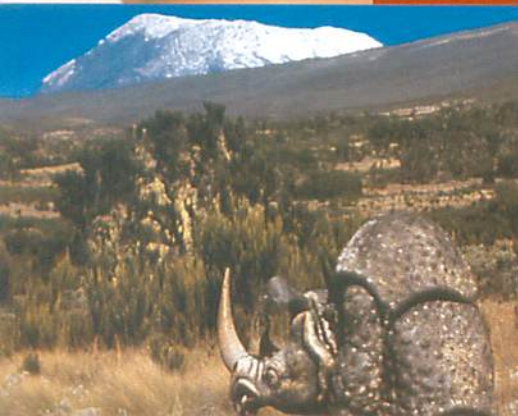




Mad rhinos and 30,000 Englishmen



Newsletter Autumn 2001





Out with the old and in with the new.....

They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks but I like to think that this old dog has learnt a few, and one of them is to accept that after ten years at the coalface of fundraising it is time to pass the baton on. Change brings new opportunities. After a close-run contest to appoint a new director, we feel sure that my successor Cathy Dean will be able to seize those opportunities and help the charity grow.

I cannot pretend that it is easy raising money for wildlife, but over the past ten years I hope we have shown that with great enthusiasm and determination it can be done. Rhino populations have increased in many areas of Africa due to vigilant monitoring and now there is an even bigger job ahead - to re-populate former rhino areas and work even more closely with local rural communities to help them derive direct benefits from wildlife. Over the past few years Save the Rhino has made a shift in fund distribution towards supporting community conservation initiatives (see the report on Laikipia) and I am confident that this direction will form the basis of our support for wildlife conservation in the future.

On the fundraising front there are many new challenges and opportunities. Whilst I remain convinced that the charity sector would benefit

from more consolidation - we work in isolation from other charities who so often replicate our efforts - there is also a need for donors to take an organisation-building approach to philanthropy rather than the usual project-based method. It is easy to see why it is more attractive for a donor to make their donation direct to the project. Yet, if general operating expenses and infrastructure costs could be funded, the charity may not need to be distracted with fundraising for the overheads. Thus, the charity becomes more effective with better IT systems, staff development processes and more efficient management.

It is with this vision for the future that we feel confident that Cathy, the new director, with her skills in fundraising and management, will comprehensively fulfil the charity's objectives in the years ahead. My future role will be as conservation officer to the charity and in time, I aim to help the new team build their presence in the US - very recently we acquired our charitable status in America.

I would like to thank all the staff at Save The Rhino who have put up with me over the years with astonishing patience, as well as all my friends and supporters who have advised and generously donated to the cause.

Finally, I am taking part in what will, I strongly suspect, be my last rhino costume challenge. The event is the 'Marathon Des Sables'. It is a foot race crossing 220 kms of the Sahara Desert, over 6 stages of 20 to 80 kms each, including one marathon stage and a non-stop overnight stage. It is not surprising that no 'costume' has ever completed the race in the time allotted. We - a team of 6 - intend to be the first. The race is in April 2002 and between now and then you may hear from me again! Please give what you can. Our goal is to raise £500,000, which will be the largest event fundraiser in the history of the charity. □

