

# ZooLife

**SUMMER 2003 - ISSUE 14**

CHESTER ZOO'S MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS AND ADOPTERS

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# Director's Pen

By Zoo Director Gordon McGregor-Reid

The early days of summer are with us and the Zoo's gardens are blooming in anticipation of warmer times to come. The Zoo – and particularly the gardens – look their best at this time of year; the trees are filling out, the flowers are making their first appearance and the visitors are coming in their thousands!

We have new faces at the Zoo too, most notably our baby giraffe *Sebastian*, who was born in April. He's settling in nicely with mum *Samara* and growing steadily by the day. It was kind of Tim Rowlands, the team leader on the giraffe section and his colleagues, to let our visitors decide his

name. You can see more on this story on page 16 - 17.

The summer also heralds a new change for *Zoo Life* – we've given it a 'zoo-style' makeover making it visually pleasing and easier to read. More importantly, and following feedback from many of you, it is filled with news on what's happening in and around the Zoo. We hope you like it and look forward to hearing your comments on the new format. But it's not just *Zoo Life* that has been given a 'spring clean.' Our guidebook has undergone a revamp and some of you may have noticed that our website ([www.chesterzoo.org](http://www.chesterzoo.org)) has changed; we have brought it bang up to date with a new look and content. Information on visitor services, education, animals and plants, the latest zoo news, research and conservation are all there for you to browse through and we will be adding to it in the coming weeks. Very soon, you should be able to find the information you need at the touch of a button.

The website also has a

facility which enables you to donate to our Asian Elephant Survival appeal. The campaign was officially launched just before Easter with



Mayors from around the region enjoy the sunshine at the Oakfield

a TV programme – Chester's Year of the Elephant – hosted by former Coronation Street actor Chris Bisson.



ASIAN ELEPHANT SURVIVAL  
SECURE THE FUTURE

An impressive 360,000 viewers tuned in to watch and the donations are starting to come in. We have also appointed a new appeals manager, Dawn Holt, and she has events planned to help with our £1 million campaign. Visitors can help on arrival at the Zoo as they have an option to make a £1 donation, if you want to read up on the campaign, then leaflets are available throughout the Zoo, including the elephant area. I cannot stress again how important this appeal is and what a difference it will make to



The winners of the photographic competition enjoyed a visit to the Zoo.



experiences and exchange views. I was very honoured to be given the opportunity to talk

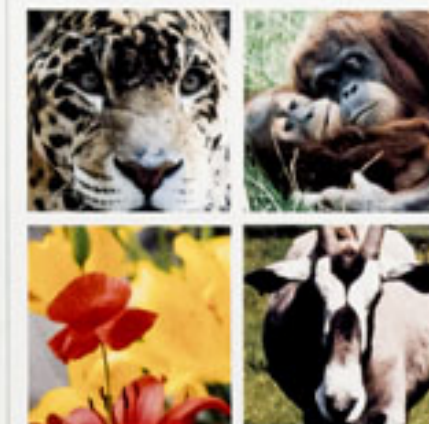
about the Zoo at such a prestigious venue and in front of a large crowd, which included HRH Prince Andrew, The Duke of York. The Queen's Award is a remarkable achievement for the Zoo as a whole and we all feel very proud to have gained it.

We also recently played host to a civic delegation of mayors and their consorts from across the region. With Chester's Lord Mayor, Cllr Brian Crowe, they enjoyed a tour of the Zoo and cakes and sandwiches back at the Oakfield! They all had a thoroughly pleasant time and we were delighted to welcome them once again.

The presentations for our 2002 photographic competition were also held in April. The standard of entries was exceptionally high and choosing between them was a real task. However we

had nine lucky winners who enjoyed a dinner at the Zoo and a twilight wander to see the Red Pandas, Otters and Lions.

The competition is up and running again this year, so get those cameras out and get clicking – it's the best time of year to catch the Zoo on camera.



Come and visit us and see if you can be a contender for next year's competition!

*Gordon McGregor-Reid*

Cover photograph by Andrew Price



# Asian Elephant Survival

**UPDATE**

Campaign Update by Appeals Manager Dawn Holt

We are now moving full steam ahead with our Asian Elephant Survival Campaign here at the Zoo.

Its launch began with the broadcast of 'Chester's Year of the Elephant' on Granada TV. Hosted by former Coronation Street actor Chris Bisson, the programme followed the lives of Chester Zoo's nine elephants, met team leader Mick Jones and looked at the problems faced by the species in the wild.

Presenter Chris Bisson said: "Hopefully the programme helped viewers understand the difficulties elephants in the wild face and appreciate how wonderful they are. I had a great day at the Zoo but learnt a lot at the same time. I'm glad to have been able to help."

The Zoo's new Appeal Manager Dawn Holt and Appeal Advisor Val Hurren are organising a number of fundraising events throughout the year to make it fun for you to make a difference.

## SOME OF THE WAYS TO HELP INCLUDE:

- You can make a donation through one of our many donation boxes situated throughout the Zoo. Visit the Elephant Centre where you can make a donation, read updates about how things are developing and study the plans for the new centre.
- You can make a donation at the gates when you enter. Our cashiers are offering you the chance to make a £1 donation per adult as you enter the Zoo. This is an

optional donation so there is no pressure to give, however donations are gratefully received.

- Fundraising Packs are available through the appeal office.
- Local businesses and shops are now selling our appeal merchandise. If you see them why not spare £1 to buy a pin badge?
- Warner Brothers Cinema at Cheshire Oaks and Birkenhead are helping the appeal and will be selling teddies and pin badges to customers. They are also taking donations.

## SUPPORT ALREADY COMING IN

Many of our long term supporters have already started to send in donations and to complement this



ASIAN ELEPHANT SURVIVAL  
SECURE THE FUTURE

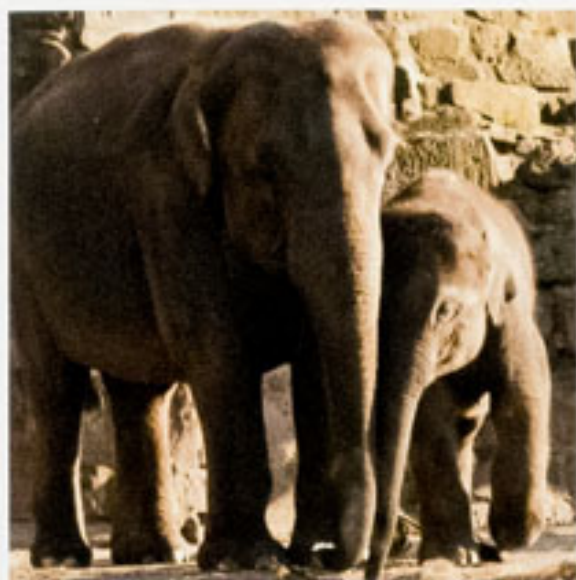
Zoo life

various groups have also started doing what they can for the Asian Elephant Survival campaign.

Roundhegians Youth Rugby Club from Leeds recently made a donation of £100 towards the Elephant Appeal during a visit to the Zoo. They were in the Cheshire area on a rugby tour and the teams' representatives took time out to hand over a cheque to elephants' team leader Mick Jones.



Helen Bousford hands her cheque to Team leader Mick Jones



Kind Girl Guide Helen Bousford also handed over £100 to the elephant appeal. Helen visited the elephants as reward for achieving the Queens Guide



Award and made the award as a thank you for being able to visit.

