclosure which contained 12 bats which were flying around me. I'd not been to the Spirit of the Jaguar enclosure before but I was very impressed with the enclosures and the conservation work which the Zoo supports."

**Lucy:** "It was great to go behind the scenes and experience life at the Zoo. I especially enjoyed learning about the Jaguar conservation programme and looking at Paul's photographs taken in Belize, South America."



Lucy hides some food

# Opportunities and events

What's happening out and about

Nine year old Lauren Nuttall from Gorsey Bank Primary School in Wilmslow is a brand new Zoo adopter as the winner of a competition to design a logo for the Sustainable Cheshire Forum (SCF).



The SCF promotes environmental issues and was originally formed in 1996 to create Cheshire's Local Agenda 21 programme. It has since developed into the Cheshire

Partnership; the champion for environmental issues within Cheshire's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The group had never had an official logo so thanks to a schools' competition run by Cheshire County Council and a prize donated by the Zoo and presented by Bats and Jaguars Team Leader Paul Howse; that has now been remedied! For more information about the SCF or environmental issues in Cheshire contact Michele Burrow on **01244 603125**, or email [michele.burrow@cheshire.gov.uk](mailto:michele.burrow@cheshire.gov.uk), or visit the website at [www.sustainablecheshire.org.uk](http://www.sustainablecheshire.org.uk)

## Seasonal Jobs at the Zoo

Students/Temporary Staff required for school holidays and some weekends

We are looking for Retail Staff, Chefs and Cooks, Catering Stores Assistants, Catering and Kiosk Assistants, Amenity & Gardens personnel, a Female Washroom Attendant as well as staff for our Gates and Gift Aid and the Visitor Information Centre.

The minimum age is 16 years for all work.

Jobs available are full time 35 to 40 hrs per week, five days in seven roster including weekends and Bank Holidays.

For more information please contact Mrs Carol Karim or Switchboard staff on **01244 380280**, or write to Chester Zoo, Caughall Road, Upton, Chester, CH2 1LH enclosing an S.A.E. for an application form. Interviews will be held.



## WREXHAM SCIENCE FESTIVAL

The Wrexham Science Festival is one of the best attended events of its kind in the UK. Organisers hope the next Festival, to be held between 14-22 March, will build on this success. As ever, the 'natural world' will form a significant part of the programme. Topics and speakers will include Iolo Williams on the Birds of Wales, 'Life in the Freezer' - a behind the scenes look at the BBC TV series on Antarctica, Mammals of North Wales, Poisonous Plants,

The Birds of Fenn's and Whixall Mosses, The Rat and the Oyster in Science, Animals Behaving Badly, Working with Horses, Marine Life in Local Waters, Welsh Butterflies and Nick Arnold on 'Fearsome Flight'.

With walks, visits to a local farm, SSSI and a lot, lot more, there should be something of interest to you. More information is available from the Festival Office on **(01978) 262696**.

# Making a difference

By Scott Wilson, Conservation Assistant

## Chester Zoo's Conservation Programmes

- Black Rhino
- China
- Jaguar
- Asian Elephant
- Nigeria
- The Philippines
- British Native Species
- Mascarenes

## New work in the Mascarenes

Chester Zoo's Conservation Programmes represent a significant percentage of the outreach support provided by the Zoo each year. Programmes are generally run in partnership with other conservation organisations, government departments or universities and



Rangers at Chyulu Hills National Park, Kenya

have a species or country focus. Chester Zoo's new Mascarenes Conservation Programme partners the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation and Shoals Rodrigues among others and currently supports projects

working with Mauritius Fody, Pink Pigeon, Echo Parakeets, marine reserves, threatened plants and the Rodrigues Fruit Bat.

Chester Zoo also supports this programme through staff technical assistance. Bird keeper, Paul Morris, recently returned from assisting the projects on Mauritius. Read more about his work on pages 16 & 17.

## Outreach Update

Here are some of the projects we supported in the last quarter of 2004.

- Funding of much-needed equipment and patrol vehicle running costs for the rangers protecting Black Rhino in Tsavo East and Chyulu National Parks, Kenya.
- Surveys and protection of plant biodiversity in Gashaka Gumti National Park and surrounding areas, Nigeria.

## North of England Zoological Society Conservation & Research Grants

- Research investigating how to reduce farmer-primate conflict in Uganda.
- A Great Green Macaw conservation project in Costa Rica.
- Ongoing support for the Tapoh Village Conservation Education Centre in Thailand and the associated hornbill nest adoption scheme.
- Surveys to investigate the conservation status of freshwater fish in Nepal and Myanmar.
- Conservation of endemic ungulates, including the threatened

Anoa, in Sulawesi, Indonesia.

- Major ongoing support for the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Programme.
- Training and support of wildlife wardens in the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary, Sabah, Malaysia.
- Two conservation projects in Colombia, one concerned with White Handed Tamarin, and the other with the Pacarana, a large South American rodent.

## Chester Zoo at World Conservation Congress

Every four years, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) holds a general assembly and international conference of its thousand member organisations. As an IUCN member, we were able to participate, sharing information and experience, networking and voting on matters concerning IUCN governance. The 3rd World Conservation Congress took place in Bangkok, Thailand on 15-21 November 2004. It was attended by approximately 6,000 delegates including many of the world's leading conservation scientists, business representatives, ministers and government agents, environmental activists and community leaders. Chester Zoo was represented by our Conservation Coordinator Alex Zimmermann and our Curator of Higher Vertebrates Mike Jordan.

# Growing Concerns

By Mark Sparrow, Curator of Botany and Horticulture

On your next visit to the Zoo look out for the new Wildlife Garden, which has been constructed between the water bus jetty and the old Cheetah enclosure.

The Garden has been designed to show what can be done in a typical back garden to attract wildlife. Parts of the Garden are fairly formal and include a patio area, circular lawn and curved access path, while other areas are less formal and include a log pile and long-grass areas which allow wild flowers to grow.

Other essential elements in the Garden include a pond, shed, compost heap and water butt. An herbaceous border will be full of plants to attract butterflies and insects. Another area is allocated for the growing of vegetables and herbs. These plants will be organically grown and pests will be controlled using environmentally friendly methods.

There will also be examples of bird boxes, feeders and hibernation boxes that are so important for providing food and shelter for wildlife throughout the year.

Another garden feature worth checking out is the newly labelled VIP (*Very Important Plant*) border. This is the long narrow border opposite the lions between the boat jetty and *Glorious Grasses*. In it are over 60 plants that are used by humans in a variety of ways. The border has been divided into seven categories; fruits, drinks, flavouring/herbs, cosmetics/oils, dyes, medicinal and general use.