David Stirling, Founder Director

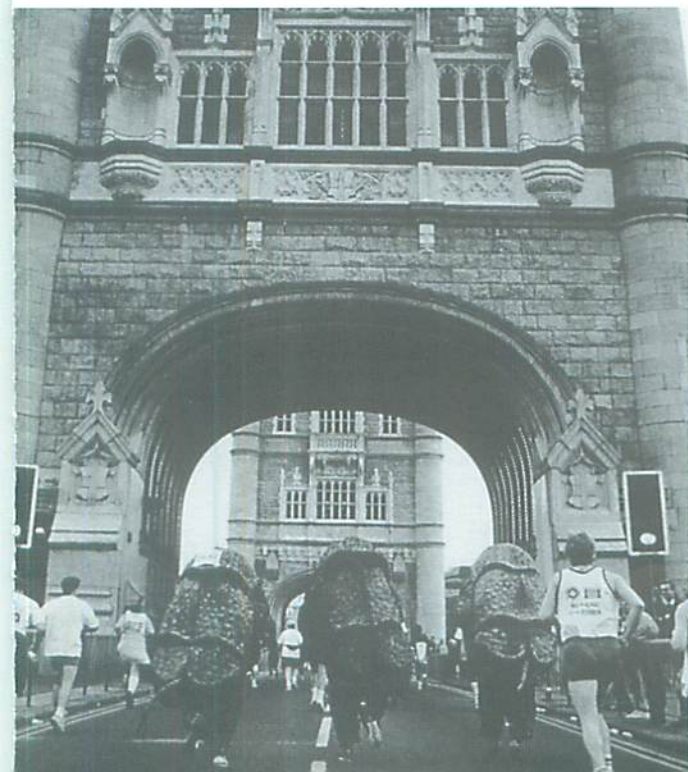
Our Cerebral Tennis Champion Patron

In July this year we received an unlikely call from "Who wants to be a millionaire?" in the USA. There was a celebrity version of the show to be recorded the following day and our patron, Martina Navratilova, was one of the participants. She had requested that her prize money be donated to Save The Rhino. Martina didn't just make it onto the chair but she raised an enormous sum for the charity, in fact, the largest single donation we have ever received - a staggering \$125,000!



I received an E mail from Martina the next day and in her inimitable way she remarked: "Not bad for a day's work?" Our sentiments exactly. This is a 'day's work' that will go a very long way. For information on how we intend to use this donation, look for the articles on Laikipia and Namibia in this edition of The Horn. Many thanks, Martina from all of us in here and all of us out there..... □

David Stirling



Report on Tsavo

2001 has been full of excitements both in and out of the rhino programme. On my last visit to Nairobi in March, I was held at gunpoint whilst staying with friends in Nairobi. A frightening situation, and one which indicative of the state of the country right now.

The Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) are also facing lean times and consequently wildlife conservation is suffering. I would be lying if I said I felt comfortable with the general situation in Kenya, particularly in Tsavo where reports of poaching are on the increase. We have been responsible for the translocation of at least 15 black rhinos from Nairobi National Park to Tsavo East. This brings the total black rhino population there to 50 animals and their home range has expanded to a total of over 4,000 sq kms. An enormous area to police you will agree, and my concern is that there simply are not the resources adequately to protect these animals from poaching.

The Michael Werikhe Memorial Fund continues to support the anti poaching effort in the area and funds raised by the UK Rhino group are ready to be spent on building a visitor centre at the rhino release area HQ. I was relieved to hear that the KWS has proposed to conduct a rigorous and thorough aerial and ground rhino survey in both Tsavo East and West. This is welcome news and we will be one of the main partners in this survey. □

David Stirling



Rhino Cycle Kenya

When a woman of your recent acquaintance tells you incidentally, over a plate of bacon and eggs, that she has been rubbing 'Vaseline' into parts of the body that the sun never sees, you know you're on a charity bike ride.

After several months' training I thought I was in good shape for our Kenyan mountain bike challenge - the heat, the hills, even the bush latrines. But nothing could have prepared me for the sangfroid my companions displayed when discussing intimate bodily functions.

In five days, we cycled a 200-mile circuit on dirt roads around Laikipia, an ascetically beautiful plateau the size of Wales in the central highlands. The region is well known for its wildlife conservation and the money we'd raised would be invested into local projects, via the Laikipia Wildlife Forum and the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy.

On paper the challenge sounded like a Herculean task. In reality it was tough, but never arduous. Great views across high savannah to Mount Kenya were our constant companion. The distances - 40 miles a day - were not huge. The bumpy roads and the mid-day sun ensured that we were happy to reach each day's destination, but nobody was ever reluctant to begin the following morning.

Rhino Cycle Kenya 2002

You can join Save the Rhino in Laikipia in September 2002. The challenge features a 5-day cycle ride through the stunning wilderness and a visit to the rhino project at Lewa Conservancy. For further details, have a look at the Rhino Adventures section of the website or contact events@savetherhino.org for a brochure.

