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Chester **ZOO** **Life**

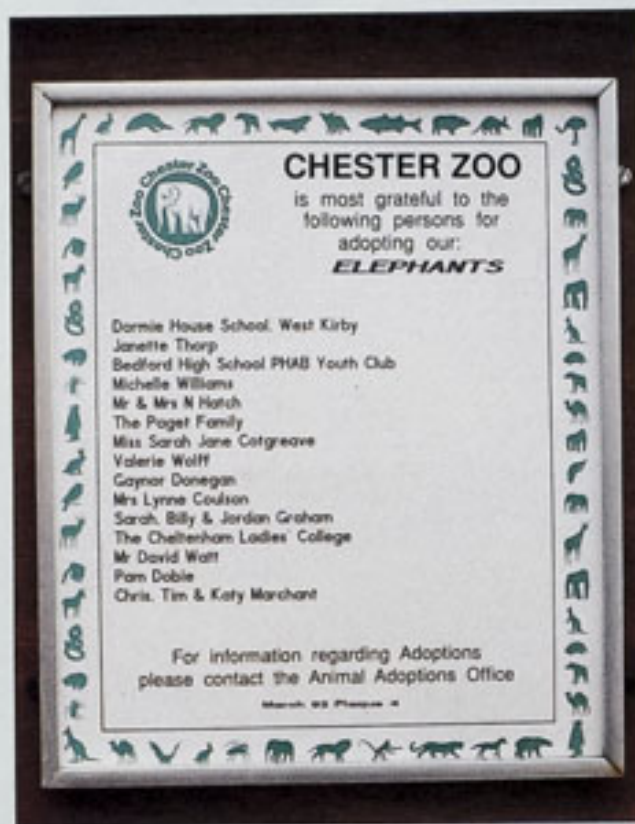


Chez Nous



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Director: Dr. M. R. Brambell Editor: Pat Cade

Adopters



Our annual "Adopter" days were held in October - the days on which we invite subscribers to the adoption scheme to come to the zoo and hear about the animals they have adopted and meet the people looking after them. It is our way of saying thank you" for the support we get from the scheme. Last year we raised £93,000 including VAT through this scheme. The benefits are not entirely one-way, for adopters do receive our magazine, complimentary tickets and one or two other privileges in return for their subscription, (hence the VAT!) and they also receive the advantage (untaxable) of knowing that they are helping Chester Zoo to do its job. Even after deducting all our costs from the overall sum, the size of the endowment to give the zoo the same financial support would be well in excess of a million pounds.

Members

A similar argument could be used with our ever-expanding membership, now with over 3,600 adults and over 1600 Junior Members. The benefit to the zoo, after costing all the tangible benefits taken up by the membership, would be of a similar order to that of the Adoption Scheme.

Both Membership and Adoptions provide the zoo with this valuable band of ambassadors, spread among the community over a wide area.

F.E.D.S.

There is yet another way people can help the zoo. Our volunteers in the FEDS scheme - Friends of the Education Division - contributed 9772 hours last year, and look like contributing even more this year. This is a most welcome form of help, for it allows the zoo to perform various activities which greatly enrich the experience of our visitors, which we could not afford to provide at an economic cost.

So to all these helpers; members, adopters and volunteers, a very warm thank you. Ten years ago there was a tenth of the number of members we have now. Adoptions have sprung up from virtually zero ten years ago and so has the volunteer force. Now we can feel very proud about the progress on all these fronts.

New Gate

In the next issue I hope to publish an artist's impression of the first stage in developing our new gate. This redevelopment is being coupled with the conversion of the Monkey House from being almost entirely indoor exhibits, to one with extensive outdoor islands and other enclosures.

Members will recall that as part of the deal with the City to provide a new access route from the A41 to the West side of the zoo, we have agreed to move our gate from Caughall Road and transfer it to a site between the Elephant House and the Oasis.

Elephant Baby

It was such a shame that after all those months of waiting, the elephant Thi-hi-way, from London Zoo, brought here in 1991, gave birth in September, only for the baby to die soon after. We are hoping that this really was a first "calf" problem, for many, many mammals do not become good mothers either physiologically or behaviourally, until their second

and subsequent calves, litters or babies. Many members and friends have written expressing their sadness that the baby was lost, and I thank them very much for this. We hope that next time Thi-hi-way will be as successful in rearing her baby as she has already proved herself to be in producing it.

M. R. Brambell

OBITUARIES

Charlie Collins. On 2 September, Charlie Collins died. Charlie was a very special pensioner of the Society. He joined the zoo on 1 March 1934 at the age of 16, before the Society formally took over the zoo. At that time he lived in Oakfield House with the Mottershead family. He retired in 1982 after 48 years working for the zoo. He and Fred Williams built much of the zoo that still exists, and though the legacy of this work is not well documented, his contribution was immense. Charlie was a warm and supportive person, capable of very constructive and illuminating criticism. In his retirement, he kept his garden in wonderful condition.

Charlie leaves three daughters, Susan, Helen and Lynne. His wife Marjorie died in December 1972, when Lynne, the youngest daughter, was only 11. He kept an excellent home for the three girls, and our thoughts go out to them at their loss.

Michael Brambell

Vic Dodd. It is with great sadness that I have to report the death, after a short illness, of Vic Dodd.

Vic was a Senior Gardener at the zoo, and had given over 30 years service, starting in June 1963. He came to the zoo from a private garden in the Frodsham area and was employed by Philip Gallup.