Among the plants you'll find are Olive, Fig, Tea, Hops, Peppermint,

Garlic, Coriander, Thyme, Lavender, Woad, St. Johns Wort, Evening Primrose and Cork Oak. See how many you can recognise (*before looking at the labels!*)



Weld



Oregano



Feverfew



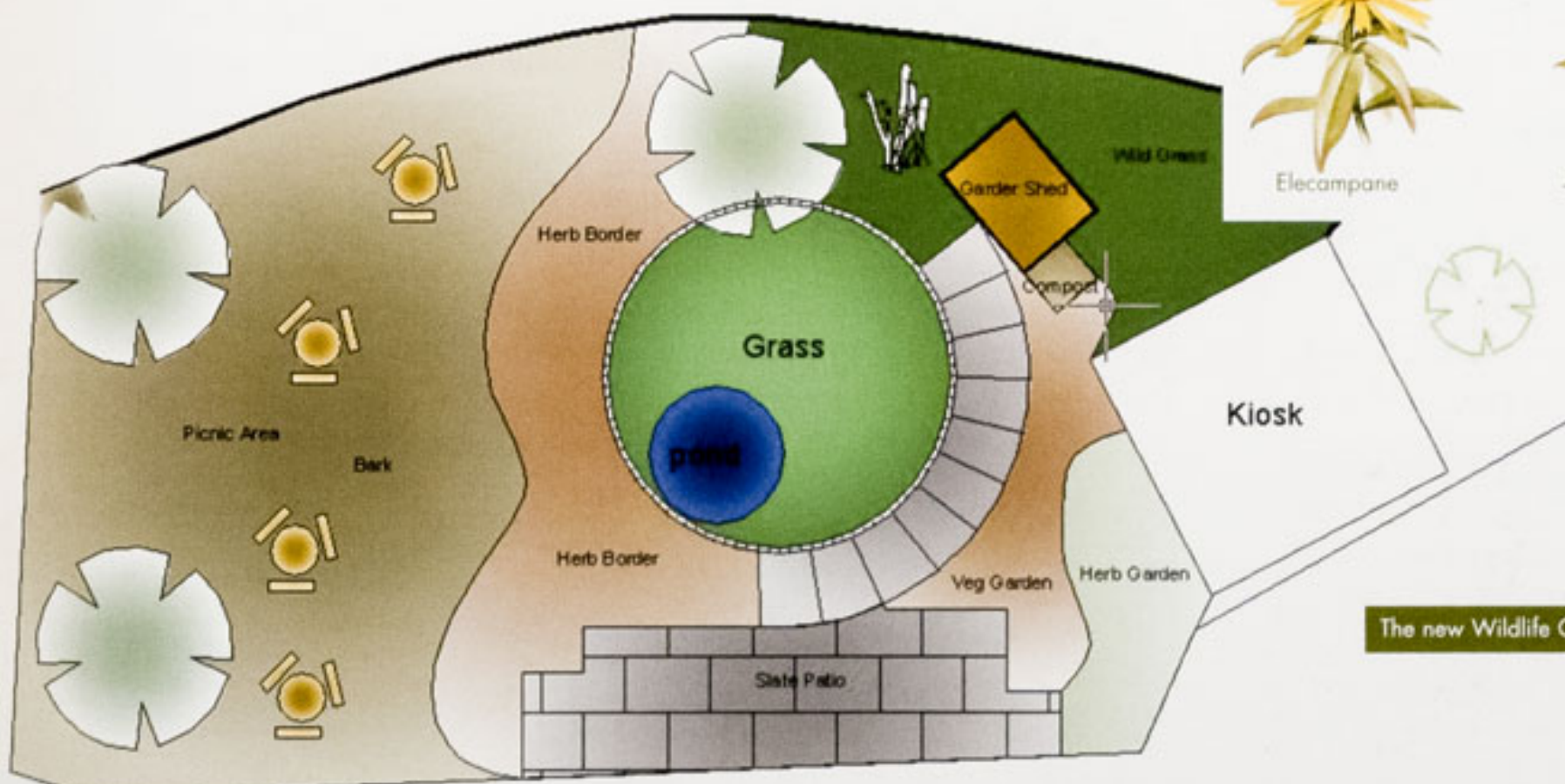
Barberry



Elecampane



Joe-Pye Weed



The new Wildlife Garden plan

# Saving southern Sichuan's Forests

Roger Wilkinson and Simon Dowell report on biodiversity conservation in action

Chester Zoo's Sichuan Forest Conservation Programme is carried out in partnership with the Sichuan Forestry Department and Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU).

This evolved from a collaborative project which focused on the endangered endemic Sichuan Partridge and was initiated by Dr Simon Dowell from LJMU and Dai Bo of the Forestry Department. The project was initially supported by the World Pheasant Association.

The Chinese subtropical forests covered by this project are home to the Sichuan Partridge and five other endemic birds. These are the Omei Shan Liocichla, Red-winged Laughing Thrush, Gold-fronted

Fulvetta, Silver Oriole and Emei Leaf Warbler. The Omei Shan Liocichla, Gold-fronted Fulvetta and Silver Oriole are listed as vulnerable by IUCN. We hold Omei Shan Liocichlas at Chester Zoo and, together with our Red

diverse and the native home of the rare Dove Tree that visitors to Chester Zoo may enjoy seeing in flower here each spring.

Chester Zoo has been supporting biodiversity conservation in southern Sichuan since 2001. During this time we have also been grateful for generous financial assistance from James Goodhart, a private donor and supporter of this programme. Visits to Sichuan in 2002, and for a longer period in 2004, permitted formal and informal meetings with forestry staff at all levels, trekking with staff in the reserves and participating in faunal surveys. Two reserves in which we have made a particular impact are the Laojunshan Nature Reserve and the Mamize Nature Reserve. Most recently Chester Zoo has also extended support to the newly protected Heizhugou Nature Reserve.



Roger and Dai Bo at Xintianzui, Laojunshan



Staff training at Mamize

Pandas; these link our zoo collection with Sichuan field conservation and research. These reserves are also botanically

## Laojunshan Nature Reserve

This is an area of broadleaf hill forest that includes a temple site often visited by pilgrims. Omei Shan Liocichlas and Red-winged Laughing Thrushes frequent this reserve, which is also an important area for Sichuan Partridge. The density of Sichuan Partridges here, at approximately three pairs for every two square kilometres of suitable habitat, is as high as anywhere else within its range.



Mamize Nature Reserve

Chester Zoo's financial support has allowed training for all reserve staff in basic biodiversity management, including animal and plant identification. The reserve director has received training in land-use management and other senior staff members have been trained in GIS and ranger skills. This has been hand in hand with the provision of essential infrastructure, including office furniture and a computer for the reserve office, two motorcycles to facilitate the rangers' access to remote areas of the reserve, waterproof clothing, cameras and binoculars for field staff, and most recently the complete refurbishment of a former forestry farm building as a field station. This field station known as the Xintianzui Conservation Centre now provides offices and accommodation for field staff.