Helen has been a Rainbow, a Brownie, and a Guide at Formby Methodist Church and whilst going through University to study Animal Science, she also started to undertake the highest award in



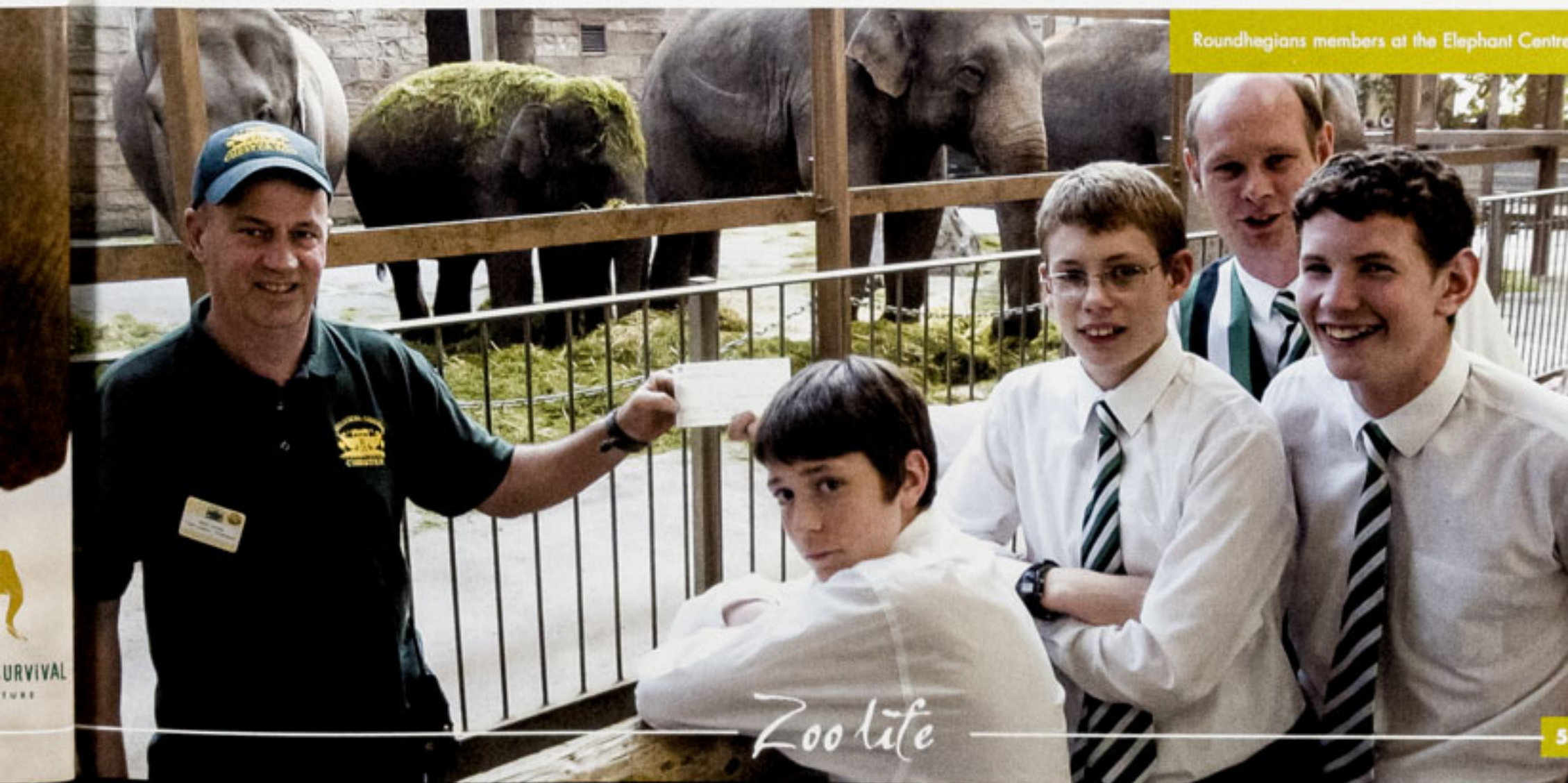
Girlguiding, the Queens Guide Award. She too handed her donation over to team leader Mick.

Trust and Foundations are also doing their bit. We recently received a very generous cheque for £1000 from the Eric and

Dorothy Leach Charitable Trust. The Trustees said the appeal was worthy of support and wished us luck in the success of our efforts.

For further information about the appeal please do not hesitate to contact Dawn or Val in the development office or alternatively log on to our new website where we will be posing regular updates and news of all the latest events, [www.chesterzoo.org](http://www.chesterzoo.org).

We would also like to thank Unit Communications of Manchester who have supplied their services free of charge with design and artwork totalling £4,515.00.



Roundhegians members at the Elephant Centre

# General News

All the latest information from the Zoo

## CHESTER ZOO HAS A NEW-LOOK GUIDEBOOK AND WEBSITE TO KEEP VISITORS IN TOUCH WITH WHAT'S NEW

The website is user friendly with key information from all the divisions and plenty of information about our animals. The website was designed by Manchester-based Unit Communications, the Zoo's advertising agency.

The marketing department's Kris Beaumont, who spearheaded the project, said: "Visitors should find

our new site easy to navigate and easy on the eye. It also has the latest news and happenings from the Zoo and more pages will be added in the coming weeks."

The website can be found at [www.chesterzoo.org](http://www.chesterzoo.org). The Zoo also has a new guidebook, in keeping with the Zoo's new



leaflets. Bold images have been used to freshen up the guidebook, which still contains fascinating facts about our animals.

## CHESTER ZOO HAS BECOME ONE OF THE FIRST ZOOS IN THE COUNTRY TO CLINCH A NEW PRESTIGIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AWARD

Achieving level one of the Environmental Management Standard BS8555 shores up the Zoo's commitment to the environment and puts it on the road to achieving the overall standard, ISO14001. To achieve the first level of this new award, the Zoo had to

show commitment to preparing a draft environmental policy, develop performance indicators, set objectives and targets and provide training and awareness.

Zoo Safety and Environment Manager John Winward said: "The Zoo's mission statement talks about supporting and promoting conservation and by aiming for environmental standards we are reinforcing this commitment.

"We have an environmental policy committee with 12 zoo members on board and they have driven this through and

enabled us to achieve this first phase."

Environmental developments carried out at the Zoo include a waste management recycling scheme for paper, card, cans and plastic, a reed bed filtration system for the elephant pool and the construction of new administrative buildings from renewable cedar trees.

Added John: "This is an important award for us and we are already working on the next phase of the project. We hope to have completed the whole process by summer next year."

**MARK YOUR DIARIES!** This year's special days of appreciation for our adopters will be on Sunday 5 October and Saturday 11th October. Full details, including keepers' timetable plus complimentary ticket, will be sent out in September.

## A GIFT THAT CAN LAST FOREVER

Since the last issue of *Zoo Life* we have had 2 new joiners to the Legacy Pledge Club. They have joined a group of very special people that have let us know they have left a donation in their Will to the Zoo. By letting us know they have made a provision in their Will, this not only allows us as a charity to plan for the future, but it is a lasting gift that will benefit our animals and people generally long after the Pledger's lifetime.

To put it in perspective, in the last 5 years alone we have received over £100,000 from gifts left in Wills. To us, that could mean the funds for a new exhibit, to go towards our conservation outreach projects or for veterinary equipment. So a gift you leave to us in your

Will really is a legacy that will help us continue our vital work for a long time.

We do get legacies left to us from people who haven't let us know they have included us in their Will. This seems such a shame as that way we can't thank the person until it's too late.

If you have included Chester Zoo in your Will and you would like to let us know about it, or if you would just like some further information about our Legacy Pledge Club, then please do not hesitate to contact Lynsey Jones on 01244 650292 or via [l.jones@chesterzoo.co.uk](mailto:l.jones@chesterzoo.co.uk)

A recent donation was received 'in fondest memory of Jack and Molly Smith' from John, Claire, Lucy, Emily, Jessica and Isabelle. Jack and Molly were two special people who loved

and supported this Zoo and spent many happy hours here. The Zoo was very grateful to receive this special gift from life long supporters who had been members for the majority of their lifetime.

## NATIONAL ICT PROJECT

Chester Zoo recently teamed up with the country's top-performing school, Thomas Telford as part of a national ICT project. Five employees from the Zoo, including Head of Visitor Services, Liz Child, and IT Manager Phil Morris, were interviewed on camera about their job roles and the use of computers in their work. These videos will form part of Thomas Telford's successful online GNVQ ICT courses and will be used by around a third of English secondary schools.

## LIVERPOOL'S ALLEYGATING TEAM HAS A NEW MEMBER – AND YOU BETTER HOPE YOU DON'T MEET HIM DOWN A DARK ALLEY!



Our 11-foot alligator has been officially adopted by Liverpool City Council and Safer Merseyside Partnership's team. Community safety team manager at the city council Alison Doherty said:

"Alleygates, used to secure alleyways, are so popular in Liverpool that we can hardly keep up with demand from people, so we were thinking of recruiting Alfie and his friends as a new method of deterring burglars from using the city's back alleyways.

"But in the end we thought he'd be happier here in the Zoo – we can always send the burglars round here for a quick 'chat' if we have to!"

## SAFARI HOLIDAYS FOR THOSE WHO LOVE WILDLIFE AND CARE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

Would you like to join one of our unique escorted safaris to Southern Africa? We have a number of tours travelling to Tanzania, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana in the forthcoming future that will appeal to wildlife lovers. You'll be in good company as we have been working for a number of years with many of the UK's most respected



zoological parks, providing intimate group travel for their members and supporters to experience animals in their natural habitat. Those who join our tours see and hear how conservation work helps restore the balance of nature - and get a wonderful holiday at the same time. Our small escorted group holidays are only offered to Zoo members and their families. Our next three trips are to Namibia (in conjunction with AfriCat UK in July); South Africa (with Zoological Society of London in September) and Tanzania (with Paignton Zoo in November). The safaris feature plenty of game viewing with experienced rangers, warm hospitality and accommodation in very comfortable surroundings. Many who



participate enjoy the whole experience so much they return year on year!

