

Gester
ZOO
Life

Winter 1989



CONSERVATION CANNOT WAIT

Chez Nous

ZOOS AND CONSERVATION

Regular visitors will be aware that there has been a lot of work going on, and we are now beginning to make significant inroads into the improvement of animal enclosures so that we can begin to make them over to species more in need of our help.

There's a lot of talk about conservation through captive breeding being best done in the countries of origin. This is not necessarily so. If the reasons for the decline apply to the whole of that region then they will apply to captive breeding groups too. West Indian parrot species in breeding establishments are just as likely to be hit by hurricanes as are the forest remnants supporting the last few birds in the wild. The political and economic factors which have made the East African countries despair of keeping their wild elephants, will equally apply to any captive effort. The diseases which could drag down the wild herds in Africa and Asia are just as likely to strike zoo stocks in those areas.

Species conservation is a world "life boat" problem and cannot be shrugged off as the responsibility only of the governments of the country of origin. It is not just the people of Mauritius who have been impoverished by the extinction of the dodo, and it will not just be the people of Africa who would be impoverished by the loss of the black rhinoceros. We are all in this together and must make our local efforts as effective as we can.

The organisation of a particular zoo's contribution is becoming very complex. If we accept the I.U.C.N. (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) as being the central point for co-ordinating all international effort, then there is an intricate family tree of organisations below. We have applied to join the I.U.C.N. as a National Non-Government Organisation.

Under I.U.C.N. is its Species Survival Commission, an immense body, set up and chaired for many years by Sir Peter Scott. Nobody did more than Sir Peter to further the interests of world wide conservation. We all owe his memory a great debt, and it is so sad that he did not live to enjoy the celebrations being planned for his eightieth birthday.

Because the field to be covered by the Commission is so wide, it is broken up into specialist groups, one of which is Captive Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG). This very active group draws together all the effort that goes into saving species outside their habitat. It is therefore very closely integrated with the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens (IUDZG).

Co-operation is not simply swapping animals. It involves finding out which zoos have which animals, and working out from the breeding histories which pairings will be most advantageous genetically. This is done with the help of the computerised data bank of the International Species Inventory System (I.S.I.S.) and its Animal Record Keeping System (A.R.K.S.), to which Chester Zoo contributes.

At less than world level, (for we have to consider the immense problems of moving animals and quarantine restrictions across the world) we have the European association, E.C.A.Z.A. (Community Association of Zoos and Aquaria) and the European Species Programmes. At national level we have the National Federation of Zoological Gardens of Great Britain and Ireland, in which Chester is deeply involved. I am the Treasurer, and Mrs Cade is on the marketing committee. We have the Joint Management of Species Group, which co-ordinates the management of particular species within the quarantine barriers.

We must now progress at three levels. We must continue to improve our zoos, until they are bursting with

the successes of our breeding programmes. We must continue with our international co-operative commitment, and we must take a closer involvement with the work being done in the wild.

The days are over when the captive breeding lifeboat is only launched when all hope of wild conservation has failed. Hopefully, such last minute scrambles as the Californian condor programme are now things of the past. Common sense says that the lifeboats should be launched at the first sign of trouble, so there will be parallel efforts of wild habitat conservation and zoo conservation.

We have already made modest contributions towards helping Indian zoos co-ordinate their efforts and manage their brow-antlered deer. Two years ago, Dr. Wilkinson, our Curator of Birds, went to Nigeria to advise on the management of a forest area. Maybe the help most needed will be in supporting field workers, or in providing training. One day it might be in helping local conservation societies buy land to expand their reserves. Whatever form the help takes, we must ensure that we involve our own local community in it, so that the zoo becomes a real means of spreading the interest in the wild and all its diversity.

All members of staff join me in wishing you all a very happy Christmas. I hope the 'nineties' will be a very prosperous decade for us all.

Michael Brambell

FRONT COVER

Father Christmas will be in the zoo from 12 noon to 3pm for the first three weekends of December, with his reindeer, in the cave under the bridge.



Front cover photo by the Liverpool Post & Echo

Chester Zoo Life is edited by Pat Cade

MEMBERS' MEETINGS 1989/90

Saturday 9th December 1989

2.30pm in the Lecture Hall.

Members Christmas lunch in the Oakfield Restaurant, followed by "Florida's Everglades" - Mrs Valerie McFarland.

Christmas Lunch tickets now available - Adults £9.95, Children (aged 13 and under) £5.75. Ring Maureen in the Membership Office (0244) 380280 to reserve your ticket.

Members are welcome to attend the lecture without taking lunch.

Saturday 27th January 1990

2.30pm in the Lecture Hall.

"The Fauna of New Zealand" - Mr Mike Lyndley. Mr Lyndley is a member of the Anglia TV "Survival" series team.

Saturday 24th February 1990

2.30pm in the Lecture Hall.

"The Owl Man" - Mr Tony Warburton from the Owl Centre, Ravenglass.

Monday 12th March 1990 President's Evening

Our President, His Grace the Duke of Westminster, will attend this meeting, and the guest speaker will be Dr. P. Morris, an expert on small mammals - especially hedgehogs. A light buffet will be served - prior booking with Maureen Allsopp will be necessary for catering numbers. Ring Maureen to reserve your ticket - (0244) 380280.

Time: 7.00pm for 7.30pm

Venue: Lecture Hall

Access: Through Time Office entrance.

Price: £4.50

Saturday 14th April 1990

2.30pm in the Lecture Hall.

"The Future of Wild Life in the East African Parks", accompanied by bird song - Mr David Lovatt Smith.

SLIDE NIGHT

Wednesday 17th January

Oakfield Boardroom 7pm

Zoo Photo Group invites all members with an interest in photography to bring up to TEN slides for an informal screening evening. Choose your favourites. Everyone who comes will vote for the best slide. Kodak prizes for the winners. Coffee and biscuits. Enter via Time Office. For further information contact Chris Vere.

MEMBERS CONCESSIONARY TICKETS £1.90 each

New members are reminded that all annual members may purchase up to 20 tickets annually for family and friends (sold in blocks of five for £9.50). Each ticket admits either one adult or two children/OAPs.

These tickets must be purchased in advance, and can only be obtained from the membership office. They are not available at the entrance gate.

If ordering by post, please enclose cheque, made payable to Chester Zoo, and a stamped, self addressed envelope.

Junior members are not entitled to purchase concessionary tickets.

Tickets to the zoo make super Christmas presents!

Maureen Allsopp
Membership Secretary.

TIGER TROUBLE

By Helen Muir, with Peter Wait.

Published by Blackie.