Our support has enabled this former 'local' nature reserve to be upgraded to a 'provincial' level reserve. As a direct result of this



In the field with staff at Laojunshan

project the reserve will be extended to include adjacent forest tracts and will have more than doubled in size to over 100 km<sup>2</sup>. A management plan has been completed which will be used in an application to further upgrade the reserve to 'national' status. If successful, that opens up funding sources from central government previously unavailable to this reserve.

## Mamize Nature Reserve

This diverse and extensive reserve of over 320 km<sup>2</sup> includes a wide range of habitats and species. Broadleaf forest at lower elevations gives way to conifer forest that is itself replaced by bamboo and rhododendron thickets with juniper forest and alpine meadows at higher altitude.

Chester Zoo funding has supported this reserve with a similar range of training and infrastructural support as outlined above for Laojunshan. Surveys have shown the reserve to contain 51 vertebrate and 18 flowering plants listed as protected by the Chinese government. These include Giant Panda, Red Panda and Takin. This has resulted in Mamize being upgraded from 'local' to 'provincial' status. A management plan has already

been completed. Almost certainly the reserve will be upgraded to 'national' level with significant funding then available on account of its Giant Pandas.

## Heizhugou Nature Reserve

Heizhugou Nature Reserve is a newly protected 'provincial' status reserve covering 380 km<sup>2</sup> and bordering Dafending Reserve. This reserve supports a number of key species including Giant Panda, Red Panda, Sichuan Partridge and Omei Shan Liocichla. An area of the reserve has already been developed for ecotourism in association with a nearby spa resort. Chester Zoo funding for this developing reserve during 2004 supported training for four field officers and also enabled the purchase of binoculars and field identification books.

Plans for further support for these reserves require the development of a memorandum of understanding with the Sichuan Forestry Department. Objectives include developing and linking broadleaf forest reserves to secure the future of the endemic fauna and flora. This will be facilitated by reserve assistance and staff training alongside community education and support for local communities developing sustainable use of forest products.

# Echo Parakeets in Mauritius

By Paul Morris, Birds Section

When asked if I would like to work on Mauritius, releasing Echo Parakeets (*Psittacula Echo*) back into the wild on behalf of Chester Zoo for the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation my answer was an emphatic 'yes'.

With such an endangered avifauna comprising such species as the Mauritius Kestrel, Mauritius Pink Pigeon, Mauritius Fody and Mauritius or Echo Parakeet, no other answer would suffice!

The speed and efficiency which found me airborne also materialised on the island where, after countless introductions, I was whisked away and ensconced at Bel Ombre research station. Set in the interior forest with a marvellous vista over sugarcane fields down to white-rimmed, deep blue Indian Ocean, this idyll was to be my home for the next seven weeks.

Here I quickly came to terms with the many creature comforts of my lodgings which meant literally

working around the numerous toads, geckos, lizards, ants, shrews, spiders, snakes and their like which inhabited the place. The surrounding forest also harboured some notable wildlife, including a managed population of 80 Pink Pigeons, three pairs of kestrels with nestlings and a small sub-population of Echo Parakeets – the species with which I was to work.

My job was to both wean and then release Echo Parakeets back into the wild. In order to make this happen, a large four-compartment aviary had been constructed with funds from Chester Zoo in a forest clearing only two minutes away from Bel Ombre.

The birds I received came from

the Black Riober Aviaries, a breeding station on the coast which comprised both parent and hand-reared birds from a managed wild population and similar birds taken from a captive breeding programme. After the hand-rearing (sometimes from the egg), the youngsters came up to Bel Ombre to be weaned and released into the wild.

The weaning process involves the gradual reduction of the rearing food over a period of around 10 days. Of the two feeds given at this time, the morning feed, which is fed directly into the crop by syringe, is reduced first in order to encourage the birds to forage on presented fruit, vegetables and pellets during the daytime.



A second evening feed is then also reduced when the birds are clearly foraging successfully and have attained the optimum release weight.

The release process was also a gradual one with small groups of fully weaned birds let out to roost nearby at dusk and then recaptured in the morning with the lure of both their noisy companions and of course food! At this stage, sunflower seeds and sweetcorn were almost irresistible to them.

Prior to their initial release however, the fledgling parakeets were encouraged to feed from closed seed hoppers as these were to be used as a supplementary food source through the non-breeding season. This was achieved by propping open the hopper lids initially to



Preparing food for the chicks

allow easy access to sunflower seeds before gradually lowering them until the birds had learnt to push up the lid with their head in order to get at the seeds. Watching the released birds was of course magical but at the same time more than a tinge of anxiety

crept in when it came to recapturing them in the morning for a health check and some weighing. Some birds relished their natural environment and



almost immediately enjoyed nibbling at a dozen different leaves, flowers, buds, cones and other parts of plants in and around the aviary. They appeared to be quite at home, which of course they were.

Naturally when working with such an endangered species, a strict routine was adopted and adhered to. The day started at five o'clock when the birds were checked, hoppers filled, water provided and fruit and vegetables presented. This was followed by weighing, cropping and crop-feeding the 'weaners' and then back to camp by eight in order to write up the records.

At this early hour an attempt was made to identify and capture birds that had been released earlier, for monitoring. The midday hours were mostly spent on observation, a second replenishment of food,

re-branching and re-foliaging and of course cleaning. At around seven o'clock a late crop feed was given to the 'weaners'. Routines don't always run

smoothly and perhaps our most perplexing time came when the island was brushed by hurricane Darius. Despite high winds and much rain and the retrieval of the youngest birds from the aviary into the research station, it was the safety contingency plans which caused most bother. Our aerial and solar panels came off which meant we were without both communication and power for three days and had to guess both the temperature and consistency of the food before feeding the parakeets by candlelight!

At this time in particular I felt that the valuable experience I had gained in hand-rearing parrots over many years at Chester Zoo contributed to the welfare of an endangered species destined for reintroduction into the wild.

I have come away with very fond memories of ringing kestrel nestlings, doing the rounds of incubating pink pigeons, observing nest-building fodies and checking the cavity nest sites of wild echo parakeets.

I would like to thank Chester Zoo for making it possible.

# Giant Pandas and the Great Wall

How one Zoo supporter's efforts raised over £1,000

Judy Blythe from Oswestry went on the challenge of a lifetime on a five day trek of the Great Wall of China to raise money for Chester Zoo's animal health centre. Here is her account of the trip.

I set off from Heathrow and after a 10 hour flight from London and a further two and a half hours by coach with fellow trekkers to the mountains north-east of Beijing, we had arrived. We stayed in different lodges each night of the trek with hard beds, unreliable showers and flickering lights but the staff were so friendly and helpful that they more than made up for any shortcomings!

