

Autumn 2006 **Issue 27**

The official magazine for Chester Zoo
Members and Adopters

Z



Bird Breeding Triumphs!

Frogs in Crisis

Conservation at Work





Director's Pen

By Gordon McGregor Reid
Director General

Welcome to the autumn issue of Z. With the summer months firmly behind us, we now have our sights set on our winter plans.

Starting on December 1, visitors will be afforded a truly magical winter experience. Father Christmas will be with us as ever but this year there will be some very special added extras.

The Zoo's main plaza will be home to an ice rink, there will be market stalls, a Snow Blast, bandstand and entertainment. There will also be a Journey to the North Pole where Father Christmas will be found. The icy fun starts on December 1 and runs until February. More details will be in December's Z.

It has been a magnificent year for the Zoo and we are well on the way to reaching the one million visitor milestone yet again.

We have also picked up a number of accolades recently including the highly prestigious Queen's Award for Sustainable Development and also Visitor Attraction of the Year 2006 at the Visit Chester and Cheshire annual awards.

We were runners-up in the Best Tourism Website category in the same awards and were runner-up in the 2006 Group Travel Awards in the Best Provision of Disabled Facilities category.

As you will see from reading the magazine, we have had a number of major events with the official openings of **Elephants of the Asian Forest** and **Café Tsavo** and some very notable births and hatchings! More on all of these items can be found within the pages of the magazine.

We hope to see you in the Zoo soon or maybe at the Adopter Days in October. Whenever you choose to visit, I hope you have a good day and don't forget we appreciate your feedback!

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Front page picture by Mike Jordan



Red Panda

In spring 2005 we exchanged one of our female Red Pandas (**Ailurus fulgens fulgens**) for a male from Heidelberg, Germany. This has proved to be fruitful and our first youngster was born in June. This is the first time we have successfully bred Red Pandas in the Zoo since 1958!

Zoo additions



Mountain Chicken

When is a chicken not a bird? When it's a frog of course. The Critically Endangered Mountain Chicken (*Leptodactylus fallax*) is one of the largest frogs in the world with adult animals reaching almost 20cm in length. They are now found only on the islands of Montserrat and Dominica in the Caribbean where they are at grave risk of extinction from the combined pressures of over-hunting (they're the national dish on Dominica), invasive species, volcanic activity on Montserrat and, most recently, the arrival of the fatal amphibian fungal disease chytridiomycosis. We are currently involved in a British Government 'Darwin Initiative' conservation programme to help save the species on Dominica, and the arrival of four young chickens here at the Zoo forms part of an Assurance Population for the species, should they disappear in the wild.



Utila Island Iguana

Also known as 'Swampies' or 'Wish Willies', the Utila Island Iguana (*Ctenosaura bakeri*) occurs only on the small island of Utila off mainland Honduras. Three young animals have recently arrived here at the Zoo from the conservation breeding station on Utila that was established in 1998 to help save the species from extinction. Several European zoos are now involved in the breeding programme for this Critically Endangered species and, once they have finished their quarantine period, our animals will be on display in the Tropical Realm.



Pancake Tortoise

The Pancake Tortoise (*Malacochersus tornieri*) is one of the strangest looking species of tortoise in the world. As their name might suggest, they are very, very flat. Their shells are also soft and flexible and this enables them to squeeze into tight crevices to escape danger in their natural rocky kopje habitat in Kenya and Tanzania. Our first ever Pancake Tortoise baby hatched earlier this year and is now on display in the nursery area of the aquarium with all our baby Egyptian Tortoises (*Testudo kleinmanni*).



Asiatic Lion

Asoka our male Asiatic Lion (*Panthera leo persicus*), finally has a mate. Our new female, Asha, arrived from Rome in June. She is an 8 year old female who was born at Paignton and hopefully will be a perfect match for our male. Our previous breeding female, and Asoka's mother, was Chandani, who sadly died in May 2005, she was the most successful breeding female Asiatic Lion in Europe giving birth to 14 cubs.



Pla Eesok

Six Endangered Pla Eesok (*Probarbus jullieni*) and a pair of Endangered Asian Arowanas (*Scleropages formosus*) are the new big arrivals in our fantastic new aquarium in **Elephants of the Asian Forest** exhibit. Both species have been part of the Chester Zoo collection for some time, but this is the first time that they have gone on public display. Both species face extinction in the wild as a result of habitat loss and over fishing.

Mauritius Pink Pigeon

Chester Zoo has kept Pink Pigeons (*Nesoenas mayeri*) since 1985 and had a long tradition of sending both our staff and money to support their conservation in the wild in Mauritius, along with other species of Mauritian endemic bird. Since 1993 though we have only had a single bird here at the Zoo and the recent arrival of three new birds from the Czech Republic and Jersey brings hope that the Zoo will once again start breeding this Endangered Mauritian Pigeon.



Belanger's Tree Shrew

This new species to the Zoo has taken up residence in the new Elephants of the Asian Forest exhibit. The Belanger's Tree Shrews (*Tupaia belangeri*) immediately settled and within days of their arrival were mating. We already have our first two youngsters weaned and active with the parents and have high hopes of many more to follow!



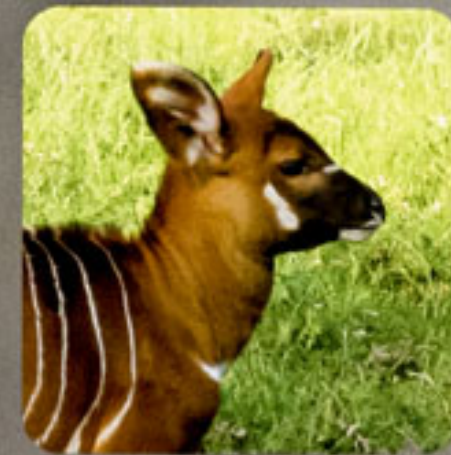
California Sealion

Our Californian Sealions (*Zalophus californianus*) have produced a female pup this summer. The pup, Sophia, was the first for seven year old Rio, and she has proved to be an excellent first time mum. Mother and offspring have been visible out in the main sealion pool for most of the summer.



Great Hornbill

Chester Zoo has been extremely successful in breeding Great Hornbills (*Buceros bicornis*) over the past few years. It is hoped that the arrival of a new female from Alphen, Netherlands will continue this. She is more than 37 years old, coming originally from the wild and will join our 27 year old male.



Eastern Bongo

This year has proved to be an excellent one for our herd of Endangered Eastern Bongo (*Tragelaphus eurycerus isaaci*). We have had two calves born, a male in April and a female in July. Eastern Bongo are highly restricted in the wild and recently a reintroduction programme has been started on Mount Kenya, with the transfer of animals from zoos to form a breeding herd at the release site.

Bird Breeding

The spring and summer of 2006 have been an exceptional bird breeding season for Chester Zoo. A huge amount of planning goes into the start of each season, with bird and parrot team leaders, incubation & rearing staff and curator all meeting to consider carefully each species we keep and a strategy for breeding them during the year. This year has been incredibly diverse with more than 80 species laying eggs. At the peak of the breeding season the number of birds in the zoo can nearly triple with all the chicks that are being parent, foster or even hand-reared by staff. The following are just some of the highlights of the year.



g Triumphs!

White-naped Crane

Particularly pleasing was the White-naped Crane (*Grus vipio*) chick that hatched in late April. The egg was removed from the parents and artificially incubated, then returned under the parents at hatching. It is the first offspring at Chester for our new 17 year old male crane which was bred at Frankfurt. Our old male sadly died in January 2005 at more than 60 years old.



Chestnut-backed Thrush

This species was new to the collection late in 2005 and they have immediately settled well into the Tropical Realm and produced their first brood of 3 chicks. Chestnut-backed Thrushes (*Zoothera dohertyi*) are rarely kept in zoos and the species is rapidly declining on the few Indonesian islands on which it occurs.