There are lots of new children's books published at this time of year. But when you are browsing in the bookshop, you may see one with a familiar name on the front cover. Peter Wait, our Senior Curator, has co-written a book, with author Helen

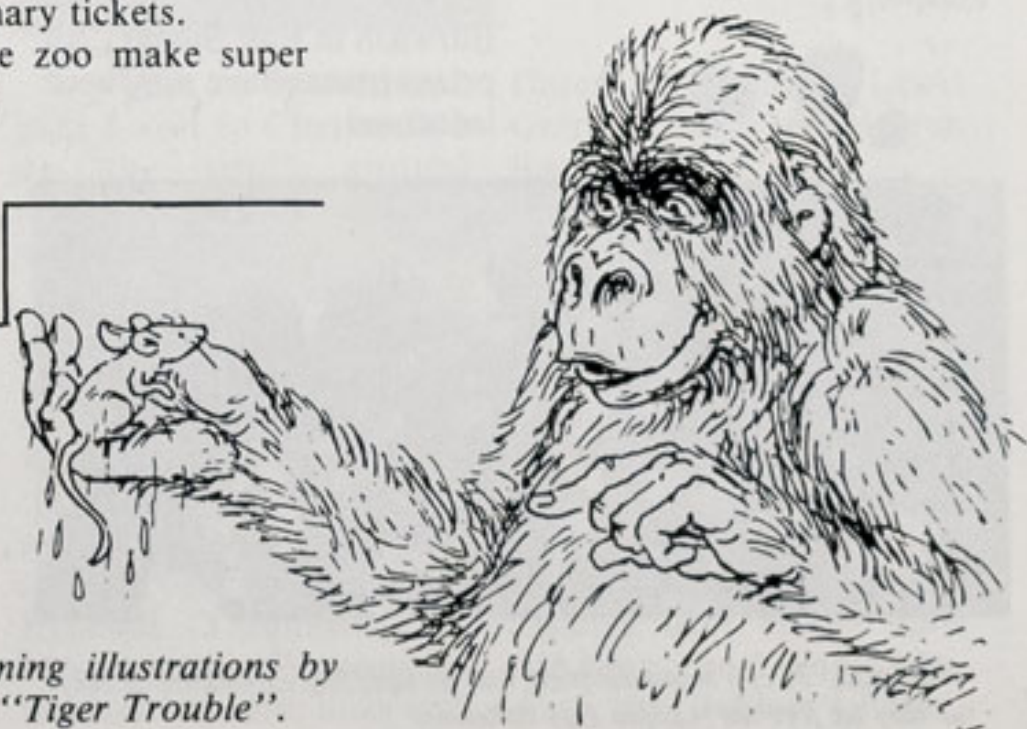


Peter Wait

Muir, called Tiger Trouble. It is a fictional story book, based on Peter's real life experiences hand-rearing some of Chester Zoo's young animals. Junior members should be able to recognise some of the real characters behind the fictional names!

"Victory" for instance, is a very thinly disguised name for our own Jubilee!

The book is on sale in the zoo gift shop, and will make a super present for any youngster from five years upwards, who loves animals and the zoo. Peter has offered to sign copies bought by any members or visitors.



One of the charming illustrations by Robert Bartlet in "Tiger Trouble".

ZOO REVIEW

RARE FOAL

The rare Arabian Gazelle is used as the logo on zoo stationery, symbolising the Society's dedication to conservation.

Because the animals are very timid, most of the stock is kept at the zoo's quarantine station in Birkenhead. But a few months ago, a pair was brought into the zoo to ease pressure on the expanding population at the station.

In October, Karan, the female, produced a female calf, at present unnamed. Staff are delighted that the baby is female, because this is extremely important to the small British population of this endangered species.

Keepers are considering suitable Arabian names, as they always like to choose dignified names, appropriate to the country of origin. The male can be seen in the paddock by the monkey house, but mother and baby will remain off view during the Winter months.

"ADOPTA" DAY WINNERS

Friday 6th October & Saturday 7th October.

Quiz

Mrs S. Downs of Stockport (Bennett's Wallaby and Prairie Marmot adopter) and Mrs M. Finch of Shrewsbury (Penguin adopter)

Balloon Race

The winner of the "most travelled balloon" prize is David Finch, of Shrewsbury. His balloon ticket was returned by Mr David Boulton, from Burwash in East Sussex! All prizewinners have now been informed.



This group of cub scout adopters had an uplifting experience as they let free the Adopta Day balloons.

TO PHILIP'S MEMORY



The late Philip Janes was the zoo's energy consultant for a number of years, and his advice and friendly interest has been much missed.

Because Philip had such affection for the zoo, his family felt the nicest memorium for him would be a seat in the gardens.

The new seat, suitably inscribed, is in the lovely setting of Mrs Mottershead's memorial garden. Director Michael Brambell, Deputy Director Alan du Cros, and Projects Engineer Fred Carson are pictured here drinking a toast to the memory of Philip Janes.



GOURMET EVENINGS 1990

Most people who attended one of these evening in the Oakfield during the year, immediately booked for the next one.

Michele O'Sullivan is now planning the 1990 programme, and the first one will be "Around the World in Five Courses." That will be on an evening in June. Others planned include a Chinese Banquet, the popular "Taste of India", and finally a November welcome to the Beaujolais Nouveau.

Full details of dates and prices in next issue.

VICE PRESIDENT LAUNCHES THE OAKFIELD RAMP!



Until a few months ago, there was no permanent facility for wheelchairs to enter the Oakfield restaurant at Chester Zoo. But now, the terrace has been completely rebuilt, including a ramp for disabled visitors.

Dinah, Lady Tollemache, a Vice President of the North of England Zoological

Society, officially opened the ramp by taking her own wheelchair through the red ribbon, and into the restaurant!

Photograph shows Lady Tollemache with Dr and Mrs Brambell, and three members of groundstaff who built the new terrace - Nick White, Dave Holden and George Scott.

MEDAL FOR MICHÉLÉ

Michèle O'Sullivan, who manages the Oakfield Restaurant in the zoo, has been training hard, in readiness for the 1,250 Christmas meals that have been booked in the restaurant this December!

Michèle was running in the first ever Chester Zoo 10k road race, which was held in November in conjunction with Whitby Heath Athletics Club.

There were over 500



runners, and Michèle was the seventh lady home - a great achievement, which won her a medal and a free ticket to the zoo!