We saw a huge amount of game. In one wonderful vision reminiscent of 'Old Africa', seventeen giraffe, a hundred gazelle, sixty zebra as well as buffalo and baboon swept across the road in front of us on a small plain beneath the Loldaiga hills. I say 'us' when, in fact, I actually missed this: I was a mile further back, pulling a thorn the size of a small carrot out of my tyre. But when you are uninhibited with your 'Vaseline' stories, you share everything!

On the final day of our ride we were chased into the campsite by grey tentacles of thrashing rain. As we came roaring down the last hill to reach the Ngare Ndare River, a herd of impala exploded in every direction, leaping over rocks and fallen trees - a dramatic and fitting end to our challenge.

Under the dripping mess tent, slugging 'Tusker' beer, the bold talk among the group was not 'if' we would all do it together again next year, but where.

Rob Penn

Report on Laikipia

We have made a large commitment of £60,000 to the Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) in Kenya over the next two years.

The district of Laikipia is immediately north East of Mount Kenya and for those of you who know nothing of this initiative, the LWF was established in 1992 when thirty-one major private landowners joined with eighteen

indigenous communities,

twelve tour operators

and various individuals

to form an organisation

whose mission statement

is: 'To conserve the integrity of the Laikipia ecosystem by creatively managing its natural resources to improve the livelihoods of its people.' This is a first in Kenya and it is fair to say that the venture has the potential to become a model for regional wildlife management across East Africa.

The key is integrating community development needs and wildlife management aims. In short, the primary activities of the LWF are to maintain ecosystem integrity, establish and develop community conservation and micro-enterprise projects in wildlife dispersal areas as well as develop wildlife enterprises.

You may ask what relevance this has to rhino conservation. Well, approximately half of

Kenya's rhino population is protected on private land in Laikipia, in five sanctuaries. Despite the security afforded to rhino by those sanctuaries, poverty, insecurity and land use changes in communal dispersal areas around them continue to be a threat to rhino conservation efforts. The sustainability of rhino conservation in Laikipia and the rest of

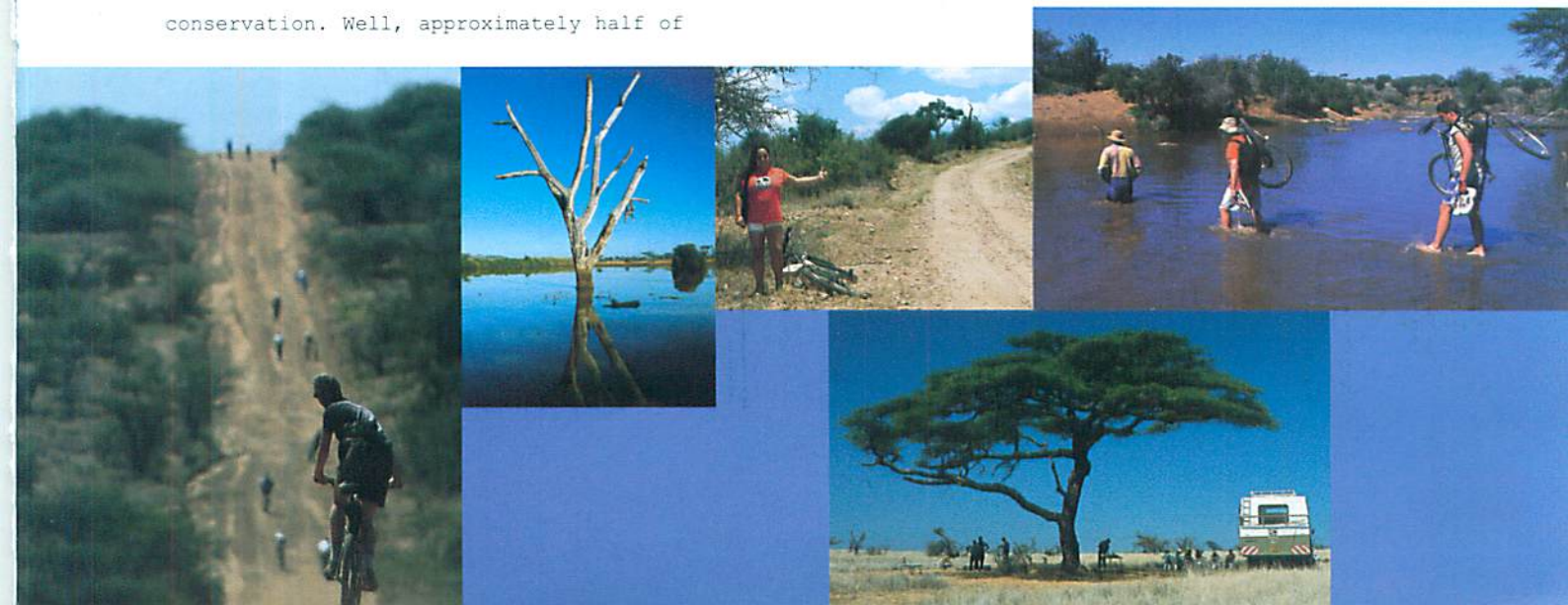
Kenya rests mainly in the integration of conservation benefits in surrounding communities, the