Lapwing

This year the Lapwings (*Vanellus vanellus*) in 'Europe on the Edge' managed to successfully produce and rear a chick. The parent birds originate from eggs that were rescued from the runway at Hawarden airport where occasionally the wild lapwings nest in areas that are unsafe for the birds and a potential hazard for the planes. Lapwings are undergoing a serious decline in the UK and have decreased by over 40% in the last 30 years!

Great Grey Owl

Chester Zoos pair of Eurasian Great Grey Owls (*Strix nebulosa lapponica*) have again proved highly productive rearing and successfully fledging 4 chicks. They have produced a total of 18 chicks since they have been in the Zoo.



Javan Rhinoceros Hornbill

The most noteworthy breeding of the entire 2006 season must be the two chicks produced by our pair of Javan Rhinoceros Hornbills (*Buceros rhinoceros silvestris*). This is a definite first for Chester and the UK and very likely the first time this hornbill has ever been bred in Europe! The pair has been together in the Zoo for 11 years, although the female is known to be at least 26 years old. This year the bird staff worked hard to get the conditions just right to encourage the birds to breed for the first time. The whole process has been visible throughout the year on the screen in tropics linked to a nestbox camera.



Building the Amphibian Ark

In 2004, the world's amphibian experts published the Global Amphibian Assessment. This document held frightening news and confirmed what many scientists had long believed; that the planet's frogs, toads, salamanders and caecilians – an entire vertebrate Class – are experiencing an extinction crisis the like of which has never been seen before.

Nearly a third of the world's 6000 species of amphibian are currently threatened with extinction. At least 168 species are believed to have gone extinct since 1980, though this number is likely to just be the tip of the iceberg.

Compounding the existing pressures of habitat loss and degradation, pollution, over-collection, climate change and alien invasive species, a new fungal disease - chytridiomycosis - has swept through frog populations in North, Central and South America, Australia and Europe.

The fungus invades the skin of amphibians and fatally disrupts their water balance. In many cases, the disease is decimating amphibian populations in otherwise pristine habitat. Conventional conservation techniques in the wild will therefore not help to save these species from extinction.

For many hundreds of species of frog, toad and salamander therefore, their only immediate hope of survival is in Assurance Populations in the world's zoos and aquariums. These populations will

help keep species alive until we have found methods to prevent and treat the spread of chytridiomycosis in the wild.

As President-elect of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), Director General, Gordon McGregor Reid is working with the IUCN's Conservation Breeding Specialist Group in leading the planning and coordination of the enormous global response required to set up Assurance Populations for up to 1000 species. Such a conservation response will require massive investment - both in the development of new amphibian conservation facilities in zoos and aquariums, and in the training of hundreds of staff in amphibian husbandry and breeding.

The response will also involve rapid-response teams to collect disappearing species from the wild, training and capacity building for conservation programmes in range countries, research on breeding and reproductive science, disease management, and education and outreach.

Here at the Zoo, we have already started constructing special new Amphibian Arks that will be set-up in readiness for the imminent arrival of threatened frog and toad species. They are being built in off-show areas, where our dedicated herpetology staff will be able to monitor and care for the animals more closely. It is hoped that the first residents of these Arks will move in by the end of this year.

Zoos and aquariums have never faced such an important and urgent conservation challenge. Chester Zoo is helping to lead the fight to save these species, but it will take an unprecedented, coordinated effort involving zoos and aquariums across the globe to halt the continuing mass extinction.



Room in the Ark for Art!

Generous Donors

Chester Zoo has a longstanding relationship with Marks & Spencer Money, whose headquarters are based locally on the Chester Business Park. The organisation has supported our education programme for a number of years and many of their members of staff have been involved in fundraising and volunteering opportunities both at Chester Zoo and at their offices.

In November 2004 Marks & Spencer Money was sold to HSBC, one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations, although it still retains its own name. In 2005

Chester Zoo was invited to apply to the HSBC in the Community fund, under the specific area of education and the environment. These criteria fitted well with many zoo projects and a proposal was put forward to fund a rejuvenated multi-purpose exhibition space on the site of the old Wildlife Discovery Centre building. The aim of this project was to create a dedicated exhibition gallery for both in-house exhibitions (focusing on outreach and conservation programmes) and external travelling exhibitions. In addition the space would be used for various events such as talks, presentations or performances related to conservation projects.

The proposal impressed the committee and it was agreed the entire project was to be funded by HSBC in the Community. Maggie Esson, Education Services Manager, managed the project which is now complete. Marks & Spencer Money staff volunteered to help plant out the external area under the supervision of Mark Sparrow, Curator of Horticulture and Botany.

The official opening of the Joseph Banks Room will take place in September in the presence of Marks & Spencer Money Chief Executive Brendan Cook.



Joseph Banks came from a privileged background and attended Eton and later Oxford where he studied Botany. At the age of 21 he inherited his family fortune making him a very wealthy man, which enabled him to pursue his interest in scientific discovery. He went on his first voyage in 1766 (age 23) a seven-month survey of Labrador and Newfoundland.

In 1768 Banks set sail with Capt. James Cook on their three year voyage to observe the transit of Venus and discover new lands. Their ship Endeavour was only 32m long by 9m wide and had a crew of 94, which included Banks and his carefully chosen team of nine men. They included naturalists, illustrators and trained collectors. Banks put in £10,000 (equivalent to £600,000 today) of his own money to fund the expedition. The ship sailed west to South America and Cape Horn. He stopped off on the way collecting 125 new species of plants. They sailed on to Tahiti where they spent a very enjoyable three months, and where Cook was able to fulfil the first part of his mission. Reluctantly the crew left Tahiti and continued sailing west for another 3 months until they came across a large land mass. This turned out to be New Zealand and they spent the next six months circumnavigating it. They encountered war-like Maoris, who they later found out were cannibals, and had several skirmishes with them. Banks collected 360 species of plants on New Zealand.

They then set off in a northerly direction where on 17 April 1770 (20 months after leaving England) they discovered Australia and Cook claimed it for the British Empire. They landed at Botany Bay. They continued along the east coast of Australia where the ship struck coral on the Great Barrier Reef. The ship was nearly lost but after six days at sea, pumping water from the hold continuously, they managed to sail it up the mouth of a river (Endeavour River) for repairs. It took one and half months for this work to be carried out in which time Banks collected 331 plants.

They had now been away for two years and everyone was keen to return home. They stopped off in Java on the way where many of the crew became sick with Malaria. By the time the ship docked back in England on 10 July 1771, three years after setting sail, 42 of the 94 crew members had died, including seven of Bank's team.

The trip resulted in the collection, illustration and naming of 1300 new species of plants. Unfortunately Banks was unable to bring back plants or seeds.

In 1772 (age 29) Banks was appointed by King George III (mad King George) as 'Scientific Advisor on the Plant Life of the Dependencies of the Crown'. King George had an estate at Kew which Banks persuaded him would make an ideal place to grow some of the incredible plants he had seen on his travels. George made Banks Kew's first unofficial Director and he started to send out plant collectors to all corners of the globe in search of interesting and unusual plants.

Banks became President of the Royal Society in 1778 a position he held for 42 years until his death in 1820. Through his work at Kew he is attributed with securing the introduction of over 7,000 new species of plants.