Nothing had quite prepared me for the magnificence of the Great Wall itself. It was stunning. Mile upon mile of wildly undulating wall with imposing watch towers. We had permission to walk along sections which have not been restored and are not normally visited by tourists. On some days our trek would begin on picture-postcard reconstructed sections and end with us scrambling up and down crumbling steps of the ancient monument. On one day we had to climb 964 steps just to get to the Wall itself!

Our Chinese guides, two young women who spoke good English, were brilliant. They led the group at a pace to suit us all, allowing us to make fast progress if we could, but they didn't push us if we needed to take it easy on steep ascents and descents. Each day was exhilarating and exhausting. We encountered a bad tempered farmer with a scythe who blocked our way because he wanted us to pay to walk past his farm, "hello" people wanting to carry our bags or sell us 'T' shirts for tiny amounts of money, pigs and geese in impossibly small cages, scruffy dogs on long chains guarding red brick farm houses and so many friendly and enquiring Chinese interested in what we were doing. The five days passed all too quickly.

We were driven back to Beijing for a few days' sightseeing. I visited Beijing Zoo because I felt a trip to China would not be complete without seeing a Giant Panda. They were relatively well housed in a zoo which is reminiscent of zoos in the UK in the 60s and 70s with small barren enclosures inhabited by individual species. It costs an extra five yuan to visit the pandas (30 pence) and this funding has allowed the building of large indoor and outside areas. The inside area was glass fronted allowing for good visibility although the addition of a metal rocking chair was an incongruous sight. The pandas had just been fed a large amount of bamboo and were eating enthusiastically, although I didn't have time to wait until the panda put on its slippers and settled into its rocking chair for an afternoon nap!

Judy's trip has raised £1,128 and her efforts are very much appreciated by everyone at Chester Zoo.

# Zoo helps the 'Sleeping Mouse'

By Sarah Bird, Biodiversity Officer

Reporting on Chester Zoo's involvement in a local conservation project.



Dormouse in characteristic pose!

Did you know that the dormouse gets its name from the French verb *dormir* which means to sleep? – so it is the sleeping mouse! Dormice were once common in woodland in the UK, especially in the south, but have declined sharply since then. In England they have become extinct in up to seven counties (half their former range) in the past 100 years. English Nature lead a reintroduction programme with the aim of restoring dormice to five English counties. Cheshire is one of these and dormice were released at a site close to the Welsh border in 1996 and 1997. The reintroduction was co-ordinated by Cheshire Wildlife Trust and careful monitoring of the

mice since release shows they have flourished and expanded their range.

Over in North Wales there are several natural populations of dormice though these appear to be scattered and isolated. The North Wales Wildlife Trust has an ongoing project to monitor known sites and survey other likely areas for these animals. I have been involved in this survey work in the Wrexham area during 2004 and Chester Zoo input to the project is increasing in 2005.

Surveying for dormice is not easy as these animals sleep during the day and forage off the ground in trees and shrubs during the night and, of course, they hibernate in the winter. There are several ways

to look for them:

- As they are very partial to hazelnuts and chew them in a particular way it is possible to identify nuts that have been eaten by dormice.
- Dormice will breed in artificial nest boxes that are rather like bird boxes. They will occasionally use bird boxes too.
- Dormice make small nests in holes in trees to sleep during the day and it is possible to provide artificial 'holes' – plastic nest tubes, which can then be monitored for nests.

In 2005 Chester Zoo is helping to increase knowledge of the dormice in Cheshire and North East Wales by advising and assisting with the individual marking of mice with microchips. This will enable more information about movement of individual animals and their longevity to be gained from the ongoing monitoring programme. Look out for reports from this project in *Zoo Life* in the future.



Nest Tube

# New species discovered at Chester Zoo!

By Dave Brunger, Records Administrator

In the five years that I have been Records Administrator, I have recorded many events onto a computerised animal records database. The computer programme we use for maintaining animal records is a programme that was developed in 1973 by ISIS (*International Species Inventory System*) and is called ARKS (*Animal Record Keeping System*). Data from ARKS is sent to ISIS regularly and is maintained in a global database which contains more than two million records for zoological animals from over 600 institutes worldwide.

Chester's ARKS database currently consists of 18,885 animal records, with each individual animal having an identification number or code. Each animal record contains basic information such as the specimen's taxonomic name, date of birth, parent IDs, house name, birth location, weights and so on. In addition to this the record also contains other information in note form such as details of animal management, rearing, reproduction, behaviour and basic medical notes, much of which is taken from the keepers' daily reports. More detailed information is contained in the veterinary database MEDARKS. In effect the record is almost like the animal's passport containing all its important information.

With the continued development of information technology, the ARKS programme is due to be replaced by a programme called ZIMS (*Zoological Information Management System*). In order for data currently maintained in the ARKS database to be successfully transferred to ZIMS it has been necessary for all institutes maintaining animal records on ARKS to check through their data for potential errors.

ISIS has given guidelines as to how accurate an institute's data is by indicating its percentage of linked records and then giving a comparison to the global percentage rate. In the last two years much of my day has been spent laboriously reviewing data in our records. Some of the procedures for 'Data Cleanup' are described below and this process has thrown out some very interesting scenarios!

## Parental Validation

This involves reviewing the data to find errors relating to an individual's parentage. Fortunately ISIS has created a process that highlights potential errors in the database so reducing time spent searching for these discrepancies.

## Transaction Linkage

When an animal is sent from Chester to another institute that maintains their records on ARKS

they in turn create a record of the animal in their database. When they send their data to ISIS their record should then link with Chester's record. If the date of birth, date of transfer or transfer details does not match then the records do not link at the global database at ISIS. This part of data cleanup involves checking discrepancies between our records and those of other institutions.

## Studbook Reconciliation

This is similar to Transaction Linkage but instead of comparing Chester's data with another institution's data, the process involves reviewing and resolving discrepancies between Chester's data and studbook data. This aspect of data cleanup requires the registrar and the studbook keepers to review their data.

Through continued efforts in reviewing and amending Chester's data, including compiling full historic records going back to the beginnings of Chester Zoo, we are now placed as a world leader in the 'Data Cleanup Campaign' and in a strong position for the arrival of ZIMS.

## World Firsts at Chester!

AN ORABAT - No actually a Crowned Plover *Vanellus coronatus*.



Cause: The Crowned Plover's record was added to the ARKS database but its parents' records were not. In the Plovers record the parents' record card IDs were

accidentally noted as a Bornean Orang-utan *Pongo pygmaeus* and a Rodrigues Fruit Bat *Pteropus rodricensis* Interesting!

A DOWL - a Dove & Owl cross!



