

ZooLife

AUTUMN 2005 - ISSUE 23

CHESTER ZOO'S MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS AND ADOPTERS

**EGYPTIAN TORTOISES
MARK ZOO FIRST**

**WEATHERMAN FRED
SHINES AT OPENING**

**BABY SEALION MAKES
A SPLASH**





Director's Pen

By Zoo Director Gordon McGregor Reid

Welcome to the Autumn issue of *Zoo Life* and what a busy few months it has been both in terms of the animal and 'business' sides of Chester Zoo.

We have welcomed new additions to the Zoo – a male Sealion pup named *Carlos* for mum *Phoebe* and a baby Bongo to mum *Nibbles* and dad *Narok*.

Building work on the elephant house has moved on a pace, as those of you who have visited over the summer months can no doubt testify. We are very much looking forward to the day when we can 'open the doors' for the first time.

The *Asian Elephant – Secure the Future* appeal, which was launched with our own TV

programme back in April 2003, has now come to an end and we are delighted that we have been able to reach our target and help both our elephants here and also their counterparts in the wild.

The success of the appeal has been down to the very many people who were involved in making it a success and that includes many of you who took time to help out and raise the much-needed funds.

We rounded the appeal off with a second *Elephantasia Ball* at the Chester Racecourse and on behalf of us all at the Zoo and, most importantly our elephants, I would like to say a very big thank you to all of you who have so generously supported our appeal.

As a charity, we have to make the most of our resources and we were delighted to welcome back Sir Digby Jones, chairman of the CBI for a business breakfast. Sir Digby has been invaluable in helping us to claw back £7.5m in VAT.

The business breakfast was our way of thanking Sir Digby and other supporters of the campaign. We also took the opportunity to do some extra lobbying. The Government's proposed changes to Gift Aid mean organisations such as ours will be adversely affected in terms of their income.

Our Council Chairman Tony Williams made compelling arguments to Sir Digby and an extract from his speech is given below. I hope you will read on



and agree with these views and support us in this worthwhile cause.

I look forward to keeping you up-to-date on this and in the meantime I look forward to seeing you in the Zoo.



Chairman of Council **Tony Williams**

Extract from his speech to **Sir Digby Jones**

This breakfast is by way of a thank you to the many people who have played a significant part in the pursuit of the VAT claim over the past 10 years. It has been a team effort involving four Council Chairmanships and two executive administrations, other charity zoos and many external advisers, advocates, supporters and friends. At a time when VAT was lifted to 17.5 % and the Society was looking at ways to

reduce its costs, it was Dr Michael Brambell, Gordon's predecessor, who started the ball rolling by asking other not-for-profit European zoos about their VAT regime. It was apparent that, although there were minor differences, all had VAT free or lower rate admission. So Michael started a campaign to challenge Customs and Excise.

It needed the intervention of Sir Digby on more than one occasion to use his very persuasive powers with the Chancellor to ensure that all UK zoos were treated alike. But we won in the end and the financial benefit that all UK zoos now feel as a result has helped them plan a more secure future.

But only the battle has been won, the war carries on! We are now at the start of a fresh campaign to persuade the Treasury that the recent changes in their interpretation of Gift Aid will adversely affect the income of all the UK zoos. The Treasury argues that zoo admission charges should not be treated as donations. But this argument fails to recognise that we are fulfilling

part of our mission every time a visitor comes through our gates. The Treasury also argues that it is fair to treat zoos the same way as other charities with visitor attractions (museums, heritage railways, etc). But they do not take into account the fact that such attractions typically receive vastly more by way of grants and subsidies than do zoos.

The changes to Gift Aid result in a loss of income to this Society of approximately £800,000 pa. So, Sir Digby, any help you can give us in arguing our case with Chancellor Gordon Brown would be greatly appreciated.

I wouldn't want any of our visitors to go away thinking that this Society expects any Government handouts. We are prepared to work as hard as anyone for our income to enable us to continue with our mission. All we ask is, as Michael Brambell said all those years ago, that we work on a level playing field and with fair competition.

Cover Image: A two day old endangered Red-crowned Crane (*Grus japonensis*) chick, one of two bred here and destined for transfer to South Africa. **Picture Mike Jordan.**



'VAT Warriors' present and past. Sir Digby Jones is flanked by the Chairman and Director

Nothing Wasted!

Focus on fundraising

Items that normally end up in the bin - toner and printer cartridges and old mobile phones - can be recycled to raise valuable cash for us.

Every time you give a cartridge or old mobile phone to us, we will receive a cash donation.

Just put your old mobile phones, chargers and batteries or printer inkjet cartridges in one of our free post envelopes and send them directly to our recycler. If you have a large amount of items, or printer toner cartridges, a free collection can be arranged from anywhere in the UK. To find out how to get yours collected free, call The Mobile Phone Recycling Appeal direct on **08712 50 50 50**, quoting Chester Zoo - account 718100.

You'll be helping the environment and helping our fundraising. What's more, it won't cost you a penny.

Frodsham Science and Technology College recently donated over 30 mobile phones that their pupils had been collecting for our scheme. The pupils all designed recycling posters for a competition, which was won by Year 7 and Year 8 pupils, Katrina Walker and Jessica Little. Pictured are Head Boy Josh Powell and Head Girl Olivia O'Sullivan donating the old phones to Sarah McDonnell from the Development Office.



If you would like more information on the recycling scheme or require envelopes, please contact Sarah either by email at s.mcdonnell@chesterzoo.org or call direct on **01244 650265**.

* Please note - we cannot accept any Epson products. Sim cards must be removed. We no longer recycle silver foil, stamps or foreign currency.

New Corporate Adoption scheme is launched!

There are endless sponsorship opportunities around these days, but few that compare to the value of becoming a corporate animal adopter at Chester Zoo!

Here at the Zoo, we welcome the opportunity to work with companies of all sizes to build mutually beneficial partnerships. That is why we have launched our new exciting portfolio of corporate adoption packages, available for any species of animal, including our Asian Elephants, Amur Tigers and Miniature Monkeys.

On the one hand, you'll be demonstrating your company's support for the Zoo's pioneering work in the conservation of rare and endangered species both in this country and in the field (*it's a startling fact that over half the 500 species in our care are on the endangered list*). Whilst on the other hand, you'll reap the considerable rewards of seeing your company promoted to the one million or more visitors a year who pass through our gates.

Our corporate adoption packages cater for all levels of support, ranging from £1,000 to £10,000 for a 12 month sponsorship with associated benefits. All our corporate packages, for example, include free tickets for corporate or employee visits to the Zoo and invitations to special Animal Adopter Days. Some also include a private tour of your chosen species for a small group. In addition, we can also create bespoke packages for companies if these don't quite meet their needs. Whether it is to entertain clients at a high profile event or launch a new product, we can find the package that works.

ASDA
part of the **WAL-MART** family

Mark Lawton, from Asda House in Leeds said of our corporate adoptions scheme: *"The bakery team at Asda got involved with sponsoring a Tiger at Chester Zoo as this was seen as a great way to raise the profile of Tiger Bread within our stores as well as contributing to a good cause. It certainly has been a win/win situation for us, with strong growth in sales of Tiger Bread as a result of this sponsorship. Stores are also actively selling Tiger Bread as they know money raised from the sale of Tiger Bread is going to a good cause."*

If you would like more information on the new corporate adoption scheme, please contact Sarah in the Development office on **01244 650265** or via e-mail on s.mcdonnell@chesterzoo.org

Friends of the Orang-utan

As the Asian Elephant project draws to a close, the Development Office will be fundraising for the next capital project, a themed exhibit for our Orang-utans. The Orang-utan is one of human-kind's closest relatives. However, due to extensive destruction of their forest home and being hunted for food and the pet trade, they are among the world's most endangered animals.

At the current rate of decline, Orang-utans in the wild could be extinct in 10 to 20 years.

Chester Zoo has a two-pronged approach to protecting Orang-utans. One part of this involves setting up projects in the natural habitats of these apes to conserve them in the wild. Secondly, here at the Zoo we are busy creating *Realm of the Red Ape*, which will be the largest project to date in the Zoo's history. This will create a state-of-the-art facility to act as a sanctuary for the charismatic Orang-utan and other species that share the same dwindling tropical forest habitat.

However, none of these ambitious plans come cheaply. Chester Zoo is funding the majority of the project's costs but as a registered charity, we need help finding the shortfall. The

Zoo's Development Office is currently fundraising from local companies and submitting grant and trust applications for the project. We are starting to reap the benefits but still have some way to go. We are selling merchandise that we hope will contribute towards the project and of course we are hoping to count on the support of our most valued members and adopters.

As the project develops we shall keep you informed. If you have any queries on the project or would like to help with fundraising then please contact Lynsey Jones on **01244 650292** or via l.jones@chesterzoo.org

Lifetime Supporters' Club – Saying "Thank you"

We are very pleased that we have had many responses to our Lifetime Supporters' Club leaflet. This is a club for special people who have very kindly chosen to remember Chester Zoo in their Will. Those who have joined will be getting their welcome tour soon and, in September, there will be a special event in the Oakfield to welcome our new members and to update those who have been members for a while on our latest

developments. Lifetime Supporters' Club members should have by now received an invitation letter with the details but if not then please contact Lynsey Jones on **01244 650292** or via l.jones@chesterzoo.org

Chester Zoo Volunteers

As the UK's number one charity zoo, here at Chester we are always looking for supporters to assist in raising funds and organising and attending events.