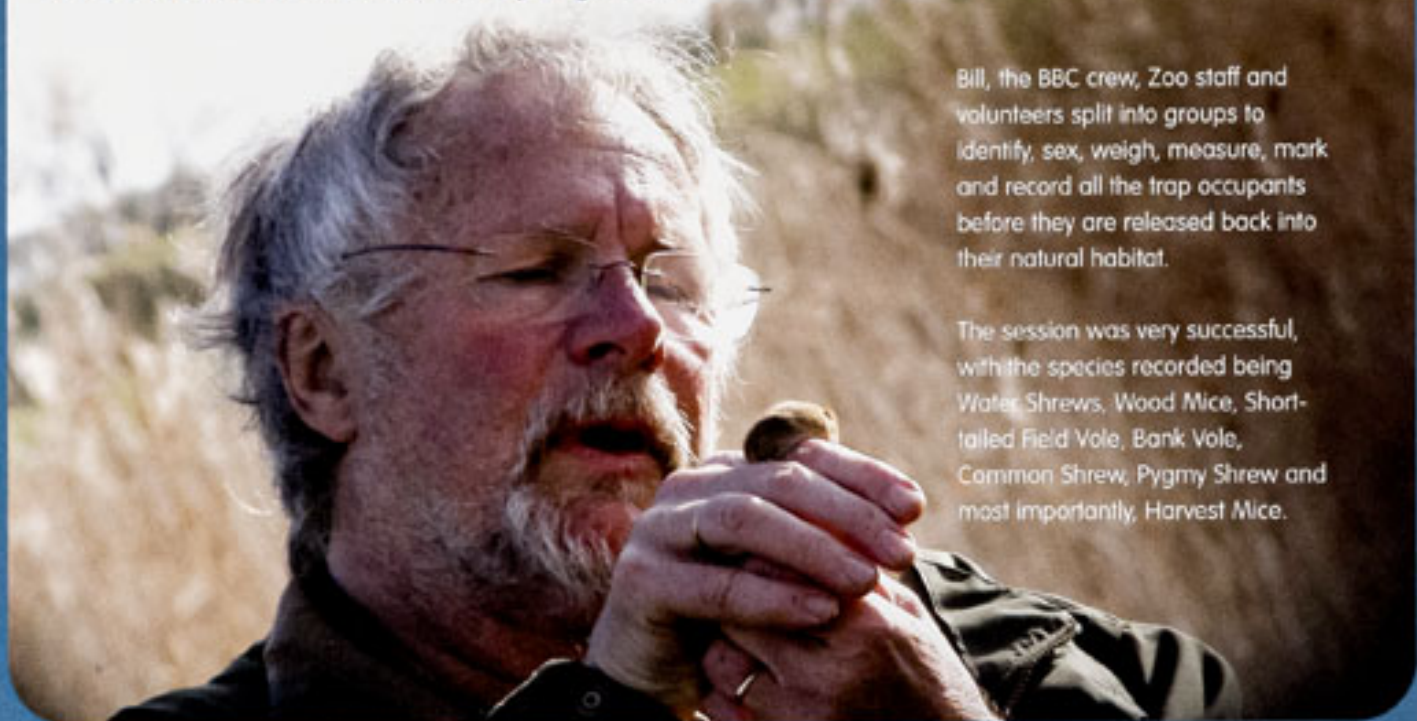
The Joseph Banks Room has been named in honour of this great botanist and explorer. We have planted up the front and side of the building with plants that were either discovered by him or have been named after him. In all 32 different taxa were chosen including *Banksia integrifolia*, *Banksia marginata*, *Astelia banksii*, *Hydrangea 'Joseph Banks'*, *Rosa banksii*, *Callistemon citrinus*, *Eriobotrya japonica*, *Leptospermum scoparium*.

The symbol which appears above the entrance door of the Joseph Banks Room and on the main sign is an engraving of a *Banksia* seed cone.



Springwatch Fun

Bill Oddie came into the Zoo to film water shrews for a new series of BBC One's Springwatch.



Bill, the BBC crew, Zoo staff and volunteers split into groups to identify, sex, weigh, measure, mark and record all the trap occupants before they are released back into their natural habitat.

The session was very successful, with the species recorded being Water Shrews, Wood Mice, Short-tailed Field Vole, Bank Vole, Common Shrew, Pygmy Shrew and most importantly, Harvest Mice.

Limestone Woundwort – plant conservation in action

Chester Zoo are working in partnership with North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT) and Ness Botanic Gardens to safeguard Limestone Woundwort (*Stachys alpina*), which grows at only three sites in the UK, two of which are in North East Wales. Chester Zoo became involved in the conservation work with this rare plant in 2005; specimens from the Zoo have been planted out into the wild this year and are doing well.

Limestone Woundwort is a hairy perennial, growing 40-80 cm tall, which belongs to the Labiate or mint family. It grows on calcareous soils in woodland glades, and flowers from June to August. The flowers are pinky-red with a distinctive creamy-yellow centre. In 2005 Chester Zoo and the NWWT surveyed Glyn Diffwys SSSI in Conwy

for Limestone Woundwort and found around thirty specimens, including original wild plants and some that had been planted between 1998 and 2003. However, many plants from earlier planting attempts had died. In March 2006 Zoo staff helped to plant around 40 new plants into the same area, using mulch mats to control weeds around them. These are doing well as you can see from the picture, which was taken when we visited the site again in June.

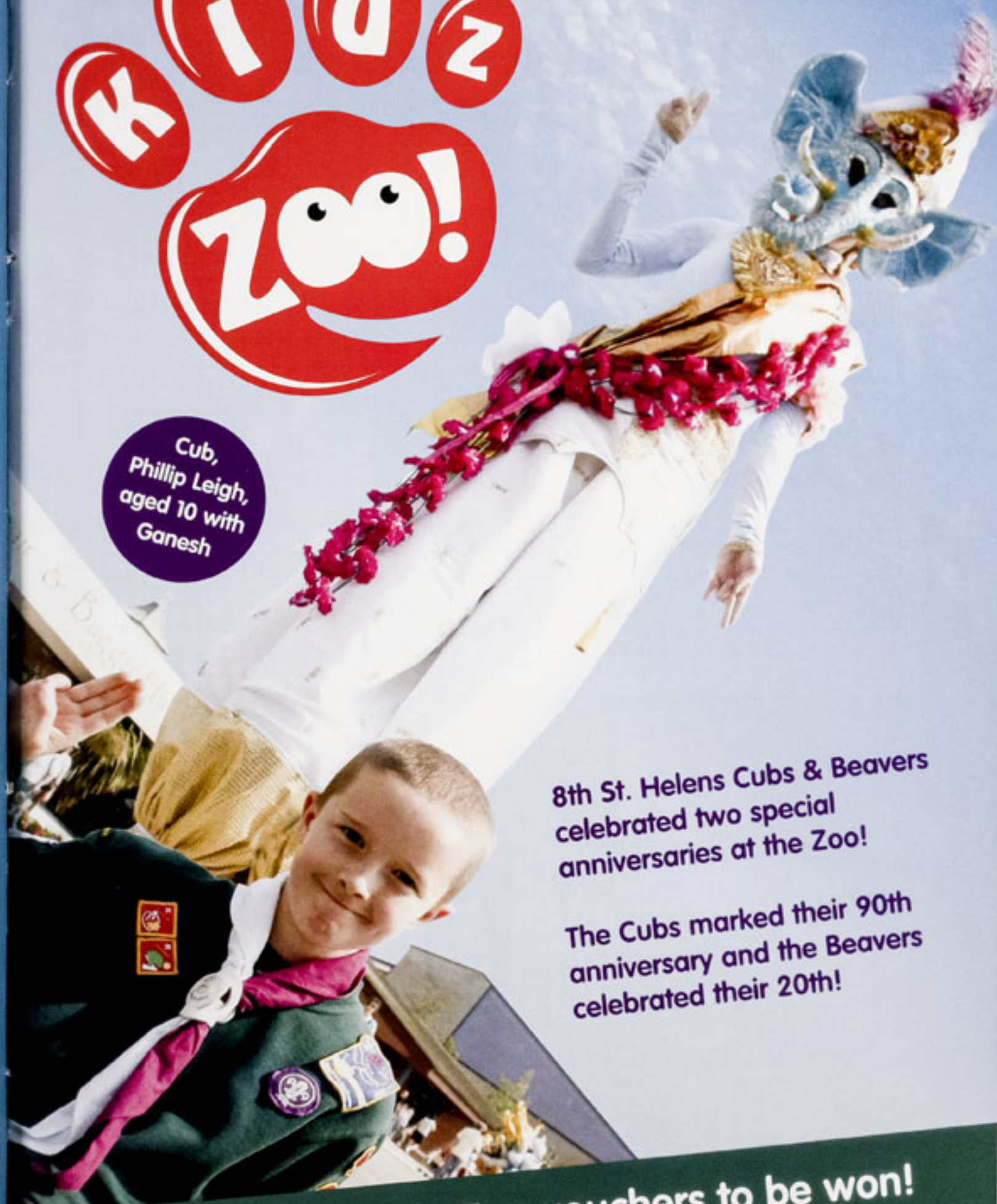
The young plants used were grown from seed collected from the wild plants and raised at Ness Botanic Gardens. They were moved to Chester Zoo in 2005. Some larger plants are being kept in the Zoo nursery to produce seeds and more plants for reintroduction work in the future.



