

A Liverpool **ECHO** supplement

Knowsley Safari Park

40th Anniversary Special



The park: its
history
and its
future



Animals do
the oddest
things – fab
facts and
funny
photos



EXCLUSIVE ECHO READER OFFER INSIDE



KNOWSLEY SAFARI PARK ● 40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Knowsley Safari Park general manager David Ross, who has been there since it opened, celebrates the anniversary with Rigsby the giraffe

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USEFUL INFORMATION

Knowsley Safari Park is open daily (March 1 to October 31) from 10am until 4pm

Entry prices:

Adults (16 years and over) £15

Children (3-15 years) £11

OAPs (60 and over) £11

Season ticket: Adult, £40

Child/OAP: £30

● SEE OUR GREAT VALUE SEASON TICKET OFFER ON PAGE 12

Season tickets are valid for 12 months from date of purchase and also gives you 10% off all purchases in the shop and restaurant.

Amusement rides:

£2 per ticket, £10 per wristband.

Rides are open weekends and school holidays from February half term to October. Rides open from noon and height restrictions apply.

Winter Opening Times: November 1 to February 28: WEEKENDS ONLY

10.30am open, 3pm last entry. Closed December 24th/25th, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day

How to find us:

From M62 exit at junction 6 then take the M57 exit at junction 2. At the roundabout follow the brown safari signs.

SatNav reference: L34 4AN

'So proud of our achievements'

HELLO and a very warm welcome to this special supplement marking 40 years since the opening of Knowsley Safari Park.

Over the next 12 pages I hope you will gain some insight into how the park came about, its history, the challenges we have faced over the years and the work we do today, both in terms of species conservation, breeding and providing one of the biggest tourist attractions in the country.

There are some wonderful photos – both of animals and humans – some fascinating facts about the park, an illuminating history and some intriguing stories of our time spent here with the animals. We've also included some very special offers as a way of saying thank you to you, the people of Merseyside, for your continued support.

Four decades ago, when the idea of a safari park here in Knowsley was first mooted, there was little else like it in the UK. Nowhere else could you find a park so close to such a large urban population, a place where human beings were able to get as close as possible to some of the most magnificent creatures on the planet and all from their very own 'cage' – their own car.

It seems a long time ago since the park welcomed those first day-trippers, 200,000 in the first month alone.

Over the intervening years we have seen many changes and faced many challenges, not least the foot and mouth crisis and more than one recession. Yet we have emerged as the successful business you see today – a must-go-to attraction which brings visitors in

from across the north of England to boost the local economy yet always with animal welfare at its heart.

I am enormously proud of what has been achieved at Knowsley and excited at what we may yet achieve in the coming years.

If you have visited us in the past, do come again. There is always something new to see, something different to experience and in terms of value for money we're hard to beat.

If you have never enjoyed what we offer here across 500 acres then try to come soon – the school summer holidays are almost here and now is the perfect time to see our animals at their best.

Either way I look forward to welcoming you to our park.

Yours,

The Earl of Derby



WARM WELCOME: The Earl of Derby



REMARKABLE: A portrait of Edward Smith Stanley, the 13th Earl of Derby who created his own menagerie in the 19th century

License granted courtesy of the Rt Hon The Earl of Derby

History of

VISITORS arriving today at the safari park inevitably will be looking forward to a day out among the animals. But did you know the park, its owners and their ancestors, have played a crucial part in the country's history?

The Stanley family have owned the Knowsley Estate since the 14th century.

Lord Thomas Stanley was created the 1st Earl of Derby after the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 when he recovered the crown of the slain Richard III and placed it on the head of his stepson, Henry Tudor.

The 5th Earl maintained a company of actors, one of whom was William Shakespeare. Later, the bard's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed for the first time at the wedding of the 6th Earl, in front of an

audience that included Queen Elizabeth I.

The 12th Earl gave his name to the famous Derby horse race which he started in 1780, while the 14th Earl was prime minister three times during Queen Victoria's reign.

The 16th Earl was President of the Board of Trade and Governor General of Canada, and the 17th was Minister of War during the First World War, as well as Ambassador to France after the conflict.

Yet it was the 18th Earl we must thank for the founding of the park itself and his nephew, the 19th and current earl, who inherited the title in 1994 and who still runs it today.

Of course the Knowsley Estate was home to exotic species from around the world long before the actual safari park opened in 1971.

KNOWSLEY SAFARI PARK ● HISTORY



BEST PALS: A charming 1974 snapshot of an elephant and a rhino who became friends at the Safari Park



REMEMBER WHEN: How the Liverpool ECHO reported the opening of Knowsley Safari Park



NEVER MIND: Visitors remain cheerful despite finding themselves in the breakdown lane



CHEEKY MONKEY: Stanley the baboon tries to steal some cake meant for all the monkeys

earls past and present

The 13th Earl of Derby had a lifelong passion for natural history and created his own menagerie in the mid 19th century which contained, at its peak, 318 species of birds and 94 species of mammals.

They occupied paddocks and buildings covering more than 100 acres of land, created by an army of 400 labourers hired specifically for the task.

Lord Derby's scientific interest in animals led him to become a founding member of



MAKING HISTORY:
Thomas Stanley, the first Earl of Derby in 1485

the Zoological Society of London in 1826, and he was president of the organisation from 1831 until he died in 1851.