As a specialist tour operator with in-depth knowledge of Southern Africa we also provide personalised travel services for individual travellers who want a holiday that is a 'cut above the rest'.

If you are interested in holidaying to Southern Africa either independently or joining one of our groups, call us on 01825 740262.

**Endangered  
Wildlife  
Travels**

[www.diplomatic.co.uk](http://www.diplomatic.co.uk)

Endangered Wildlife Travels is a division of Diplomatic Travel Ltd. Coach Lane, Danehill, East Sussex, RH17 7JJ  
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### CHESTER ZOO 100 CLUB

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

#### JANUARY 2003

£100 Mr Jason M Spencer, Chester  
£100 Mrs Susan M Smith, Sale  
£50 Miss Gill M Webster, Nottingham  
£50 Mrs Sue Tonelli, Irby

#### FEBRUARY 2003

£100 Mr John H Birch, Runcorn  
£100 Mr Richard P Watson, Welshpool  
£50 Mrs Sarah L Hastings, Littleborough  
£50 Mrs Nicola V Jones, Crewe  
£50 Mr Andrew Stevens, Bridlington

#### MARCH 2003

£100 Mr Stephen Kalischer, Menston  
£100 Mr James Whitby, Frodsham  
£50 Mrs Katherine T Lewis, Chester  
£50 Mrs Paulene Jones, Africa  
£50 Mr Andrew R Davies, Wem

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

Membership of the 100 Club is still invited. If you wish to participate, please contact the undersigned or Maureen Allsopp, Membership and Adoptions Secretary.

# Summer Events



The Oakfield House, has been given a lift with the introduction of new lighting. Victorian-style lighting has been erected outside the Oakfield and in the beer garden to provide extra lighting for evening functions. The chosen scheme is considered to be practical but also enhances the atmosphere of the building.

## FAMILY PICNIC

**Friday 4th July**

£14.95 per adult £9.95 per child  
Enter the Zoo from 4.30pm  
Picnic baskets to be collected from the Oakfield Restaurant 6.30pm. Select your favourite picnic spot within the grounds and enjoy a tasty picnic.

## GARDEN TOUR & BUFFET

**Friday 11th July**

£16.95 per adult  
Learn about our award-winning grounds from one of Chester Zoo's gardeners followed by a buffet served in our Roman Garden (Oakfield Restaurant if weather inclement).



## ELEPHANT AND CHIMP SAFARI WITH BARBECUE

**Friday 8th August**

£22.95 per adult  
Cocktails with the elephants and a stroll to the chimps makes this one of our most popular safaris. A tasty barbecue rounds off the evening served on the Oakfield Terrace.

## EVENING BAT WALK AND BUFFET

**Thursday 21st August**

£16.50 per adult  
Admission into Zoo from 4.30 pm. Buffet served in the Oakfield Restaurant at 7.30 pm. At Twilight and in the company of our keeper go in search of wild Pipistrelle, Noctule and Daubenton's bats.



## SPIRIT OF THE JAGUAR AND TWILIGHT ZONE SAFARI DINNER

**Friday 5th September**

£24.95 per adult  
Visit our ever popular *Spirit of*

*the Jaguar*, enjoy cocktails and then experience the fascinating world of our free-flying bats.



The evening is rounded off with a superb three course dinner.

## HALLOWEEN 'GHOSTS AND GHOULS'

**Friday 31st October**

£14.00 per adult £9.00 per child  
'Creepy Manor' welcomes Halloween family revellers. Bring the family along for a disco, supper and other creepy happenings.

Magical Santa Trail, Christmas Lunches, Dinner and Discos throughout December.

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

# Bird Review

By Roger Wilkinson, Head of Conservation and Science



Highlights in 2002 included breeding from our Great Hornbills, Victoria Crowned Pigeons and Blue Cranes. Rearing these birds was very satisfying - not only in that this was the first time they had been bred at Chester but because the bird staff had worked hard to create the conditions for these to breed.

Breeding Great Hornbills is a rare event in any zoo and this is only the second to be reared in the UK. Cameras were installed inside all our hornbill nest boxes in 2001 enabling us to see exactly what happened inside these nest boxes. The female Great Hornbill of the pair living in the aviary in the Elephant house removed the bark chips nest material and then laid directly on the flat floor of the nest barrel sitting with the egg to her side rather than covering it. The nest

barrel was modified providing a concave nest bottom into which a subsequent egg may roll in the hope that the hen would be encouraged to cover it. The sizes of the nest cavity and of the entrance hole were also reduced.

The pair of Great Hornbills in the Elephant House showed interest in each other very early in the year and by late February 2002 the hen was well mudded into the nest. A chick hatched on 30 March and the male

was kept busy feeding both mother and chick.

On 22 June the hen broke the mud seal and emerged from the nest. The chick fledged three days later when the male then surprisingly attacked its mother. She was removed and the male alone continued feeding the fledgling which he reared to independence.

Our Blue winged Kookaburras again reared a chick as did the Lilac-breasted Rollers and Spectacled Owls. It was also a good year for touracos with Fischer's, Schalow's, Red-crested and Violaceous Touracos all successfully bred.

An exciting new development was the new Hyacinth Macaw Aviary behind the Tropical Realm. The first of our two pairs of Hyacinth Macaws was received in 1992 and the second pair in 2001. The original pair of



Great Hornbill

Hyacinths showed their appreciation of their new quarters by laying eggs soon after they had been relocated. Although no chicks hatched this was a very important step forward.

Our Red-tailed Amazons again reared three fine chicks and Yellow-backed Chattering Lories also bred.

Another highlight was the breeding of the Victoria Crowned Pigeons for the first time at Chester. Other pigeons bred included Pink Pigeons, Golden Heart Pigeons and Jambu Fruit Doves. New to Chester were Socorro Doves. This dove is now extinct in the wild. These doves are managed as a European Endangered Species Breeding Programme (EEP) co-ordinated by Frankfurt Zoo and we were pleased to receive birds through Bristol and London Zoos.

Four West African Black Crowned Cranes were reared. One difficulty we have had in parent rearing these cranes is that they breed late in the season. Their first clutches are normally laid in July and if these are removed then second clutches, that are usually laid about three weeks later, hatch in September when days are already short and our summer almost over. These are not ideal conditions in which to rear chicks outside. Last year we took the first clutch of eggs for artificial incubation then returned them to the parents after the second clutch had been laid. One chick hatched under the cranes and



Blue Crane

was successfully parent reared. This was the first time we have successfully parent reared a Black Crowned Crane. Three chicks from the second clutch of eggs were reared by bantam fosters.

Another first for Chester was the breeding of our Blue Cranes. The Blue Crane's previous eggs were infertile so the hen was artificially inseminated following her first egg. The second egg was taken for artificial incubation. This egg was fertile and hatched under a bantam foster and has grown into an excellent bird. For the second clutch the female was inseminated before she laid her first egg. Two eggs were laid and replaced for safety with wooden eggs whilst they were artificially incubated. Their own eggs were returned to the parents a few days before they were due to hatch. Two chicks hatched but this was the first time for these naive parents and neither chick was reared.

Our pair of Vietnamese Pheasants hatched and reared two fine chicks and a Palawan Peacock Pheasant was also parent reared. Other pheasants fared less well and although Satyr Tragopans and Golden and Lady Amherst's Pheasants hatched chicks none were reared.

The flamingos had another good breeding season with eight Chilean and six Caribbean Flamingos successfully reared. Since 1990, when we held 28 Chilean and 41 Caribbean flamingos, our flocks have grown through breeding to 64 Chilean and 72 Caribbean Flamingos. This is extremely satisfying and is a result of careful egg and colony management by our bird staff. One Caribbean Flamingo hen that was adult when she arrived at Chester from Chicago in 1959 was still laying eggs in 2000 when she was over forty years old.

Ducks Unlimited...well almost! In 2002 we reared well over a 100 ducks. These included White-headed Ducks, Black-billed Whistling Ducks, Marbled, Falcated and Laysan Teal, Garganey, Baer's and Red-crested Pochards, Ferruginous and Mandarin Ducks, and also Hooded Mergansers. Red-breasted and Ross's Snow Geese and a Black-necked Swan were also bred.

Eleven Humboldt's penguins chicks were successfully reared. This was especially significant in that all were parent reared. A European Spoonbill was hand-reared but unfortunately chicks left with their parents failed to survive.

Our newly acquired female European Black vulture laid an egg less than three months after her arrival at Chester. Although this egg was later found broken it gives us great encouragement for the future.