Jobs may include selling merchandise for related appeals and assisting at events.

We are most grateful for all of the help that we receive from our many supporters so please, if you feel that you can spare some time to help us, call Lauren Evans on **01244 650229** or email at developmentoffice@chesterzoo.org



On your bike!

By Scott Wilson




Do you want to get more exercise but don't have the time? Are you fed up with traffic congestion and sitting in queues each morning? Does your wallet have a panic attack each time you fill your tank with fuel? Then maybe you need a bit of pedal power!

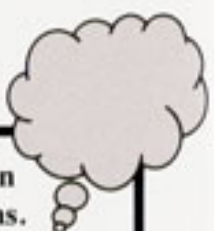
OK, the British climate isn't exactly cycle friendly for a lot of the year, but getting on your bike once in a while can have excellent benefits for your health, the environment and your bank balance and, believe it or not, once you are over the initial fitness hurdle, cycling to and from work on a nice day is actually enjoyable.

To try to encourage a few more staff here at the Zoo to hop on their bikes Tuesday June 14th 2005 was Chester Zoo's first ever *Bike2Work Day*. The event tied in with *National Bike Week* and with the Zoo's ongoing commitments to the environmental award, ISO14001, a part of which is looking at green transport options.

We teamed up with The Bike Factory, Boughton, for *Bike2Work Day*. The build up to the event included coverage in the local papers and radio, raising local awareness about the benefits of cycling in general. On the day we offered a wide range of exciting incentives to get staff biking in to work. From our fabulously




Experts recommend being active for 30 minutes a day, five times a week... Cycling improves **strength, stamina, aerobic fitness, balance and coordination and psychological well being!** Cycling just 20 miles a week can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease by 50%, and cycling at 10 miles an hour will burn off 400 calories every hour



Cycling reduces traffic congestion and produces **no harmful emissions**. Research has also found that walkers and cyclists actually **absorb lower levels of pollutants** than other road users.

Cheshire is flat and full of country lanes! - ideal for cycling. There are also a surprising amount of **cycle ways** in Cheshire to help keep you off those busy roads. The canal towpath from Ellesmere Port runs past the Zoo's door step!

Bicycle running costs:
Fuel - £0
Road Tax - £0
Insurance - £0



decorated gazebos we offered a free *Bike Check*, entry into a large national raffle (£2000 holiday top prize!), a Zoo raffle for bike goodies, *Bike2Work* stickers and certificates, a discount card for the Bike Factory, plus a £7.50 voucher to spend!!! A few lucky people also went away with a *Bike2Work* helium balloon!

Anyway, in an attempt to bolster bicycling further, here are some reasons why biking may be worth a bash...

For further information try these links:

www.sustrans.org.uk - a huge resource of cycle information and further link. Including an interactive map of ALL UK cycle routes.

www.cheshire.gov.uk/cycling/home.htm - downloadable maps of cycle routes in Cheshire.

www.bikeforall.net and www.ctc.org.uk - loads of information about everything to do with bicycling.

www.bikeweek.org.uk - info on the National Bike Week campaign.

Or if you're not online pop into the Bike Factory in Boughton and staff there will be happy to give you help and advice.

Zoo News

In and around the Zoo

Zoo is a big draw for young artist

Over the summer months, the Zoo has been the inspiration for a young artist who has been capturing scenes of the Zoo's animals and plants on canvas, thanks to funding from the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Granada Foundation.

Katy Hollinshead, 29, of Bolton, fought off stiff competition to take the title of Chester Zoo Artist in Residence and has been out and about in the Zoo producing artwork which will form an exhibition in the autumn.



Chester Zoo's new Artist in Residence Katy Hollinshead gets to work.



Fred and Zoo Director Gordon McGregor Reid at the opening of the Shellshock exhibition.

TV's Fred maps out future for turtles and tortoises

TV personality Fred Talbot, together with pupils from St Edward's Primary School, Oldham, brought some sunshine to the Zoo when he opened a new exhibition.

Granada's Fred, the former *This Morning* weatherman who can currently be seen on *Granada Reports*, took time out from the news to open a new exhibit - a *Turtles' Tale* - aimed at raising awareness of the threats faced by turtles and tortoises.

This year, Chester is at the forefront of an international conservation campaign to raise funds and awareness of the extinction crisis facing turtles and tortoises.

The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), which comprises 290 member zoos, has launched the *Shellshock Turtle & Tortoise Campaign 2004/5* to address this issue. The campaign is being co-ordinated by Chester Zoo's Curator of Lower Vertebrates and Invertebrates, Kevin Buley.

Shellshock merchandise is available in the Zoo shops.

To find out more about Shellshock see www.eaza.net

Chester Zoo "100 CLUB"

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

April 2005

Mr A. F. Chiverton, WEST SUSSEX	£100
Mrs Sue Clews, FLINT	£100
Mrs Jill Barnard-Blom, ELLESMERE PORT	£50
Mrs Kathleen Holding, ORMSKIRK	£50
Mr Robert K Barnard, GARSTON	£50

May 2005

Mrs Rachel Thompson, CHESTER	£100
Mrs D. Duffy, RAINHILL	£50
Captain M. Ramsbottom, BOLTON	£50

June 2005

Mrs J Colclough, STOKE-ON-TRENT	£1000
Ms Linda Joy Ash, LIVERPOOL	£100
Mr George F Hooke, UPTON	£50
Mrs Gillian Edwards, CREWE	£50
Mrs S Welsh, HALIFAX	£50

Membership of the 100 Club is still invited. All prize winners will be notified by post and will be listed in the next edition of *Zoo Life*. Please inform us as soon as possible if you change address.

If you wish to participate, please contact Sarah McDonnell, Development Co-ordinator on **01244 650265**.

Mammal Mania!

By Sarah Bird, Biodiversity Officer

Cheshire Mammal Group was established in 2001 to encourage study and conservation of Cheshire's mammals and to raise awareness of mammals in the county.

Several members of Zoo staff are members of the group, which holds regular meetings and events and is working towards the launch of a Mammal Atlas for Cheshire. The last book written on the mammals of the county was T.A. Coward's *The Fauna of Cheshire* published in 1910, since then a provisional UK mammal atlas was published in the 1980s.

With the Atlas in mind the focus of the group for the immediate future is mammal recording. Over 50 species of mammal have been recorded in Cheshire since 1900. These range

from rare and elusive species like the Pine marten, to alien species such as Mink, and common ones like Rabbits (probably introduced by the Romans) and Wood mice. The Atlas will give a picture of the distribution of mammals across the county and, by comparing current data with old records, some idea of how populations are changing. You can help with data collection by noting when you see wild mammals in Cheshire, and

passing your records on to **RECORD** in the usual way. Records can include live sightings, road casualties, cat victims, even tracks and signs are



acceptable if you can take clear photographs so an expert can confirm identification.

The Mammal group is arranging training sessions for people interested in recording for the Atlas. Coming up is a small mammal identification day at the Zoo on 24th September. To book a place contact Tony Parker - details on page 9. We will be checking traps set in the fields used for our Harvest Mouse release trials; if we are lucky we will see seven native species – two mice, two voles and three shrews.



Hedgehog decline

Did you know that hedgehog numbers in the UK have fallen by an estimated 20% in the last five years? According to the Mammals Trust UK, numbers have dropped steeply since 2000. This maybe partly because people are keeping tidier, decked gardens with fewer refuges for hedgehogs, but I am not sure this is the case in Cheshire. Several friends who live in Cheshire



towns have told me they are seeing more hedgehogs around their gardens than they used to. I suspect that suburban gardens in Cheshire are actually better habitat for hedgehogs than intensive farmland. Have you seen a hedgehog recently? If so we would like to know about it.

Cheshire's Rarest Mammals?

The Pine Marten is one of Britain's rarest mammals; it is thought to have disappeared from Cheshire around 1880 due to woodland clearance and persecution by game keepers. BUT...there have been 10 sightings reported in Cheshire since 1989; the best two from areas close to the Peak District - possibly animals spreading from a population in the hills.

Dormice were reintroduced to Cheshire 10 years ago; before that the last record was in 1910. However, a nest was found in South Cheshire this spring that looks suspiciously like a dormouse nest - it could be that there are more dormice here than we think.

We are living in exciting times for mammals in Cheshire - keep your eyes open and see if you can spot something rare, but remember to tell **RECORD** about all that you see - even the common species.