Adrian Lloyd Jones, NWWT Conservation Officer said: "Limestone Woundwort has been voted the County Flower for Denbighshire so it's great to be able to work with partners to do something positive for this rare and special plant."



Cub, Phillip Leigh, aged 10 with Ganesh



8th St. Helens Cubs & Beavers celebrated two special anniversaries at the Zoo!

The Cubs marked their 90th anniversary and the Beavers celebrated their 20th!

Great competitions! Zoo vouchers to be won!



Elephant Wordsearch

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

All the words in this wordsearch are linked to Chester Zoo's Asian Elephants, past or present, other animals in the **Elephants of the Asian Forest** or elephants in the wild. The words may read forwards, backwards, up, down or diagonally. Once complete, send your entry to Kidz Zoo competition, c/o of Marketing Department, Chester Zoo, Upton-by-Chester, CH2 1LH by Friday September 29 and the first out of the hat will win a £10 voucher to spend in the zoo shops.

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| ASIAN ELEPHANT | ELONGATED | RAIN |
| ASSAM | TORTOISE | RAINFORREST |
| AZURE-WINGED | FOREST | RED-BELLIED |
| MAGPIE | GREAT HORNBILL | SQUIRREL |
| BATHE | GREEN PEAFOWL | SITHAMI |
| BREEDING | INDIA | SRI LANKA |
| BULL | IVORY | SUNDARA |
| CALF | JUBILEE | THI HI WAY |
| CHANG | LARGE | TREE SHREW |
| CLEVER | PLA EESOK | TRUNK |
| CONSERVATION | POCHIN | TUSK |
| DEFORESTATION | PREVOST'S | TUSKER |
| EARS | SQUIRREL | UPALI |

A Day at Chester Zoo – A Logic Puzzle

Terry and Jane are taking their three children to the opening of Elephants of the Asian Forest. Nicola, Martin and Rosie are very excited and are looking forward to seeing their favourite animals. Also each child will be allowed a special treat after the ceremony. From the clues, can you work out how old each child is, which is his or her favourite animal and the promised treat?

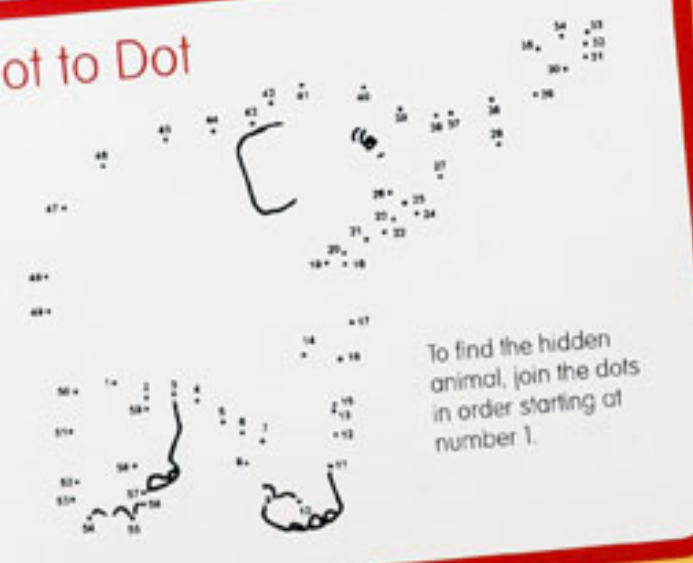
- Nicola has been promised an ice cream. She is older than the child whose favourite animals are the elephants.
- Martin doesn't want to ride on the monorail; he isn't the 8 year-old who has been promised the monorail as a treat.
- Rosie thinks the Great Hornbills are brilliant.

	Tree Shrews	Great Hornbills	Elephants	Ice Cream	Monorail	Fun Ark	10	8	6
Nicola									
Rosie									
Martin									
10									
8									
6									
Ice Cream									
Monorail									
Fun Ark									

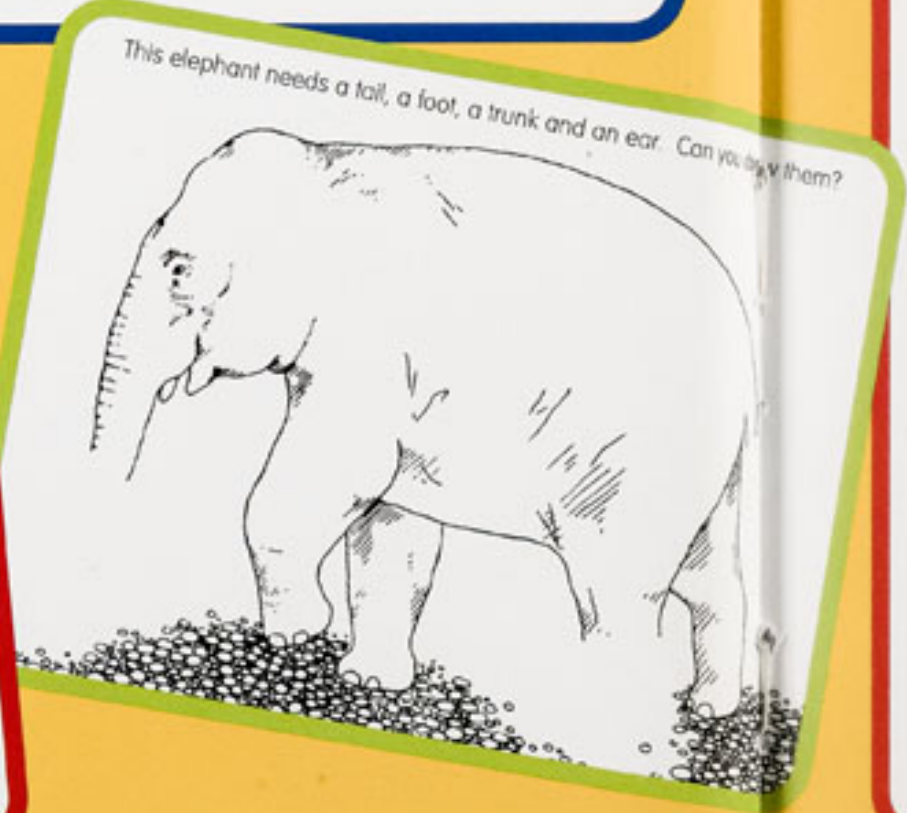
	Favourite Animal	Treat	Age
Nicola			
Rosie			
Martin			

Clue: If you haven't done a logic puzzle before, put a tick in the grid where you know something is true - eg where Rosie and Great Hornbills meet - and a cross where you know something is false.

