

The Bartlett Society



NEWSLETTER No.131: July 2013

This newsletter is a special one-off bumper issue to mark the different ANNIVERSARIES being celebrated this year by the following six major UK zoos - Edinburgh, Paignton, Colchester, Welsh Mountain, Twycross, and Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust.

Our AGM for 2013 will be held on Saturday 19th October in the ZSL Council Room (same venue as last year) between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The ELECTION OF OFFICERS postponed from last year will be held: further important information about the election can be found within this newsletter.

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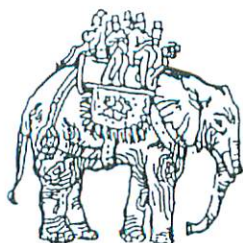
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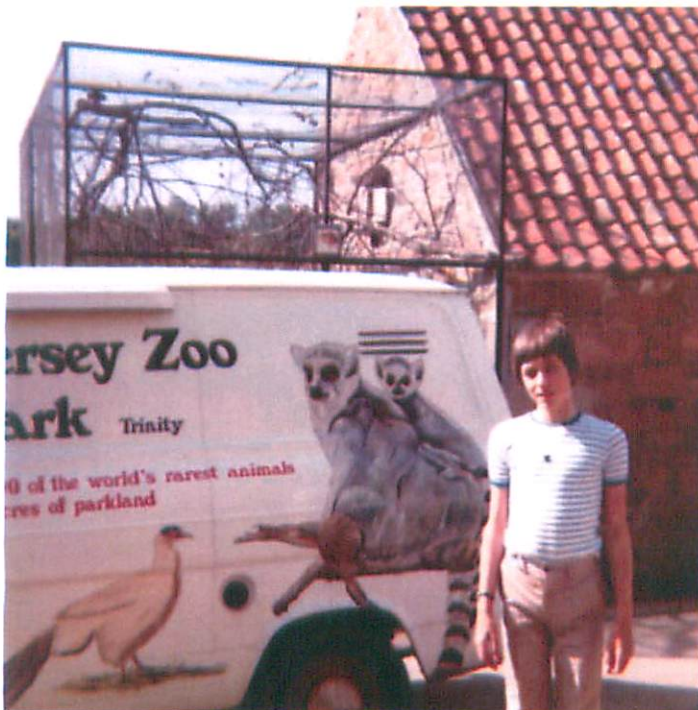


*Founded by C.H. Keeling on 27th October 1984,
and devoted to studying yesterday's methods
of keeping wild animals.*

2013 IS A MILESTONE for some of our finest zoos. It marks the centenary of Edinburgh Zoo, the 90th anniversary of Paignton Zoo, and the 50th anniversaries of Colchester Zoo, Twycross Zoo, Welsh Mountain Zoo, and the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust (as Jersey Zoo, this latter was, of course, opened 54 years ago, but in July 1963 the JWPT – now the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust – was formed to take over the zoo and put it onto a scientific footing). Some of these organisations are already celebrating in style, or have celebrations planned, but, being a zoo-history organisation, the Bartlett Society could not let the year slip by without some form of tribute of our own. This special themed edition of our Newsletter is therefore dedicated to the above organisations and to the geniuses (I don't feel that's too strong a word) who founded them, and who battled petty bureaucracy, local opposition, stress, self-doubt, escalating costs and poor summers to achieve their dream. These men and women were persevering, singular-minded, determined, unwilling to compromise, and convinced their course was the right one. Above all, the notion of just throwing in the towel when the going got tough, was unthinkable. So to Molly Badham, Gerald Durrell, Nathalie Evans, Frank Farrar, Tom Gillespie, Robert Jackson, and Herbert Whitley, we salute you!

I must express my profound thanks to everyone who has written for this special newsletter. My only regret is that one article – about Twycross Zoo – has, most unfortunately, not arrived at the time of going to press. This omission is felt most acutely. The reason I was given for the delay was that Twycross has recently lost “Louis” the chimp after a short illness. As he was an original PG Tips chimp, this generated a considerable volume of queries from the media for the Twycross team to respond to. So in the following pages you will read articles on Colchester Zoo, Edinburgh Zoo, Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, Paignton Zoo, and Welsh Mountain Zoo, but the piece on Twycross Zoo will, I am sorry to say, have to wait until a future issue.