I joined the zoo just three years after Vic, so I knew him as a colleague and great friend for over 27 years. The legacy of Vic's skill and knowledge is to be seen throughout the zoo. He played a prominent part in some of the large scale developments, including Mrs Mottershead's memorial garden, the Jubilee gardens and, more recently, the new Chimpanzee House.

Vic will be sadly missed not only by the gardening team, but by everyone connected with the zoo. He leaves a widow Gwyneth, and a son, Stephen, to whom I send my sincere condolences.

Eric Rudman, Head Gardener.

Front Cover: Black Vulture in the new aviary.
Picture by Roger Wilkinson.



11 December 1993

Members' Christmas lunch in Oakfield Restaurant at 12 noon. Ring Maureen (0244 380280 ex 203) to reserve your place for the Christmas lunch - £12.75 adults, £7 children (3-11 years).

Talk by Dr Gordon McGregor Reid, Curator in Chief, entitled "Wildlife of the Sahara Desert" will start at 2.30 pm in the Lecture Hall. Members are welcome to come to the meeting without taking lunch.

MEMBERS' MEETINGS 1993/94

15 January 1994 - 2.30 pm in the Lecture Hall Mr E P Rogers - "Birds as Flying Machines"

12 February 1994 - 2.30 pm in the Lecture Hall
Mr & Mrs S J Chaplin - "India - Land of the Tiger and other endangered species".

Tuesday 15 March 1994 - 7.15 for 7.30 pm in the Lecture Theatre. "The North of England Zoological Society - 60 Not Out". His Grace the Duke of Westminster will attend this meeting. Tickets £7.00, to include a buffet supper. Prior booking is necessary through the membership office - please make cheques payable to Chester Zoo and enclose a s.a.e. for

ticket return.

16 April 1994 - 2.30 pm in the Lecture Hall "A Zoo Review" by the Director, Dr M R Brambell (As Oakfield has been booked for a wedding reception, the Restaurant will be closed for lunches, but hot food is available in the Cheshire Room).

May 1994 - AGM - 2.30 pm in the Lecture Hall. Date to be announced. Members are reminded that a charge of 50p per meeting will be made at the door to offset expenses for bringing speakers and towards defraying the costs of maintaining the meeting rooms. Tea and biscuits will be available at meetings at no extra cost.

ADOPTA DAY QUIZ WINNERS

(10th & 16th October)
The first all-correct answers drawn were from Penny Jackson, (Ring-tailed lemur adopter) and Sarah Pursall (chimpanzee adopter.) The winners have received zoo vouchers.

CHESTER ZOO ONE HUNDRED CLUB

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

- JULY:** 100 Mrs J. V. Jobson
50 Miss Joan Goodall
50 Dr Michael Brambell.
- AUGUST:** 100 Mrs Mavis Bowden
100 Mrs Pamela Cate
50 Mrs C. McGarva
50 Mr M. K. Batchelor
- SEPTEMBER:** 100 Mrs K. Pickersgill
50 Mrs K. H. Parsons
50 Mrs Meryl Finch
50 Mr Rennie Barnes
- OCTOBER:** 100 Mr Peter Kitchin
100 Mrs Bea Jones
50 Mrs N. V. Jones
50 John & Janet Makinson
50 Mr J. Alkins.

All winners have been notified by post and received their cheques. Membership of the "100 Club" is still invited. Please contact Alan Sykes, Deputy Financial Controller, if you want details.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

A polite reminder that subscriptions are due on 1st January next! The subscription rates remain the same, and are:

Annual:	under the age 65	£28.00 pa
	age 65 & over	£21.00 pa
Joint*:	both under 65	£50.00 pa
	one under 65	£45.00 pa
	both 65 or over	£38.00 pa

*Both at the same address.

A special plea from your Membership Secretary, Maureen Allsopp! Many members pay by standing order, and a lot of these orders have not been amended since the last change in subscription rates. This means a lot of time and expense is incurred in contacting members. If your subscription is paid by Banker's Order - please ensure it is for the right amount.

Rolling Membership for New Members

In our efforts to increase the Society membership/Junior membership, we have always recognised that the more we progress into a year, the more difficult it is to "sell" the idea, because of the "lost" months.

We have had some success with the half year discount, and the Autumn offer of "15 months for the price of 12" on memberships taken out after October. But we really wanted to have a way of offering a full 12 months whenever the new membership began. Happily, advances with com-

puter software mean that we will soon be able to offer a rolling membership for new members. This seems a much neater solution to our needs than having 12 different tariffs through the year.

This will not affect existing members, whose subscriptions will continue to be due each January. Any late renewals will be backdated to 1st January, in order to maintain continuity of membership and, in the fullness of time, qualify you for the special free Life Membership granted after 25 years, provided you are over 60 at that time.



ALICE MEETS BEANIE

For the past few years, the Lewis Carrol Society's newly elected "Alice in Wonderland" has visited the zoo to renew the Society's adoption of a white rabbit.

This year, just for a change, Alice - alias nine year old Imogen Perry - was photographed with a young flamingo. In the book, the characters use flamingos as croquet mallets, but our Alice was just a little nervous of getting too close!

Flamingos grow rapidly! The same chick in the Alice picture is shown, right, with Keeper Wayne McLeod, only a few weeks beforehand.