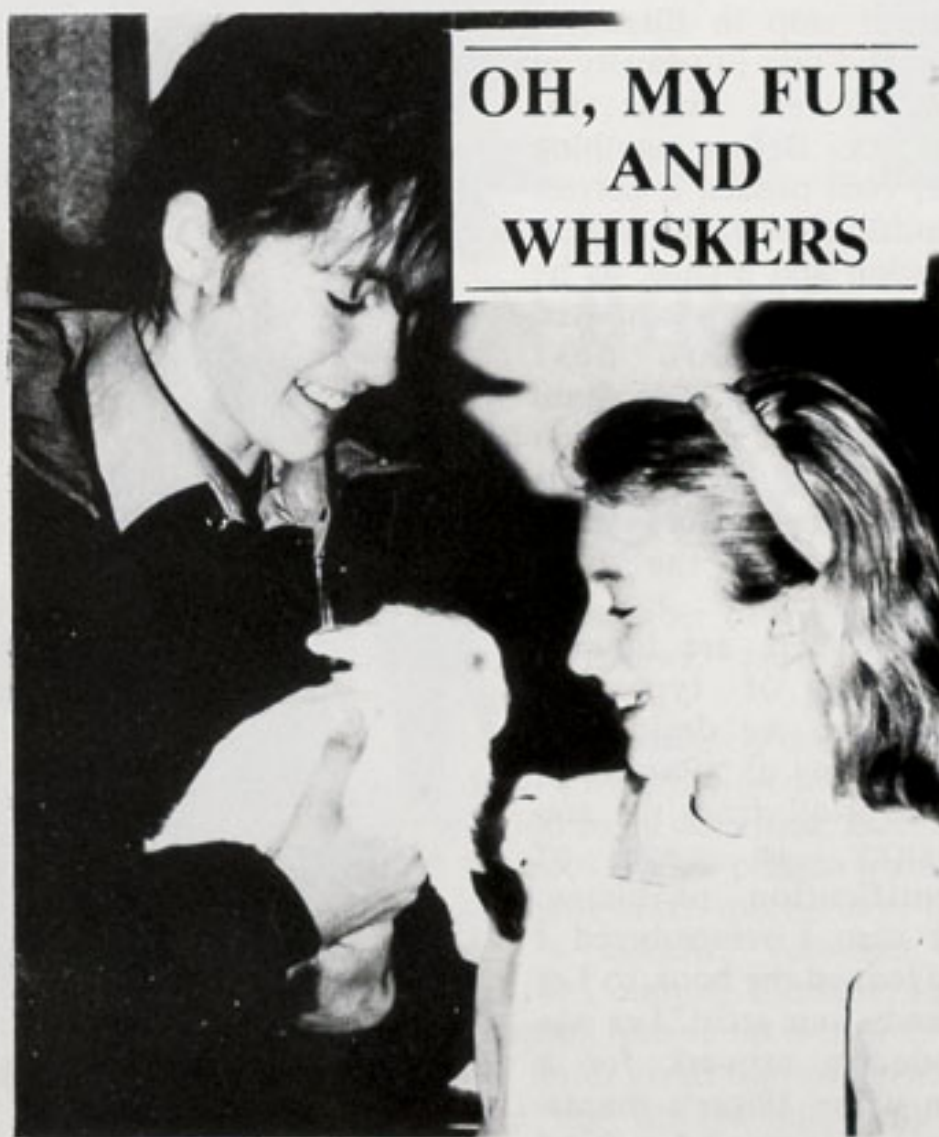


ZOOLOGISTS' WEDDING

Chester Zoo was the obvious choice for the wedding reception of two zoologists!

Dawn Akers and James Cooper are both keen animal lovers. Dawn holds a PhD in zoology, and her new husband is the Manager of the Sea Life Centre in St. Andrews, Scotland.

One of their surprise wedding presents was the adoption of one of the zoo's flamingos.



OH, MY FUR AND WHISKERS

Alice in Wonderland paid a visit to Chester Zoo on the zoo's annual Adopters Day - to adopt a white rabbit!

Each year, the Lewis Carroll Society in Daresbury, elects a young girl to be Alice for the next 12 months.

This year's Alice, who took up her duties in October is 10 year old Rebecca Thomason, of Moore, near Warrington. Rebecca has close links with

Daresbury, where Lewis Carroll's father was vicar in the 1930s.

Adopting the white rabbit on behalf of the Society, was Rebecca's first official duty. But as this year marks the 20th anniversary of the Society, her engagement book is likely to be very busy.

Rebecca/Alice is pictured (above) with keeper Julie McAdam and Snowdrop, from the Children's Farm.

BIRD IN THE HAND

When the office phone rings in the zoo, you never know quite what unusual request is likely to take place!

A case in point was on one dull Autumn afternoon.

"There's a man here about an illegally imported parrot."

Obviously, I had drawn the short straw, as Roger Wilkinson, Curator of Birds, was away twitching in the Scilly Islands. So someone else had to sort out the illegal immigrant.

It turned out that the man was Neil Wrench, Senior Officer Animal Health from the County Council Trading Standards Office. It had been reported to him that a parrot, possibly South American origin, had jumped ship in Ellesmere Port and was in security in the Octel industrial complex. Before anything else, Neil needed a correct identification of the bird in question and a cage, as he had been told it was housed in a cardboard box! Keepers Andrew Woolham and Mark Pilgrim soon produced a magnificent looking cage, and we all assembled at the time office.

There are literally hundreds of types of parrot, so we decided to take a copy of "Parrots of the World" from the zoo library, in case of identification problems. But then I remembered I had loaned the book to Les Grandy, our artist. Les was producing artwork for a sign of an Illiger's macaw for Harewood Bird Gardens, and needed it for reference. (Incidentally, Chester Zoo provides a sign service for many other collections).

This was going to be a real test for us. No parrot bible in hand, the experts would have to make an instant identification of what could be a rare or endangered illegally imported bird.

What could we do with it when it was identified? We couldn't bring it into the zoo, as that would contravene quarantine regulations. We couldn't take it to our own quarantine station, as other birds were due to arrive and an additional bird would mess up all our

arrangements. All we could do was identify, loan a cage, and ask Neil Wrench to find a suitable quarantine establishment, and then hope that if it was an unusual species, it would end up in the zoo.

Anyway the four of us set off for Ellesmere Port, in Neil's Ford Escort. The cage was too big for the boot, so Mark had it on his knee. Even with the passenger seat fully forward, his nose was pretty close to the cage front, but he didn't complain too much. As we



Could the illegal immigrant be one of these?

arrived at Ellesmere Port, Neil muttered, "Bad time this, Shell are just turning out." Hundreds of cars came through the gates at breakneck speed, obviously very pleased to have escaped. We drove for what seemed like miles, through industry, pipes, chimneys, fumes - a very alien landscape to us.

From the Octel gate house, we were escorted by security through the industrial lead making complex,

Mike Coupe has problems with a parrot!!

towards some ships moored at the docks. Neil thought we might have to go on board ship and make further investigations, but our security escort pulled up outside an engineering building.

This was it! Would the experts be able to identify the illegal parrot? A hush fell over the assembled Octel workers, the zoo staff looked a little pale and reserved - the tension of the situation was beginning to tell!

"Here he is!" said the foreman.

Well, we couldn't believe our eyes, for sitting in a beautifully crafted cage was a lovely pet cockatiel! No identification problems here; no illegal import this one - just a lost pet bird.

Relief all round. No paper work, or problems for Neil, and we experts could give an on-the-spot identification and give advice on health and feeding.

We have a strange suspicion that the Octel workers wanted to keep the bird there. Maybe it had been there for some time without the foreman's knowledge. But who can blame them for wanting a little bit of nature to brighten up their working environment.

We loaded up the car for the journey home, and all decided we couldn't work in industry at any price - and returned to our beautiful zoo.

"Had an exciting time? Where's the rare bird?" our colleagues asked. Hmmm -exciting? Well - it's all in a day's work!

By Royal Appointment



If you visited the zoo in May this year, you will probably remember the very colourful exhibition of paintings by Edward Moughtin. The exhibition is currently on show at London Zoo, and has clearly been seen by Very Important Persons indeed!

Mr Moughtin recently received a call from Buckingham Palace, informing him that Prince Philip wished to purchase two of his paintings.

Like his Royal patron, Edward Moughtin is ex-Royal Navy. He is a self-taught artist, particularly interested in flora and fauna. He says of his work that there is no attempt to present a portrait, only the movement and colour of the species, interlocked within a fantasy of flowers, orchids and foliage. "In my world," he says, "animals and birds are free from the depredations of mankind."

Above: Edward Moughtin with his painting "African Pastoral" at Chester Zoo.

ZOO TOKENS

If there are still a few gaps on your Christmas shopping list, a Chester Zoo gift token could be the answer! They cost £4.00 each, and can be exchanged for entry to the zoo, or in any of the shops or restaurants. Buy them at the zoo, or by post from the marketing office. A free gift card is enclosed.

SOUTH AMERICAN BIRDS - A PHOTOGRAPHIC AID TO IDENTIFICATION

Roger Wilkinson, Curator of Birds, reviews this book newly published by Harrowood Books.