Victoria Crowned Pigeon

In the Tropical Realm new arrivals included a group of Java Sparrows from Rotterdam Zoo and we were delighted when these fledged youngsters. Pope Cardinals from London Zoo also bred in their first year at Chester. Other smaller birds bred included Bali Starlings, African Pied Starlings White-rumped Shammas, Pekin Robins and Azure-winged Magpies.

Moving from the smaller birds to the largest ones. After twenty years with no cassowaries at Chester we received a hen Double-wattled Cassowary from Paignton Zoo and look forward to locating a suitable mate. To breed from cassowaries at Chester... now there's another challenge!

# Growing Concerns

Mark Sparrow, General Curator of Botany and Horticulture and his Deputy, Sarah Bird, report on what's growing on in the Zoo's gardens.

## NEW! DRAGONS IN DANGER GARDEN

The Botanics team have created a spectacular new garden to compliment the new Komodo Dragon enclosure. It is located between the *Islands in Danger* House and the Flamingos, on the site of the Old Rose Garden and Butterfly Garden. The area was in need of re-development, and we decided to theme it to represent tropical island vegetation. The site has been contoured so that it is not possible to see the whole garden all at once. A stream connected to the Lemur moat, runs through the garden before opening out into a pool, and



Dragons in Danger Garden

three wooden bridges enable visitors to cross the stream at different points. Around the pond and along the banks of the stream we have planted a range of marginal and moisture loving plants. These will provide a lush flowering display in the summer. On a sunny south-facing bank plants that require arid well-drained conditions have been used, with a mulch of sand applied to give a tropical 'desert island' feel. An assortment of exotic looking plants have been used in other parts of the garden, including palms, tree ferns, acacia, and bamboo, as well as herbaceous plants to give a vivid splash of colour during the summer months. The garden has been designed and planted to provide interest for twelve months of the year, but will undoubtedly be at it's best in summer. The Horticulture and Botany team, under the expert guidance of Mark Hargreaves, carried out all the design, landscaping and planting of this new feature... Well done Mark! Make sure you make a point of discovering Chester Zoo's *Tropical Island* paradise on your next visit, and watch out – there just might be a dragon around the corner!

## Conservation Corner

### BRITISH ORCHIDS

These days most people think of orchids as exotic hot house flowers or plants from tropical rain-forests, like those that we saw at the Orchid Festival here in February, not of British wildflowers. To some extent that is because some of Britain's orchid species are small-flowered and inconspicuous, and many are rare and hard to find. However, there are about 50 orchid species that are native to Britain and even the conspicuous and attractive ones are not well known. About a third are thought to be threatened, and ten species are specially protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act. While many species prefer the dry, alkaline conditions of limestone and chalk hills, others can be found in the densest woods and some even thrive in acid marshes.

The rarest species must be the lady's slipper orchid (*Cypripedium calceolus*) which was reduced to a single flowering plant by the 1980's. A Species Action Plan for this orchid has protected the only remaining UK site, propagated the plant at the Royal Botanic



Common Spotted Orchid – *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*



Lesser Butterfly Orchid – *Platanthera bifolia*



Common Twayblade – *Listera ovata*

Gardens Kew, and identified several new sites for reintroduction work. The biology of orchids is very complex and contributes to the rarity of some species. Seed dispersal and germination are particularly complicated. Orchids produce millions of minute seeds, which are spread by the wind. The seeds contain



Lady's Slipper Orchid

no food supply to provide energy for germination and establishment of the seedling. They can only germinate in the presence of a fungus that provides the seedling with the nutrients it requires. Some orchids seem to require one specific fungus, others will grow with any of several different fungi. The fungi grow in the soil and in the roots of orchid plants. It is a matter of chance whether

the wind carries an orchid seed to a patch of soil containing the right fungus for its germination, but at least those seeds which land close to the parent plant have a good chance of meeting the appropriate fungus partner. The seedling then develops as an underground stem only producing leaves above ground after a period of between two and eight years. It may be ten years before the plant produces a flower - fifteen years in the case of the Common Twayblade (see above). Although the plants of some British Orchids flower for several years, some species like the Bee Orchid die after one flowering season.

To the right above are some pictures of more common British Orchids

**Common Spotted Orchid –** *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* - Probably the most common British orchid; it

grows in woods and meadows mostly on alkaline soils, and flowers from June to August. There are some in the Rhino paddocks at the Zoo!

**Lesser Butterfly Orchid –** *Platanthera bifolia* - A delicate white orchid growing to 40cm tall. You might find this species in woods, meadows or heathland. It flowers in May, June and July.

**Common Twayblade –** *Listera ovata* - This orchid has small green flowers on a spike that may be 60cm tall. It is called Twayblade because of the two big leaves at the base of the stem. Growing mostly in damp woodland, this orchid flowers from May to July.

As you can see here British orchids are very beautiful plants too, and finding them growing wild is thrilling – so keep your eyes open this summer!

# Baby Giraffe makes tall story

He already stands at over 5ft 10" tall - but is just two months old.

Meet the latest leggy addition to Chester Zoo.

Sebastian was born to mum Samara and father Cormac in April. He is the first male giraffe to be born in the Zoo since 2001 and the youngster and mum Samara are both doing well.

His name was chosen by Lauren Ireland of Manchester. She was one of hundreds of people who entered the 'Name the Giraffe' competition on our website and in the local press.

Lauren wins a trip to the Zoo to meet Sebastian and the members of the giraffe team.



Sebastian is the first male giraffe to be born in the Zoo since 2001

# Chester Zoo's Black Rhino Conservation Programme

By Roger Wilkinson, Head of Conservation and Science & Mark Pilgrim, Chief Curator

Black Rhinos are critically endangered in the wild with numbers declining dramatically from around 65,000 in the 1970's to approximately 3,100 today.

Only 500 eastern Black Rhino remain in the wild and these are now largely restricted to game reserves in Kenya. This is the same race that we work with at Chester Zoo where we have already bred six rhino calves.

Substantial investment has been made in the breeding programme, stock, facilities and husbandry. Most recently this commitment has been shown by the arrival of the new male *Sammy* from Osaka, Japan, and the building of the new Tsavo Black Rhino exhibit with its important educational role in informing our visitors of the threats facing Black Rhinos.

Black Rhinos are also one of our major conservation outreach programmes. Over the last 5 years a main focus of the programme has been in Tsavo East National Park, Kenya, working in partnership with Save the Rhino International (SRI). Chester assisted the funding of the translocation of 20 Black Rhinos to Tsavo East and subsequently

supported the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) game guards unit protecting these rhinos. A group of Chester Zoo members made a trip to East Africa in July 2001 led by Mark Pilgrim when they then visited Tsavo East.



Chester Zoo with SRI has also assisted work with Black Rhinos at Mkomazi Game Reserve in Tanzania. Additionally Chester is supporting a study initiated by Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) on the effects of large herbivores on vegetation in enclosed reserves. This study was initiated at Sweetwaters Black Rhino Reserve in Kenya. Six Chester keepers have been able to visit Sweetwaters over the last three years and work with the rhino teams and researchers there. During 2002 we received

disturbing reports of poaching of Black Rhinos at Tsavo East. The decision was made to visit East Africa to familiarise ourselves with the current situation regarding Black Rhino field conservation and research so as to better target our own conservation

support. In particular an on the ground assessment of the current situation at Tsavo was needed. Chester Zoo has been working with SRI for over ten years and this was an opportunity to strengthen our partnership and together assess



opportunities for supporting rhino conservation work in East Africa. For the initial part of our visit we joined Cathy Dean and David Stirling (Director and Africa Projects Director / former Director of SRI).

We visited Tsavo East to assess the current situation and accompanied the rhino patrols tracking the free ranging rhinos. We met Kenya Wildlife Society (KWS) staff here and in Nairobi and learnt of their priorities for rhino conservation.

We then took the opportunity to visit the Mkomazi Game Reserve in Tanzania to learn of their experience of working with Black Rhinos in an enclosed sanctuary.

Returning to Kenya we drove to Sweetwaters Game Reserve where we participated in a two-day meeting on developing research into the management of large mammals in enclosed reserves and accompanied researchers and the teams darting and marking rhinos to assist individual identification.

During our stay at Sweetwaters we also visited Lewa Downs

## TSAVO EAST, KENYA

Tsavo East National Park covers an area of 11,000 square kilometres in southern Kenya. In the 1970's this area held over 8000 Black Rhinos but these were decimated by poachers. It was not until 1999 after translocations of rhinos from Nairobi N.P and other areas in Kenya that Tsavo again became an important area for Black Rhino.

Following a number of rhino poaching incidents in late 2001/early 2003 the game guards units have been strengthened. Richard Kech who has many years experience in anti-poaching now leads game guards units at Tsavo. More foot patrols and game guards at remote and changing camp sites has led to the apprehension of at least seven poachers and no further rhino poaching over the last twelve months.