Dot to Dot



To find the hidden animal, join the dots in order starting at number 1.



Junior Members' Programme of Events 2006-07

Walking the Wirral Way

Saturday 23 September 2006

The 'Wirral Way' follows the route of an old railway line running from one end of the peninsula to the other which has been disused for some years now, but it has been made into a wonderful footpath for walkers. The bus will drop us off near Heswall and we will walk to Thurston to have a look around the visitor centre there and await collection by the bus.

Eights and over should come along prepared for all weather conditions, and bring a picnic. We will leave the Staff Entrance at 10.00am and return there for 4.30pm.

The Hawkstone Follies

21 October 2006

It is a while since we visited this interesting location in Shropshire. The Autumn colours should be a lovely backdrop for the walk we will take along the paths around the 'follies' in Hawkstone Park. There is one point on this walk when you might need a torch and another point where a good head for heights might be useful if you choose to climb the tower! Good footwear will be vital, and you should bring a picnic.

Eights and over are welcome to join us, and we will leave the Staff Entrance at 10.30am, and return at 4.00pm.

Manchester Science Museum

Saturday 18 November 2005

The Science Museum in Manchester is a simply fascinating place. There is so much to see and do and one day is not enough to get around to see everything, but we will try! A great way to spend a cold November's 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 8 December 2006

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 Caughall Road, which is the second staff entrance on the left going from the Upton lights. You should arrive at 7.00pm and parents should arrange collection from Arara Lodge at 9.45pm.

Discovery Session

Saturday 20 January 2007

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 2.00pm, and parents can collect the youngsters from there at 4.00pm.

The Welsh Mountain Zoo - Colwyn Bay

Saturday 24 February 2007

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 10.00am, and we will return there for 5.00pm. Bring a picnic with you.

Tracks & Signs

Saturday 24 March 2007

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 bear 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, when we meet outside Oakfield House at 11.00am, returning there for collection at 4.00pm. You will need a picnic lunch, and it is important that you wear clean, very old clothes and clean wellies please.

Shugborough Home Farm

Saturday 21 April 2007

We love our visits to this beautiful stately home in Staffordshire and find that Spring is a perfect time to visit the Home Farm to see the rare breeds and shire horses. Home Farm also has wonderful displays of cheese making and bakery skills.

Eights and over are invited to join us, leaving the Staff Entrance at 9.30am, and returning for 5.00pm. Bring a picnic.

The Greenwood Centre

Saturday 19 May 2007

Back by popular demand, this seems to be one of the Junior Members' favourite haunts! Set within the Snowdonia National Park, the Greenwood Centre is an environmental park offering fun and games as well as good education. The amazing grass slide, boat races, woodland walks, archery and den building activities to name a few always keep everyone well occupied for the day.

Eights and over should put it in the diary early. We will leave the Staff Entrance at 9.30am, taking a picnic, and return at 5.00pm.

Anglesey Sea Zoo and Butterfly Palace

Saturday 16 June 2007

This will be a busy but enjoyable day split between two very interesting venues on the Isle of Anglesey. We will visit the Sea Zoo in the

morning and then travel on to the Pili Palace to see their great collection of butterflies in the afternoon.

We will leave the Staff Entrance at 9.30am and return at 5.00pm. Eights and over should bring a picnic and sunscreen.

How to be a good Zookeeper!

Wednesday 25 July 2007

This is a unique opportunity offered to Junior Members to spend a day working alongside a Zoo Keeper. The work can be tough and demanding so we strictly limit this event to those Juniors of 12 or over. We try to match Juniors to their favourite section, but places are limited so this cannot be guaranteed. Please arrive prepared to work hard, with clean wellies and an additional completely clean set of clothes to work in. Owing to the Zoo's biosecurity measures, it is important that the clothes you wear to work on the sections have not been in contact with any farm animals, or even your pets at home, since they were last washed.

We will meet outside the Oakfield at 10.30am, and the day will finish for Juniors at 4.00pm. Please bring a packed lunch. Also please note that bookings for this event will not be taken before 8.30am on Wednesday 12 July 2006, and will be strictly on a first-come, first-served basis.

SUMMER BARBEQUE

Thursday 9 August 2007

Our summer barbeque has become a regular feature for the Juniors' diary as it has proved immensely popular. Perhaps this because it is our chance to be in the Zoo when there are no other visitor noises to distract you and the animals, so it is a different zoo experience. We usually aim to have a speaker to chat to you or to engage in craft activities during the evening, but you can be sure to find it relaxing.

We would like to invite eights and over to join us for a 7.00pm start, when you should arrive at the Ark Restaurant (near the Tigers) via the Zoo's Staff Entrance on Caughall Road. Parents are asked to collect Juniors from the Ark restaurant at 9.45pm please.

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 'Z' Magazine and not by individual letter, so please keep up-to-date by reading the Junior Pages in each issue. A 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.

Beetle? We've got it!

The very rare Lesser Silver Water Beetle, **Hydrochara caraboides**, has been found in a pond at Chester Zoo!

This beetle lives in exposed ponds that have lots of aquatic vegetation growing in them. It is currently only known in three counties in the UK – Somerset, Cheshire and Wrexham. Since 1970 this species has only been found in 11 ten kilometre squares in Britain. It was more widely distributed in the 19th century, being particularly common in Hammersmith Marshes, the Cambridgeshire Fens and Askham Bog. Until recently it was thought it only survived in the UK in ditches on the Somerset Moors. However, the 1990 record of an adult in a pond on the Cheshire Plain has been followed by the discovery of more colonies in Cheshire and Wrexham.

In the summer of 2006 detailed survey work was undertaken in Cheshire by expert ecologist Andy Harmer for the Environment Agency; some of the ponds on the farmland owned by the Zoo were checked out... and we have the beetle too!

One of the interesting things about this beetle is that it likes ponds in fields with cows, where the cows trample the margins of the pond. This means that putting a fence around a pond for 'protection' does not help conserve **Hydrochara caraboides**. Now that we have confirmed the presence of this rarity here we will be trying to manage more of our field ponds with this species in mind. In particular some of the ponds on the main car parks could be made more suitable through removal of overgrown trees and shrubs.

The Lesser Silver Water Beetle has a complicated life history in which eggs are laid in a floating cocoon made from leaves of aquatic plants. A picture of a cocoon is shown here.



Strangely the beetle larva is a formidable carnivore, with large jaws, that feeds on snails, and freshwater shrimps, but the adult beetle is a vegetarian that only eats water plants. In Great Britain this species is classified as Endangered. It is given full protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; this means it is illegal to disturb the beetle or its habitat.

A leaflet with more information about the Lesser Silver Water Beetle is available from Sarah Bird – please telephone 01244 380280 if you would like a copy.



Pictures: Andy Harmer



Elephants of the Asian Forest

A 'Tomorrow's World' for Chester Zoo's elephants was unveiled by broadcaster and environmentalist Philippa Forrester.

Philippa, host of shows including **Robot Wars**, **Tomorrow's World** and the **Time Machine**, was at the Zoo to open the £3 million **Elephants of the Asian Forest**, a new home for the Zoo's nine elephants.

The opening of the exhibit marked the end of a fundraising campaign – **Asian Elephants – Secure the Future** – which saw £1 million raised from a public appeal and £500,000 raised from a private appeal.

Elephants of the Asian Forest has been designed to enable the Zoo to continue its breeding work with its current herd whilst helping educate visitors about the issues facing Asian elephants in the wild.

Philippa, who was joined by Zoo President, His Grace, the Duke of Westminster, said: "It's a pleasure to see these elephants in such a rich environment and to know that money

raised from this appeal is helping to make a better life for the wild population.