Cheshire Mammal Group website:
www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/lrc/mamg.htm

Group Secretary

Tony Parker Tel: 0151 207 0001
email:

tony.parker@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk



Pine Marten. Frank Greenaway - Vincent Wildlife Trust

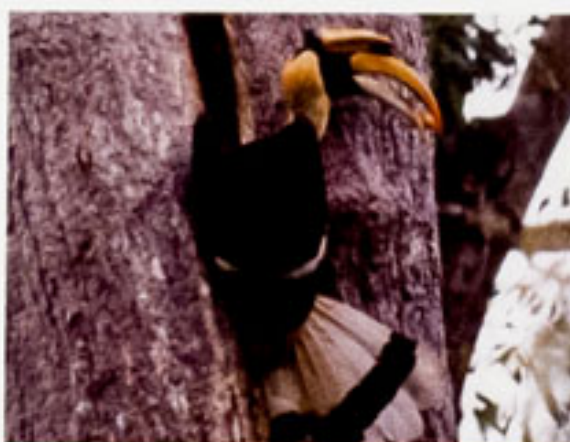
Making a Difference

Focusing on Conservation

The Conservation department is supporting a number of projects. These include:

- Funding for a Manchester Metropolitan University study into the genetics of Black Rhino in enclosed reserves in Kenya. This work will help with Black Rhino management strategies by studying the genetics of individuals through DNA extracted from dung samples from Sweetwaters and Lewa Downs game reserves.
- Continued major financial support for the Philippine (Red-vented) Cockatoo Conservation Programme on Palawan Island.
- Support for the Greater Adjutant Stork rescue and rehabilitation project in Assam, India. This project has been particularly busy as Assam experiences violent thunderstorms between February and June, dislodging many chicks from their nests.
- Funding for the Birecik Northern Bald Ibis Project in Turkey. The Critically Endangered Northern Bald Ibis breeds only in a few sites, one of which is Turkey. The population worldwide crashed due to the effects of the, now banned, pesticide DDT. The project manages and protects this important breeding

population and helps increase local conservation awareness through its visitors centre.



A Great Hornbill nest adopted by Chester Zoo

- Chester Zoo continues to sponsor Rhinoceros and Great Hornbill nests in Thailand. This highly successful scheme employs villagers to protect and monitor hornbill nest sites. Many villagers formerly made a living from collecting hornbill chicks from nests for trade. If you are personally interested in sponsoring a hornbill nest in Thailand then email conservation@chesterzoo.org for a leaflet. The Tapoh Village Conservation Education Centre is another project in the same area for which Chester Zoo has given continued support. The centre provides education and awareness to the villages surrounding the Budo-Sungai Padi National Park.



The Tapoh Village Conservation Education Centre

In 2005 Chester Zoo Zoological/Veterinary Studentships were awarded to:

- Two students investigating the status of coral reef flats in Ko Phuket, Thailand.
- University of Glasgow Expeditions to Ecuador and Bolivia
- A study assessing distribution and marking activity of Brown Bear populations in Greece
- Research into the conservation status of Orang-utans and their habitat in Borneo
- A project investigating community attitudes around Nouabale-Ndoki N.P., Republic of Congo.
- Research comparing intramuscular anaesthetic protocols in Grey Seals
- The 2005 Richard Hughes Scholarship was awarded to Natalie Boyd, Chester Zoo Elephant Keeper, to study elephants in Namibia.

Conservation news from around the world....

Good... A new species of monkey, the Highland Mangabey (*Lophocebus kipunji*), has been discovered in the forested highlands of southern Tanzania. This is the first new species of monkey to be identified in Africa for over 20 years.

And Bad... The annual review of the state of the world's birds by *BirdLife International* shows that the total number considered to be threatened with extinction is now 1,212.

Cheshire Wildlife Watcher's Diary



Helping out with Wildlife

Christmas is coming and Chester Zoo has linked up with Cheshire Wildlife Trust and RECORD to produce the *Cheshire Wildlife Watcher's Diary* - an ideal gift for anyone with an interest in local wildlife. The diary highlights several species each month, giving identification tips and illustrations, and incorporates a

recording card at the bottom of each page to fill in and send back to RECORD.

Featured species include birds you might see on your birdfeeder in February, small mammals in June and ladybirds in July. Though particularly relevant to those living in Cheshire the species featured occur throughout the

north west and completed cards from outside Cheshire will be passed on to relevant records centres. Since the diary is not for any specific year you can start it in any month of any year. Records will be added to the database at RECORD and will contribute to our

knowledge of the wildlife of Cheshire; for more information on the services provided by RECORD visit their website at:

www.rECOrd-LRC.co.uk

Order your copy now by contacting RECORD Tel:

01244 383749 email:

calendar@rECOrd-LRC.co.uk

At the time of going to print the price had not been finalised but it will be in the region of £6.50. Proceeds will be recycled into production of the next edition.

Record Moves Upwards

RECORD, the biological records centre, has moved into new premises at Chester Zoo. They now occupy rooms on the 1st floor of the Oakfield building; a more comfortable and permanent option than the portacabins that they previously inhabited nearby. Guests are very welcome and should telephone to arrange a visit.

RECORD has also been successful with a Heritage Lottery Fund grant for *Unlocking the Past*, a project to recover wildlife records in Cheshire and make them available for use. "We know that Cheshire has a wealth of biological recording information, collected by a large number of naturalists and natural history organisations over the last two centuries. However, we don't know where all this information is

held," said RECORD Manager, Steve McWilliam. The project aims to seek out and capture as much of this important information as possible and to make it available for the public, for specialists and all those who need it - opening up a whole new heritage resource.

First results of the project will be presented at the RECORD *Unlocking the Past* conference to be held on November 1st 2005 at Frodsham Community Centre.

For further details of the *Unlocking the Past* project, the conference, or to arrange a visit please contact tel: **01244 383749** or email: info@rECOrd-LRC.co.uk



Elephants & Swallows

Moving Chang

By Team Leader **Mick Jones**

Moving an elephant is never an easy business and none more so than when it came to moving one of Chester's favourites, the magnificent breeding bull *Chang*.

Chang, one of the foremost breeding bulls in Europe, left the Zoo on Sunday May 8 to move to his new home at France's Le Pal Animal Park.

He has fathered a number of calves here including *Sithami*, *Tunga*, *Sundara*, *Po Chin* and *Assam* and two female calves at Twycross Zoo. *Tunga* and *Sundara* were born at the Zoo last year.

In line with European guidelines, bull elephants as opposed to females are moved around Europe - this is natural in terms of the social systems for elephants and we have spent a considerable period of time looking for the best home for *Chang*.

Ensuring *Chang's* move ran smoothly was very much a team effort and the move was an emotional time for Elephant team leader Mick Jones.

Chang had been lightly sedated to make his move easier and his special crate had been left with him overnight to give him chance to get used to it.

Vets and animal staff were on hand to help with the first part of *Chang's* move and he was gently winched into his crate in preparation for the transfer.

Highly experienced transporters were chosen for the move and took the three-hour task of moving the formidable *Chang* in their stride.

After taking the midnight ferry, *Chang* arrived in France with Mick moving on ahead to prepare for his arrival.

Chang was introduced to his new home and paddock - which to our relief he has taken a liking to - and Mick spent time with him and his new keepers, relaxing him and continuing with his training sessions.

Chang has three females - *Akra*, *Macey* and *Nina* - to keep him company in his new home and after a challenge from *Akra*, the natural order of elephants was resolved in the way only elephants can. The Chester team will continue to visit to provide advice and support to the team at Le Pal.

Chief Curator Mark Pilgrim said: "*Chang* has been with us for 12 years and will be missed, not only by the animal division, but by visitors and members and adopters. We were sorry to see him go but this move will enable us to continue to strengthen the herd and allow our young bull *Upali* to become our next breeding bull."

Swallows successful at Cedar House

By **Sarah Bird**, Biodiversity Officer

Last year, during construction of the second phase of the *Cedar House* building, several pairs of swallows took up residence in the roof space before the building was completed. This presented a problem when the contractors were ready to board up the access points used by the birds. The holes were sealed up when we were sure the swallows had left in the autumn. Keen to give the birds an alternative nesting site here should they return this year, we bought some artificial swallow nests. From mid April



we were aware of twittering swallows in the central courtyard of *Cedar House* and by the end of the month, it was clear that a pair were preparing to breed in one of the new nests. The first brood of four fledged around mid June and a second clutch was laid. Above is a picture of this second family in mid July...we are very proud of them!

Turtles, Toads, Crocs and Dragons

By Team Leader Isolde McGeorge

The hatching of six Egyptian Tortoises has been a real highlight for the department.

We had acquired two unrelated groups of this species three years ago as youngsters. Many matings were observed from both groups and eventually eggs were laid. We now have six healthy offspring, no larger than a fifty pence piece and lighter than a strawberry and all are doing exceptionally well.

The tortoises are currently off-show whilst we take good care of them but you can find out more about *Shellshock* by visiting the Turtle's Tale exhibition at the Zoo.

These hatchings come at a very apt time for the Zoo as we are at the forefront of *Shellshock* - an international conservation campaign to raise funds and awareness of the extinction crisis facing turtles and tortoises.



There have been other movements too in the *Tropical Realm*.

The Dwarf Crocodiles have been relocated to a double-pooled enclosure at the far end of the *Tropical Realm* so they would not only have much more space, but also so

we could develop their original area for our larger Tortoise species.

Thirty six tons of hard core and gravel were poured into these pools. The area was then heated, illuminated and planted before transferring the Radiated Tortoises and Yellow-footed Tortoises to their new facility. They have all settled in extremely well and both species are now laying eggs. We were delighted when one egg, laid previously by the Yellow-foots, hatched out successfully as this was another first breeding for us at the Zoo.