The total number of Black Rhinos killed by poachers in late 2001/early 2002 was estimated as ten and Richard Kech estimates that at least 30 rhinos remain in the reserve. We also learnt that financial support for Tsavo East had been recently received from other funding organisations and that KWS was considering creating a fenced and guarded sanctuary at Tsavo East in which to relocate the rhinos.

Surveys and monitoring of rhinos are difficult in this very large and densely vegetated reserve. We went out on foot with the rhino patrols on both mornings of our stay at Tsavo and although we saw fresh signs of rhino including footprints, dung middens and recently browsed plants we were unable to locate any rhinos.

The vastness of Tsavo East and the dense vegetation make tracking

and monitoring of rhinos more difficult than in other more open parks. The sheer size of the area requires a large number of game guards to protect the rhinos and skilled management to co-ordinate these teams of guards.

Individual identification of Black Rhinos remains a problem at Tsavo. This makes monitoring of numbers uncertain. The availability of cameras to assist the production of a photographic dossier of individuals was considered important at Tsavo. More cameras were needed on site and Chester Zoo working with Save the Rhino has agreed to assist in the purchase of these cameras.

Individual identification of rhinos through genetic profiling of dung was also a possibility and it was agreed this could be further explored. Chester Zoo has already worked with scientists from MMU who have used dung from our rhinos at Chester to develop this research.

## SWEETWATERS, KENYA

In the immediate future it is likely that most Black Rhinos in East Africa will be maintained within enclosed reserves or sanctuaries. The management of large herbivores in enclosed reserves is essential and a vegetation-monitoring programme at Sweetwaters run by Alan Birkett has resulted in some very practical recommendations regarding the numbers of other large herbivores that can be maintained within this enclosed Black Rhino reserve. Half the elephants had recently been relocated and it was recommended that giraffe numbers also needed to be reduced.



Game Conservancy, another important reserve for Black Rhino. Finally we returned to Nairobi to further discuss priorities for rhino conservation and joined the rangers on rhino patrol.

Short accounts of two of the main Black Rhino projects we are currently supporting are given below.

# Sweetwaters Trip Report

By Chester Zoo keepers Helen Boczek and Chris Lavender

For four months we planned this field trip to Sweetwaters Wildlife Reserve in Kenya. The rest of the rhino keepers had visited here before; they gave us advice on what to take with us and what to expect when we got there. None of this prepared us for what was an experience of a lifetime. The fact that we were given the opportunity to go didn't sink in until the two of us waved goodbye to our 'better halves' and were sat on the plane at Manchester Airport, on our way to experience something we will never forget.

Our experience started when we entered the reserve gates, straight away we saw plenty of



animals including 37 Giraffe all together walking across one of the plains. This was a rare sight considering there are only 125

Giraffe in total in the reserve, it was amazing watching these animals walk so gracefully past the vehicle.

At the reserve there are 36 Black Rhinoceroses, each of these has to be seen at least once a month by the trackers. The main purpose of our trip was to observe the natural behaviour of Black Rhinoceroses in the wild and learn more



about their natural habitat and ecology this meant we worked with the trackers to find the

rhinos - easier said than done! We had to be up and out by 7am each morning as the Reserve is situated on the equator. This is the coolest time when the rhinos are at their most active and easiest to find. We stayed with the trackers until at least 1pm and covered over 15 miles each day (some days without a break!). This was sometimes hard going in thick



bush, not knowing what was behind the next bush, usually a huge Cape Buffalo often too close for comfort which didn't need provoking to charge! Luckily for us Francis always carried a gun and a snap of the barrel was often enough to scare the buffalo off. Out of the 36 rhinos in the reserve we managed to find 11 of them. A large part of the tracking meant us looking for bedding sites and middens along with footprints, broken branches and many other things. This enabled us to bring back many enrichment ideas to try and implement in the enclosures for the seven Black Rhinos housed at the Zoo. Also there was a male rhino called *Morani* kept in a very large enclosure at the reserve. He was hand-reared

and so was very friendly which meant we were able to go right up to him.

This left us with the

afternoons to keep busy which wasn't difficult. Straight after lunch we would sit by a water-hole and watch the wildlife gather for a drink and wallow, observing how they behave and interact. Warthogs spent a lot of time here along with Zebra both Plains and Grevy Zebra, Reticulated Giraffes, Cape Buffalo, Thompsons Gazelle and of course Rhino along with many birds and Olive Baboons just seeing them all together was an excellent site. Part of the reserve was a chimpanzee sanctuary, here orphaned or rescued chimps are brought and looked after. *Morani* and the Chimpanzee sanctuary are a way of encouraging tourists to the reserve and parting with their money, as the tourists know that they will see these animals. It also educates the public about how endangered the animals are and the reason why they are threatened.

We also managed to gain radio-tracking skills. Felix Pattern doing a PhD on Rhino/Lion photo identification had radio-collared a male and a female lion and each day three or four times these were searched for. It was found that they moved around the reserve a lot, possibly so that the prey didn't know where they would strike

next, scary stuff when you come across one when walking on patrol about 50m away!!!!

We would spend the evenings either on night game drives or at the water-hole experiencing some weird and wonderful sights. The rhinos are most active at night when it is cooler and will retreat into the thick bush to feed, they were often found on the night game drives! Hyenas are nocturnal animals, we encountered two species of hyena, the striped and the spotted. A study was being carried out at the reserve on hyenas, this meant traps were set and checked overnight. It just happened that our rest day coincided with the morning check of the traps so we were given the okay to go out with the research group to check them, then we found out we had to be up at 5am earlier than when we were out on patrol! Unfortunately after getting up at 5am no hyenas were caught.

After an excellent two weeks we packed up, said our goodbyes and made the long journey back home. It is an experience neither of us will forget - maybe one day we will get to go out there again. We would like to thank the 'Keeper for a Day' Scheme which made this trip possible.





# Photo 2002

The winners of the 2002 photographic competition

The winners of the 2002 photographic competition were in the frame at a special event to mark their success. The nine winners were presented with framed copies of their prints and prizes for their winning contributions, which were chosen from more than 1,000 entries.

The overall prize went to Glyn Roberts, of Conwy, who impressed the judges with his eye-catching photo of an elephant. The winners enjoyed a walk around the Zoo, before tucking into a tasty meal and later picking up their prizes. The Zoo's Public Relations Officer

Rachael Ashton said: "The standard of entries last year was very high and choosing an overall winner was quite a task. It was obvious that a great deal of time and effort had gone in to capturing the right shot and all the entrants should be very proud of their work."

For information on this year's photographic competition, please visit the Zoo website at [www.chesterzoo.org](http://www.chesterzoo.org)



**1st Place DIGITAL:** Peter Ganderton, of Great Sutton: £75 from 3C Imaging



**2nd place GARDENS:** Steve Cribbin, of Leeds: £75 Jessops voucher



**1st Place JUNIOR:** Robyn Walton, of Burnley: £100 Borders voucher



**2nd place DIGITAL:** Jane Evans, of Shrewsbury: £50 digital memory from the Colour Centre



**1st place PRINT:** Alan Barber, Middlewich: Three night break Holiday Inn



**2nd place JUNIOR:** Nicholas Heard, of Northumberland: £50 Borders voucher



**1st Place GARDENS:** Steve Heaton, of Warrington: £100 Bridgmere voucher



**2nd place PRINT:** David Mort, of Congleton: £100 Calumet voucher



**2nd place SLIDES:** Peter Robinson, Crewe: £75 Jessops voucher

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**Photographer of the year/1st place SLIDES:**  
Glyn Roberts, of Conwy: Kodak Digital Camera

*Zoo life*

# The Lear's Macaw

By Sam Williams, holder of a Chester Zoo Studentship in 2002

Chester Zoo - Zoological and Veterinary Studentships have been running since 1992. Since then Chester Zoo has made awards to more than 50 students conducting research in over 20 countries worldwide from the UK to China, Brazil and Indonesia.

Sam Williams has a long interest in parrots and in 1995 gained work experience on the Parrot Section at Chester Zoo. Sam then successfully completed a degree in Ecology at the University of Stirling. In 2002 Sam was awarded a Chester Zoo studentship to join field researchers in Brazil working on Lear's Macaws which, with around only 250 individuals remaining in the wild, are now critically endangered.

## THE LEAR'S MACAW

is one of the rarest and most endangered of parrots in the world. The problems they face are varied and far-reaching but conservation work has adapted to this spectrum of challenges and there is now no reason why saving this species from extinction should not be achievable. Currently the number of wild individuals is believed to be 246 and these are only known to use two nesting sites.