Cause: Daily Report sent by keeper had inadvertently stated Sire and Dam ID numbers that were different species!

## Talking Animals - New for 2005

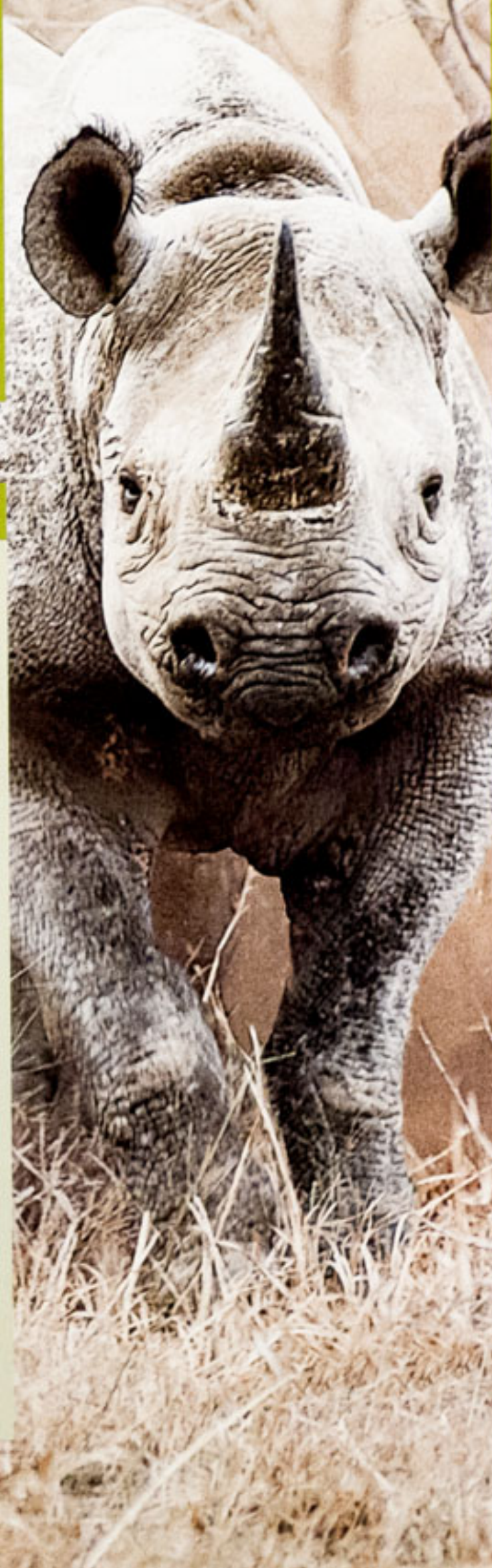
As always the Presenters will be giving a series of talks throughout the year, so pick up a leaflet from the information kiosk or look out for the boards dotted around the Zoo advertising the times. The talks, again, will be a mixture of old favourites along with some exciting new ones.

A new talk for 2005 is about Przewalski's Horses. These beautiful animals were once extinct in the wild and Presenters are frequently asked 'are any animals returned to the wild?' Come and find out what Chester Zoo is doing to help. Have you ever wondered how it got the name, Przewalski's Horse? Presenters will be able to give you the answer and maybe even how to pronounce it! Last year visitors enjoyed a talk called 'Got it Licked', that looked at the relationship between the

Acacia tree and the Giraffe. We are returning to the Giraffes to look at what is happening with our animals, now and in the future.

'No Tree, No Me' is a slogan used in Australian conservation to describe one of the problems facing Colombian Black Spider Monkeys in the wild. In addition to talking about why Colombian Black Spider Monkeys are endangered, the Presenters will be able to point out the females! It's not what you may think. New this year, and a must for Harry Potter fans, is a late afternoon talk on Owls. So, come along and listen to the new talks and, remember, Presenters are happy to answer any questions - well, we'll try to! If there is any animal or plant that you would like to hear about please let me know.

By Liz Marrs, Presenter.



# Record Frogs!

**RECORD**

Following on from the article in our last issue about local wildlife recording, **rECOrd** would like zoo members to look out for frogs this spring.

Do you have a garden pond? Cheshire has always been renowned for its ponds, having more ponds than any other county in Britain. Sadly, over the past 30 years the number of ponds in the county has fallen substantially for many reasons including land development and road building. This means that garden ponds are now very important for wildlife in Cheshire, particularly for amphibians such as frogs, which need water to breed.

Wildlife using garden ponds is not often recorded and our understanding of the distribution and population levels of frogs in Cheshire is relatively poor. Zoo members and adoptors can make a real difference by making notes of the frogs and other wildlife they see around garden ponds, and sending the records in to **reCORD** at the Zoo. The following simple information is required:

- Species (e.g. frog, toad, smooth newt, etc.)
- Where the amphibian was seen (e.g. garden pond at 4 Zoo Close, Chester, CH2 8LH)
- Your name and contact details (telephone number or email)
- Date the amphibian was seen
- Number of individuals seen (e.g. two frogs)

This information will help provide a better understanding of the amphibians living alongside us in gardens and will contribute much needed information towards a book, *The Atlas of Cheshire Amphibians*, which is planned for publication in 2005.

Please send your records to:  
**rECOrd**, Chester Zoological Gardens, Upton  
Chester, CH2 1LH,  
Tel.: 01244 383749  
Fax: 01244 383569

#### More information

**rECOrd** website: [www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk](http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk)

Email: [info@rECOrd-lrc.co.uk](mailto:info@rECOrd-lrc.co.uk)

Telephone: 01244 383749

National Biodiversity Network website: [www.nbn.org.uk](http://www.nbn.org.uk)



*Zoo life*

# Who are your favourites?

The animals YOU love

Membership and adoptions at Chester Zoo are at an all time high.

We currently have more than 24,000 members and over 5,500 adopters so thank you for your support. In 2004, memberships increased by eight per cent on the previous year with more and more people choosing a Zoo membership as a cost effective way to visit the Zoo any time.

Adoptions are increasingly popular too and more than 90 per cent are given as gifts. Christmas time inevitably sees a major surge in adoptions but more and more people are buying them for anniversaries, birthdays, Valentine's Day, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, retirements and for any number of other occasions throughout the year. Corporate adoptions are on the increase too with businesses enjoying the benefits and 'feel good factor' of adopting an animal for their company.

Adoptions are for the whole group of your chosen species rather than an individual animal and everything you give goes into a special account for animal foodstuffs and is a positive contribution to the well-being of our animals.