Of seven Caribbean Flamingo chicks hatched in 1993, this, the last hatched, was abandoned in the morning of hatching by its novice

parents. Cold and motionless, the chick would have died within hours if it had not been removed for hand-rearing. It was cared for by Wayne, who took it home at nights for the first few weeks. The chick rapidly grew on an artificial "crop milk" of liquidized fish, shrimp, egg yolk and baby cereal.

This is the first flamingo chick to be successfully hand-reared at Chester. Of the other six Caribbean flamingos hatched in 1993, five were successfully reared by their parents, taking our group up to 50 birds.

Only one Chilean was hatched in 1993 and this was also successfully parent-reared making that colony 30 strong.

PARROT ADOPTION



The Amazona Society has adopted two Lilacine Parrots at Chester Zoo. This generous adoption indicates the Amazona

Society's support of zoo breeding programmes for parrots. Following a talk to the Society by Curator of Birds, Roger Wilkinson, on the Zoo Federation Parrot Taxon Advisory Group, Mrs Berna Perry presented the speaker with cheque to support the work of Chester Zoo with Lilacine Amazons. (photographed above). The European Breeding Programme for this species is run by Mark Pilgrim at Chester Zoo, so the adoption was particularly appropriate.

ZOO REVIEW



NOT SUCH A TRIVIAL QUESTION

Readers of this magazine playing the board game "Trivial Pursuit" this Christmas, are guaranteed at least one correct answer.

In the new set of questions, on sale for the Christmas trade, is one which asks: "Which organisation obtained permission from the GPO to send pots of elephant manure through the post?"



MORE AWARDS

In the last issue, we reported that Chester Zoo collected more conservational breeding awards from the Federation of Zoos, than any other zoo in the country.

Since then, more awards have arrived. The zoo was voted Best Tourist Attraction in Cheshire, at the county level of a competition organised by the British Tourist Authority, and went on to take second place at the regional level, covering the whole of the North West.

DRAW WINNERS

The winners in the annual draw, this year in aid of the zoo's Jubilee Year studentships, were:

First Prize: (Junior Encyclopedia Britannica). Mrs M. Sheriff, of Marks and Spencer Financial Services.

Second: (Overnight stay for two at the Victoria and Albert hotel, Manchester, and complimentary admission to Granada Studios Tour): P. Watts, of Ellesmere Port.

Third: (Pair of Bushnell binoculars, courtesy Ascotts Cameras): Mr & Mrs Kneale of Great Sutton.

Fourth: (Panasonic 14" television): J. Dent, of Meols, Wirral.

Fifth: (Technics CD Player): Mrs B. Davis, Hawarden, Clwyd. 774.

Congratulations . . . to Senior Keeper Philip Whalley, on gaining a distinction for course work in the City and Guilds Animal Management examination.

AQUATIC CONSERVATION MEETS VISUAL INNOVATION!

By Aquarist Justin Bell.
Aquatic conservation is clearly necessary in the modern world and public aquaria have a vital role to play in this through education and through breeding programmes. Anything which fosters the exchange of information, ideas and results between public aquaria, will inevitably allow all of us to progress more quickly than if we were working independently.

One recent small step on the road to fuller co-operation happened in August, when Nick Lloyd, - an aquarist from the new Sealife Centre in Rhyl came over to work with us here at Chester Zoo. (We are both in the picture, right.) This visit was followed by both myself and Mike Crumpler going to Rhyl for the day.

Both visits were great

successes. I feel that both the Sealife Centre and the zoo have benefited greatly from this exchange, and we swapped notes on a number of technical points in fish and invertebrate husbandry. I noted that the conservational breeding programme at Chester is more developed than at Rhyl.

However, the scale of their educational displays is most impressive, especially their walk through" shark tank. Seemingly, immersing visitors in the world which are trying to conserve creates for them a sense of excitement which must surely encourage their support for conservation programmes.

We are at present arranging another exchange with the Sealife Centre in Blackpool, and this should be an equally beneficial exercise in co-operation.



The Director, Council and Staff at Chester Zoo wish all our members, adopters and volunteers a Very Happy Christmas. We thank you all for your support during 1993, and hope you will join us in 1994 as we celebrate our Diamond Anniversary.

Welcome to the Education Division

Teacher Ann Macauley has recently joined the Education Division, with the special responsibility of developing teachers' packs in the subject of English.



Theme Evenings '94

Oakfield Functions Manager Richard Casson, and Head Chef Geraldine Foden, have been spending a lot of time pouring over continental cookery books, planning the new season's theme evenings.

The first three for next year are: Friday 21 January: A trip to Mexico! Mexican food is one of the fastest growing "ready meal" lines in supermarkets. Come along and find out how it should taste, when freshly and authentically prepared.

February 25th: Our popular Italian evening. Everyone loves Italian food, and there will be a great choice of dishes on the menu.

March 25th: Entertainment plus French cuisine! A member of the marketing department will present a very light slide show, illustrating the work at Chester Zoo, and the way we promote it. The menu will be from France.

Christmas Meals in the Oakfield Restaurant

Bookings for Christmas lunches and dinners in the Oakfield are higher than ever before this year. But there are still some dates with tables available, so if you want to start your Christmas celebration in great style, phone the party-bookings office - extension 209 - right away.