Having the largest bird fauna of any continent, South America has, until recently, been relatively poorly represented in illustrated field guides. The best is "A Guide to the Birds of South America" by Rudolph Meyer de Schauensee. The first edition of this included 50 plates, which, with text figures illustrated over 600 of the nearly 3,000 species described.

However, that first edition is now out of print, and more recent editions lack the plates. So the new "South American Birds - a Photographic Aid to Identification" forms a most useful companion volume to de Schauensee.

Over 1,400 colour photographs taken by John Dunning are presented in this volume. Many of these photographs have been taken in a controlled environment. A hide-like enclosure was used to contain the bird rather than the photographer! John Dunning went out into the field with mist nets to collect the birds which were later released back into the wild.

That said, a number of his shots, for example curassows, are clearly of aviary birds.

The book is extremely useful for the addition of a distribution map for each of the 2,700 birds described. Excluded from the book are all pelagic seabirds. On what basis other species have been dropped is unclear. Amongst the macaws, for example, Caninde, Lears and Glaucous receive no mention.

Brief notes given on un-illustrated birds are not always sufficient for identification purposes. To be fair, the book is described as a photographic 'aid' and not as a complete identification manual.

The grouping of species onto plates such as 'furnariids usually in low vegetation' or 'small flycatchers with obvious wing bars', should assist the beginner in identification. However, the splitting of genera in this process is annoying to the taxonomically minded reader.

The book is well produced and worth having for the photographs alone. For me, the addition of the distribution maps makes it indispensable.

As a Zoological layman (some people would say layabout) I thought it high time I learned something of the complexities of transporting animals from one country to another. The opportunity arose when Peter Wait, our Senior Curator and Martin Squires, an ungulate keeper (or should I say a keeper of ungulates) planned to collect three onagers from a private collection at Oberwil near Basle, Switzerland. Since Whipnade had two Przewalski Horses for Oberwil it made economic sense to combine the two operations. Consequently, at 04.00 one Monday morning we set out from Chester in a Landrover kindly loaned by James Edwards and towing a horsebox provided by Knowlsey Safari Park.

Our planned schedule of an 0800 arrival at Whipnade was shattered by the traffic in Dunstable but the two Przewalski yearling mares were duly loaded. The bad news at Whipnade was that we needed to call at St. Margarets, near Dover, for veterinary clearance before proceeding to the ferry terminal. This further delay meant that we missed our 1400 ferry but nevertheless, Sealink, who had sponsored our channel crossings were extremely helpful. Their Freight

Manager speeded us through the freight formalities and apologised that he could not do the same for customs clearance. We were then escorted to the berth and posed with the ferry in the background for the benefit of Sealink photographers. In the absence of any visible animals, we felt a little incongruous alongside the labels announcing "Rare animals in transit". Sealink were most considerate for the wellbeing of the cargo and offered a choice of upperdeck or lowerdeck stowage.

By the time we had cleared the docks at Calais, dusk had fallen and the difficulty of finding overnight accommodation for ourselves and Przewalskis seemed rather daunting so we decided to drive on through the night, using the autoroute du l'est. We soon fell into the routine of one driving, one to keep the driver awake and one "zizzing" in the back and changing duties every hour or so when the driver was tired. With one break for a meal at about 2300 we managed to cover the 500 odd miles from Calais to Basle in about 14 hours, arriving at the Swiss customs post at 0700. Two hours later we had cleared customs, run the gauntlet of the veterinary centre and arrived at our destination.



Photographs by Derrick Thompson

The zoo thanks Sealink and James Edwards, Chester for sponsoring this trip

Derrick Thompson, the zoo's computer friendliest adviser, wears a different hat for a trip to Switzerland



Frau Stamm, our hostess, had kindly met us at customs and this helped enormously with the navigation of the last part of the journey.

The unloading of the horses went without incident. They surveyed the situation for a minute or so when the ramp was lowered and then decided that even without snow, Switzerland was not a bad place to be and trotted through the yard and into their new stables. The horses stabled, we were able to enjoy the luxury of baths and shaves and to return to a more human state. After a very warm welcome lunch prepared by Frau Stamm and her son Stefan we were shown round the collection of some 35 animals on the 80 acre estate. Besides Przewalskis and Zebras, the household pets included five Irish wolfhounds, three pugs, a golden retriever, a cat and two parrots, all of whom seemed to be living in perfect harmony in this little organic Shangri La.

We were entertained to a most enjoyable dinner that evening by Frau Stamm and Dr Sigfried, the Canton veterinary officer and President of the Society from which we were obtaining

our onagers. I had forgotten the hospitality of the Swiss and it was good to be in the company of people who genuinely cared, not only for animals but for nature.

The following day was our rest day and Frau Stamm drove us to Basle Zoo in the morning for part one of our busman's holiday, driving us on to Zurich Zoo in the afternoon for part two. Both zoos were most interesting and entertaining and useful ideas were gathered on film and to a lesser extent, in the grey matter. We were particularly fortunate in that at Zurich, the Director, Dr. Peter Weilemann and Dr Christian Schmidt took time off to show us around. Their new house for small mammals, fish, reptiles and birds had been opened six days previously and was consequently a great attraction. That evening the Stamms prepared a delicious cheese fondue which made us realize how fortunate we were to be staying with them and not having to find local "McDonalds" for a quick burger.

Thursday was our departure day and at 0600 we commenced loading the three onagers, firstly into crates to

transport them to the horsebox and then into the horsebox itself. Because of the wild nature of onagers, plans for the conduct of this exercise had been discussed on and off for the previous 36 hours. It was an eye opener to me to see the apparent ease with which Peter and Martin carried out this exercise, obviating any need for sedation of the animals (or of myself for that matter). Everyone was greatly relieved when the loading had been completed and felt that breakfast had been well and truly earned.

Back once more to the veterinary centre and then to customs where we cleared and we were on our way by 1100. Twelve hours later found us back at Calais ready for the 0045 sailing to Dover. Until then I had no idea how welcome a Sealink full English breakfast could be in the middle watch but it really did go down well. Perhaps my predilection for food is becoming a little too apparent. I shall not mention it again.

Dover at night is an extremely busy port with a continuous stream of lorries passing through the freight terminal. Despite the efforts of our agents to clear us, by the time we eventually left the port and joined the solid stream of heavy traffic up the A2/M2, we had met the beginning of the London rush hour. Avoiding the Dartford Tunnel tail-back we joined the Blackwall Tunnel tail-back and persuaded ourselves that we had made the right decision. Nevertheless, we were back in Chester Zoo at 1303 having previously telephoned an ETA of 1300 and most importantly, the onagers, Mohamed, Mana and Mahel (so that's why they declined the ham sandwiches) were in perfect condition after their 850 mile journey. If only the same could be said about the crew of the landrover.

N.B. The three onagers have settled very well into their new quarters and being herd animals, have begun to form links with the previous stock.

The Gentle Giraffe



If I were asked to choose the most popular ruminant in the zoo, the answer would have to be the giraffe -once described as the world's most unlikely animal! The scientific name, *camelopardalis*, translates to "a camel marked like a leopard." The Arabs added the name "Zarafah" meaning "He who walks swiftly." This later became "Giraffa."

Even though most children can identify the world's tallest animal before they go to school, the first time they see one in real life they are amazed at the sheer size confronting them.