"This is a great example of the way that the modern zoo can work helping populations both in captivity and in the wild and teaching us all in the process."

Part of the money raised from the elephant appeal has been used to fund projects overseas including Assam where elephants and humans have come into conflict, leading to a decline in numbers of the Asian Elephant.

Melanie Cowieson, the Zoo's Development Manager, said: "The elephant appeal was one of the biggest fundraising appeals in the Zoo's history. The new facility could not have been made possible without the time and effort of so very many people and it is rewarding to finally see it come to fruition."



Café Tsavo

TV celebrity chef Nick Nairn cooked up a treat for Chester Zoo visitors when he opened the new £2 million café.

Nick, Scotland's best known chef, who won the main course heat in the Great British Menu and who cooked for the Queen's 80th birthday celebrations, officially opened the Zoo's new 270-seater **Café Tsavo**.

The new café – where the emphasis is on healthy eating and recycling – has been built on one of the former rhino sites and offers diners the chance to tuck in under the watchful eyes of some of the animals including rhinos, mongoose and warthogs.

Nick, Scotland's youngest chef to be awarded a Michelin star, officially opened the café before putting on a cookery demonstration for guests, which included a party of catering students from West Cheshire College, Chester and Christleton Primary School, Christleton.

Nick said: "I think it's great that Chester Zoo is putting so much thought into their new café, particularly the healthy eating aspect."



Adopter Days

Don't forget – Adopter Days will be held on Saturday October 7 and Sunday October 15!

Top 10 adoptions:

1. Elephants
2. Tigers
3. Penguins
4. Giraffes
5. Orang-utans
6. Chimps
7. Meerkats
8. Red Pandas
9. Jaguars
10. Black Rhinos

Top 10 reptiles:

1. Komodo Dragons
2. Tortoises
3. Crocodiles
4. Tuataras
5. Rhinoceros Iguanas
6. Galapagos Tortoises
7. Green Anacondas
8. Veiled Chameleons
9. Gaboon Vipers
10. Egyptian Tortoises

Top 10 birds:

1. Penguins
2. Snowy Owls
3. Barn Owls
4. Flamingos
5. Hyacinthine Macaws
6. Great Gray Owls
7. Spectacled Owls
8. Mauritius Kestrels
9. Andean Condors
10. Ostriches

Realm of the Red Ape



Realm of the Red Ape is the most expensive project in zoo history and will create the largest Orang-utan exhibit in the Zoo's history.

Building work is well underway on the new 'world-class' £3 million home, Realm of the Red Ape, which will open next Easter.

Realm of the Red Ape will offer more space and enhanced breeding facilities for the critically endangered Sumatran Orang-utans, Bornean Orang-utans and a host of other Indonesia forest animals.

At the current rate of decline, wild Orang-utans will be extinct in 10 to 20 years time. That is a frightening fact and it is vital we do all we can to ensure their survival. The new facility will help us to continue with our very successful breeding programme and raise support and money to help to ensure the survival of these two very important species.



Making a difference

NEZS conservation outreach update

NEZS Philippines Programme

This is one of the largest and longest running of the Conservation Programmes. Chester Zoo's continued support in the Philippines, a global biodiversity hotspot, covers several different components, including:

- Wardening schemes on the islands of Polillo, Negros and Cebu
- Support for research projects
- Habitat restoration
- Awareness and education projects
- Conservation breeding programmes for threatened endemic species including Philippine Spotted Deer, Visayan Warty Pig, Visayan Writhe-billed and Tarictic Hornbills
- Landscape mapping and surveys



NEZS Rhino Programme

Chester Zoo continued its support for the Chyulu Hills Rhino Project providing funding for rhino rangers' salaries, essential equipment and the repair of patrol vehicles. This project monitors and protects an indigenous population of around 12 Black Rhino that are a unique component of Kenya's Black Rhino management programme.

NEZS Jaguar Programme

Continued support for the excellent Jaguar monitoring and research studies being conducted in the Cockscomb Basin Jaguar Reserve, Belize.

Richard Hughes Scholarship

Each year Chester Zoo awards a scholarship in memory of Richard Hughes, a keeper who tragically lost his life working with the animals he loved. The award supports young people wishing to work with elephants. This year two awards were provided:

- 1) Vicki Fishlock – Social dynamics of bat use in forest elephants in relation to risk: A PhD study in the Congo.
- 2) Emily Claire Newman – Dietary management of the elderly elephant: a case study at Chester Zoo.



Making a difference

Global conservation news

Good

Chester Zoo has been accepted as a member of The Great Apes Survival Project Partnership (GRASPP). This is a major collaboration of government and non-governmental organisations working towards saving the great apes from extinction. Membership recognises the wealth of support Chester Zoo already provides towards great ape conservation and the expertise we have in the field of great ape conservation and research.

Bad

Whilst three subspecies of Africa's Black Rhino continue to steadily rise in numbers, the fourth subspecies the Western African Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis longpipes*) is now feared extinct. An intense survey in northern Cameroon, previously home to the remaining Western African Black Rhinos, has failed to locate any signs of their presence. Poaching is the main cause for their demise.

Other Grant Support

- The Tapoh Village Conservation Education Centre – continued support for a very successful project protecting hornbills by working with the villages surrounding the Budo-Sungai Padi National Park in Thailand.
- Support, linked with Chester Zoo's involvement in the European breeding programme, for a project reintroducing Scimitar-horned Oryx to Dghoumes National Park in Tunisia.
- Continued support for the Wildlife Warden Project in the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary in Sabah. This is an important area for the Bornean Orang-utan.
- Support for the attendance of an overseas conservation biologist to attend a global amphibian crisis workshop at the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust in Jersey. The workshop is aimed at capacity building scientists to tackle the important conservation issues that threaten amphibian populations worldwide.



Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes

Yellow-throated Laughingthrushes are found in north east India, Myanmar and China. The two Chinese races differ from those found elsewhere in having blue crowns and blue edges on their wings. These are to be shortly recognised as a full species, the Blue-crowned Laughingthrush, and this new name will be used in this account by Roger Wilkinson.



These birds were previously known only from two museum specimens of the race *courtoisi* collected in Wuyuan County, Jiangxi Province in 1919, and three of the race *simaoensis* collected in 1956 near Simao, Yunnan Province. No Chinese or visiting ornithologists had seen them since. It was a great surprise when Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes appeared in the wild bird trade in Europe in 1988.

Zoos and Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes

Roland Wirth, Director of the Zoological Society for the Conservation of Species and Populations (ZSCSP), Munich, first brought Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes to the zoo community's attention. In June 1993 David Jeggo, of Jersey Zoo, chaired the first Zoo Federation (now BIAZA) Passerine Taxon Advisory Group. At that meeting Dave Coles, of Child Beale Bird Park, agreed to co-ordinate a British Isles and Ireland Joint Management of Species Programme (JMSP) for these birds. This was later taken on by Laura Gardner, Curator of Birds at Leeds Castle, and has evolved into a European Studbook managed by Laura and supported by Chester Zoo.

Chester Zoo started working with Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes in 1993 and first bred them in 1996. Under the care of Wayne McLeod and his team Chester Zoo has continued to breed these lovely birds which, as part of the managed breeding programme, have been sent to many other European zoos.

Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes in Wuyuan, China

In 1994 Roland Wirth began funding Professor He Fen-qi of the Institute of Zoology, Beijing, to look for Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes. It was three years before a report of living birds was received and not until 2000 that birds were confirmed to be breeding at two different sites in the vicinity of Wuyuan. Since then four further breeding locations of the race *courtoisi* have been discovered. Most of the known breeding sites lie in lowland areas close to the Le'an River where stands of tall trees suitable for their nesting requirements remain. All sites are close to human habitation and one is in a small town away from the river where the birds live in close harmony with the local people. That was until building developments earlier this year resulted in the clearing of that area! Last year a different breeding site was threatened by road building so work is continuing to find ways to offer better protection to known colonies and to look for new ones. An extensive search in Wuyuan earlier this year however found only one other colony and these may yet prove to be displaced birds. In total the number of *courtoisi* summed at all these sites is estimated to be 180-190 birds.