Nessie and *Flora*, our two female Komodo Dragons, are maturing fast and it is hoped that by the end of the year we will have been able to acquire an unrelated male for them. Komodo Dragons are a species that are managed globally but within Europe there is also a smaller, core group of workers who co-ordinate and manage these animals. Before animals are moved between institutions, agreements have to be made with regard to suitability of pairings and the environmental conditions that the exported Dragon will be exposed to. With this in mind, keepers from the giving and receiving institutions will often be invited to visit each others facilities before approval is given.

It was important that if we were to achieve a successful pairing from any approved bonding that the male would be a good match for our girls, *Nessie* and *Flora*. It's a bit like a dating agency but with more emphasis on good lineage and physical compatibility!

A new match has now been approved in France and the male will be transferred before the end of the year.

This year we have also had a number of very exciting new arrivals. These included Indian Starred Tortoises, destined as an integral species in the new and extended *Asian Elephant Forest facility*, Gila Monster males to complement our three young females, Mexican Beaded Lizards, Green Tree Monitor, a female Radiated Tortoise and four species of endangered Turtles, the Roti Island Snake-necked Turtle the Annam Leaf, Beal's Turtle and the Four-eyed Turtle.

In the last 12 months, due to the dedication of staff developing first class husbandry techniques, we received a new species of Partula Snail, *Partula hyalina*, which thrived remarkably well. Another very delicate species, *Partula faba*, was then offered to the team to work with, which has also proved a success. Fieldwork is currently on-going on the small islands near Tahiti to try and establish which species of snails still exists. Of the four species of snail managed at Chester, three are known to be extinct in the wild and the fourth has been classed as critically endangered. Captive management of these animals is crucial if we ever hope to re-introduce these very delicate and inoffensive creatures to their native habitat again.



Bloomin' Marvellous!

New look for Zoo gardens

The fountain gardens at Chester Zoo have had a major facelift for the first time in over 40 years.

The famous flowerbeds in the centre of the Zoo, which were originally created by Phillip



Gallop, the Zoo's original Head Gardener under the watchful eye of the Zoo's founder George Mottershead, have been re-designed to give zoo gardeners more flexibility in creating displays.

For this season we added 13 new pathways, 200 tonnes of top soil and spread 30,000 plants over 14 new flower beds so it is quite a dramatic new look.

The changes to the original design mean that we can be more creative in our designs and use a wider range of colour, height and texture for our visitors to enjoy, something we couldn't do with the flower beds in their previous shape.

Under the old design there was very little choice of plantings we could use over such a large area that would offer us a long lasting display for the full season. The main flower border was long and continuous around the outside of the lawn area which made it



difficult to select a range of plants that would look right placed next to each other.

The Zoo gardens have always been a popular aspect of the whole zoo experience and we have had lots of comments from visitors already. We hope you like it!



Critical List

Zoo support helps birds' success

A Chester Zoo - supported programme has marked its first breeding success.

The breeding of Visayan Writhed Hornbills (*Aceros waldeni*) in a wildlife rescue and breeding



centre on the Philippine island of Panay is being celebrated back at Chester.

Critically endangered, the birds' future was threatened due to loss of forest habitat and illegal poaching of nestlings. In total there were less than 200 birds left until a pioneering project helped make a difference.

Together with Vogelpark Avifauna in the Netherlands, we have supported the islands' hornbills'

project for many years providing support through funds, staff visits and advice.

Roger Wilkinson, Head of Conservation and Science, said: *"This year this has come to fruition with the first ever successful aviary breeding at the Mari-it Conservation Centre where the birds are now held."*

"This project and the successful breeding has acted as a safety net against extinction and once current threats are controlled there may well be an opportunity for reintroduction in the wild. At Chester we have the sister species of hornbill, the Mindanao Writhed Hornbill, and are delighted to be able to transfer our knowledge and expertise to hornbills elsewhere."

Chester Zoo has supported Philippines biodiversity conservation since 1994 with funding exceeding £180,000 between 1994 and 2004.

Prickly Problem is great for Rhinos!

Zoo Life Summer 2005 – Issue 22, p.4

In the last edition of Zoo Life, we told you about the use of Sea Buckthorn from Haven Holidays' Presthaven Sands Park at Prestatyn, as browse enrichment for the Rhinos at Chester Zoo. We would like to acknowledge that the original suggestion to use this thorn as browse for enrichment for the Zoo's Rhinos came from an undergraduate student project by Helen Rowlands (*née Woods*). Helen, then a student at Liverpool John Moore's University, carried out this research here in 2002-2003.

For details on how to apply to conduct a research project at the Zoo, please contact our Research Dept research@chesterzoo.org



Rhinos on the Run

By Rhino keeper Rosemarie Scott

London Marathon 2005

What do two members of zoo staff, a 13kg rhino costume and a trip to London have in common?

It doesn't seem that long ago since last July when Kev Whitehead from the Animal Supplies Department joined me and the rest of the rhino team to support the *Save the Rhino* weekend that was being held on the section. It also doesn't seem that long ago either since we were chatting to Cathy and Nicky from *Save the Rhino*, asking them about running a marathon to raise money for them.

Sunday 17th April dawned sunny and clear. We arrived at 8am in Greenwich Park, London, in the back of the *Save the Rhino* van. Runners were everywhere, music was playing and the seven rhino costumes that were arranged in a nice neat pile were attracting a lot of attention!



After making some last minute adjustments to the costume, eating one final banana and completing a warm up, it was time to join the thousands of people making their way to the start. It took 10 minutes to cross the start line! With so many people you'd think it would be easy to blend in with the crowd, but the 7ft tall rhino suit put an end to that.

The support we received all the way round was tremendous.



The immense crowds all chanting 'Rhino, Rhino' in unison gave us a real boost.

Anybody we overtook either gave us words of encouragement or looks of despair at having a gigantic rhino pass them! Kev had the harder job by far, having a cumbersome, uncomfortable weight to carry around on top of the running. Grabbing the water became my job as the costume made it impossible for Kev to pick them up himself. You could just about see his face through a small gap in the costume, which was either furrowed with concentration



or had a look of slight shock as he poured ice cold water over himself!

It may have only been April but it felt like a hot midsummer day, making the run even harder as we melted in the heat. The little showers set up by the side of the road for participants to run through don't really have much effect when you're in costume! Despite this, the crowd support, sheer determination (or was that foolishness!?) and thoughts of why we were doing the run in the first place spurred us on, enabling us to run the whole 26.2 miles in one go.

Crossing the finish line was exhilarating! On our application forms we put our estimated times as 'before sunset,' so we were quite pleased that our actual time was 5.46.29. It may have been a challenging day but it was well worth it. The most important thing was raising £2000 for *Save the Rhino*. The bruises, aches and pains have gone now but the memory of an amazing day is still very much with us!

Dreamnight



Dreamnight at the Zoo

On the 1st of July Chester Zoo hosted its extraordinary event, *Dreamnight*, which is an evening where we open the Zoo especially for children with serious illnesses and their families. This was only the second event of its kind here at Chester but the *Dreamnight* phenomenon started in zoos in the Netherlands and is now being adopted by zoos all over the world.

Our VIP guests were chosen by local hospices and 68 families attended in all. The families started arriving at 6.00pm and were given a welcome pack which included a disposable camera which were bought from funds donated by local companies. They were then treated to a guided tour of Chester Zoo by our staff, all of whom volunteered their time for the evening. Everyone was given food and drink during the evening



which was donated by the Zoo's catering suppliers. Around 9.30pm the families started to leave but not before a goodie bag was given to each of the families as a memento of their evening. These bags were filled with items which were either donated or bought from funds which were donated.

The goodwill on *Dreamnight* extends far beyond the Zoo, its suppliers and local companies to services such as the Police, Army and Fire Service. They kindly came along to make the experience extra special by putting on vehicle displays, doing face painting and giveaways.

Dreamnight was the result of many months planning by a small committee of staff from different divisions. Thanks must go to everyone involved from the hospices, our suppliers, local companies, the services and of course the dedicated Chester Zoo staff who helped out in the run-up



and the 130 staff who helped on the

night itself, despite the terrible weather!

Comments from some of the families were:

"It was our first time as a family visiting the Zoo and it was thoroughly enjoyable. We had two members of staff to show us round...we could not have had two better people."

Sarah & John Jones (Hope House)

"We had a wonderful evening in spite of the rain. All the Zoo staff we met were so friendly and helpful."

Marjorie Roderick (Hope House)

Santa Magic

Christmas starts early at the Zoo! By Head of Visitor Services, Liz Child

This year our two main Christmas events are the *Daytime Santa Magic* – a unique opportunity to meet Santa and his helpers and enjoy the festive feel of Christmas across the Zoo; and our popular Oakfield House Christmas lunches, dinners and discos – giving guests a special chance to celebrate Christmas in a formal manner, whilst soaking up the festive atmosphere in our beautiful surroundings.

Planning for these events commences as early on in the year as January.

In April the serious work begins! This is the time when we forecast budgets, ticket sales and really begin the planning of all our festive entertainment including dinner, discos, santas and fairy lights.

In October and November the physical work begins. Firstly the Information Centre has to be transformed into Santas magical Grotto and Toy

shop. This requires immense creativity from members of Amenities staff. Alongside this we need to build the Ice-cave in the *Twilight Zone*, decorate the 20 foot Christmas tree, and, of course, erect the thousands of festive lights that we place across the site.