Russell Tofts



Left: This is one of my favourite photos. It was taken on my first visit to Jersey Zoo on 3 September 1978, a few weeks short of my 14th birthday. The cage behind me was home to a successful breeding colony of Sierra Leone striped squirrels. Note I am proudly wearing my Ark Club membership badge. I'd been a member since 1976. The Ark Club, a precursor of the Dodo Club operated by the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust today, was a joint scheme – a sort of marriage if you like – between the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, as it was then, and the Wildlife Youth Service (the junior wing of the World Wildlife Fund). My parents and I were staying in Jersey for one week. We arrived on Saturday afternoon, 2nd September, and on the Sunday I insisted on dragging them round the zoo with me. I was to spend two more days up the zoo that week, but on my own,

leaving my parents to explore some of the other sights in Jersey on those days. I notice I am wearing my watch on my right arm. Today I habitually wear it on my left. I wonder at what point I changed, and why. **RT.**

Edinburgh Zoo and Some of Its Animal Characters

The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland

This month marks the 100th anniversary since the opening of Edinburgh Zoo. With the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland's founder, Thomas H. Gillespie at the helm, the Zoo opened its doors for the first time on 22nd July, 1913. In the century since, Edinburgh Zoo has been a forerunner in conservation, animal husbandry and science as well as the home of many famous faces. While most will recognise Tian Tian and Yang Guang, the Zoo's two giant pandas who arrived in 2011, there are parts of the Zoo's history which may not be so widely known.

Thomas Gillespie's main aim with creating Edinburgh Zoo was "to promote, facilitate and encourage the study of zoology and kindred subjects and to foster and develop amongst the people with an interest in and knowledge of animal life". This still rings true to both the Society and Zoo's objectives today.

The site of Edinburgh Zoo was bought with help from the local council for a sum of £17,000 and was opened to the public on 22 July 1913. There were originally 27 acres of park with 45 acres to the north that was used as a golf course. The Society took over these 45 acres and incorporated them as part of the park. £8,000 was estimated for an initial collection of animals and to adapt the existing buildings. The early footprint of the southern aspect of the site was designed by the social visionary and town planner, Patrick Geddes, along with his son-in-law Frank Mears.



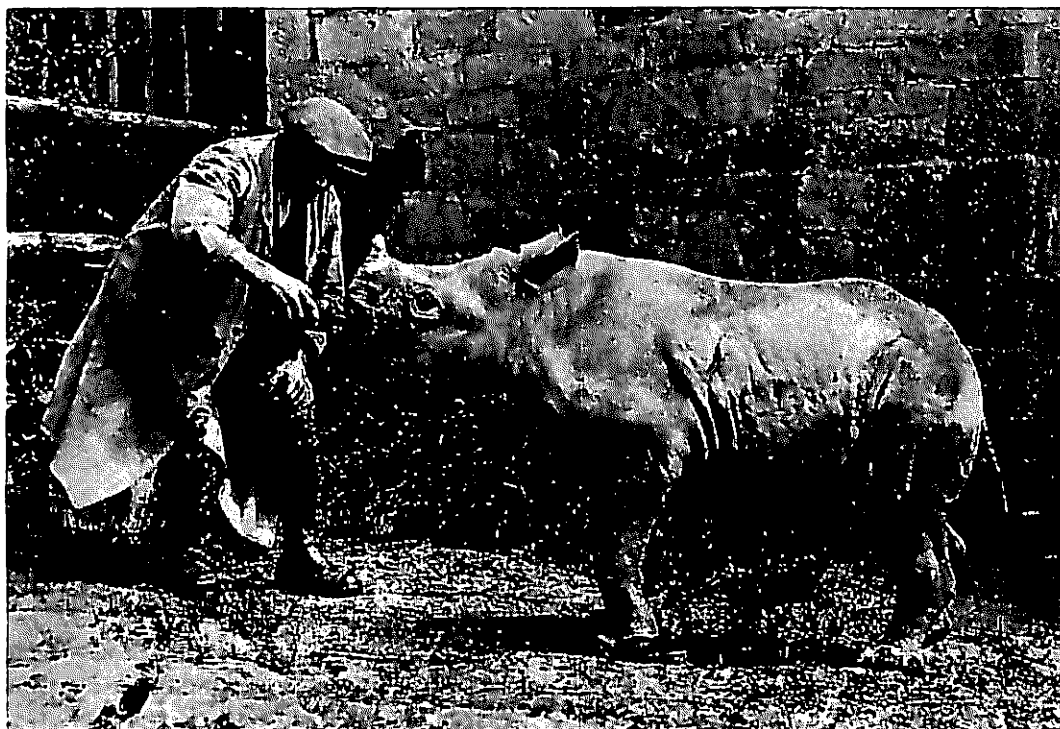
Mr. T. H. Gillespie, the Society's first Director-Secretary and now an Hon. Vice-President of its Council, who celebrated his ninetieth birthday on 3rd October.
See 'Zoo Man's Ninetieth' page 17.