Although this year's lunch menu does include traditional turkey and plum pudding, there are many unusual alternatives, for those people who feel you can have too much of a good thing! There is a choice of 6 starters, seven main courses - including vegetables - six sweets (or cheese) and coffee and mints are included, for just £12.75 adult and £7.00 children. The evening dinner menu offers even more choice, for £14.75. Lunches are served every day from 6 - 31 December (not including Christmas Day) and dinner dates are 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21 and 22 December.





DWARF MONGOOSE AT CHESTER ZOO

*By Ray Packwood,
Head of Section,
Small Mammal House.
With special thanks to
colleague Beryl Ramsey
for helping to collate the
information.*

A group of 15 mongoose arrived at the zoo in late 1985. After a short time they bred, and the group increased in size. It was decided to send some of the animals to other collections, but since then they have not bred successfully.

In 1992 a pair were moved to a new enclosure. At first they were stressed, and called to the original group constantly. But within a week they had settled down and began to react with each other, grooming and following one another around.

April 15th 1993

Lots of squeaks from the female made us think that she was being mated, although nothing was observed. During the following month, she slowly got bigger and bigger; she was obviously pregnant. By this time she could not climb the rock work in the enclosure and just sat around with the male being very attentive to her.

3rd June 1993

The expectant mother gave birth to

four young. This was, to our knowledge, her first litter, and she seemed to have trouble deciding where to put them. The male, on the other hand, seemed to know exactly what to do. Whilst he was busy placing them in the warm box provided, she took them out and dumped them everywhere!

By the next day, the male had managed to collect all the babies in one place, and the female was content with his choice of accommodation. After only a few days, the pair took the babies outside into the sunshine. As the sun moved around the enclosure, the pair moved the babies into the warmth of the sun. By the afternoon, they had taken them back inside. If any baby got misplaced, Father gathered it up by holding it around the neck with his mouth, and placed it with the others.

Over the next six weeks, hourly observations were recorded. This was in case any problems arose that could be corrected should the pair breed

again in the future.

The youngsters continued to grow well, and by the time they were eight weeks old they were half the size of the parents. At first they all used to feed out of the same bowl of mealworms. As they grew, tempers flared, so the mealworms were scattered over the enclosure to prevent any further fighting.

During the time they were growing, we had fine, warm weather so most of the days were spent sleeping and playing outside, with the male keeping a close watch on all their antics.

On the 6th June, we decided to microchip the mongoose because of identification problems - they all look the same! The microchip is inserted under the skin by means of a syringe. It only takes a moment to do, but - first catch your mongoose! At the same time, they were sexed, and found to be three males and one female.

27th June

The pair were observed mating again.



13th August

47 days after mating, the female gave birth to five babies. The previous litter were very busy carrying the babies everywhere - mainly outside - and rolling them in the sand like an egg and kicking backwards. They carried them by their ears, their legs, their tails - anything but the correct way. The male was frantically collecting the babies and trying to keep them together. He did it eventually, and the female settled to feed them. Peace at last!

During the next few weeks the group settled down to their new responsibilities looking after the new babies, with one adult or juvenile always in attendance baby-sitting.

3rd September

One of the new babies was lethargic and under-nourished, so it was removed to be hand-reared. Hand-rearing is only practiced when it is obvious that the parent(s) cannot do it themselves. After warming the baby up, it was offered a drink of lactol milk from a syringe with a small teat

fixed on the end. This it accepted avidly, and went to sleep in a heated plant propagator at a temperature of 75°F.

Because these animals are in constant contact with each other, they need to feel close to something that seems alive. So our Retail Manager Alan Jones generously donated a reject furry glove puppet, which the mongoose cuddled up to straight away.

Of the four animals left, one was obviously smaller, but in good health and we knew from previous experience that the female could cope with four babies.

23 September 1993

The four babies have grown well, and are feeding on a diet of chopped mice, crickets and mealworms sprinkled with vitamin powder.

The hand-reared youngster, now named "Gedi" after a place in Kenya I had the good fortune to visit, is doing very nicely. His constant playmate is "Bess" my bullmastiff bitch. Size is of no importance when you are three

In The Wild

The Dwarf Mongoose is the smallest of the species - approximately 12 inches long including the tail. They are russet to dark brown in colour.

Insects form the major part of their diet, but they also include spiders, scorpions, eggs and small vertebrates like lizards and snakes. Water is taken in small amounts by dipping the front paw in water and lapping from it.

The animals live in groups averaging 15, but as many as 40 have been recorded. Each group comprises one dominant female (Alpha female) and her mate. Only these two animals breed, all other members of the group are suppressed by the pair from breeding. Observations have shown that this works well for the mongoose. Many eyes can watch for danger and there are plenty of willing volunteers to care for the young ones. Baby mongooses are lavished with attention, given first choice of food and constantly kept clean with social grooming - an activity taking up most of the day whilst not feeding. This helps to keep the group bonded together. Only when the Alpha female dies do the other members of the group stand a chance of breeding themselves.

inches long and crave company!

When he is first picked up, he scent-marks my fingers with his cheek glands, to establish our bond as group members. It's then Bess's turn to get scent-marked - and she takes the opportunity to give Gedi a good wash. One lick, and the whole animal is soaked! A bullmastiff's tongue is twice the size of a baby mongoose.

He then settles to feed on a towel on my lap. Bess sits as close as possible, with her head on my lap. No - he will not share his food; he growls and turns his back to her. This is normal behaviour for a mongoose and it is best not to touch him at this time. His teeth are small, but like small needles. Crickets finished, he then has a drink, sometimes refusing it now that he is eating well.