## Top 20 Adoptions

You can adopt most of the animals at Chester Zoo. Here's a run down of your current favourites in our Top 20:  
**Elephants, Tigers, Penguins, Orang-utans, Giraffes**

**Chimpanzees, Meerkats, Red Pandas, Jaguars, Black Rhino, Rodrigues Fruit Bats, Lions, Otters, Prairie Marmots, Spectacled Bears, Spider Monkeys, Komodo Dragons, Sealions, Ring Tailed Lemurs, Tortoises**

For more information contact the Membership and Adoptions Department on **01244 650204** or email [adoption@chesterzoo.org](mailto:adoption@chesterzoo.org)

## Red Panda Adoptions

Christmas time saw a surge in adoptions of Red Pandas. In January, *Lushan*, one of the two sisters who originally joined us from the Cotswold Wildlife Park, moved to Colchester Zoo to be paired with a male. By the time you read this *Zoo Life* we should have a new male of our own to join *Lushui*. He is coming from Dortmund in Germany and it is hoped they will form a breeding pair in the future. The breeding season is generally January to mid March so we will have to wait and see what happens!

## A day in the life of Lushui...

*Lushui* is fed three times a day. At 8.20 she has grapes and half an apple followed by bamboo for lunch at noon and leaf-eater pellets, and 'panda cake' at 3pm. Panda cake looks a bit like cheesecake and is made up of a dried powder mixed with water which contains all the minerals and nutrients *Lushui* needs to be

healthy. She spends much of her day and night in the trees but if the weather is bad she may take to one of the boxes inside the artificial tree in her enclosure, some of which contain straw beds. *Lushui* will generally come down from the trees to eat and you may see her chewing on bamboo, which is left for her to munch on during the day or helping herself from fruit bushes.

Red Pandas are one of a kind as they have no close living relatives. They are classed as carnivores even though their diet is very different to other carnivores. Their lifespan is 14 years, but 8 to 10 is average. Gestation is 112 to 158 days and young are weaned at 12 months. They are kept in pairs in captivity and are solitary in the wild.

Red Pandas are endangered due to poaching and shrinking habitat because of logging and farming.



# Wild Holiday Offers

## Holidays for Wildlife Lovers

Endangered Wildlife Travels currently have four safaris scheduled during 2005, designed with wildlife lovers in mind. Anyone interested should contact Simon Lacey on 01825 740262 or holiday@diplomatic.co.uk.

### **The Best of Botswana** 20 June – 1 July 2005

Join Marwell Zoo members on an 11 night fully escorted flying safari to experience the effects of the annual flooding of the Okavango Delta, which creates an amazing wetland within a desert and sustains a huge diversity of wildlife. Staying in three luxury camps you will enjoy a variety of game viewing options in differing eco-systems. £3,175 per person.

### **The Magic of Kenya** 5 – 16 October 2005

Join our 11 night safari to three different yet panoramic areas of northern Kenya, staying in 4\* lodges at Lake Nakuru and Samburu National Park and a luxury tented camp at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (supported by Tusk Trust), nestling in the foothills of Mount Kenya. Excellent game viewing and birding is assured and the variety of game watching experiences in the company of other wildlife lovers will provide a truly memorable holiday. This trip is in conjunction with Paignton and Bristol Zoos. From £2,195 per person.

### **Canada's Coolest Bears** 21 - 29 October 2005

Visit the polar bear capital of the world to watch the bears during their migration to their winter hunting grounds of the Hudson

Bay and spend two days on an arctic tundra buggy getting up close and personal with these magnificent creatures. Our Canadian adventure concludes in Toronto with a trip to the Niagara and Horseshoe Falls. From £2,295 per person.

### **Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright** November 2005

Experience game viewing like never before on the back of an elephant! Visit Ranthambore and Corbett Wildlife Reserves, home to a rich diversity of wildlife including elephant, leopard, sloth and the elusive tiger. You can't experience the rich culture and scenery of India without a visit to its historical wonders including Delhi, the Pink City of Jaipur and the Taj Mahal. Price Guide £1,795 per person (dates to be confirmed).



Zoo Life members and adopters can save 20% off the base price of a 2005 Eurocamp holiday – on high quality holiday homes or canvas accommodation.

Travel any day of the week, stay as long as you like and enjoy your holiday at your own pace. Whether you are a family or a couple, you can

choose to relax on the beach, cycle along leafy lanes, read by the pool or taste the local culture, the choice is yours. Whatever your preferred location on holiday, from beaches or mountains to lakes or forests, Eurocamp has over 160 parks in 12 European countries and islands to choose from, including up and coming destinations such as Croatia, Corsica, Elba or Sardinia and European holiday parks in Italy, Spain, France, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Holland and Luxembourg.

Some are spectacular and vibrant with huge water parks, busy bars and

restaurants; others are smaller, more laid back, relaxed and exclusive. Discover for yourself, by calling Eurocamp on **08703 338 338** and quoting ZOO05 to request your brochure and get bigger smiles for less on your 2005 Eurocamp holiday!

#### **Offer terms and conditions:**

20% discount offer valid off the base price of holidays taken from 19th March and completed by 14th July (excluding week commencing 27th May) or started after 2nd Sept and completed by 31st October 2005. Holidays must be booked by **30th September 2005.**

# Special Zoo experiences

Forthcoming events programme

## Chester Zoo's Gardens

Friday 22nd April - £27.50

The gardens of the Zoo are justly famous, winning many awards over the years.

Enjoy a tour in the company of our Botanist followed by a delicious three course dinner.



## Spirit of The Jaguar & Giraffe Safari

Thursday 9th June - £24.95

After cocktails in the Jaguar House with our keepers, take a stroll to meet our Giraffes before returning to the Oakfield Manor for a BBQ on the terrace.



## Tropical House & Islands in Danger Tour

Thursday 23rd June - £27.50



Learn about the Zoo's Tropical Realm, stroll to Islands in Danger to meet the Komodo Dragon, then enjoy a delicious tropical dinner in the Oakfield Manor.

## Family Picnic Evening

Thursday 14th July - £17.95

Enter the Zoo 4.30pm. Picnic baskets may be collected from the Oakfield Restaurant at 6.30pm.

## Chester Zoo Spectacled Bears & Twilight Zone Safari

Thursday 28th July - £29.95

Visit our Spectacled Bears and meet the keepers before moving onto our Bat Cave. Our Presenters will help you appreciate the finer points of the Twilight Zone before returning you to the

Oakfield for a BBQ, champagne and strawberries on the Oakfield Terrace.



## Evening Bat Walk and Traditional Buffet

Thursday 11th August - £17.25

Admission into the Zoo from 4.30pm. Buffet served in the Oakfield Restaurant at 7.30pm. At twilight and in the company of our keepers, go in search of wild Pipistelle, Noctule and Daubenton's bats.

## Carnivore Evening with Mexican Buffet

Thursday 1st September - £21.50

An evening with a difference. Enjoy an informative tour visiting Red Pandas, Sealions and big cats. Return to the Oakfield Manor and enjoy a Mexican Buffet.