At present there is precious little ecological information about the Lear's Macaw. Early naturalists searched for over 100 years before they discovered the location of the wild population, and it was only in 1978 when

their location was discovered. They are only found in the dry North-East of Brazil where they are dependent on the Licuri Palm of the caatinga (white forest) habitat. In this area drought is a continual threat and one that dramatically influences the Lear's. In years of drought and therefore poor food availability it is believed Lear's Macaw reproduction is severely limited. Experimenting with supplementary feeding may help the Lear's raise young even in drought years.

The conservation of the macaws therefore has to include the conservation of the Licuri palms. This in turn means protecting the caatinga habitat. Within this habitat there are a wide variety

of other birds and among these are five other parrot-like species. These are Blue-fronted Amazons, the rare and now CITES I listed Illiger's Macaw, Blue-crowned and Cactus Conures, and the tiny Blue-winged Parrotlet. Conserving the caatinga by using the Lear's Macaw as a flagship species will also contribute to protecting these and many other species.

The caatinga region is a hard place to live for people yet their population continues to grow and spread. Consequently the amount of natural vegetation has been reduced considerably. Farming is a major land use and cattle are believed to play a major role in reducing the regeneration of the Licuri Palm.



In a long term approach to bolster Licuri numbers the BioBrazil Foundation developed Licuri plantations growing hundreds of palms. The World Parrot Trust were involved and contributed by raising funds for the project through their 'Palm for a parrot campaign'. Hopefully these plantations will be backed up by improved land management to help restore the habitat that is left.

As a result of trapping for collectors worldwide the Spix Macaw is now believed to be extinct in the wild. The Lear's therefore hold the unfortunate title of being the world's rarest wild Macaw. Trapping is the most serious threat to their survival and the BioBrazil Foundation employs guards to protect the nest sites. Some of the guards at Serra Branca, which is managed by BioBrazil, are converted trappers and this has proven to be very effective, despite at first causing controversy. The 2002 breeding season appeared to be a great success with no sign of trapping and a great deal of rain providing plenty of food for the parrots. With continued conservation efforts saving this amazing bird is well within reach!

Sam's wishes to thank the North of England Zoological Society, World Parrot Trust and the



BioBrazil Foundation for greatly aiding his visit.

The experience provided an excellent opportunity to observe the Lear's Macaws and Serra Branca to determine what research could be attempted in the future. As a result Sam is currently proposing to conduct a Masters research project through the University of Stirling, Scotland.

This project will investigate Lear's Macaw ecology and behaviour. It will also look at the



community's views on conservation. Gaining in depth ecological knowledge of the Lear's Macaw is essential for future conservation success.

# Then and Now...

...the importance of Zoo archives by Clare Caws and Jane Woodward

In recent years the importance of preserving the history of the Zoo for future generations has been recognised. We have recently embarked on an ambitious project intended to secure the Zoo's history for current and future generations. Using new high-tech hardware and software we have started digitising the enormous number of documents and photographs that have been accumulated since the Zoo's foundation in 1932. When completed, this information will be published on the Zoo intranet and eventually we hope to publish much of the material on our website. The original copies will, of course, be carefully preserved, in a safe environment.

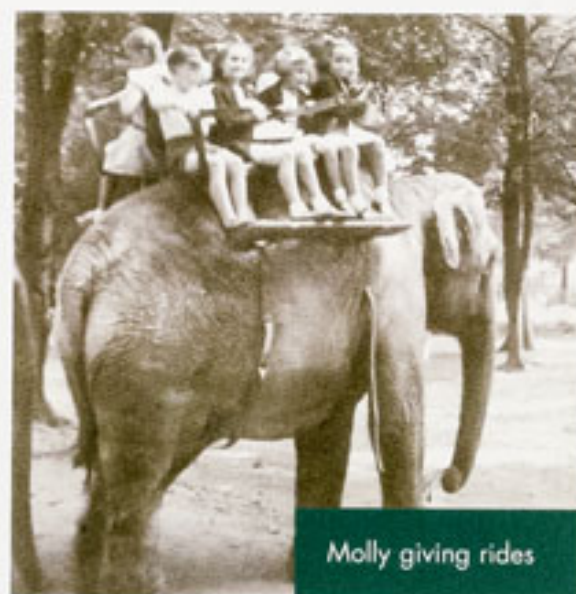
One of the most interesting parts of the Zoo archives are the various incarnations of the Zoo magazine, the earliest dating back to November 1937.

We also have huge albums of newspaper cuttings going back to 1955 plus annual reports and minutes of almost all the meetings ever held in the Zoo! These all portray the history of the Zoo from very different perspectives and make fascinating reading. We are currently creating a database to store all our photographs and art work in a digital form. There is a fabulous collection of videos taken over

the last 20 years, covering TV programmes featuring the Zoo, adverts, news clips and amateur video footage. We also have strange Chester Zoo ephemera such as Zoo ties through the ages; a tiny brick manufactured to raise funds for the new Chimpanzee Breeding Centre and a Chester Zoo chocolate coin amongst other things.

We have learnt so much about the history of Chester Zoo whilst working our way through the archive collection. The Zoo's first magazine was published in 1937. 'Our Zoo News' was available for an annual subscription of 2 shillings (10p to our younger readers!). In September 1938 the North of England Zoological Society had 226 members and over 12000 visitors a year. Entry to the Zoo cost 1 shilling for adults and sixpence for children.

The collection was relatively small and contained mostly birds and a range of monkeys. The Zoo covered about 9 acres, centred around the Oakfield building, which contained a basement aquarium; and the stable block, where most of the animals were located. In one of the early issues we learn about Molly, the elephant, giving rides along paths around the house.



Molly giving rides

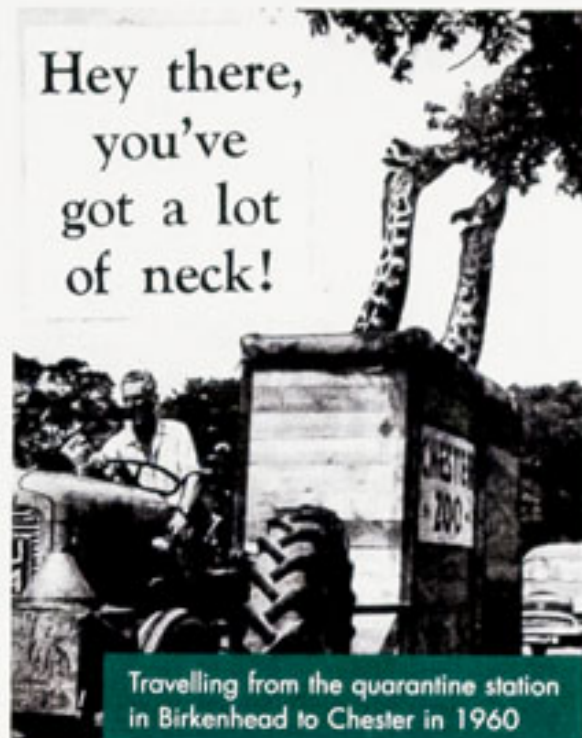
For years the magazine started with a weather report from the previous month, showing that the Zoo was as much a weather-dependent attraction 60 years ago as today! In those days, some animals, such as chimpanzees, only had indoor quarters so in 1938 a new chimpanzee house was designed which would provide outdoor, as well as indoor, accommodation and would increase their living space from 9 square feet to 20. In those early years the young chimpanzees were allowed to mingle with the public.

From 1948 a map of the Zoo was included in the newsletter. It is interesting to see where the animals used to be housed. For example, the Malayan Bears were in what is now the Bush Dog enclosure. This was the first permanent structure built at the Zoo. The open-air lion enclosure



Chimpanzee Island in 1956

Hey there,  
you've  
got a lot  
of neck!



Travelling from the quarantine station in Birkenhead to Chester in 1960

Map of The Zoological Gardens, Chester



1st guide to the Zoo, August 1948

fascinating pictures. There were some escapes early on, but the chimps ignored visitors and were easily encouraged home. The water was a lot shallower then and there were no barriers between the public and the water.

Newspaper cuttings often provide more amusing stories, revealing details not allowed in the Zoo magazine. They can also provide ideas of how life in general differed from today, such as the methods of transportation in 1960!

Our archives are growing constantly, aided recently by many of our office-based staff moving to a new office block and discovering forgotten

treasures in the process. We are also helped by members of the public finding mementos of a happy visit to Chester Zoo. We recently received 2 reels of ciné film taken in the early 1950's that we intend to transfer to DVD. In order to learn more about the Zoo's history and to put names to faces on photographs we have talked to some long-standing ex-members of staff. These talks have been so illuminating that in the future we are going to record such chats and establish an oral history collection.