This whole procedure is repeated at 12 noon, 5pm and 9pm. At 7pm, he gets his mouse and this is the only time that Bess will not get too close - I think it's the smell. From about 6 - 9pm he likes to play, and when a bullmastiff wants to play with a three-inch long mongoose, one has to keep careful watch; one false move, and splat! No mongoose!

In the future Gedi will be placed with a female in another collection, so that he can maintain the captive population.

ANTisocial

Overall, my memories of ants are not pleasant ones. Once, when trekking through Korup rainforest in Cameroon, I stumbled upon a swarming mound of giant ants. I was soon bitten from head to foot, and bulky soldier ants with fearsome pincers attempted a forced entry into my ears and nostrils.

Throwing myself in a nearby stream in a mad rush did little to ease the pain; and the ants, even when submerged underwater, clung on with a remarkable tenacity and buried their sharp jaws into my tender flesh. Understandably, this unwelcome encounter fostered in me nightmare visions of being eaten alive and did nothing to encourage an interest in, or love of ants.

ANTibodies

Another time in northern Nigeria, my wife Sally and I discovered a little known and deadly relationship between ants, country 'n western music and creme caramel. We were lodged in a rather seedy hotel, pending a move to new accommodation kindly provided by the university that I was working for. We could hardly face visiting the hotel restaurant, where a scratchy, distorted and unbelievably monotonous version of 'Poor old Joe' was played constantly on a battered record player at full volume. The ants, however, were undeterred by the awful noise and thin columns of them could be seen advancing across the floor and carrying away tasty morsels that they had retrieved from the cold buffet. To this day I recoil in horror from creme caramel, as I remember hungrily spooning into one and finding a cluster of dead and decayed ants lying together in solemn state and enveloped in dark syrup.

So it was that when Chester Zoo's retail sales manageress Suzanne Stanton showed me a box labelled 'Ant World', I experienced the sort of terrifying flashbacks well known to victims of severe trauma. From time-to-time Sue is offered animal care products and she wanted my advice on whether or not to stock this particular item. I steadied my hands enough to hold the box and read the advertising blurb: "Welcome to the wonderful world of ant watching. See the LIVE ants build tunnels and move mountains right before your very eyes! Fun for all the family.". Uneasily, I explained to Sue that I was not at all sure that this was what the shop needed but (very bravely I think) offered to test the product out on my eight year old son Alexander.

ANTiclimax

"You've brought me a new pet!" shrieked Alexander jumping up and

ANTWORLD

Gordon McGregor Reid, with the assistance of young son Alexander, tries out a new product now available in the zoo shop

down in excitement as I unveiled the mysterious looking box. His enthusiasm died down somewhat on closer inspection of the contents. "This clear, flat perspex container is designed to hold ants." I said. Alexander looked bemused "Ants! ... you mean you've brought me ants as pets?". I carefully explained that - while the box included a comfortable and escape-proof observation home for the ants, sand for them to burrow in, a feeder, an artistic



jungle-view backdrop, a magnifying box with travel tube, a full set of assembly instructions and a highly educational ant care manual - it did not actually contain any ants. Alexander sniffed, then brightened a little when I showed him the stock certificate which would enable us to order ants by post; and brightened even more when I suggested that, rather than do this, we could collect our own ants outside.

ANTicipation

A quick expedition to the back garden proved to be highly successful and we soon located a thriving colony of ants. However, we could not find the Black Ant (*Lasius niger*) or the Yellow Meadow Ant (*Lasius flavus*) recommended in the care manual as being non-stinging and completely safe for small children. We settled instead for a Red Ant (*Myrmica species*) which can be safely kept but which has a mild sting. About twenty workers were

encouraged to climb up a stick and experience the delights of Ant World (the queen is avoided as this would mean disrupting the nest). They soon settled down in their new home and, as can be seen in the accompanying photo, created an amazing network of tunnels. Feeding proved to be easy, although the ants were not particularly keen on the home-made plum jam which was given to them. Dead flies collected from the window ledge were we found, the most popular item and groups of ants would manhandle each fly from the magnifying box down into the deepest recesses of the observation chamber (amazingly, they can carry loads equivalent to twenty times their own body weight).

ANTipersonnel

Alexander became so enthusiastic that he took Ant World down to his bedroom at night so that he could watch the workers toiling away as he dropped off to sleep. Then one night disaster struck. I was awoken by yells coming from the bedroom: "They're out! They're out!" I rushed into the room to see Alexander frantically trying to persuade the wanderers out of his bed and back into Ant World, and being bitten in the process (a brief melodic snatch of 'Poor old Joe' would, I feel, not have been out of place at this point and would have disguised the yells nicely). I hasten to add that the problem arose, not from any fault in the construction of Ant World but, rather, due to one of the clip-on sides being accidentally pulled-away. No real harm done, the escapees were soon back in the nest and normal operations resumed.

ANTiheroes

Worker ants will live happily in Ant World for a year or more, safe from predators, bad weather and pesticides. Evidently, they will live for longer in Ant World than they do in the wild. The makers argue that by encouraging people to discover the secret and fascinating world of ants they are helping to promote environmental awareness and make people think twice before needlessly destroying the nests of these wonderful little creatures. Every home should have one. Definitely recommended!

Ant World is available in the zoo shop at £9.99.