The present day giraffe is found in Africa, south of the Sahara to the Cape and, depending on the authority used, in up to eight sub-species. Most commonly seen in zoos are the Rothschild's, some times called Ugandan; the Reticulated and the Masai. The other species are Cape, Angolan, Kordofan, Chad and Nubian. Where sub-species overlap, cross breeding can occur further complicating the issue. Colouring also varies in individuals and animals of light or dark appearance may be produced. Animals with no spots and albinos have also been recorded on occasion.

Height can be up to six metres, but by straightening the neck and reaching upward, leaves can be grasped by its long extendable tongue, at least a metre higher. The forelegs are slighter longer than the hind, giving the back a distinctly sloping line, and the tail ends with a black tassel. The long head is small compared with the body, and the lips

are very mobile. On the forehead and crown are between 2 - 5 bony protusions, or horns, covered with skin, and perhaps its most appealing features are the large eyes and long eye lashes.

The males grow much larger than the females and adults can weigh over 1.5 tonnes, whereas the females seldom more than 600kgs.

Although the neck, which has a short erect mane, is the longest in the animal kingdom, it still has only the seven vertebrae normal in most mammals. It is a true ruminant with the four chambered stomach and can be seen "cudding" or regurgitating food for re-mastication.

They are mainly browsers, but will graze, and are frequently seen with other plains animals, such as zebra, antelope and ostrich, where their height, excellent vision, hearing and general alertness may increase the safety of such liaisons by giving an early warning of danger.

Herds of giraffes may number 50 -60, but they are usually in smaller groups of 10 - 15. The herd consists of the adult male, cows, calves and adolescent males not yet old to challenge the dominant male. Groups of males will also be seen together. Giraffes are normally shy, inoffensive animals, and have few enemies except for man, though they may be vulnerable to lion predation especially when drinking, ground feeding or resting.

In defense, a giraffe is known to have killed a lion with a single kick. Fights between males are commonplace, but only rank is determined, the losers can stay in the area peace—

fully - unlike deer and antelope, where the loser is driven out of the territory. Fights normally consist of the two bulls standing side by side, exchanging blows with head and neck and generally pushing each other until they determine which is the stronger, when the weaker gives up the unequal struggle and walks away.

Like many other large mammals, giraffes can doze standing up, but will also lay down to sleep when the neck is bent round in an arch with the head resting on a hind leg.

Being chiefly browsers, when possible they choose to feed almost entirely on acacia and mimosa. The large acacia thorn seemingly have little or no effect in preventing them taking the leaves. Water will be drunk when presented, but giraffes appear capable of getting sufficient moisture from the vegetation eaten to sustain them for weeks without a drink necessary.

Mating takes place in July, August and September, though this does not apply in the zoo, and a single calf is born after an approximate 450 day gestation. Twins have occasionally been recorded. After birth the calf can stand and suckle within half an hour and will stay with the mother for the first year of life. They mature between three - four years, though continue to grow for up to ten years and have a life

They look rather ungainly when galloping, but they can go quite long distances at about 30 m.p.h. without tiring.

The giraffe house at Chester was opened in 1951 and over the years has proved to be a most successful building. Originally the outside enclosure was smaller and surrounded by a wire fence. This was later replaced by the moat and the enclosure was extended to its present size. Apparently the method of building the house was rather unique. I am told the roof was the first part built on the ground, and then car jacks were used to raise it a little at a time to enable the walls to be gradually built beneath it. This was accomplished with the help of prisoners of war before their repatriation after the end of hostilities. The first giraffe in the house, was a Reticulated called Maud. She died in 1969 aged approximately 22/23 years. Maud was joined by George, Henry, Debbie and Margaret in 1959. These four were all Masai. The three females produced 16 calves during their stay in the zoo. One of our present four, Twiga (the Swahili name for giraffe) is a direct descendant from these animals, and one of only three Masai giraffes at present in the U.K. Of our other three, one is a Rothchild's and the other two are cross bred. All four

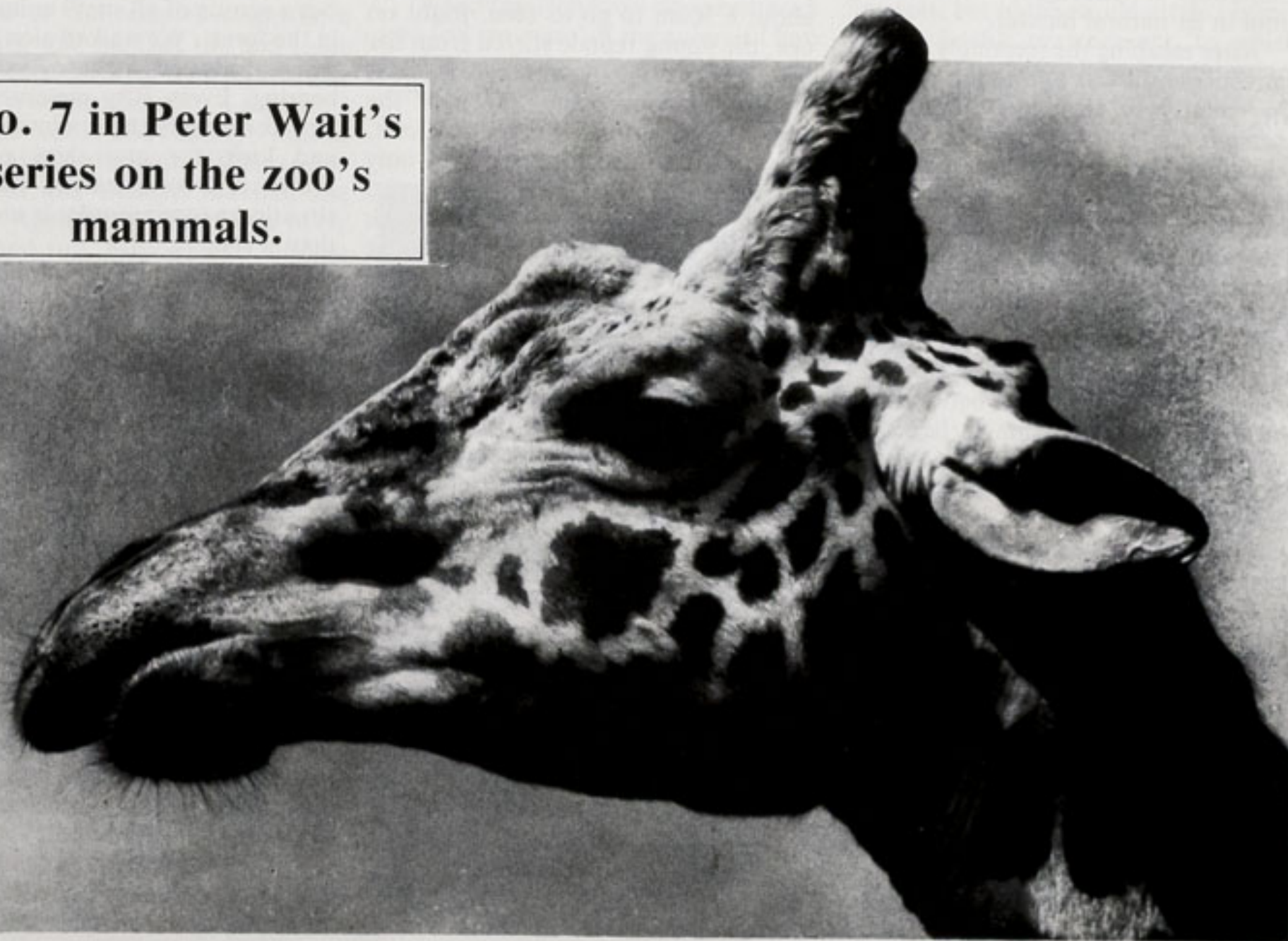
are zoo-bred animals.