Penguins have always been an important part of Edinburgh Zoo, with a king penguin featuring as the Zoo's logo. In 1919, Edinburgh Zoo successfully hatched the first king penguin outside of the Southern Hemisphere. The world-famous penguin parade began in 1951 when a gate was left open and a gentoo penguin escaped and the keeper decided to see what would happen. It was followed by other penguins and they marched down to the front of the Zoo, along the pavement on Corstorphine Road. The keeper turned them around and they marched back by a different route. The penguin parade is entirely voluntary; the penguins can choose to be involved, so sometimes there can only be a few in the parade, sometimes many.

Above: Thomas Hailing Gillespie in 1966

In August 1938, the first giraffe ever seen in Scotland arrived at the Zoo. George was born in Bristol and his journey north provided a problem as he was eleven feet tall, too tall to pass under railway bridges or overhanging tree branches on the roads. It was arranged that he should travel by sea from Avonmouth to Glasgow and thence by motor lorry through the night.

Wojtek, the brown bear, was adopted as a cub by the 22nd Company Polish Army Service and Corps (Artillery) troops in 1942. He quickly became a firm favourite of the troops and in 1944 was enlisted as an honorary soldier and mascot for the soldiers, complete with name, rank and number. Wojtek stayed with his unit throughout the entire Italian campaign. When the Company was assigned to help supply food and ammunition to the Allied Forces in the battle of Monte Cassino, the Soldier Bear travelled to the battle with the troops and, without prompting, helped to carry boxes of 25lb artillery shells for his comrades under heavy gunfire without dropping a single one. After the war ended, the 22nd Company was billeted in Winfield Camp, near Hutton in Berwickshire. Wojtek was one of around three thousand troops in the camp and became a very popular figure with locals in the Borders. In November 1947, Wojtek was loaned to Edinburgh Zoo by the Polish army. He died of old age in 1963 after a very contented life.



Thomas Gillespie feeding a “baby” rhino

Photo: Mrs Gillespie

In 1966, two young chimpanzees, Ricky (4 years) and Cindy (3 years), arrived at the Zoo. Ricky became a mascot on a merchant navy ship after the probable slaughter of his parents for the illegal bush meat trade. Although he was well cared for, the merchant navy realised as he grew older that they couldn't offer an ideal environment for the chimp. Although often difficult for chimps like Ricky who were separated from other chimps at a young age, Ricky was warmly accepted by the group at Edinburgh Zoo due to his calm and gentle nature. Ricky lived to the grand old age of fifty and died on 31st January 2012. Cindy is still alive today and we will be celebrating her 49th birthday in October 2013.

The Zoo hosted the 9th European Endangered Species Programme conference in 1992, the first to be held in Britain. With 140 people representing 62 institutions from fifteen countries, it was the largest EEP meeting to date.

Mercedes the polar bear was rescued from northern Canada in 1984 where she was due to be shot for being a nuisance to local townsfolk. The car company Mercedes-Benz assisted with the costs of her transport which is how she got her name. Mercedes moved to a four-acre purpose built enclosure at the Highland Wildlife Park in 2009 where she happily spent the rest of her days.