CONSERVING WEST AFRICAN WILDLIFE

by Curator in Chief,
Dr. Gordon McGregor Reid

The Nigerian Field Society and the World Wide Fund for Nature jointly organised an important symposium on this subject on the 18th of September at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew. Chester Zoo was asked to make a major contribution, in view of the strong West African component in our animal collection and the extensive field experience of staff members. The welcome address was given by Professor Grenville Lucas, a distinguished conservationist and the recent past President of the Zoo Federation. I completed the morning session with a talk on the conservation of freshwater and estuarine fish and fisheries. Many kinds of fishes (some of which are economically and nutritionally important) are becoming rarer due to pollution, overfishing and habitat degradation, including damming. Zoo-based aquarium breeding programmes



◆ Chester Zoo's display of scientific posters. Foreground: Professor C. Olaniyan, Zoology Department, University of Lagos – distinguished author of *West African Animal Ecology* (Heinemann).

coupled with field work could help to save critically endangered species.

Roger Wilkinson, Curator of Birds discussed the sad plight of the West African Crowned Crane, which is the national symbol of Nigeria and is now highly endangered in the wild. A vital breeding programme for this species was initiated several years ago by Chester Zoo and Roger keeps the U.K. Studbook. Endangered Royal Pythons were the subject of a poster paper presented by Keith Brown and Isolde McGeorge of Chester Zoo's Reptile Department. Each year, over 40,000 Royal Pythons are exported from Ghana and Togo for the pet trade in Britain, Europe and North America. It

is not known how many survive in captivity and the wild population is severely depleted. Chester Zoo successfully breeds Royal Pythons and this group (cooperatively managed with other zoos) serves as a kind of 'insurance policy' against extinction of the species. 'Consumer to producer' is the title of a fascinating poster presented by Nick Ellerton, Curator of Mammals and Niall Ormerod, Section Head. It was an historical review of the Chimpanzee colony at Chester Zoo which - with 76 births over fifty-year period, and an increasingly higher survival rate among babies - is probably the most successful zoo breeding group in the world.

It seems scarcely ten years ago that the Society celebrated its Golden Jubilee - and next year brings the Diamond!

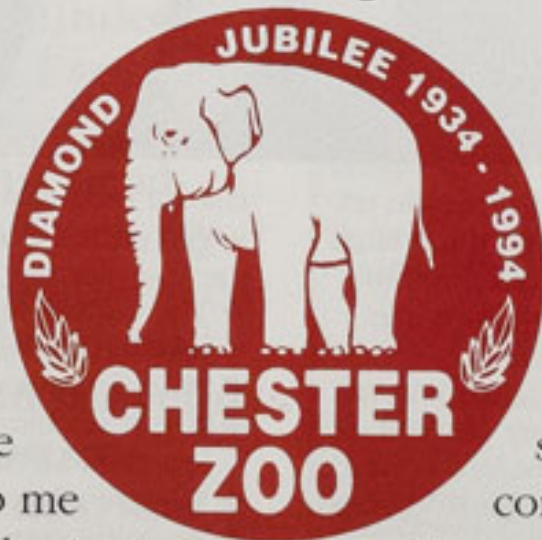
Observant, newly joined members, will see that their membership cards already have the new logo. Progressively this will appear on a range of special merchandise within the shops. Hannah Lawson is well into painting the special celebration panels featuring animals and their food in the Jubilee Cafeteria and we have other plans well in hand to add

DIAMOND JUBILEE 1934 - 1994

by Marketing Manager Chris Vere

something special to the year.

We have been negotiating with Birds Eye Walls for the loan of a couple of 1930's style "stop me and buy one" tricycles in time for the 12 June 1994. It was suggested that we might sell ice-cream at the 1934 price for



an hour or so on that day, provided that we could work it out to be the smallest of today's coins the 1p piece!

More will be revealed in the next magazine.... Watch this space for the whole Diamond Jubilee programme of events.

A CRAFTY TALE

The Education Division has produced a wonderful range of craft kits based on zoo animals. Education Officer Linda Davenport explains the background:

It has taken over four years to develop fully the handicraft kits, and Zoo teacher Sara Ruks has been centrally involved throughout.

The story kicks off in late '89, when zoo volunteer Norah Murphy created an original elephant knitted finger puppet. Norah's technique is to pick up needles and wool, and create as she goes along! The elephant was her first attempt at making such an intricate shape from scratch. She also had to take into account that knitting is worked in two dimensions, then imagine her finished three-dimensional animal!

Undeterred, Norah applied her skill to great effect and her elephant is instantly recognisable, in proportion, and fits neatly over a finger.

Sara worked with Norah to identify other animals which make attractive puppets. Norah created these, and tackled the exacting task of writing the patterns. Sara researched the best wool to use, and how to package the kits. Another zoo teacher, Heather Dibb wrote animal notes to include in each kit. The kits were all "test knitted" by adult and child volunteers before going on sale, and there are now eight animals in the range. (See enclosed order sheet for details.)

Sara then looked at another popular craft - counted cross stitch. Suitable kits for children and simple zoo animal charts were not widely available in 1991. Sara

trod the pioneer path, and made it up as she went along!

She wanted a finished mounting frame of A5 size, with "Chester Zoo" included in the stitching, using 11-count Aida (i.e. 11 stitches to the inch.) The first problem was which animals to select? The pre-determined stitch size restricts the amount of fine detail possible - no porcupines or scorpion fish. But a giraffe was ideal.