We hope you will come and



celebrate Christmas with us this year, and we very much look forward to welcoming you!

Daytime Santa Magic 2005

This event is a unique opportunity to team a special meeting with Santa with a festive trip to the Zoo. Included in the ticket price is a present from Santa for every paying child, festive refreshments in the Ark Restaurant, a ride on Santa's magical monorail, and extended Zoo opening hours, allowing privileged viewing of the Zoo's Christmas lights and animation.

This year, following Members' feedback, all Zoo Members will be entitled to book for the event date of their choice (subject to availability) and receive a 50% discount on the normal ticket price. *(Please note that this offer is available to membership card holders only. Tickets booked on behalf of non members will be charged at normal rate).*

The event runs on all weekends and school holidays throughout December, as well as every Friday.

CHRISTMAS LUNCHES, DINNERS AND DISCOS

Our beautiful Edwardian Manor House, with its backdrop of the Zoo's glorious gardens, is the perfect setting for a delicious 3 course Christmas meal with family and friends.

Christmas lunch visitors can also enjoy free entry to the Zoo – a great way to walk off all that food!

Our Christmas dinners and discos are a fun evening for everyone. Guests can either book places on a specified date, or for larger groups, a private event can also be arranged.

Members are entitled to a 10% discount on any Christmas lunch or dinner booking.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON OUR CHRISTMAS EVENTS, PLEASE REFER TO THE ENCLOSED LEAFLET OR TELEPHONE THE EVENTS OFFICE ON 01244 650 209

Please Note:

The traditional Members' Christmas Lunch will take place this year on December 10th at noon. The delicious 3 course lunch will be served at the Oakfield restaurant, and will be followed by an optional talk in the lecture theatre. The cost is £17.55 for adult members and £11.65 for junior members. Please note that seating for the event is banquet style meaning although groups will be seated together, you may be sharing the table with other members.

Further details and booking form can be found as an insert in this edition of *Zoo Life*.

Christmas lunches and dinners and discos are held at the Oakfield Manor on selected dates throughout December.

For details and prices contact the Events office on **01244 650209**.

Junior Puzzle Page



Autumn puzzles

Ear - Ear

Work out to which animal each ear belongs. Write your answers in the table below and you may win £10 to spend in the Zoo Shop

The animals drawn are Asiatic Lion, Black Rhinoceros, Geoffroy's Marmoset, Giraffe, Onager, Red Panda, Red-ruffed Lemur, Sealion.

Win £10
to spend
in the Zoo
Shops!



Ear Number	Name of Animal
1	
2	
3	
4	

Ear Number	Name of Animal
5	
6	
7	
8	

Last issue's answers:



Last issue's winner was Dan Warr of Upton, Chester

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

Fauna and Flora International

Programme of events for North West Group Autumn 2005

Debby Cox - Chimpanzee Conservation, 'A Holistic Approach'

Friday 14 October

Debby Cox is the Executive Director of the Jane Goodall Institute, Uganda. She arrived in 1996 originally, where she worked as an adviser to the Uganda Wildlife Education centre, developing training programs. During this time, she worked on developing a sanctuary for the chimpanzees that were housed at the centre and for future confiscated chimps. This led to the formation of Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary, managed by a Trust of six National Government Organisations (NGOs), with conservation as their primary objective.

The Conservation of Great Apes requires a multitude of conservation and economic activities and many

strategies in order to succeed. Looking at root causes rather than symptoms is the best way to have positive long-term effects on conserving the remaining wild populations in Uganda.

Over the past seven years, the Jane Goodall Institute has been concentrating on projects based in three of the four major forest blocks where chimpanzees are found in Western Uganda. This presentation will describe these activities and their positive impact on the survival of this species

Chimpanzee welfare, and their survival are paramount forces in Debby's life and she has provided immense drive to initiate projects that assist in the long-term conservation of chimpanzees and other wildlife in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa. We are extremely lucky to have the opportunity to hear her speak during a brief visit to the UK in October.

Madagascar: Nature's Noah's Ark

Friday 18 November

With Nick Garbutt

Thankfully we have managed to re-arrange what promises to be an excellent talk, which was unavoidably postponed in the Spring of 2005, so here are the details again.

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

A self-taught photographer and artist, Nick now combines these with leading wildlife tours, writing and lecturing, and his travels have taken him to many parts of the world over the past decade. Nick regularly contributes photographs and articles to a wide range of magazines like National Geographic, Africa Geographic, BBC Wildlife, Africa Birds & Birding, to name a few! His photographs have appeared in books and other publications worldwide. He has also twice been a winner of the *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition*.

Nick is author of the highly acclaimed *Mammals of Madagascar* (Pica Press 1999) and *Madagascar Wildlife - A Visitors Guide* (Bradt 2001) and he is currently writing his third book.

This evening will not only be a fascinating opportunity to learn more about Madagascan wildlife through excellent photos, but also to discover more about the ongoing conservation work and how ecotourism is playing a

Fauna and Flora International

Programme of events for North West Group Autumn 2005

central role on this unique island.

In addition, Nick tells us that "rainforests are my heart and soul", so during the second half of the evening, he will also take us on a tour of two other rainforest areas – the Ecuadorian Amazon and the forests of Borneo (a great favourite and the one he finds most exciting and challenging photographically).

Nick will also be donating a piece of his artwork or a limited edition print to boost our funds for the raffle on the night, so please come along and support what will be a **terrific** evening.

Julian Fitter and Santiago Bejarano - 'Galapagos - The Challenge for Conservation'

Friday 2 December

Julian Fitter arrived in Galapagos in 1964 aboard the Charles Darwin Foundation's first ship Beagle and after a brief spell as a university lecturer in Quito, returned to Galapagos in 1968 where he started one of the first yacht charter operations. In 1984 he became a founder trustee and later first secretary of the Falklands Islands Foundation and remains heavily involved in Falklands Conservation. Regular visits to his extended family in the

Galapagos led, in 1995, to Julian being instrumental in the establishment of the Galapagos Conservation Trust, where he served as its first Chair.

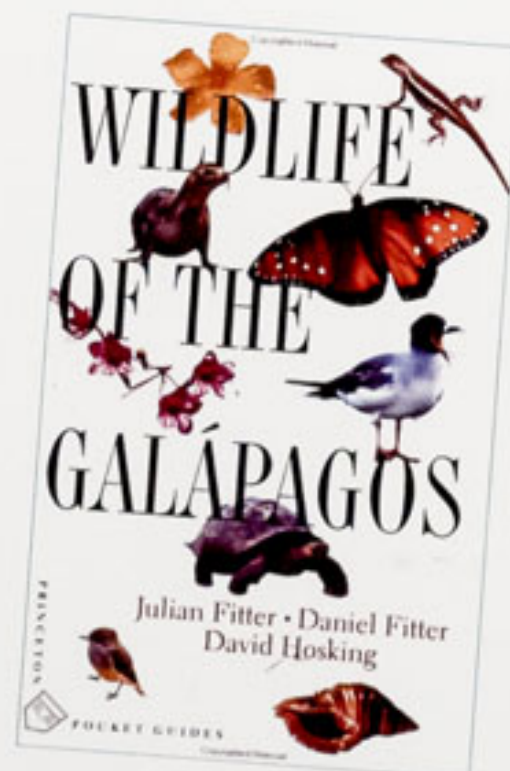
In 2000, together with his sons Daniel and David Hosking, he published, the most comprehensive guide to the wildlife and natural history of the Galapagos. With another book on Galapagos in the pipeline, a large format book on Albatrosses, and a book on the natural history of New Zealand, Julian is a busy man!

Santiago Bejarano trained in Environment Sciences in his native Ecuador and began his guiding career by bringing visitors to the jungle and highlands of Ecuador. For the last ten years he has specialised in the Galapagos. Santiago says "In this amazing place, we can actually observe nature as we imagine it was before humans appeared on the

scene. Exploring the Galapagos is a great adventure that you will always remember, but it is also a place that will give you a deeper understanding of the natural world."

This event will be a joint meeting with the Cheshire and North Wales Regional Group of the Royal Geographical Society. Julian and Santiago will both be speaking to paint a picture for us which will include history and geology. They will outline the problems and how they are making progress in some areas and seeming to lose ground in others and then look at possible ways forward. Truly not an evening to miss!

Tickets: These may be available on the door, but advanced booking helps us to keep costs down. Please ring Penny Rudd at the Zoo on **01244 650215** to reserve your ticket(s). Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30 pm start. The venue will be the Zoo's Russell Allen Lecture Hall, off the A41, access to which is immediately before the entrance to the Park & Ride. Members and non-Members of FFI are welcome to attend. Tickets cost £7.50 for FFI Members, £8.00 for non-Members of FFI, with a concessionary rate for students of £5 each and this includes a light buffet and wine.



Zoo life

'Talking animals'

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

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

Saturday 24 September 2005

2.30pm

Simon Chapman 'Deepest Borneo'

What is it like in the Borneo rainforest? What animals will you find? Who are the Dyaks and how do you shoot a sumpit?