Sir Nils Olav, a king penguin, is the mascot to the Royal Norwegian Guard. He was named after two people: Major Nils Egelien (who organised to adopt one of Edinburgh Zoo's king penguins in 1972) and King Olav V of Norway. After his adoption, Sir Nils was given the role of mascot of the Norwegian Guard. Since then, each time the Guard has visited the zoo, Sir Nils has inspected the troops and received a promotion (Lance Corporal 1972, Corporal 1982, Sergeant 1987, Regimental Sergeant Major 1993, Colonel-in-Chief 2005). In 2008 he was given the prestigious honour of a knighthood - a position so high it had to be approved the King of Norway, King Harald V. The ceremony was lavish, and a crowd of several hundred joined 130 Guardsmen as Nils walked down to receive his knighthood.



Mansion house 1903

Presented by Andrew Macmillan Esq.

Memories of Edinburgh Zoo

David Barnaby

I have three memories of Edinburgh Zoo. They are memories more than recorded incidents, although the first of them recalled here did leave its own record in print. I shall begin, therefore, a little self-indulgently, by quoting from my own writings.

“The Night Herons in Edinburgh were so easy to see that their significance might have been lost on me had I not been looking for them. I saw half a dozen of them within minutes of entering the zoo. They were perching in trees and on fencing just above head height about eight feet away from me. In a zoo like Edinburgh where, in my opinion, most of the animals are displayed extremely well and where fences and barriers are not obtrusive, the fact that a lot of people just glanced at the free Night Herons is a compliment

to the zoo's layout. There seemed so little difference between the Night Herons *on* the fence and the other birds *behind* the fence.

“The history of the Edinburgh Night Herons is fairly straightforward. In 1950 (I read in the guidebook) an aviary was damaged during a storm. The group of Night Herons escaped – although ‘escaped’ may not be the right word. The birds stayed in the trees and have been breeding locally ever since. They spend a lot of time in the zoo but are completely at liberty. In the evenings they leave the zoo to feed in nearby streams and lochs. As I left the zoo, towards evening, I counted thirteen of them sitting on the fence. What greater compliment could animals pay to a zoo?”

I can pinpoint a time for this particular memory because I published the above words, as part of a longer piece, in the Journal of the Zoological Society of Greater Manchester for December 1983.

At various times I have bought things from the Edinburgh Zoo gift shop, but one particular book on my shelves recalls the day, probably on the same visit that I witnessed the Night Herons, when Edinburgh Zoo had, delight of delights, a gift shop *and a separate bookshop*. The bookshop, as I remember it, was not a small place. Books of animal art and photography, animal travel books, scientific surveys, books of zoo history such as there were in 1983, monographs and everything that an animal enthusiast could desire.

Over three years before this visit (it was the same visit, I wrote the acquisition date in the book), the publishers called Windward – owned by W.H. Smith – had released a new edition of Thomas Bewick's *A General History of Quadrupeds* (1790). I bought a copy of that book in the Edinburgh Zoo bookshop. This was an early move in my personal involvement with the art and life of Thomas Bewick. Not long ago I bought the three volumes of *Thomas Bewick: The Complete Illustrative Work* (2011). When its author/editor, Nigel Tattersfield, was beginning his research for that monumental work, he put a request for material in the Bartlett Society Newsletter. I replied to his request, but I had nothing in my collection that he did not have already.

My good friend, the now-deceased instrument builder Roger Lee, was a true man of the north-east. We visited Bewick's home, Cherryburn, together once. I occasionally wrote about Roger in *Mainly About Animals*. Cyril Bloor was also a Bewick enthusiast and he, too, visited Cherryburn. Cyril passed some Bewick material to me after his visit.

Was it at Edinburgh that there was once a famous Penguin Parade? I even think I have seen a photograph of it somewhere. Whatever the truth of the matter is, I did see a “parade” of penguins at Edinburgh Zoo. A keeper was walking from one point in the zoo to another. A quantity of penguins walked along behind him. They were not in an unorganised group scrabbling for food. They walked in an orderly single file, unhurried and knowing that their short journey had a specific aim and destination. This was in the 1980s, too.

The Penguins of Edinburgh Zoo

Russell Tofts

David Barnaby is absolutely right (above) about the Penguin Parade being a noted daily ceremony at Edinburgh Zoo (see *Edinburgh Zoo and Some of Its Animal Characters*, page 5). Certain other zoos – including the Welsh Mountain Zoo, also featured in this newsletter – have, or have had at some time, a