The first chart was hand produced with the aid of photo-copier and squared tracing paper. But the first "test stitch" Sara produced using her new chart made her giraffe resemble a spotted hyena! Adjustments were made, until the ideal shape was achieved.

By the end of '91, Sara had repeated this painstaking progress several times, and we had eight designs to offer.

Last year, Sara turned her skills to developing quilling kits. Long coloured paper strips are wound into shapes which can be combined to create a 3D animal.

The kits were available by mail order, and at the "Let's Make" centre in the zoo. At Easter this year, the new "Things to Do" shop, run by volunteers, also stocked the kits.

It soon became obvious that many people were interested in a greater cross-stitch challenge, and we were being asked particularly for crafts featuring



tigers. So it was back to the drawing board for Sara - or, in this case, to her newly acquired computer design program. She decided to attempt more detailed charts, and to focus on the big cats.

The computer programme has eliminated much of the time consuming elements. Once the picture is loaded into the program, all the adjustments for size, scale and colour can be quickly done on screen, with the finished chart printed out on demand.

The animals, too, played their part by taking no notice as Sara studied them, matching sample silks to coat and eye colour.

The result is the "Cat's Collection" of three designs - tiger, cheetah and lion. These kits will be available in the Spring of '94. (Pictured above).

The Education Division is very grateful to all zoo volunteers involved in the creation, production and sale of the kits to zoo visitors.

A mail order form for all the kits currently available is included in this magazine mailing.



Are there still some awkward people on your Christmas shopping list? If the High Street shops all seem the same, and the crowds are too daunting, we have the answers to all your problems!

The Fountain Gift shop in the zoo has a great selection of gifts, many of them unobtainable anywhere else in the area. All the stock is, of course, animal-themed, good quality, and excellent value.

All zoo members get an automatic 10% discount on all purchases from the shop, on production of their membership card. As a "thank-you" to all our adopters, we are making the same offer to them. Just

cut out the coupon on this page, and we'll knock 10% off all your purchases in the shop for the month of December.

- ❖ The biggest selection of cuddly animal toys in the region - at all prices.
 - ❖ Wildlife books, jigsaws and games.
 - ❖ A vast selection of stocking fillers at less than £2.00.
 - ❖ Wildlife videos and audio tapes.
 - ❖ Beautiful choice of animal-themed jewellery.
 - ❖ T-shirts and sweat shirts for every age group.
 - ❖ Pottery, brasswear and pictures.
- There will also be a Christmas shop in

UNIQUE GIFTS - SUPERB SELECTION

and a 10% Discount!

the lecture theatre (no entrance fee into the zoo needed) - from 6th December. Members' discount and the adopters' vouchers will also be valid here, and this is the ideal spot to buy your Christmas tree, and load it straight into your car.

This voucher may be exchanged for a 10% discount on purchases at the Fountain Gift Shop or the Lecture Theatre Christmas Shop during December 1993.



Photo courtesy of the Manchester Evening News

**COME AND
MEET
FATHER
CHRISTMAS
IN HIS
NEW ZOO
HEAD-
QUARTERS!**

Father Christmas is paying his annual visit to the zoo this month, to choose the strongest of our reindeer for his Christmas Eve journey!

He has set up his headquarters in Noah's Ark, by the under-cover picnic area by the Rainbow lawn, and will be there, with his reindeer from 12 noon on December weekends, and on 23rd and 24th December. No extra charge for a visit, but optional gifts available at £2.00.

**DING DUNG
MERRILY!**

People ordering zoopoo for Christmas gifts have given marketing staff a lot of amusement with the messages they have asked to be included. Here's a sample of some of our favourites:

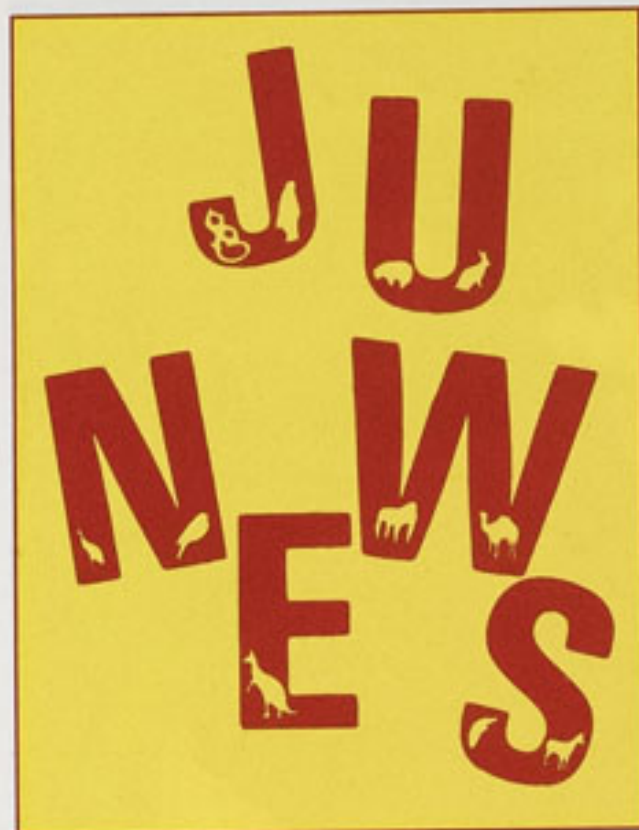
"I was just thinking of you - and discovered the ideal gift!"