Learn how to call like a gibbon and to remove a leech – or a semi tame Orangutan which won't let go!

Simon Chapman will be showing some of his slides and artefacts from his travels in Borneo and answering these questions – and many more.



Saturday 22 October 2005

2.30pm

John Lawton Roberts 'Life and Wildlife on the Fringe of Europe'

Bulgaria's wealth of wildlife is the result of its varied landscape, fertile soils and position, mid-way between Europe and Asia. The talk starts as a leisurely journey through farmland rich in the very birds and butterflies that survive only as a memory in much of the west. The journey becomes an expedition, Bulgarian style, into the country's central mountains, coastal steppes and sub-mediterranean south. Here the focus is on species of the south-eastern fringes of our continent.

Friday 11 November 2005

7.30pm

Eric Peake 'A Brush with Birds'

Welsh artist, Eric Peake has dedicated most of his life to the birds he loves. An active aviculturist since the age of seven, he has combined his God-given talent to draw and paint, with lecturing, fundraising and problem solving in the area of bird keeping today. To date he has painted over 1200 watercolour paintings of birds. In 1984 Eric realised the plight of parrots and has



concentrated his work in that area ever since. Studying from the collection of birds here at the Zoo and Loro Pargue, Tenerife, Eric became more aware of the importance of conservation and research.

Eric's popularity and reputation as an artist, author and lecturer reflect his outstanding artistic talent and dedication to the birds he paints and loves; so much so he was commissioned by the Zoo in 1989 to paint a pair of Princess of Wales parrots for Diana, Princess of Wales.

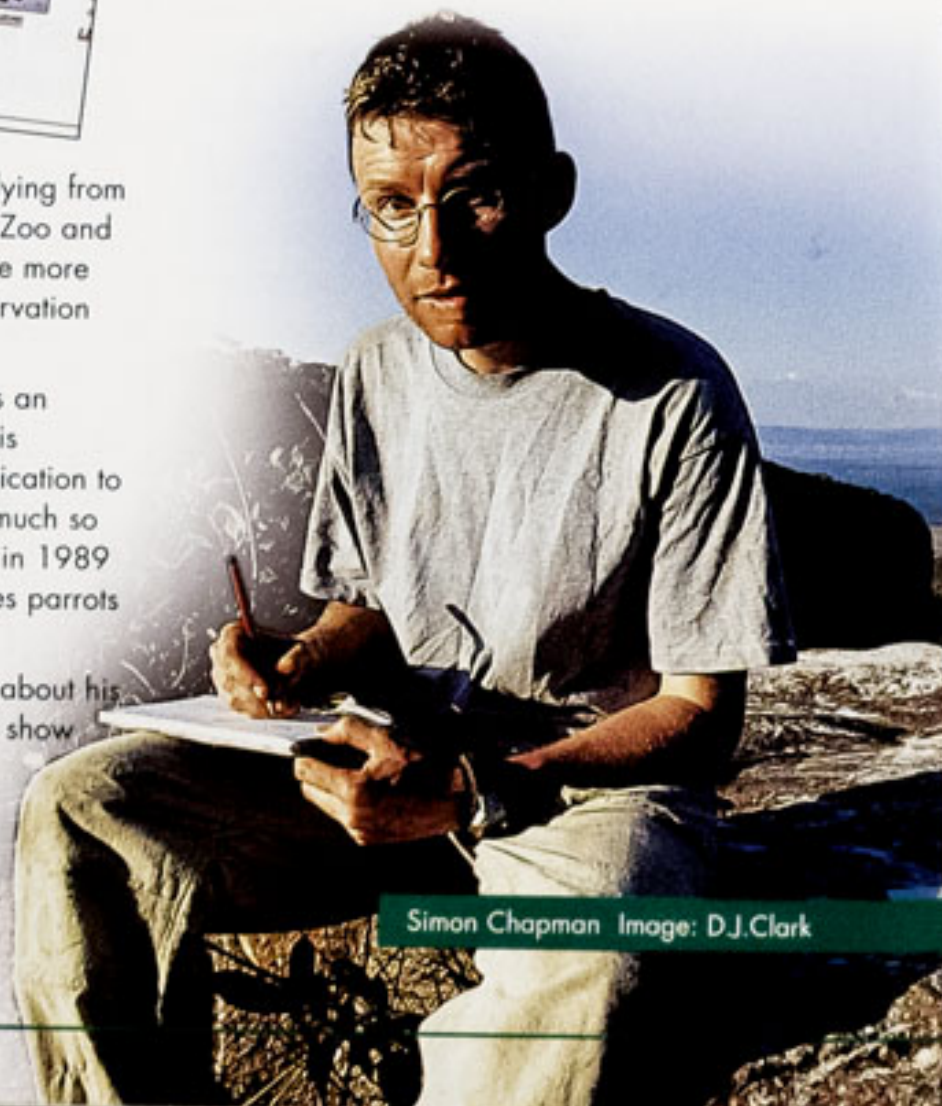
In *A Brush with Birds* Eric will talk about his art work in relation to parrots and show examples of his artwork.

Saturday 10 December 2005

2.30pm

Steve McWilliam 'Did you know about rECOrd?'

Find out about rECOrd and how you can get involved. rECOrd is the Local Record Centre for Cheshire which collects, manages and makes available all types of wildlife information (terrestrial, freshwater and marine) from Cheshire, Halton, Warrington, the Wirral, and the old 'vice-county' which includes most of Trafford, Stockport and Tameside. rECOrd urgently needs your help to increase knowledge of Cheshire's wildlife and Steve will be able to give you some simple pointers to tell you how you can do it.



Simon Chapman Image: D.J. Clark

Desert Trek Namibia

By Rhino Keeper Rosemarie Scott

Rhino team leader Chas MacKenzie and keeper Rosemarie Scott take a hike to save the rhinos

Chas and I began our trip at 8.30am from Chester train station and after a long journey of planes, trains and automobiles we finally arrived at Palmwag Lodge, Namibia, getting there just in time to watch the most beautiful sunset I've ever seen!

The next day marked the start of the trek. We were raising money for *Save the Rhino's* camel patrol team. Local game guards work in groups, each regularly patrolling a specified area within the 25,000 square kilometres rhino range. All fresh rhino tracks are picked up during such patrols by vehicle, foot and camel and followed on foot until the rhino is sighted. Rhino are observed at close range using binoculars to note any distinguishing marks and assess body condition.

All observations are recorded on detailed ID forms. Good quality ID photographs are taken and the exact position of each rhino is recorded using a GPS. All this information is fed into a coded computer database and analyzed. Over the years the tracking teams have photographed and identified every rhino in the 25,000 square kilometres, every new calf born is recorded, as are all mortalities. This monitoring effort

needs to be maintained, as the rhino population grows and rhino change appearance over a time period. The camel programme was introduced due to the very rugged terrain in which some of the rhino live. It is too difficult to get into the mountains to monitor the rhino by vehicle and too far away from water to walk with donkeys. The camel patrols visit all the outlying settlements and stay a few days with the herders, finding any news about rhino.

Save the Rhino aims to help communities to be able to take on more and more of the responsibilities of conserving and monitoring the desert rhino and elephant.

The highlight and focus of the trip was, of course, the four rhinos we tracked along the way. The first two were a mother and six month old female calf which has now been named after me. The third was a male who popped out of a bush no more than 50 metres in front of us! Tracking rhinos is exhilarating, knowing that they are close yet not really having a clue where they are keeps the adrenaline pumping! After five days of hard trekking (well, ok we hitched a ride on the camels for a few hours

on the last day) and approximately 110km later, we made it to the coast, which marked our finish line. Mission completed, we posed for a photo with the rest of the team, the trackers and guides and of course the camels! It was an extraordinary experience.

There were lots of rewards along the way, but the biggest reward was for *Save the Rhino*. The team raised £20,000 in total for *Save the Rhino Trust*, Namibia. That's enough to fund the invaluable work of the 23 strong camel patrol team for a further year.

It was an amazing and truly humbling trip. All concepts of days and time become irrelevant when you're in such a beautiful place with fantastic people to experience it with. Although we have now all gone our separate ways, I'm sure we'll come back one day!