If any Members of the Society would like to view the archive collection please contact Jane Woodward, Librarian, (Education Division 01244 650205) for an appointment.

was already completed and was the first project mentioned in 1938.

Many interesting stories emerged while looking through the early magazines. In 1943 a small terrier was raised with a lion, and the two became the best of friends. Pictures of Peter and Mowgli were frequent occurrences. The stories are touchingly told and there is genuine sadness when the characters involved are lost. A major story was the creation of the chimp islands, started in 1955. The Zoo dedicated a whole edition to this with some



Peter & Mowgli

# Junior Puzzle Page



**PICTURE THIS!  
SEE IF YOU CAN  
UNSCRAMBLE THESE  
PICTURES AND  
DETERMINE WHAT  
THE ANIMALS ARE.**

There is a £10 gift voucher to spend in the Zoo shops for the first correct entry opened on the closing date, Friday August 29.

Congratulations to the winner of the last competition Shaun Davies, of Wrexham. The correct answer was Indochina.

Please write your answers, name and address on the back of a postcard and send to:  
Zoo Life, Marketing  
Department, Chester Zoo,  
Upton-by-Chester, CH2 1LH.

Entries to arrive no later than Friday August 29.



Answer 1



Answer 2



Answer 3



Answer 4



Answer 5



Answer 6



Answer 7



Answer 8

# Talks for Members & Adopters

Talks for 2003

We anticipate that these speakers will attract a wide audience, so as we cannot guarantee availability at the door, we advise you to send for your free tickets in advance. Applications to the Membership Office, Chester Zoo, Upton-by-Chester, CH2 1LH, stating which talks you would like to attend, and number of tickets required for each. Please enclose a SAE for return of your tickets. We ask those attending to make a donation of £1 per person to cover refreshments.

**Sat, 6 Sept @ 2.30 pm**

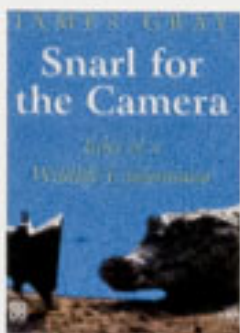
**Eleanor Condon**  
**ENRICHMENT FOR ANIMALS**

Environmental enrichment provides environmental stimuli that encourage positive natural behaviours in Zoo animals and is now an integral part of zoo animal husbandry routines. Chester Zoo's Research Assistant Eleanor Condon will talk about environmental enrichment.

**Sat, 13 Sept @ 2.30 pm**

**James Gray**  
**SNARL FOR THE CAMERA**

Our guest is the renowned natural history cameraman of some thirty years standing, James Gray. His work has taken him all over the world filming everything from human lice to



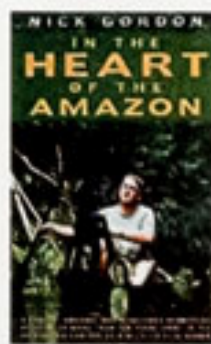
elephants in Thailand, polar bears in the Arctic, anacondas in Venezuela, mountain gorillas in Uganda, and golden monkeys and pandas in

China. His television credits include work on *Polar Bears: Shadows on the Ice* for ITV and *The Singing Apes of Khao Yai* for the BBC, *Living Plant*, *Trials of Life* and *Life of Birds*, all with David Attenborough.

**Sat, 4 Oct @ 2.30 pm**

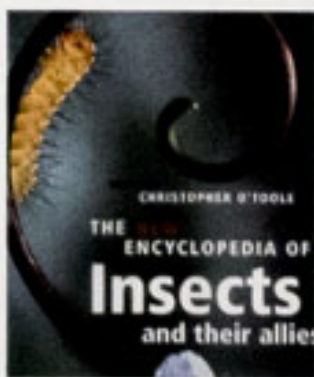
**Nick Gordon**  
**JAGUAR: EATER OF SOULS**

Nick Gordon is one of the great adventurers and storytellers among natural history film-makers. For 20 years he has travelled the world filming, photographing and writing about wildlife, environmental and travel issues. He has reared jaguar cubs, befriended native Indians and survived life-threatening tropical diseases in the heart of the Amazonian jungle.



**Sat, 8 Nov @ 2.30 pm**

**Chris O'Toole**  
**WHY WE NEED INSECTS AND THEIR DIVERSITY**



By the author of *The Encyclopedia of Insects*.

**Nov @ 7.30 pm**

**Mark Sparrow**  
**FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE CAPE OF SOUTH AFRICA**



Mark Sparrow is the Zoo's Curator of Horticulture and Botany at Chester Zoo. He will give a talk about a six week trip he

undertook to the Cape of South Africa. During this time he experienced the amazing diversity of plants and animals that are found in this biodiversity hotspot. The Cape Floristic Region is recognised as being one of the top 25 most important and unique habitats on earth.

**Sat, 13 Dec @ 2.30 pm**

**Steward Ellett**  
**NAMIBIAN CHEETAH: POPULATION ECOLOGY AND MONITORING**

It was Steward Ellett's many visits to Kenya that brought about his interest in and study of the Cheetah in more depth, eventually spending time as a volunteer helping in the study and protection of the Namibian cheetah.

# Caught on Camera

by Twilight team leader Paul Howse

The Jaguar has fascinated people throughout time. It was worshipped by the ancient Mayan Civilisation as a strong and powerful God. Today in Belize the jaguar, for some, has become a symbol of conservation.

In 1982 The Belize Audubon Society asked the Wildlife Conservation Society, (WCS), to assess the abundance of jaguars in Belize. Dr Alan Rabinowitz, (now Director of Science and Exploration for WCS running the Global Carnivore Programme), conducted a 2-year ecological survey. The results of this survey and Rabinowitz's determination saw the first ever jaguar reserve come into being - The Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary.

The reserve is 120,000 acres - look out for the pictures when you next visit the Spirit of the Jaguar at Chester Zoo. It's part of a complex of protected areas in Southern Belize, more than 500,000 acres of tropical forest. This includes Chiquibul National Park and Bladen Nature Reserve.

As part of a comprehensive programme, the whole of the jaguar's range, from South Western USA to Argentina is now being assessed. There are huge areas where very little is known about the local jaguar

populations. It's a priority to survey these areas; they could be vital to the long-term survival of the species. This project receives significant funding from Jaguar Cars. As Rabinowitz says, "Without this type of sponsorship, we're not going to be able to save these animals."

To carry out this work effectively there needs to be a testing ground for surveying techniques. The Cockscomb Basin fits that role perfectly, as it's a known quantity. Examination of jaguar population ecology there started in the 1980's and continues to be examined. It has protected status, mountains along three sides add to that protection and the dedicated wardens from the Belize Audubon Society looking after it. Field technologies can be perfected and replicated in priority locations.

Chester Zoo helps field biologists perfect their techniques. One example is the photographs of pugmarks we send to scientists working in Belize, identifying individual jaguars from their footprints. We can supply any

number of images with information about sex, age and weight. Presently we're investigating ways to collect hair samples for DNA analysis.

Jaguars are secretive by nature and spend most of their life alone. The reserve is nearly a quarter of the size of Cheshire. But unlike Cheshire's easy terrain you have to remember this is wall to wall moist tropical forest.

Two scientists from the WCS, Dr Scott Silver and Dr Linde Ostro, surveyed the population densities of jaguar in the Cockscomb Basin last year with a grid of camera traps. Eleven jaguars were caught on film. Mark/recapture methodology puts the estimated population density within the study area at fourteen cats.

Earlier this year Scott and Linde repeated the survey and it was my good fortune to be part of the team. Including our Mayan guides, without whom we'd have been lost, literally, there were eighteen of us, from five different countries.

The cameras were put out in pairs, either side of the game trails. Each one in a waterproof housing and activated by a sensor which detects heat and motion.