Food given in the zoo consists of a specially formulated concentrate of mixed fruit and vegetables and lucerne hay. Browse in the form of willow and poplar is given daily in Summer. The food is placed in high baskets and troughs so that the giraffes can feed from a comfortable position. Water is always available.

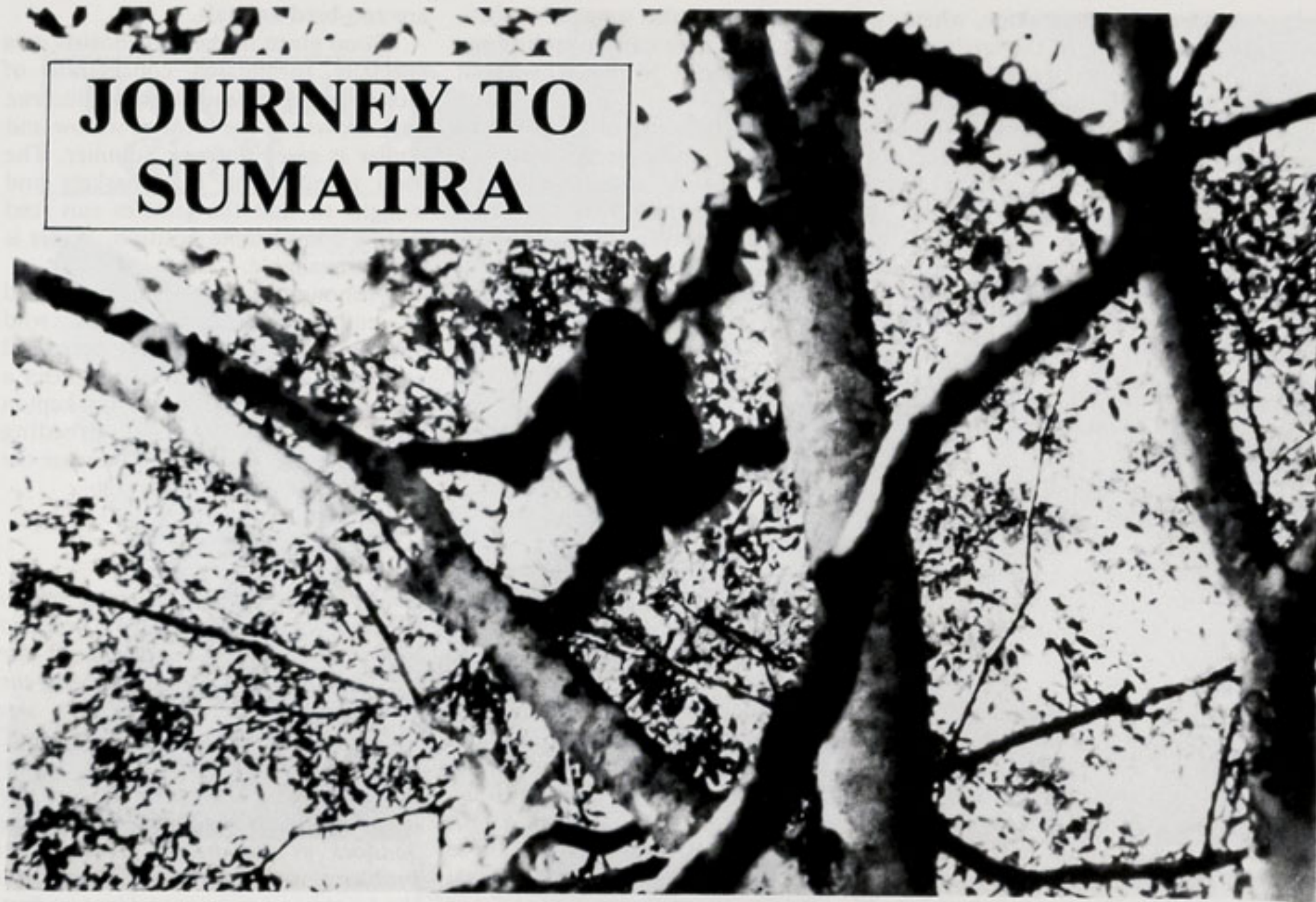
Although giraffes are not yet listed as endangered, numbers of wild animals are known to have decreased so much that it is desirable to keep a careful watch on the population kept in zoos, and to have a breeding programme to maintain or increase the number held.

Footnote: George the male Masai giraffe that arrived in 1959 attained celebrity status by appearing in the Guinness Book of Records as being the tallest giraffe in captivity. He was reported to be the only one to reach 20 feet. I remember him as being extremely large and able to lick the telephone wires that once crossed the paddock at that height. This caused problems with our switch board, and the height had to be raised by two feet.

**No. 7 in Peter Wait's
series on the zoo's
mammals.**



JOURNEY TO SUMATRA



A few years ago I was fortunate to have an opportunity to visit N. Sumatra, to photograph the orang utan in its natural habitat.

After escaping the seemingly endless bureaucracy, I was allowed to proceed up country to the Koro Highlands, through the land of the Batak tribe-cannibals and headhunters until the turn of the century. I reported to the District Police Post at Kotachane on the outskirts of the vast Gunung Leuser tropical rain forest reserve, and then completed my journey in a badly leaking dugout canoe, across a relatively smooth but fast flowing stretch of the Alas river between the cataracts. From the shingle beach, it was only a short walk through the forest to the Ketamba Research Station.

Here a constantly changing population of international scientists study different aspects of the rain forest. While I was there, they were all primatologists.

Having been allocated a wooden hut, built on stilts and roofed with corrugated iron and palm leaves, Dr. Juto, the Director of the station, told me they had had an orang utan under observation for several days and would I be interested to see it?

We followed along a track, to a mass of foliage gathered together in the

fork of a tree. This was the orang's place for the night. My friends predicted that the animal would get up about 8.30am to go to feed. Right on cue, the young female stirred from her bed, and effortlessly, but quite rapidly, walked four-handedly through the trees. Observation was not difficult, since most of the time she was only 20-30 feet above the ground. However, keeping pace at ground level through dense vegetation and drenched in the intense heat and high humidity was hard work. Soon she reached her goal, a fig tree laden with ripe fruit, and I had time to set up my camera.

On another occasion, walking the bank of the river and being shadowed by a troop of inquisitive long tailed macaques, I stopped to look at a blue-eared kingfisher, which is about the size of our common kingfisher. Suddenly, above the sound of the river, I was alerted to the honking of three rhinoceros hornbills, flying diagonally across the river. They settled in a tree right opposite me, and noisily started to feed.

Looking through my binoculars, I noticed another part of the tree move. There, emerging from the thick foliage, and silhouetted against the brilliance of the early morning sun, was the orange outline of another orang, feeding on the same fruiting

tree.

One day, I went with Dr. Robertson, my contact from Cambridge, to carry out a census of all small animal species in the forest. We walked along the path which followed a prescribed compass bearing. Every fifty meters we would stop for exactly three minutes to listen and look for any signs of animal presence. I soon learned that in this situation a tape recorder is more useful than a camera.