## Jules Verne Evening

Friday 14th October - £23.50

Our Head Chef invites you to sample different courses from around the world. A culinary experience in 80 minutes (perhaps a little longer)!

Contact the Events Team in September for details of our Christmas activities.

For further information and to book any of the above please contact: **The Events Office, Chester Zoo, Caughall Road, Upton, Chester. CH2 1LH**  
Tel: 01244 650209.

# 'Talking shop'

Members and adopters' talks for 2005. Zoo Lecture Theatre, off the A41.

We anticipate that these talks will attract a wide audience so, as we cannot guarantee availability at the door, we advise you to send for your ticket in advance. Most of the talks are free but should it be held in support of a specific fundraising appeal, there will be a charge and a booking form/price details will be enclosed with the magazine. We ask those attending to make a donation of £1 each towards refreshments, payable at the door. This donation will be waived at chargeable meetings.

## Saturday 12 March 2005

2.30 pm

**Gregory Rasmussen**

### 'The Hunted Hunters'

This talk will discuss the birth and development of a conservation project that targets the highly endangered and wide-ranging African Canid, the African wild dog, also known as the painted hunting dog. The presentation will demonstrate how hands-on conservation using the dogs as a flagship species coupled with community involvement can serve to enrich the situation for both wildlife and people alike.

## Saturday 23 April 2005

2.30 pm

**Simon Bearder**

### 'Discovering new species in the Rainforest'

Most of the plant and animal species on earth remain unnamed and many of them live in the remaining rainforests that are being destroyed at an alarming rate without any sustainable benefits. Biologists now estimate that there are at least 30 million different species of organisms on earth, but less than two million have been given names, leaving a lot to be discovered. This talk uses sound and pictures to provide a step-by-step guide to how to find an unknown species for anyone who would like to work in the last remaining rainforests before they disappear forever.

## Thursday 26 May 2005

6.30 pm for 7 pm

### Annual General Meeting and Zoo Review

6.30 Doors Open

7.00 Zoo Review by Gordon McGregor

Reid and Zoo Heads of Division

8.00 Coffee and Nibbles

8.30 AGM

9.00 Questions

9.15 Finish

**Please note this is a change to the previously advertised date.**

## Friday 3 June 2005

7.30 pm

**Mark Pilgrim**

### 'A night of Rhinos for Rhinos'

Mark Pilgrim is the Chief Curator and Head of the Animal & Plant Conservation Division at Chester Zoo. This talk offers a

personal insight into the survival of the Black Rhino. Mark says: *"The Black Rhino is a fantastic creature in so many ways.*

*I really look forward to the chance to share with you why this animal is so special, its lifestyle, biology and history.*

*"Its plight is a moving story - this talk is a personal view of the way rhinos have touched my life and why I am so passionate about securing their future."*

All proceeds from this talk will go towards a joint fundraising initiative between Chester Zoo staff and Save the Rhino International. Tickets are priced at £8 each, which includes a light buffet and a glass of wine. Please send a cheque for the correct remittance (made payable to Chester Zoo), an SAE for ticket return, along with your daytime telephone number, to: Development Office, Chester Zoo, Chester, CH2 1LH. Alternatively, to pay by debit or credit card, please call 01244 650229.



## Chester Zoo "100 CLUB"

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

### October 2004

Mr Kenneth Day, CHORLEY	£100
Mr James Rafe, PONTEFRAC	£100
Mrs C. J. Barnard-Blom, GREAT SUTTON	£50
Mrs S. Wakefield, ELLESMERE PORT	£50
Mrs L. M. Hughes, GREAT BARROW	£50

### November 2004

Mrs Molly E Bryceson, MOLLINGTON	£100
Mrs Florence Bland, RICHMOND	£100
Mr Andrew R. Davies, WEM	£50
Mr I. D. Ogden, ASHTON-UNDER-LYME	£50
Mrs Mary Doogan, WAVERTON	£50

### December 2004

Mrs Kathlen M. Peaker, CHESTER	£700
Mr Robert K. Barnard, GARSTON	£100
Mr Glyn Jones, GOOSTREY	£50
Mrs Kathleen Oakes, ATHERTON	£50

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

The Chester Zoo 100 Club will now be run by Sarah McDonnell, Development Co-ordinator. If you wish to become a member, please contact Sarah on **01244 650265**.

## A reminder to Blue Peter Badge holders...

The Chester Zoo Blue Peter Badge offer for free entry to the Zoo is only valid when the badgeholder is accompanied by a full paying adult, which therefore unfortunately excludes members, senior citizens and students. Also the offer can not be used in connection with any other concession or promotion.



## Twycross Zoo joins reciprocal scheme

Members can now visit Twycross Zoo for free on production of their membership card.

This brings the current number of attractions you can visit for free with your membership to 11.

## £5 Gift Voucher

To celebrate our record number of members and adopters we would like to give you the chance to claim a £5 gift voucher when you recommend a friend to become a member or adopter.

More details can be found on the flyer in this magazine.

## Boxing Day

A decision has been made to close the Zoo on Boxing Day this year.

This is to give the staff a well-earned rest. We hope it doesn't affect your enjoyment of the Zoo during the Christmas and New Year period.



## New Look Membership Card 2005

During 2005, the membership department will be changing your membership cards from the existing format, to a new look photo ID card. Current members will be given the opportunity to change their membership card over to the new version when visiting the Zoo, or will be invited to change them when renewing membership. New members will be invited to come along to the Zoo and have their photographs taken for their new membership cards to be issued.

To find out more details, please ask on your next visit to the Zoo or telephone the membership office **01244 650208 / 203** or email [memberships@chesterzoo.org](mailto:memberships@chesterzoo.org)



# Who's Beak?

Junior Puzzle Page



Match each bird's common name with its scientific name, and then work out which beak belongs to which bird.

The birds drawn are Caribbean Flamingo, Blue-throated Macaw, Dalmatian Pelican, Humboldt's Penguin, Hyacinthine Macaw, Red-crowned Crane, Rhea and West African Crowned Crane.

Win £10  
to spend  
in the Zoo  
Shops!

Fill in your answers in the table below.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Beak
<i>Anodorhynchus hyacinthus</i>		
<i>Ara glaucogularis</i>		
<i>Balearica pavonina pavonina</i>		
<i>Grus japonensis</i>		
<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>		
<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>		
<i>Rhea americana</i>		
<i>Spheniscus humboldti</i>		



Last Month's  
answers were:

Giant Redwood  
Handkerchief Tree  
Maiden Hair Tree  
Glory Pea

The winner is:  
Rebecca Brew, age 7  
from Elton, Chester



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

**FAUNA & FLORA  
INTERNATIONAL  
(NORTH WEST GROUP)**

**Spring 2005  
Programme**

**Friday 8 April 2005**

**Madagascar:  
Nature's Noah's Ark  
with Nick Garbutt**

After graduating with his Zoology degree from Nottingham University in 1988, Nick Garbutt spent four years working on various research and conservation projects in the UK and abroad. Wanting to write a book about the wildlife of Madagascar, but not having the time, he gave this up to pursue a freelance career.