Great attention is paid to the

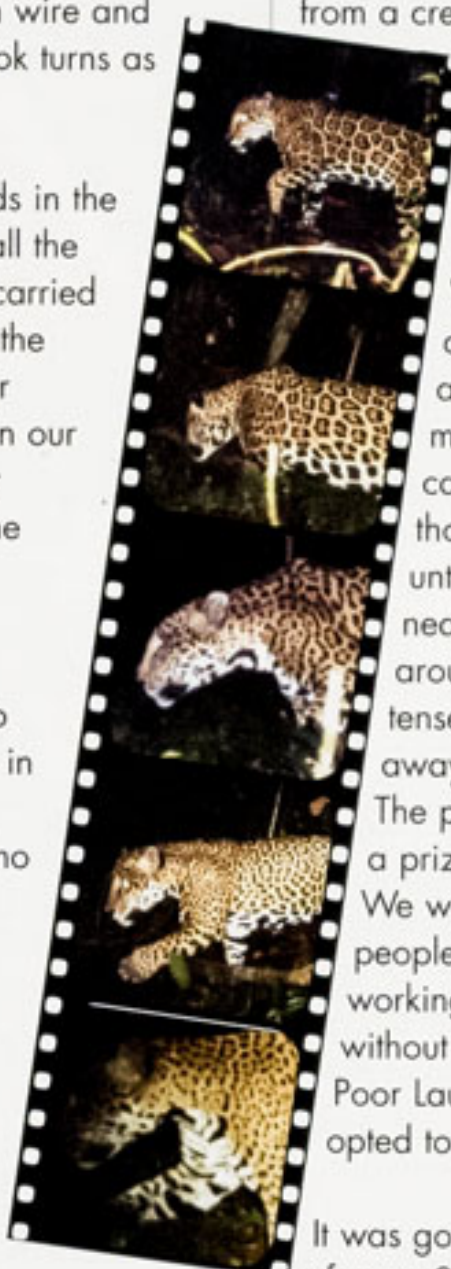


placement of the cameras; they have to be at just the right height. They're attached to trees with wire and a padlock. We all took turns as honorary jaguars!

There aren't any roads in the reserve. This means all the cameras have to be carried out on foot. To cover the area we split into four groups. We had six in our group: Bart, a jaguar researcher living in the reserve; Laura, an ecologist from Los Alamos; Marianne, learning techniques to apply to similar work in Brazil, me and our Mayan guides, Gustino and Frederico.

At the end of one day's hike with big packs carrying camera equipment, tents, cooking pots etc. we reached, "Juan Branch."

After pitching our tents, Gustino, Frederico, Bart and I carried on along the trail to set up the next camera station. This would save us



time in the morning. Three or four minutes later, we were climbing up from a creek we'd crossed, came round a corner and 20 metres in front of us was an adult jaguar, playing with a clump of grass. At first he didn't notice us. When he did, he stood up and watched us. Gustino and Frederico were urging me to get nearer as I had a camera in my hands, (I thought they quite liked me until then!) As I took a step nearer I could see the muscles around the cat's shoulders tense; he turned and walked away. I'd invaded his space. The photograph will never win a prize but it's one I'll treasure. We were very privileged. Some people have spent many years working in jaguar territory without ever seeing one. Poor Laura and Marianne, they'd opted to go for a swim.

It was good to see an abundance of prey. Some potential jaguar food I saw included white-lipped peccary, tamandua, red brocket deer, paca, agouti, opossum, curassow, iguana and some big snakes. Judging by all the footprints there was a lot more around. A wonderful print was found one morning a few hundred metres from where we were sleeping. A tapir print with agouti and jaguarundi tracks on top. Over 540 species of bird have been recorded in Belize. It does the soul good to see macaws and keel-billed toucans flying overhead. To see a puma wandering along the path and troops of black howler monkeys in the trees above your head is magical. But seeing that jaguar was truly inspirational.

The cameras will be out for two months during which time a lot of hiking will be done to make sure the films and batteries don't run out. At the time of writing the cameras are still in the forest and I'm waiting to hear the results.

## JAGUARS AT CHESTER



"**Carlo**," weighs 90 kilos. Born 1980, he arrived from Rome Zoo on the 12th April 2001. He's the oldest cat in the Zoo.



"**Ebony**," weighs 72 kilos. Born 14th April 1984, she too arrived from Rome Zoo on the 12th April 2001. She's the only black jaguar at Chester Zoo.



"**Salvador**," weighs 75 kilos. Born 6th May 1991, he arrived from Poznan Zoo on the 22nd June 2001. He's our only jaguar that doesn't like fish.



"**Sofia**," weighs 70 kilos. Born 22nd May 2001, she arrived from Rostock Zoo on the 22nd September 2002. She's the youngest and most playful.

(Photographs by Tom Larkham)



# Junior Members

Meetings and Field Trips



## Dr Jane Goodall introduced **ROOTS AND SHOOTS** Saturday June 21

Jane Goodall is a very famous scientist who has worked with Chimpanzees for many years. She started, and remains part of, the world's largest uninterrupted study of a group of animals in the wild, based at the Gombe Stream Chimpanzee Reserve in Tanzania, Africa. Jane set up the Jane Goodall Institute in 1977 and part of their organisation is their 'Junior Club' – similar to ours.

This is called Roots and Shoots and is a programme which supports students from pre-school through to university in projects that benefit people, animals and the environment. Roots and Shoots now has 4,000 worldwide groups in more than 709 countries. Jane travels all around the world speaking about the threats facing chimpanzees, and other environmental crises.

We are incredibly lucky that Dr Goodall has offered to talk to our Junior Members about her exciting work with Chimpanzees and her visits to 'Roots and Shoots' groups. She will also help Juniors understand some basic animal behaviour observation techniques and will assist us with the making of environmental enrichment objects such as hessian food parcels and 'party poppers' filled with food treats. We will then give these to our chimpanzee's to watch and

record their reactions.

Juniors of eight and over are invited to join us for this event. We will meet outside the Oakfield House at 9.30am and parents can collect you there again at 2.30pm. You will need to bring a picnic, plus at least one large cardboard tube (e.g the inside of a tin foil roll or kitchen roll). In the meantime, perhaps you will take some time to watch the Chimpanzees when you are next in the Zoo and work out some questions about their behaviour that you might like to ask Dr Goodall.

## **DAY WITH A KEEPER** Wednesday July 23

Always the most popular event of the year when Juniors of 12 years and over have the opportunity to spend a day working alongside a zoo keeper.



The work can be tough so we have to strictly limit this event to over 12s. We try to match Juniors to their favourite section but places are very limited so this cannot be guaranteed. Please come prepared to work hard with clean wellies and an additional completely clean set of clothes to work in. Owing to the Zoo's bio-security measures, it is important that the clothes that 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. You will also need a good picnic. We will meet outside the Oakfield at 10.30am and the will finish at 4pm. Please note that bookings for this event will not be taken before Wednesday 9 July 2003 from 8.30am and will be strictly on a first come, first served basis.

## **SUMMER BARBECUE** Friday August 15 2003

Most of our Members have never been in the Zoo after all the visitors have left, but Juniors have this lucky offer once a year if they come to the Summer barbecue.

There will be a surprise speaker or a tour of the Zoo, but you can be sure to have a fun and relaxing evening. Over 8s are

Zoo life

invited to join us starting at 7pm when you should arrive at the staff entrance off Caughall Road and walk over to the Ark Restaurant. Parents are requested to collect Juniors from there at 9.45pm.



## CHOLMONDELEY CASTLE

**Sunday September 21**

Please note that we visit Cholmondeley on a Sunday, as the grounds are not open on Saturdays.

Located near to the Bickerton Hills in Cheshire, Cholmondeley is a lovely relaxing day when

we visit the Castle's pretty gardens and grounds and the Home Farm.

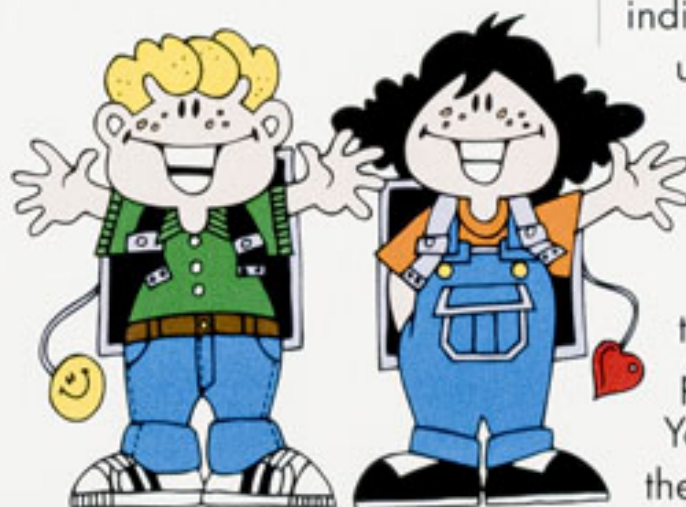
The bus will leave the staff car park at 11am and return there for 4pm. Bring a picnic.

## COLWYN BAY WELSH MOUNTAIN ZOO

**Saturday October 18**

It is always interesting to visit other zoos and the Welsh Mountain Zoo at Colwyn Bay is always a popular trip for our Junior Members.

Apart from its exotic inhabitants, the Welsh Mountain Zoo also assists with the rearing and rehabilitation of seal pups and we may find they have some there when we visit.



The bus will leave the staff car park at 10.30am and return at 4.30pm. Bring a picnic and warm clothes as it can be quite exposed on the hill.

### 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 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 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 these events which involve transport, materials or the provision of food.

You will be informed of this at the time of booking.



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