We had set out at first light, and as the early morning mist began to clear, the sounds in the forest began to build up. From general background noise, we could distinguish the whooping calls of the White-handed gibbon. This gradually increased in intensity as each family group began to signal to others in the more distant parts of the forest. Later in the morning, we could hear the deeper note of the Siamang Gibbon, and we could just distinguish the sound of the much more secretive Pig-tailed macaque as he scuttled along the floor of the forest.

A scuffling and a bark overhead drew our attention to the canopy 160 feet above us, we could just see two or three Silver langurs, or Leaf monkeys as they raced through the branches.

The largest trees in the forest, the Dipterocarps, are unbelievably tall. Some are said to reach just over two

Brian Coles recalls his visit to a tropical rain forest

hundred feet. Nelson's Column, the tower of Chester's town hall and the under tower of Liverpool's Anglican cathedral are all about 160 feet.

That day we heard three species of hornbill; the Helmeted, recognised by its rapid and maniacal call; the Rhinoceros, with its barking call, and the Black hornbill.

Another bird easily heard but not seen was the male Great Argus Pheasant. Its loud, clear, high pitched 'coo woow' seemed to echo through the forest. On a hillside, we passed one of the bird's display grounds where it had tidied up the area, leaving a patch of cleared forest.

With a sudden screech, we had a fleeting glimpse of an immature Crested Serpent eagle, as it glided across a gap in the trees. I saw these birds at three separate locations, so I assume they were not that uncommon.

In a dense part of the thicket, we noticed an area of flattened vegetation and from a few hairs left clinging to some twigs, we saw where a tiger had rolled.

One of the research students, a Dutch girl, told me that she had come face to face with a tiger when out alone. "What happened?" I asked. "I just kept cool and slowly walked towards him," she said. "Whereupon he snarled and sheared off into the jungle." Apparently, the rule is never to turn and run. Nobody had told me this before I was allowed to go off by myself! Of course this routine won't work with elephant or the rather diminutive Sumatran rhino. Few people have ever seen this animal, but Yarrow Robertson wrote to me to say that about a week after my visit, one of these rhinos had careered through the research station.

Most easily seen and heard are the vast variety of insects - some of which seem very large by European standards. I measured a Shield bug which was as long as my Swiss army knife. There were stick insects and Praying Mantis which could cover your hand, and a multitude of beetles, many quite brightly coloured.

Most beautiful, of course, were the butterflies. They had the annoying habit of gliding off through the thickest tangle of vines, aerial roots and ferns etc, just when you were

about to release the shutter of your camera. I found the easiest place to photograph butterflies was down on the sand banks of the river, where they settled - though often with closed wings - to suck up fluid and extract the salts.

I had expected to see many reptiles, but I saw none except for a very brief sighting of a startled monitor lizard which flashed into the undergrowth.

Walking through the rain forest, I soon encountered a silent and insidious inhabitant - the leech. This creature has the uncanny ability to home in on your body heat or the vibration of your footfalls, and to attach itself to any part of your exposed anatomy. The leech, which is about a couple of inches long when fully stretched, has a sucker at each end. This enables it to travel with a quick looping movement through the vegetation to its victim, for a meal of blood. It is said they can detect the exhaled carbon dioxide of any passing animal. I found the best protection was to wear a longed sleeved shirt, hat and long trousers tucked into my socks. All my clothing was sprayed with insect repellent. All very uncomfortable! Nevertheless, I still found that I had collected a couple of leeches clinging to the water bottle slung around my neck. One of the Dutch students had been badly bitten on the legs, and was left with a number of ugly indolent ulcers.

Watching television documentaries you will see many of the animals I have mentioned, very often with a clearer view than you will whilst walking in the

forest! However, you never get the feel of the intense heat and humidity which soaks your shirt as soon as you put it on; you don't experience the dank smell of the decaying vegetation or the intermittent crash of falling timber. You don't get that uncanny tingling feeling at the back of your neck that someone - or something - is watching you. However, it is not confrontation with a tiger (hopefully not a man-eater!) or the sudden appearance of a large python that worries the field biologist. It is being trapped by a swarm of giant honey bees, or the unexpected fall of a giant dipterocarpous tree which is the real fear.

The forest is full of discordant sound, much of it difficult to identify. The clear calls of the gibbon and the Argus pheasant seem to echo and reverberate like sound in a cathedral. Towards the end of the day, and usually heralded by the rumble of thunder, there is a brief but intense rain storm. You can hear the rain some distance away. It comes towards you with the rushing sound of an express train. Suddenly everything is enclosed in a wall of water. No other sound can be heard, and you have to shout to communicate. Then, just as suddenly it is all over except for the constant drip, and everything returns to normal.

For the biologist, the rain forest is a fascinating place, full of never ending interest, but to the casual urban visitor, it is a hostile environment, to which Mawas and his fellow creatures are much more at home.



LETTER FROM AMERICA

One of our Junior Members recently had a very exciting trip to America, visiting Texas and Louisiana. Twelve year old Ian Bourke has written this report of his visits to Audubon Zoo, in New Orleans and Fossil Rim Wildlife Park in Glen Rose Texas.

Audubon Zoo

This is a very big zoo. I will list its good points: The Mombasa Railway; Australia; The Asian Plains; Africa; Pathway to the Past; The Reptile House; The Louisiana Swamp; Primate World; Various Aviaries, and Childrens Kingdom.

The Mombasa Railway is really a tram which goes around the zoo, pointing out features of interest. It also goes into part of the zoo forbidden to pedestrians.

"Australia" is a collection of Australian animals and a giant, walk-through aviary. It consists of only three exhibits, but is very good.

The Asian Plains are gigantic fields, with hoofed animals in them. This exhibit is excellent. Africa is a similar exhibit, with African animals.

The Pathway to the Past is all about dinosaurs. It has lots of information and models but it is not as good as some of the other things.

The Reptile House is excellent. It

JU NEWS



Ian Bourke

has a massive collection of reptiles ranging from a chameleon to a water turtle. The environment is very realistic and it has a separate section devoted to rattle snakes.

The Louisiana Swamp is by far the best exhibit. It recreates a bayou, and has all the animals, such as turtles and alligators. It also has an aquarium and a cougar exhibit.

Primate world is a large collection of primates, in separate enclosures, very much like the chimp house at Chester.

The aviaries are like the ones at Chester, with birds flying free, the only difference is that they are bigger and have netting around a steel frame, like the eagle enclosures at Chester.

The Childrens Kingdom is a large area with a restaurant and a play area. It also has elephant and camel rides, a contact yard, a baby elephant and

nocturnal house.

The zoo has a large cheetah exhibit, but only two giraffes. If you are a member you get a magazine, free admission and discounts from the shop which is a good idea!

Fossil Rim

This is a very good safari park, like Windsor but much bigger. It has over 200 acres, with hoofed animals from all over the world. They can roam free, but to stop animals from different countries mixing, there are cattle grids and some fences. The only animals not allowed to roam free are the cheetahs, but they have a really big enclosure.

The whole trip round in the car is 9 miles, and in the middle there is a restaurant, gift shop, nature trail and petting park.

You can buy animal food, to feed the animals from the car. Lots of animals came up to the car. One ostrich tapped its beak on the window! A big gemsbok (African oryx) put its head inside the car, and we had to feed it to get it out!

Fossil Rim is a very good wildlife park, and I had an excellent day out.

Sounds a wonderful trip - perhaps we should include Audubon and Fossil Rime in the Junior Members programme!