Search for Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes in Simao, Yunnan Province

Simao in south Yunnan, South West China, is the only known locality for *simaoensis* and there had been no reports of its presence there since 1956. In April 2002 Professor He Fen-qi and Hong Yuan-hua visited Simao to search for these birds. Photographs of Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes were shown to local villagers, one of whom reported the bird to have been quite common twenty years ago but none had been seen for over ten years. Few trees remained except for one area by a reservoir and no laughingthrushes of any species were found. Trapping, habitat loss and pesticides may all have resulted in a decline of birds in this area.

A second visit to Simao in May 2004, was made by Professor He Fen-qi together with Laura Gardner, but this again failed to find any Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes in Yunnan. Hopes were raised in early 2005, when on a third visit to Simao, birds were heard and glimpsed that could have been Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes. I visited Simao in May 2005 together with Professor He Fen-qi and Mary Richardson of Jersey Zoo, but we were unable to find any evidence of these birds and to this day *simaoensis* remains an enigma.

In-situ conservation of Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes

Since 2000 Chester Zoo and Leeds Castle, Kent, joined ZSCSP in funding research and conservation of the Blue-crowned Laughingthrush in China. The French conservation organisation CEPA (Conservation des Espèces et des Populations Animales) that receives funding support from French zoos joined this consortium of funding partners in 2001. This consortium is now co-ordinated from Chester Zoo. I met Professor He Fen-qi in Beijing in 2002, and in May 2004 I made my first visit to Wuyuan where together with the Professor and Laura Gardner I was able to study these birds in the wild. On behalf of the four European partners we renewed the three-year Memorandum of Agreement with Wuyuan Forestry Bureau to continue support of Small Protected Areas.

Although further field work may reveal more breeding sites for Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes it is precautionary to assess their conservation status in terms of current knowledge. With a total known population of less than 200 birds these should currently qualify under the IUCN criteria as Endangered or Critically Endangered. Although protected from trapping in their breeding areas they remain threatened by large scale development. Two breeding sites are currently threatened by building projects. As such both the ex-situ zoo breeding programmes and in-situ field support remain of highest priority.





Leap into action for snow leopards with WWF Walk for Wildlife

With its unique spotted coat and bushy tail, the snow leopard is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful creatures in the world. However, it is a species fighting for survival with only an estimated 300-500 snow leopards left living in the mountains of Nepal, known as Nepal's 'Sacred Himalayan Landscape' and only about 4000 left in the world. WWF is therefore asking

people to leap into action to help raise funds to protect these amazing creatures and join one of the many sponsored walks that are taking place on Sunday 8 October.

Here at Chester Zoo, we will be hosting a WWF Walk for Wildlife 2006 with a fantastic prize for the top fundraiser. We are exclusively offering a Red Panda

Adoption package, which includes an engraved thank-you adoption plaque, our quarterly magazine, two complimentary tickets and an invitation to our Adoption Day in October. During the Walk for Wildlife there will also be face painting, competitions and a goody bag for all participants. All fundraisers can also enter prize draws to win fantastic prizes from Canon.



For a great day out with friends and family, please call, 01483 426333 to register for the walk or visit the WWF website at: www.wwf.org.uk/walk.

Take home your zoo memories in two exciting new ways!

Launching this Summer, Chester Zoo is starting its very own collectors range of pin badges. With over 60 stunning designs available, including animal, conservation and landmark events, they will surely become hot property for avid collectors.

To help you collect we have produced specially designed Chester Zoo lanyards.

Pin badges and lanyards are on sale from our Zoo shops and at the new Pin Badge Trading Post, next to the Marmot enclosure.

Look out for our staff wearing special edition badges as you can swap badges with them. But hurry as stocks are limited!

Another way to make your day at the Zoo extra special is to have your photograph taken as you ride the Zoofari monorail.

Available on selected trains, get ready to smile for the camera as you soar over the Zoo. When you have completed your journey, simply purchase your photo, in an attractive animal print frame, at the photo booth, next door to the Monkey Island monorail station.

Capture your special day in print!

Tour Opportunity of the Galapagos Islands

The Galapagos Islands, off the coast of Ecuador in South America, are a veritable Eden, a living and real natural history lesson of exactly what the world was like prior to the advent of man.

Today Blue-footed boobies, flightless cormorants, land and marine iguanas and giant tortoises roam freely as they did thousands of years ago. This extraordinary landscape comprises of 13 islands in total and dozens of smaller islets and rocks – all the result of volcanic activity, with exotic plant life, unique wildlife species and an extraordinary landscape fringed with blue sea, gorgeous untouched beaches and bays and reefs, perfect for easy snorkelling. Simply put, there is nothing else like them in the world.

Working with Discovery Initiatives, a pioneering and award winning nature tour operator, Chester Zoo is now able to offer you and your family an unforgettable, high quality wildlife cruise. Not only will you have a fascinating experience, you will also

be directly supporting Chester Zoo's work with endangered animals, with each tour contributing to this end. Either join a set departure or charter a boat as a party of friends or family. Children's activities incorporate everything from lessons in astronomy and ecology to kayaking and snorkelling. Prices start from £3,450 per adult and £2,370 per child fully inclusive of international and domestic flights.

For further details or to discuss any of our other trips please call our Travel specialists on 01285 643333 or email enquiry@discoveryinitiatives.com or visit www.discoveryinitiatives.com Please quote Chester Zoo when making an enquiry.

These trips are run on behalf of Chester Zoo Charity No. 306077 by Discovery Initiatives Ltd, an award winning nature travel operator, ATOL Number 6945 (Steppes Travel). All bookings are made with Discovery Initiatives, under their published terms and conditions.



Rural Enterprise Fundraising Support

Supporters of the Zoo will know that as a charity the North of England Zoological Society relies on donations from a variety of sources to help fund its conservation programmes and development programmes across the Zoo. In this issue we wanted to focus on two grant giving bodies who have helped Chester Zoo to further their mission: The Rural Enterprise Programme and the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme.

The Rural Enterprise Programme is an excellent grant initiative which aims to support a range of regeneration activities in rural Cheshire, Warrington and Halton. Chester Zoo has received grant funding under the Green Fingers Scheme to support the planting elements of our new Orang-utan development, **Realm of the Red Ape**. Over 1100 plants, shrubs and trees will be incorporated into this new exhibit to give visitors the impression they are high up in the canopy of the Asian forest. In addition, Rural Enterprise generously supported the educational and theming elements of the wonderful new **Elephants of the Asian Forest** including commissioning many of the models from local artists.

More recently the Rural Enterprise Programme has supported our native species work with Voles and Water Shrews, and in an exciting new development for the Zoo the Programme has helped to provide infrastructure funding for **Frost Fair**, a themed winter experience new for December 2006.

In total an investment of £266,000 has helped Chester Zoo to create two new exciting enclosures, providing undercover viewing of the animals which will bring additional visitors to the Zoo. The programme also supports local conservation through our native species project involving the reintroduction of species into safe waters at the Zoo. Finally, Rural Enterprise has also helped safeguard seasonal jobs and create new outlets for regional crafts people. This has been possible through the creation of a new winter attraction extending the appeal and season beyond the summer months.



The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme



The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme is a voluntary government initiative which enables landfill site operators to donate some of the money they would have paid in landfill tax, to environmental projects. This is usually via a distributive body. The scheme was designed to help mitigate the effect of landfill upon local communities.