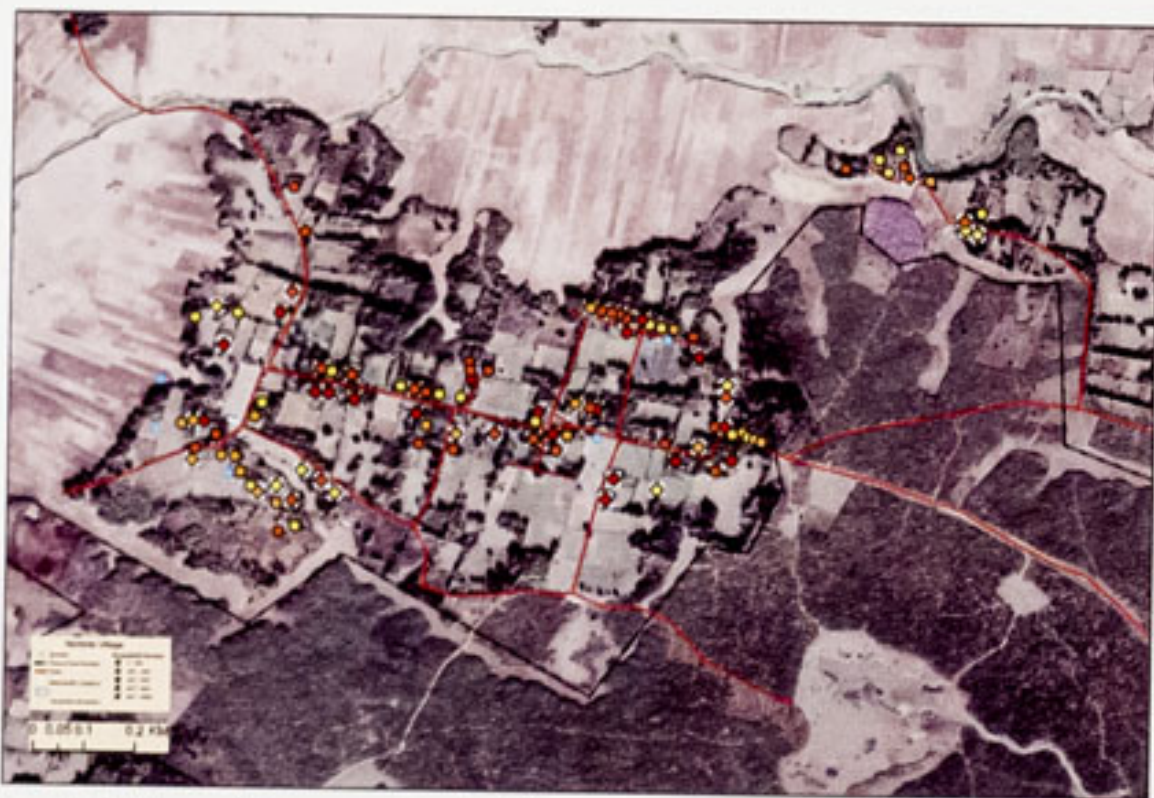
Chas and Rosie were sponsored by Buckley-based Rhino Products Ltd who kindly donated £300 towards their trip.



Elephant Conservation: The Assam Haathi Project

By Alexandra Zimmermann, Conservation Manager

Assam in north-eastern India is home to one of the largest remaining populations of the endangered Asian Elephant. Unfortunately this population is also one of the least protected and most acutely threatened. Here, wildlife and people compete for space and food and, as a result, encounter each other more frequently than ever before. In Assam, elephants and people are in direct conflict.



At certain times of the year, herds of elephants leave the forests and venture into croplands in search of food. Trampling through the fields at night, they eat great quantities of crops and sometimes venture into villages, where they destroy houses while trying to access grain and salt stores. The villagers in turn, in desperate attempts to defend their livelihood, scare the elephants away with lights and noise, but all too often the result is one of chaos and accidental deaths. This scenario has become so frequent that some of these Ganesh-revering Assamese communities have resorted to poisoning and killing their pachyderm co-inhabitants.

To protect the Asian Elephant from extinction we need to ensure that they have natural areas of adequate size and quality in which they can survive. In order to achieve this, we need to ensure that local people are willing and able to tolerate their existence, and support their protection both in principle and in reality. This can only be done by addressing the needs of the people with serious and long-term efforts. In response to these

needs, we developed the Assam Haathi Project.*

The Project has a practical component and a research component. On the practical side, we assist selected villages suffering from severe bouts of elephant crop-raiding. This means a great deal of community work; getting to know the villagers, the local history and pattern of crop-raiding, learning about their attempts to deter elephants, and discussing other options with them. The aim is to design a suite of elephant crop-raiding control measures tailor-made for the village in question, and to teach community members how to make and use these, and adapt ideas as necessary in the future. For example, we are currently installing a so-called "trip-wire" mechanism which gives advance warning of the elephants' approach: if an elephant





walks into this single-wire fence, it breaks and an alarm is triggered, giving people time to prevent elephants from coming too close to their houses. A second method is the use of chilli as a repellent, an innovation first developed in Zimbabwe. Elephants hate chilli, and a sprinkling of powder from locally grown hot chillies into a small fire will create a smoke that keeps elephants far at bay without harm. Further measures, including spotlights and portable low-tech electric fences will also be trialled in the near future. In addition, we also assist villagers in

learning how to cultivate cash crops for local markets (e.g. chilli, pepper, turmeric, ginger, etc) to supplement their income and decrease their dependence on subsistence crops, which in a bad year, may be destroyed completely by a herd of elephants.

For the second component of the project we carry out research on the spatial dynamics of elephant herds in the region. Elephants seem to follow specific routes though the landscape on a seasonal basis. By studying their habitual movements we can learn about their needs (nutritionally, ecologically and behaviourally), learn to predict their paths (to prepare better for oncoming crop-raiding events) and eventually use these insights to help local authorities develop large-scale land-use and

corridor plans. So far we have trained two Assamese research assistants how to use of GPS units to record exact locations of elephants, and around twenty villagers in how to identify individual elephants and track the movements of herds. These data are then collated and analysed here at the zoo to produce GIS (Geographic Information Systems) datasets: layered maps that show where elephants migrate, rest and crop-raid at different times of the year in relation to various ecological and land-use factors.

The Assam Haathi Project, now in its second year, is one of Chester Zoo's major conservation programmes and is managed in partnership with the Assamese-based organisation Ecosystems-India.

* Haathi is Hindi and Assamese for elephant



Ngamba Island - Chimpanzee and Wildlife Conservation Sanctuary

By Claire Lightfoot and Chris Yarwood, Primate Keepers

During two weeks in March 2004 Chris Yarwood and Clare Lightfoot, both Senior Primate Keepers at Chester Zoo, were fortunate enough to have the privilege of visiting the island and working alongside the dedicated staff.



Ngamba island was established in 1998 to care for orphan chimpanzees that had been rescued by the Ugandan Wildlife Authority from poachers and/or traders, and had no chance of survival back to the wild.

The island is 100 acres (approximately 40 hectares) in size and for the main part covered in lush rainforest. Situated in the world's second largest lake, Lake Victoria, it is just a few miles south of the equator and 23kms from the mainland. It supports a rich diversity of natural wildlife including over 120 species of birds.

The boat trip to the island is an adventure in itself; many birds can be seen including pelicans and the magnificent African Fish Eagles. Our first journey to the island was on a

boat alongside a class of local school children. It was an excellent opportunity for us to see the Trust's education programme in action under the supervision of the education officer, Isaac Mujaasi upon our arrival. Debby Cox, the director of the project, travelled with us and introduced us to the staff and the site.



It is a great set up, an electric fence divides the forested area from a small corner of the island containing a few buildings and all its human inhabitants. And almost like the genetic equation where humans are 98.4% chimpanzee, the island too is around 98% chimpanzee and 2% human!

The staff on the island really made us feel at home. Their work stints last 10 days, during which time they don't leave the island, so it really is a way of life rather than a 9-5 type job. Half work environment, half community, it was an immersing situation to be in.

Each day started around 6.30am at sunrise and ended not long before sunset. Morning and afternoon sessions/workloads were dictated by whether visitors were visiting the island at that particular time. If there were no visitors, time could be spent on enrichment for the chimps. We became dab hands in folding the corners of hessian sacks over and chimp-proof stitching

them to allow ropes to be slid between the corners and the sacks to be made into sleeping hammocks. The care-givers on the island are all good at multi-tasking, good with the chimps, giving talks, running the gift stall and it all adds up to a pretty full itinerary.

One of the most pleasing and astounding things we saw on the island was the annual health checks which coincided with our stay. Each animal is anaesthetised and given thorough medical and dental check ups. With such a large group of chimps over just a few days this was a huge undertaking, but the vets and care-

givers have developed a technique which impressed me each and every time I saw it. Each day a handful of chimps chosen for checking were kept back in the night quarters. When it was time a care-giver would call the chimp over to the mesh for a chat and tickle. The vet who would be innocently standing next to the care-giver, one hand hiding the syringe, waiting for the right moment to inject. With the slight of hand of a master magician, the vets administered the

drug and hid the syringe again. The chimps obviously felt the prick of the needle but instead of allowing the chimp to think about what had just happened the care-giver would scratch at the dirt in front of the mesh and mimic a chimp alarm call. Such was their trust in their carers, the chimps automatically thought they have just been bitten or stung by an insect which the care-giver had also spotted and alerted them (too late), but they tried to find the culprit anyway. After a minute or two of looking at nothing both chimp and carer gave up and a few minutes later the chimp was happily sound asleep. Once the checks were completed, the chimp



woke up and returned to the group none the wiser. The skill of the vets and the relationship between the chimps and the carers was fantastic.

This experience was made possible using the *Keeper for a Day* fund so thanks to everyone involved in the scheme, Chester Zoo for allowing us to visit Uganda during zoo time and allowing the K.F.A.D scheme to happen, and the rest of the primate team for the extra work they put in due to our absence.

We would also like to extend our thanks to our new friends in Africa - Debby Cox, Peter Apell, Lawrence Mugisha, Gerard Musingo, Stany Nyandwi, Paulo Kibirige, Mandy Masumba, Isaac Mujaasi, the D.S.A. and everyone else on the island and in the J.G.I. Mainland offices.