"The elephant will arrive in the next post."

"Sorry we couldn't afford the whole elephant."

"A token of my love for you / comes all the way from Chester Zoo / For many years your praise I've sung / you must be worth a pail of dung!"

"We hope that this pressy will not be too messy. It should make your garden a winner. Your rhubarb will be like an African tree - And you'll need just one stick for your dinner!"



THE CHRISTMAS PARTY – Friday 10th December 1993

This will be at the zoo as usual, but this year we will be holding the party in the newly converted indoor picnic area at the back of the Tropical House. Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy the music, games and the hamburger/hot-dog supper.

Juniors should arrive at the MAIN NORTH GATE ENTRANCE for 7.00 pm, and parents may collect from there, or the party area (bring a torch) at 10.00 pm.

THE CONTACT SESSION – Saturday 15th January 1994

Please note change of date. Juniors tell me that it would be unthinkable to omit this event from our calendar so once again we will be meeting outside the Oakfield before going to meet some of our friendlier zoo animals.

Over eights should meet outside the Oakfield at 2.15 pm, then we will walk over to the Tropical House together to meet the animals, and older Juniors can drift away after 3.15 pm, with the remainder being accompanied back to the Oakfield for 4.00 pm.

TWYXCROSS ZOO – Saturday 26th February 1994

We had a marvellous day last time we visited Twycross Zoo, one of the finest primate collections in the UK. This will be a chance for you to increase your knowledge about monkeys, as well as seeing many other animals in a different setting.

The bus will leave the staff car park at 9.30 am, returning at 5.15 pm, and you should bring a picnic. Over eights welcome.

TRACKS & SIGNS – Saturday 26th March 1994

Another of our very popular events each year, when Juniors hunt through

JUNIOR MEMBER'S FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS

enclosures to find footprints from which to make plaster casts.

We will meet outside the Oakfield at 11.00 am, and meet back there at the end of the day at 4.00 pm. Over eights are invited to join in and everyone should bring a packed lunch.

CHOLMONDELEY CASTLE HOME FARM, CHESHIRE – Saturday 23rd April 1994

A new visit for Juniors this year when we head off into the Cheshire countryside to discover the delights of Cholmondeley Castle estate. We will be visiting the Home Farm then picnicking in the magnificent gardens before setting off on a nature ramble.

The bus will leave the Staff Car Park at 10.30 am, returning around 4.00 pm. Over eights are invited along, and you will need a picnic lunch.

THE CHESTNUT CENTRE, DERBYSHIRE –

Saturday 21st May 1994
Popular demand has ensured that we again visit this most lovely of locations in the Derbyshire hills. May is a particularly spectacular time of year at the Chestnut Centre which specialises in keeping otters, badgers, owls and other birds of prey. We have been promised a conducted tour of the collection.

The bus will leave the Staff Car Park at 9.30 am, returning around 5.00 pm. Over eights should come equipped for being outdoors in May, and bring a picnic.

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

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

DAY WITH A KEEPER – Wednesday 27th July 1994

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

finish at 4.00 pm when Juniors will return to the Oakfield for collection.

JUNIOR MEMBERS' BARBEQUE AND MOTH TRAPPING – Friday 19th August 1994

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

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

AINSDALE NATURE RESERVE AND SOUTHPORT ZOO – Saturday 17th September 1994

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

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

THE RED DEER RUT AND HOME FARM AT TATTON PARK – Saturday 22nd October 1994

After a visit to the rare breeds at Tatton's Home Farm during the morning, we will meet up with the Park Rangers who will take us into the Deer Park to observe the Red Deer Rut and then take us to look at the Deer Farm.

Picnic and wellies please. The bus will leave the staff car park at 10.00 am returning to the Zoo for 4.00 pm. Over tens invited.

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

ON THE SANDSTONE TRAIL



September brought a wonderful day for the Juniors' Sponsored Walk along the Sandstone Trail in Cheshire. Thanks to the keenest Juniors who were prepared to attempt the eight mile walk, we had a brilliant time. We started off from Duckington Hill, stopped several times along the way to admire the views - and catch breath! - and, as you can see from the photographs, everyone was happily relaxed at the end of the day when we reached Beeston Castle. Juniors raised nearly £200 to help the Monkey House refurbishment and Senior Keeper Dave Brunger from the Monkey House brought this dog Meg along on the walk to say "thanks" from the keepers. Special thanks must go to Juniors Jonathan Cracknall, who raised a remarkable £45 and Rebecca Wimpey, who raised a splendid £40 in sponsorship.

Sarah and Noel



Special congratulations to 10 year old Junior Member Sarah Kippax from Kelsall, who courageously led out a six-month old bull calf into the show ring at the Cheshire Show in June this year. This magnificent animal is a pure beef Blonde D'Aquitaine whose full name is "Last Chance Icon" but he is fondly called "Noel" by the family. Sarah and Noel did extremely well, coming Second in the Young Farmers Class.



MEETING THE ELEPHANTS

The Elephant Evening and Summer Barbecue in August was a huge success for Juniors this year, with many youngsters and Senior helper Joyce Lucas (below) meeting these wonderful creatures at close quarters for the first time. Camilla Smith was chosen by keepers to present the elephants with their special bread cake" which as our photo shows,

was received with great enthusiasm! The heavy rain did not manage to dampen spirits(or appetites) and a great time was had by all, especially the elephants who loved the fuss.