Chester Zoo has been lucky enough to receive strong support from the two funds which use tax credits donated from two major landfill operators in the UK, Biffa Waste Services and Waste Recycling Group Ltd. Biffaward is funding the lift and related works of **Realm of the Red Ape** project, whereas Waste Recycling Group Ltd generously funded the pathways for **Elephants of the Asian Forest**. This wonderful support for both projects amounts to over £95,000 ensuring both projects are fully accessible to the public.



investing in the environment

Change the world with the gift of a lifetime

With habitats and the species within them disappearing at an alarming rate, the need for Chester Zoo's conservation and animal welfare work is crucial. Unfortunately changing the world is not an easy task, nor is it possible without vital funds.

Chester Zoo's Lifetime Supporters are a special group of individuals who have kindly pledged to leave a gift in their Will to Chester Zoo. The beauty of giving in this way is that it costs you nothing right now. Our Lifetime Supporters have committed to this to make a better future, and the world has never needed it more.

Lifetime Supporters are given a special guided tour when they let us know they have remembered the Zoo in their Will. In recognition of their gift they are also invited to a special event at the zoo once a year to show our appreciation.

This gives them a chance to see the latest exhibits and receive updates on the latest developments. This year's event is taking place on 22nd September so if you have remembered Chester Zoo in your Will and have not let us know yet, then please let us know

soon so we can say thank you properly. For more information on how to go about leaving a gift in your Will to Chester Zoo, please contact Lynsey Jones on 01244 650292 or via email on l.jones@chesterzoo.org.



Chester Zoo "100 Club"

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

April 2006

Mr Mark Cleave, Chester	£100
Mr Robert Callaghan, Stoke on Trent	£100
Mrs L M Hughes, Chester	£50
Dr Peter Duggleby, Wirral	£50
Mrs J Colclough, Stoke on Trent	£50

May 2006

Mr & Mrs D Milligan, Wirral	£100
B Moreton, Stoke on Trent	£50
June Walker, Merseyside	£50
Nigel Jones, Wrexham	£50

June 2006

Penny Rudd, Chester	£1000
Mrs S Cheetham, Birkenhead	£100
Sheila Hartley, Lancashire	£50
Mr Ken Roberts, Chester	£50
Alison Gillies, Birkenhead	£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 Z. Please inform us as soon as possible if you change address.

If you wish to participate, please contact the Development Office on 01244 650292.

Sunday is the day the Teddy Bears have their Picnic!



Chester Zoo is once again looking after lots and lots of Teddy Bears! Come along on Sunday 17th September and join the fun with Build-A-Bear Workshop. If you bring your own Teddy Bear you will receive £1 off children's admission and you'll get a free Calypso 250ml fruit drink – just go to the Ark Restaurant to collect.

All the entertainment takes place on the Ark Restaurant Picnic Lawn from 11am – 4pm and includes:

- Dancing competitions
- Giveaway bears
- Pass the Teddy Bear
- Teddy Bear Treasure Hunt
- Music man
- Bear Statues
- Bear colouring competition
- Bear Fancy Dress – make sure Teddy is all dressed up!

There are lots of prizes on offer for the lucky winners.

Have your photo taken with the Build-A-Bear Workshop huggable mascot Bearemy®, who will be making many appearances throughout the day.

Please note, normal zoo admission rates apply. One bear entitles one child to receive £1 off a children's admission. All events take place on the Ark Restaurant picnic lawn.

www.chesterzoo.org

www.buildabear.co.uk

in conjunction with Step Into Cheshire Campaign
www.stepintocheshire.org.uk



To b
Tiger image c

www.chesterzoo.org/frostfair



FROST FAIR

1st December 2006 - 4th February 2007

- outdoor ice skating rink
- Festival gift stalls
- Live Entertainment and fun activities for the children
- Journey through Lapland to meet Santa

WIN

a family holiday of a lifetime! Courtesy of Emagine. Fly to see Santa in Finnish Lapland. Enjoy a luxury holiday in the snow.

Terms and conditions apply. See website for details.

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To book or for further details call: 01244 650240 or book online.

Fauna and Flora International (North West Group) at Chester Zoo



FAUNA & FLORA
International
Conserving wildlife since 1903

The Barn Owl in Cheshire

Bernard Wright

Friday 20 October 2006

Bernard Wright was awarded an MBE in the New Years Honours List 2006 for his services to ornithology and conservation. Having spent 10 years as leader of the Chester RSPB Group, Bernard spent much of this time raising awareness and promoting conservation. He was instrumental in installing the cameras on Chester Cathedral and Town Hall when the Ravens nested there in 1997, but he has also involved himself with Peregrines, Barn Owls and Lapwing. In 1932 there were 240 pairs of barn owls in Cheshire and by 1985 there was just 35 pairs. This represents a decline in Cheshire of 85% against an average decline rate of 69%, one of the highest decline rates in England & Wales. Worse was to come and in 1999 only 10 breeding pairs were recorded in Cheshire. Bernard, together with George Bramall and Cheshire Wildlife Trust

(www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/cheshire) set up the Broxton Barn Owl Group, and has assisted other barn owl conservation groups in setting up their own groups, both in Cheshire (www.ipjnet.freeseerve.co.uk/mcboc) and Staffordshire. As a result of his work there has been a significant improvement in the status of Barn Owls, and other species in Cheshire.

This evening will not only be a fascinating opportunity to learn more about the barn owl in Cheshire but the talk will also embrace the general conservation concerns in the county and beyond as they affect species such as the brown hare, lapwing, corn-cockle etc. Please come along and support what will be a terrific example of the conservation principle "think global, act local."

The Painted Dog of Africa

Gregory Rasmussen

Friday 1 December 2006

The Painted dog, also known as the African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*), is one of the most endangered African carnivores, with hypotheses to explain the decline including human persecution, pack size dynamics, disease and competing predators.

This presentation highlights 17 years of research and conservation effort targeting this fascinating species, and the development of a model conservation project that brings in the community as partners.

Born in Britain, but brought up in Rhodesia, Greg developed a strong affinity for and understanding of the country's flora, fauna and people, leading to a life where conservation has been the main theme. The encouragement offered to him as a child by the Curator at Zimbabwe's Natural History Museum has resulted in Greg seeing one of his roles as doing the same for children today. After distinguished service with the British Merchant Navy, which included the Transglobe Expedition bound for the North & South Poles under Sir Ranolf Fiennes, Greg still yearned to work in wildlife conservation. A twist of fate in 1989 whilst working of a field survey in Hawange National Park, led to an invitation to work with the Hwange wild dog project, so Greg sold all his worldly goods and purchased an old Landrover and some spares. Although this project terminated in 1992, Greg was 'hooked' having found a meaningful subsistence and cause, so he lobbied National Parks for permission to set up a research and conservation program based out of Hawange National Park.

Greg made his vehicle his home and the work of saving an endangered species his vocation.

Despite the considerable political and economical hurdles in Zimbabwe, this project has managed to survive and grow thanks to Greg's persistence and dedication, and unlike elsewhere in Africa, where numbers have declined, the Painted Hunting Dogs of Zimbabwe have re-colonised in a number of areas where they existed historically (www.painteddog.org). Come along and hear how this magnificent achievement has happened, and continues to happen.

For All Events:

Tickets may be available on the door but advanced booking helps keep costs down. Please call Penny Rudd on 01244 650215 to reserve tickets. Doors open at 7.00 pm for a 7.30 pm start at Chester Zoo's Russell Allen Lecture Hall, off the A41, just before the Park & Ride. Members and non-Members of FFI are welcome to attend; tickets cost £8.00 for FFI Members and £8.50 for non-Members, with a concession of £5 for students. All ticket prices include a buffet and wine.