establishment of income generating community development projects, and bringing more land under conservation management.

It is with this in mind that we have been asked to support the community liaison officer (CLO) programme in Laikipia whose role will be to spread livelihood benefits and conservation management into communal wildlife areas. The funding requested is to cover salaries, transport, mobile radio communications and training programs. The proceeds from the Rhino Cycle Kenya, combined with central office funds, will go to support the programme for the next two years. □

David Stirling

...half of Kenya's rhino population is protected on private land in Laikipia...



So long Douglas and thanks for all your help

When I read that Douglas had once found himself standing on top of a termite hill staring at another termite hill through binoculars, I knew we had something in common.

Here was a man looking for rhinos. Not just any old rhinos but a rare breed named the Northern White Rhino, which could only be found deep in the Garamba National park in a remote area of The Democratic Republic Of Congo. This 5,000 sq km area of pristine wilderness is home to the last remaining handful of Northern White Rhinos, and the only way to catch a glimpse of these elusive creatures is to stand on the only elevated ground - which usually happens to be a termite hill.

Douglas's eminence stems from his cult classic 'A Hitch Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy' but it was his writings and observations on endangered species on our planet that caught my attention. I first met him in the early 1990s at the Royal Geographical Society, at a talk on his latest book 'Last Chance To See'. He had the house in paroxysms of laughter reeling off stories about his travels and the endangered species he met along the way. It is rare to meet someone who can entertain and educate in the same breath. I knew then that we had to get him on board the charity.

Someone was on my side that day, as I pushed through the crowds after the lecture to get before him. There is always that horrible, vulnerable moment when you doubt yourself for a second before you pitch in. But I did and he bit; I left with his telephone number and an assurance that we could talk further in the more relaxed surroundings of his Islington house.

Two years prior to that meeting I found myself outside Chichester Theatre with a Bedford van crammed full of bizarre looking rhino costumes. Originally designed by Gerald Scarfe for an opera, they were now obsolete and in need of a new home. We had just set up the Save the Rhino charity and we needed to make a noise - these costumes would definitely turn up the volume.

Our first publicity stunt was to run the London marathon dressed in the costume - we were

blown away by the amount of press coverage it received. Our next challenge was to walk, wearing the costume, from sea level to the highest point on the African continent, the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro. It was with this in mind that we went to see Douglas at home in Islington, to discuss quite seriously the eventuality of walking for a month in temperatures of one hundred degrees whilst climbing to an altitude of over nineteen thousand feet. He loved it and instantly saw the relevance of the walk, which would take us alongside and sometimes through the great national parks of Tsavo East and West.

It was Douglas's enthusiasm for the project that motivated us to raise £100,000 for those people living on the perimeter of these parks and he even managed, in his busy schedule, to join us for a week. Not content with walking alongside the rhino costume he took turns to wear it himself, but being six foot five tall, he looked - by his own description - "more like a giant prawn tempura". I remember well the fireside banter and old Beatles songs Douglas sung, playing one of his beloved guitars. Please go to our website to read Douglas's account on this expedition.

"There is no such thing as dull information, only dull presentation," Douglas said when the technology revolution was imminent. He had no doubt that multi media technology held the answer to this great communications problem. But providing stimulatingly visual reports to a world wide audience was just one way that Douglas felt technology could support conservation. He also strongly believed that armed with a global positioning system (GPS) and a laptop computer the average African game guard could collate information on the whereabouts and the daily habits of rhinos - in effect, generate a virtual game park on the computer. This information could be a very useful research tool, but more interestingly it could also be used, via the internet, to educate and entertain in schools in first and third world countries.