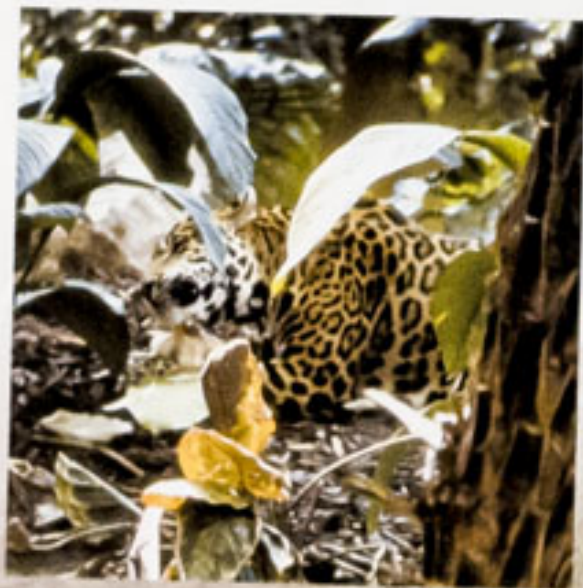
Saving Jaguars

By Alexandra Zimmermann, Conservation Manager

The Jaguar is threatened throughout most of its range in Central and South America as a result of habitat loss and direct conflict with people.

Most Jaguars live outside reserves and national parks where wildlife receives little or no protection. Jaguars are often blamed for killing cattle and shot on sight or hunted down in retaliation. This scenario is particularly true in the Pantanal region in Brazil, one of the last remaining global strongholds for the species and home to what is believed to be the largest subspecies of the Jaguar.

The Pantanal is the largest wetland in the world, straddling



the borders of Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay and spanning an area the size of UK. It forms the most significant window for evaporating freshwater in the world and supports a concentration of wildlife not unlike that of the plains of East Africa. Yet the Pantanal is home not only to jaguars and other wildlife: over 95% of the area is privately owned and used extensively to raise several million head of cattle.

Following the first opinion survey of Jaguar-human conflict in the northern Pantanal, carried out by staff in 2000, Chester Zoo partnered with the Bronx Zoo-based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) to spearhead a

programme to that would address conflicts between cattle ranchers and Jaguars in the southern Pantanal. The aim of this Rancher Outreach Programme was to develop practical, economically sound



Zoo life

solutions to resolve Jaguar depredation, while at the same time building on the community's inherent appreciation of the environment.

Through the Rancher Outreach Programme we were able to build rapport with a small number of carefully selected ranchers, which were chosen strategically for their geographical position within Jaguar habitat, or for their potential to influence the practices of other ranchers. Cattle husbandry practices vary in the Pantanal; on many ranches cattle are left to roam the pastures with little or no mineral supplementation, vaccination, synchronisation of calving with wet/dry seasons (linked to calf mortality) and no protection from



forested areas where poisonous snakes or Jaguars may linger.

Starting with the premise that increased cattle productivity (and therefore income) could make ranchers more tolerant of the comparatively loss of cattle by Jaguars, the programme worked closely with a local organisation, the Parque Regional do Pantanal and Venezuelan veterinarian Rafael Hoogesteijn, to begin to advise ranchers on these practical issues, ranging from husbandry improvements to ways of

excluding Jaguars from the most vulnerable cattle (night-time corrals, electric fences, etc). At the same time we were able to encourage ranchers to protect the natural prey of Jaguars and consider eco-tourism, raising buffalos, and other initiatives of interest to them.

After only two years the programme gained much interest in the ranching community and we needed to recruit a full-time representative on the ground. With our help, WCS was able to secure a grant for the continuation of this work and the management and on-the-ground coordination of the programme was taken on by WCS in early 2004. While the work of the Rancher Outreach Programme continues, Chester Zoo is now expanding its Jaguar conservation work to a more international scale. From localized community-based work we are now developing a global survey of jaguar conflicts, a web-based information resource and several other initiatives. To find out more about our new Jaguars & People Programme watch this space in forthcoming issues of *Zoo Life*.

Junior Adventures

Junior Members' Programme of Events 2005 - 2006



HILBRE ISLAND

SUNDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2005

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



Over eights are invited to join us, bringing a picnic and suitable clothes for the seaside!

Departure time from the Zoo will be 12.30pm. Return at 6.15pm

SNOWDONIA

SATURDAY 15 OCTOBER 2005

We have decided that Snowdonia in the Autumn will be a great place to be! We will make a full day of walking (nothing too strenuous you understand) in the Lake Padarn area, admiring the scenery, with a great view of Mount Snowdon. There is always lots to see and we invite the eights and over to join us.

We will leave the staff entrance, with our picnics, at 10am and return at 5pm.

LIVERPOOL MUSEUM

SATURDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2005

Liverpool Museum – now called the World Museum – has just undergone a huge refurbishment and this will be an opportunity to see it in all its new splendour. I have had a peek and it is well worth a serious visit. There is so much to see and do that we will hardly be able to cram it all in to one

day! A great way to spend a cold November day.

The bus will leave the Staff Entrance at 10.30am and return at 4.30pm. Eights and over are welcome and remember to bring a picnic.

THE JUNIORS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

FRIDAY 9 DECEMBER 2005

Our annual 'bash' welcomes Juniors of eight and over to enjoy an evening of games, disco music, and a great hot-dog and beef-burger supper.



You will need to bring along a cushion to sit on – and a torch to find us!

The venue will be the Zoo's Arara Lodge (the indoor picnic area) and access can be gained through the Cedar House Staff Entrance on Coughall Road, which is the second staff entrance on the left going from the Upton lights. You should arrive at 7pm and parents should arrange to pick up from the Arara Lodge at 9.45 pm.



DISCOVERY SESSION

SATURDAY 21 JANUARY 2006

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

Eights and over are asked to join us, meeting outside Oakfield House (near the Lions) at 2pm, and parents can collect the youngsters from there at 4pm.

DUDLEY ZOO

SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2006

It is a while since the Juniors visited Dudley in the Midlands and it is always nice to see how other zoos do things. Be prepared to walk up and down hills as Dudley Zoo has to create enclosures that suit steep slopes!

Eights and over are asked to join us, meeting at the staff entrance at 10am, and we will return there for 5pm. Bring a picnic with you.

TRACKS & SIGNS

SATURDAY 25 MARCH 2006

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

Eights and over can come along and join the messiness, meeting outside Oakfield House at 11am, returning there for collection at 4pm. You will need a picnic lunch, and it is important that you wear clean, very old clothes and clean wellies please.

ACTON SCOTT HISTORIC WORKING FARM

SATURDAY 22 APRIL 2006

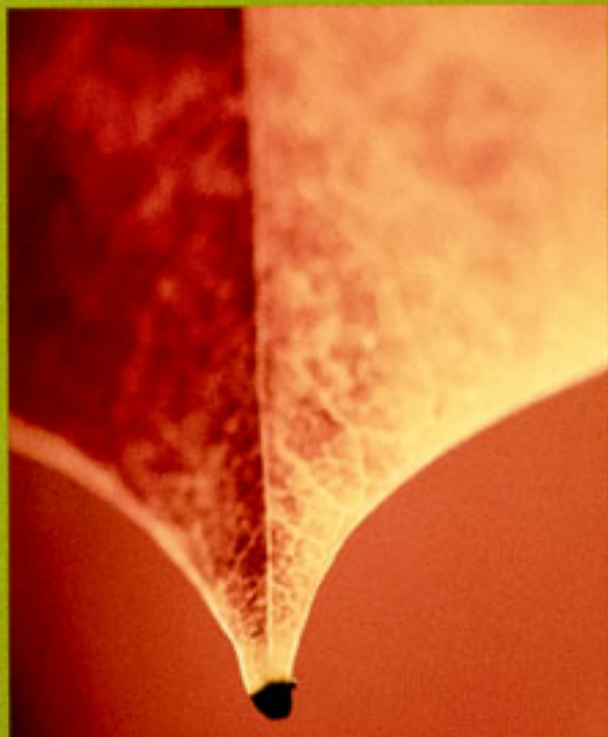
This will be a new trip for Juniors, when we will be heading off to Shropshire to experience daily life on an upland farm at the turn of the last Century. The waggoner and his team of heavy horses work the land with vintage farm machines, while the farmer's wife goes about her chores in the cottage. You will love the cows, pigs, sheep and poultry in the farmyard together with some rare breeds and have the opportunity to see lots of other craftsmen at work keeping the farm going.

Eights and over are invited to join us, leaving the Staff Entrance at 9.30am, and returning for 4.30pm. Bring a picnic.

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

**Founded in 1934 the
North of England Zoological Society
is a registered charity
and receives no government funding.**

We need your help and support to raise
funds for the care and conservation of our
rare animals and endangered species
across the world.



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

Tel: 01244 380280 Fax: 01244 371273

or visit www.chesterzoo.org

Registered Charity No. 306077

DIRECTOR: GORDON MCGREGOR REID, EDITOR: RACHAEL ASHTON.

ZOO LIFE IS PUBLISHED BY THE NORTH OF ENGLAND ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY, UPTON-BY-CHESTER, CHESTER CH2 1LH.

DESIGNED AND PRODUCED BY UNIT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP LTD 2005