A self-taught photographer and artist, Nick now combines these with leading wildlife tours, writing

and lecturing, which has taken him to many parts of the world over the past decade. He regularly contributes photographs and articles to a wide range of magazines like *National Geographic*, *Africa Geographic*, *BBC Wildlife*, *Africa Birds & Birding*, to name a few! He has also twice been a winner of the *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* Competition.

Nick is author of the highly acclaimed *Mammals of Madagascar* and *Madagascar Wildlife – A Visitors Guide* and he is currently writing his third book.

Rainforests are Nick's 'heart and soul' and in addition to talking to us about the amazing and unique wildlife of Madagascar, he will give us a glimpse of the rainforests of Ecuador and Borneo as well. Truly not an evening to be missed.

**Friday 20 May 2005**

**Saving the Wild Cheetah  
with Dr Laurie Marker**

Dr Laurie Marker is Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) based in Namibia, Africa. Having worked with cheetahs since 1974, Laurie set up the not-for-profit Cheetah Conservation

Fund in 1990, moving to Namibia to develop a permanent Conservation Research Centre for the wild cheetah.

The Cheetah Conservation Fund's ground-breaking activities are housed at their International Research and Education Centre in the main cheetah habitat of Namibia, and this evening's talk will be a rare opportunity in the UK for you to hear Dr Laurie Marker describe her tremendous work with this stunning species.

It is many years since we were last lucky-enough to hear Laurie at FFI North West (we were transfixed!) and things have moved-on with her research very considerably since that time, so I strongly urge your attendance at what will be a fascinating and stimulating evening.

**Tickets:** These may be available on the door, but advanced booking helps us to keep costs down. Please ring Penny Rudd at the Zoo on 01244 650215 to reserve your tickets. Doors open at 7.00 pm for a 7.30 pm start in the Zoo's Russell Allen Lecture Hall. Both Members and non-Members of FFI are welcome to attend. Tickets cost £6.50 for FFI Members and £7 for non-Members, and this includes a light buffet and wine.



# Junior Adventures

Junior Members' Programme of Events 2005



## TRACKS & SIGNS

Saturday 19 March 2005

Returning again by popular demand, we hope that the ground will be damp and soft enough for this event. Juniors will enter animal enclosures in order to make plaster casts. This has the potential to be a very messy day but hopefully you will all have a souvenir to take home with you! Over eights can come along when we meet outside Oakfield House at 11am, returning there for collection at 4pm. You will need a picnic lunch and it is essential that you wear squeaky-clean wellies and clean old clothes please.

## SHUGBOROUGH HOUSE AND HOME FARM

Saturday 23 April 2005

\*Please note this is a change of date  
We love our visits to this beautiful stately home in Staffordshire and find that spring is the perfect time to visit

the Home Farm to see the wide range of rare breeds of cattle, goats, chickens and pigs, and occasionally shire horses. The Home Farm also has wonderful demonstration days and we will be visiting at a time when traditional cheese making and bakery skills will be shown. A day not to be missed! Over eights are invited and we will leave the staff car park at 10am, returning at 5pm. Bring a picnic!

## THE LONG MYND AND FOSSIL HUNTING

Saturday 14 May 2005

We have had some lovely days around the Long Mynd in Shropshire when we go in search of fossils along this rather extraordinary geological feature. The walk alone is worth coming along for, so do not hesitate to join us, and we hope to find some fossils while we are there. The bus will leave the staff car park at 9.30am and return at 5pm and

over eights are invited to join us. You will need to bring a picnic and appropriate clothes for a day in the countryside.

## FOEL FARM PARK ON THE ISLE OF ANGLESEY

Saturday 18 June 2005

Our programme would hardly be the same without a summer visit to Anglesey and we thought this new event for us may prove attractive to Juniors. The Foel Farm Park (which dare I say it has a Chocolate Farm attached!) should prove a fun-packed day out in a beautiful setting and we may even manage a paddle on the beach! The bus will leave the staff car park at 9.30am, returning there for 5.30pm. Over eights are invited to bring a picnic along and join in.

## HOW TO BE A GOOD ZOOKEEPER!

Wednesday 27 July 2005

This is a unique opportunity given 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 4pm. Please bring a packed lunch. **Please Note** that bookings for this event will not be taken before 8.30 am on Wednesday 13 July 2005, and will be strictly on a first-come, first-served basis.

## SUMMER BARBEQUE

Thursday 11 August 2005

We thought we would try a Thursday evening for our barbeque this year to avoid disappointment for those of you going on holiday the following weekend! So please do come and

see the Zoo at night (when you are never sure exactly who is watching who!) and to listen to the evening sounds without other visitor noises to distract you. We usually aim to have a speaker to chat to you for this event as well, but you can be sure of having a relaxing evening. We would like to invite the over eights to join us for 7pm, when you should arrive at the Ark Restaurant via the Zoo's Staff Entrance on Caughall Road. Parents are asked to collect Juniors from the Ark Restaurant at 9.45 pm please.

## HILBRE ISLAND

Saturday 17 September 2005

This will be a real treat for those of you who have not previously visited Hilbre Island in the Dee Estuary and also for those of you who have. We will follow the tide out from West Kirby and plan to spend some time exploring the rock pools around 'Little Eye' and 'Middle Eye' on our way across to Hilbre, the biggest of the three islands from where we hope to see seals and a wide array of sea birds.

The timings for this event will be issued in a later magazine as we need to carefully check the tide times before we set out. Over eights will be invited to join us, with a picnic.

## SNOWDONIA

Saturday 15 October 2005

Following our recent hugely successful visits to Snowdonia National Park, we have decided that Snowdonia in Autumn will be a great place to be. We will make it a full day out and Juniors of eight and over are asked to come along and join the fun. There is always lots to see and do in this lovely area so watch this space for further details as we get closer to the time of our visit.

**Please Note:** Bookings must be made for all events. Please ring Penny Rudd at the Zoo on 01244 650215, not more than two weeks before the event you would like to attend. Places are offered on a first-come, first-served basis and may be limited. This list is provisional and in exceptional circumstances we may have to alter dates and venues. You will be informed of any such changes in 'Zoo Life' - not by individual letter - so please keep up-to-date by reading the Junior page in each issue. A small charge will be made to cover the cost of those events which involve transport, entry fees, materials or the provision of food, and you will be advised of this at the time of booking.

**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 our  
rare animals and endangered species  
across the world.



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