I remember him worrying over the possibilities of this information ending up in the hands of the poachers, and that it would be necessary to have some sort of time delay exerted on rhino movements - an absurd precaution since the average poacher was lucky if he got close to a radio let alone have daily access to the internet. He often tried to convince his friend Steve Jobs that this was a meritorious scheme and worthy of Apple's support. As far as I know he was still trying to win him over when he died.

Douglas left this world far too early. I would like to find a way whereby we could continue his conservation work. Perhaps a fund in his memory - a fund that champions a technological approach to the wildlife problem - is the way forward. I'd better get onto Steve Jobs and see what he has to say.

So long Douglas and thanks for everything..... □

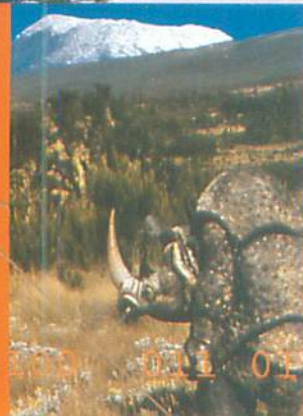
David Stirling



You can follow in the footsteps of Douglas Adams by joining Save the Rhino for the Rhino Climb Kilimanjaro challenge in October 2002.

The challenge features a 6-day trek to the summit of Africa's highest mountain along the excellent 'Rongai' wilderness route and a visit to the rhino project in Tsavo East National Park. For further details, have a look at the Rhino Adventures section of the website or contact Neil Bridgland at the rhino office.

Rhino Climb Kilimanjaro 2002





New rhino arrivals



A baby rhino is a rare thing. But at Port Lymgne Wild Animal Park in Kent they seem abundant, and Berry White along with her dedicated team of rhino keepers, appear to be single-handedly saving the black rhino species...

In 1999, four new calves were born at the park. 2000 was a quiet year due to the black rhino's 18-month gestation period, but last month another baby burst onto the scene. Two other cows are pregnant and due to give birth between now and next spring.

There is nothing quite like a baby rhino. It looks like an oversized Staffordshire bull terrier with colossal conical ears. From the moment it is born, it is on its feet and ready to run behind its mother. In the wild this is essential for survival; at Port Lymgne it's not so necessary as they're treated like royalty, but it's still wonderful to watch as a mini-rhino trots around the paddock.

Port Lymgne hosts the world's largest and most successful captive breeding population of black rhino. Save the Rhino's main priority is to help safeguard rhino 'in situ' - in the wild. However, we do recognise the valuable role that captive breeding plays in the battle to save endangered species, especially when the reproduction rate is on a par with that in the wild. One rhino has already been re-introduced - to Addo National Park in South Africa - and we hope more will follow.

Date for your diary:

The Rhino Cycle UK - 6/7th July 2002

To draw attention to the wonderful work going on at Port Lymgne, and to raise further funds for both captive and wild rhinos, Save the Rhino is staging a British version of the African Rhino Cycles. The challenge is simple: cycle from Greenwich Park to Port Lymgne in a single day, total distance around 65 miles. The route is being planned by Leisure Pursuits Group and will be primarily off-road, utilising the Pilgrim's and Greensands pathways.

We will be setting up a mini-village at Port Lymgne where participants can stay overnight and celebrate their achievement, before enjoying a day at Port Lymgne afterwards - families are welcome to join. All funds raised from the event will be split equally between our African projects and the rhino programme at Port Lymgne. So get your friends together, start getting sponsorship pledges and get training if you want to come and check out the new baby black rhinos at Port Lymgne next summer.

Neil Bridgland



Berry White deserves a special mention.

As well as being the world's most successful rhino keeper, she has run six marathons for Save the Rhino, all in the rhino costume! And if that is not enough, she has cycled across the desert on the Rhino Cycle Namibia, and this September, she negotiated the tracks of Laikipia on the Rhino Cycle Kenya. Berry, we love you - you are truly a rhino hero! □

Neil Bridgland