"Gone from our World" Competition

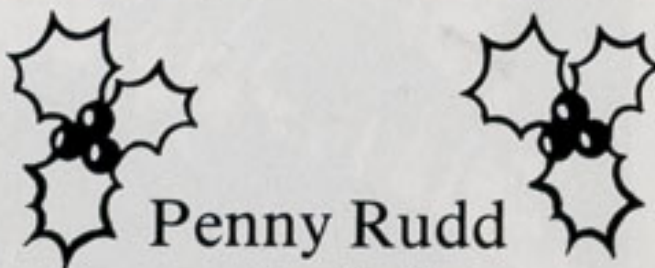
The answers to the competition in the last issue are:

A Tarpan	1887
B Passenger Pigeon	1914
C Mauritian Giant Tortoise	1700
D Great Auk	1844
E Dodo	1680
F Stellar's Sea Cow	1767

There was only one all-correct entry, and that came from Gillian Burkhill of Liverpool,

Two runners-up, each with five out of six correct answers are Michael Mitterweg from Friedberg in Germany, and Georgina Ferguson.

Well done!!



Penny Rudd
and all the
staff at the
zoo wish
our junior
members a
*Happy
Christmas*



NEW DESIGN



How do you like the new design for the Junior Members' sweatshirts?

It is modelled here by member Carol Robinson of Waverton, and is available from Penny Rudd, in most sizes, for £11.50

JUNIOR MEMBERS' FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS 1989/90

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Friday 15th December 1989

Everyone welcome to join in the fun. Meet at 7.00pm and end soon after 10.00pm

CONTACT SESSION

Saturday 20th January 1990

Over eights are invited. Meet outside the Oakfield at 2.00pm, and return to Oakfield from lecture hall at around 4.00pm

February meeting - see panel

TRACKS AND SIGNS

Saturday 24th March 1990

Meet outside Oakfield at 11.00am, complete with wellies. Finish at 4.00pm. Over eights are invited.

CROXTETH FARM PARK

Saturday 19th May 1990

Coach leaves staff car park at 10.00am, arriving back at 4.30pm. Over eights are invited.

AINSDALE NATURE RESERVE

Saturday 23rd June 1990

Coach leaves staff car park at 9.00am, returning at 5.00pm. Over 10s please, as this is quite a hard walk.



A "Really Wild" picture of Chris Packham, presenter of "The Really Wild Show"

CELEBRITY MEETING

17th February 1990

We are very excited to have a special guest to share our February Meeting. Chris Packham, presenter of the very popular children's TV programme, "The Really Wild Show" has agreed to come to entertain Junior Members with stories about the fun involved with working with animals on television. Priority bookings for this event will be open to all Junior Members from the beginning of January, and open

to the general public from the beginning of February. Tickets will be available from Penny at the zoo at a cost of £2.50 each.

DAY WITH A KEEPER

Saturday 21st June 1990

Regretfully we have to limit this to the over twelves only. Meet outside the Oakfield at 10.30am, finish around 4.00pm.

For fuller details of all the meetings, and notes about booking for the outings see the Autumn issue of Zoo Life.

JUNIOR MEMBERS AT BLACKPOOL ZOO



Juniors had a great day at Blackpool on 21st October. Our picture shows the party just as they arrived - at last! - after a long delay on the M6 motorway!

Arrivals Births and Hatchings

SINCE 1st AUGUST - 31st OCTOBER 1989

MAMMALS

Rodrigues Fruit Bat	Pteropus rodricensis	0.0.2	Birth
Celebes Macaque	Macaca nigra	1.0	D.N.S.
Crested Porcupine	Hystrix cristata	0.0.3	D.N.S.
Coypu	Myocaster coypu	3.2	1.0 D.N.S.
Capybara	Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris	0.0.1	Birth
Kinkajou	Potos flavus	1.0	D.N.S.
Margay	Felis wiedi	1.0	On Loan
Serval	Felis serval	1.1	Birth
Geoffroy's Cat	Felis geoffroyi	0.0.4	Birth
Onager	Equus hemionus onager	1.2	On Loan
Llama	Lama glama	0.1	Exchanged
Guanaco	Lama guanicoe	1.0	Birth
Axis Deer	Cerus axis	0.0.1	Birth
Eland	Taurotragus oryx	0.0.1	Birth
Nilgai	Boselaphus tragocamelus	4.4	1.3 D.N.S.
Scimitar-horned Oryx	Oryx dammah	1.0	On Loan
Red Lechwe	Kobus leche kafuensis	2.2	Birth 1.0 D.N.S.
Blackbuck	Antilope cervicapra	1.1.1	1.0 D.N.S.
Arabian Gazelle	Gazella arabica	1.2	Birth

REPTILES

Greek Tortoise	Testudo graeca	0.1	Presented
Herman's Tortoise	Testudo hermanni	3.2	Presented
Tokay Gecko	Gekko gekko	0.0.2	Bred
Leopard Gecko	Eublepharis macularius	0.0.3	Bred
Cuban Anole	Anolis equestris equestris	0.0.1	Presented
		0.0.2	Purchased
Brown Basilisk	Basiliscus basiliscus	0.0.22	Bred
Bush Viper	Atheris nitschie	2.2	Purchased
Red-eyed Tree Frog	Agalychnis callidryas		2nd generation spawn
Fire-bellied Toad	Bombina orientalis		2nd generation spawn



BIRDS

Common Rhea	Rhea americana	0.1	Presented
Chilean Tinamou	Nothoprocta perdicaria	0.0.12	Hatched 5 D.N.S.
Bare-faced Curassow	Crax fasciolata	0.0.1	D.N.S.
Common Peafowl	Pavo cristatus	0.0.2	1 Hatched
			1 Presented
Blacksmith's Plover	Vanellus armatus	0.0.3	1 D.N.S.
Crowned Plover	Vanellus coronatus	0.0.2	Hatched
Crested Bronzewing			
Pigeon	Ocyphaps lophotes	0.0.3	1 D.N.S.
Diamond Dove	Geopelia cuneata	0.0.1	Hatched
Golden Heart Dove	Gallicolumba rufigula	0.0.2	On Loan
Musk Lorikeet	Glossopsitta concinna	0.0.2	Hatched
Red-sided Eclectus			
Parrot	Eclectus roratus polychloros	0.0.2	D.N.S.
Lesser Vasa Parrot	Coracopsis nigra nigra	0.0.3	Hatched
Yellow-faced Parrotlet	Forpus xanthops	0.0.4	Hatched
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	0.0.13	Hatched 2 D.N.S.
European Roller	Coracias garrulus	2.2	Exchanged
Trumpeter Hornbill	Bycanister buccinator	0.0.2	Hatched
Channel-billed Toucan	Ramphastos vitellinus	0.0.2	Hatched
Red-tailed Laughing			
Thrush	Garrulax milnei	0.0.2	Hatched
Virginian Cardinal	Cardinalis cardinalis	1.0	Exchanged
Mexican House Finch	Carpodacus mexicanus	0.0.6	Hatched 4 D.N.S.
Zebra Finch	Poephila guttata	0.0.2	D.N.S.
White-headed Buffalo			
Weaver	Dinemellia dinemelli	0.0.1	Hatched
Golden Palm Weaver	Ploceus bojeri	0.0.1	Hatched
Ashy Starling	Cosmopsarus unicolor	0.0.3	1 D.N.S.
Coledo Mynah	Sarcops calvus	0.0.1	Hatched