Following his death the Illustrated London News described his menagerie as the most complete and important private zoological collection in the world and added that 'it is hard to think of a more perfect epitaph for a truly remarkable man'.

If you get a chance, take a look at Knowsley Hall itself. It's a fascinating structure, with the earliest part of the building dating from 1495 and boasting a classic Georgian facade and some fine Jacobean, baroque and Victorian interiors.

These include the 58-foot-long state dining room, originally created in 1820 by the 12th Earl of Derby to celebrate a visit by George IV.

Other highlights include an exceptional library and an unusual walnut drawing room inspired by eighteenth century French design.

The hall – which is set in a 2,500-acre private park created by Capability Brown – can be used for events including weddings, conferences, seminars, product launches, dinners and balls.

It is also open to the public for one week each summer and is much in demand as a film and TV location, featuring in programmes as diverse as The Forsyte Saga and Hollyoaks.

Above all it remains a family house for the current earl, his wife and three children.



MAGNIFICENT: Knowsley Hall, ancestral home of the Earls of Derby



KNOWSLEY SAFARI PARK ● HOW THE PARK WAS CREATED



KEY OF THE DOOR: An elephant and his keeper celebrate the park's 21st birthday



WHAT ARE WE LOOKING AT?: One of the park's famous baboons has a rest on a visitor's car



CUTE CUB: Derby the lion cub gets to know a safari officer



Crowds came

THESE days we take safari parks for granted, but the idea of visitors "caged" in their cars, while the animals roam free, was introduced to the UK in the mid 1960s.

The idea, based on the drive-through game reserves of East Africa, is widely credited to Jimmy Chipperfield of Chipperfield's Circus fame.

He worked with the Marquess of Bath on the creation of the first park at Longleat which opened in 1966, and then with the Duke of Bedford on Woburn Safari Park which opened in 1970.

While Woburn was in development, Jimmy Chipperfield was also in discussions with the 18th Earl of Derby on plans for Knowsley Safari Park.

However, Knowsley was fundamentally different to the previous projects because it was the first safari park that would be created near to a big city – just eight miles from Liverpool city centre – and the first that would be surrounded by suburban housing estates.

Against this background,

NEW ARRIVAL:
A newborn giraffe

planners were understandably nervous about the project, particularly in terms of its potential to cause traffic problems. As a result, it attracted a significant amount of publicity.

In fact, one newspaper called the application for the park "one of the strangest ever to be considered by Lancashire County Council Planning Authority".

Despite these misgivings, all the regulatory hurdles had been satisfactorily overcome by October, 1970, but even then there was still an element of doubt about the project.

According to press reports at the time, Lord Derby had still not decided whether to proceed because of the huge practical difficulties to be overcome, not least of which was the construction of five miles of new roads.

In the end, the 18th Earl finally gave the park the green light in early November, and work began on the huge task of transforming 346 acres of the Knowsley Estate into the new visitor attraction which was set to open the following summer.

By January, 1971, the PR campaign for the park was also in full swing, with Lord Derby appearing in the press riding a baby elephant in front of Knowsley Hall, as Lady Derby walked a very boisterous lion cub on a lead.

The first animals began to arrive in early June, ahead of the planned opening in early July, but even at this late stage there were still problems for Lord Derby and Park general manager Lawrence Tennant, formerly the Chief Game Warden of Uganda.

Firstly, the arrival of the park's elephants was delayed for several weeks due to a dock strike in Mombasa, Kenya.

And then just before the park opened, a TV

KNOWSLEY SAFARI PARK ● TIMELINE



LONG WAIT: Queues of traffic wait to get into the newly opened Knowsley Safari Park in 1971. Inset: Last chance to fill up with petrol before the safari drive

CHECK UP: Safari park general manager David Ross inspects a rhino during his rounds



TRUNK CALL: One of the safari park elephants who liked to play practical jokes



I'M NOT USED TO THIS COLD: A lion climbs up a safari park tree in a bid to get away from the snowy conditions



in their thousands

station screened an advert for the park early by mistake, which meant that thousands of people had to be turned away at the gates.

Despite these mishaps, the park opened in a blaze of glory on Saturday July 3 and immediately became a huge success.

By the end of the month, 200,000 people had visited the attraction. By the end of the year, this figure had risen to well over half a million.

One man who remembers the hectic early days well is current general manager David Ross, then the attraction's chief warden.

"Safari parks are very well established now but back in 1971 they were a totally new concept, and the opening generated a huge amount of interest and excitement," he said.

"As a result, people converged on the park in huge numbers to see this new phenomenon for themselves and, looking back, I'm not sure how we coped with the flood of visitors.

"We had the police trying to cope with long traffic jams outside the park, and the motoring organisations trying to deal with hundreds of breakdowns in the park.

"On one day 6,500 vehicles came through the gates, containing 30,000 visitors. We had to close early in order to try and get them all out again before nightfall. The last one left about 10pm.

"They were amazing days, but what's even more remarkable is that 40 years on the park is still here, and still a big success."



HAVE YOU HEARD THIS ONE?: Comic Ken Goodwin enjoys a joke with Nellie the elephant during a visit to the safari park in 1974

TIMELINE

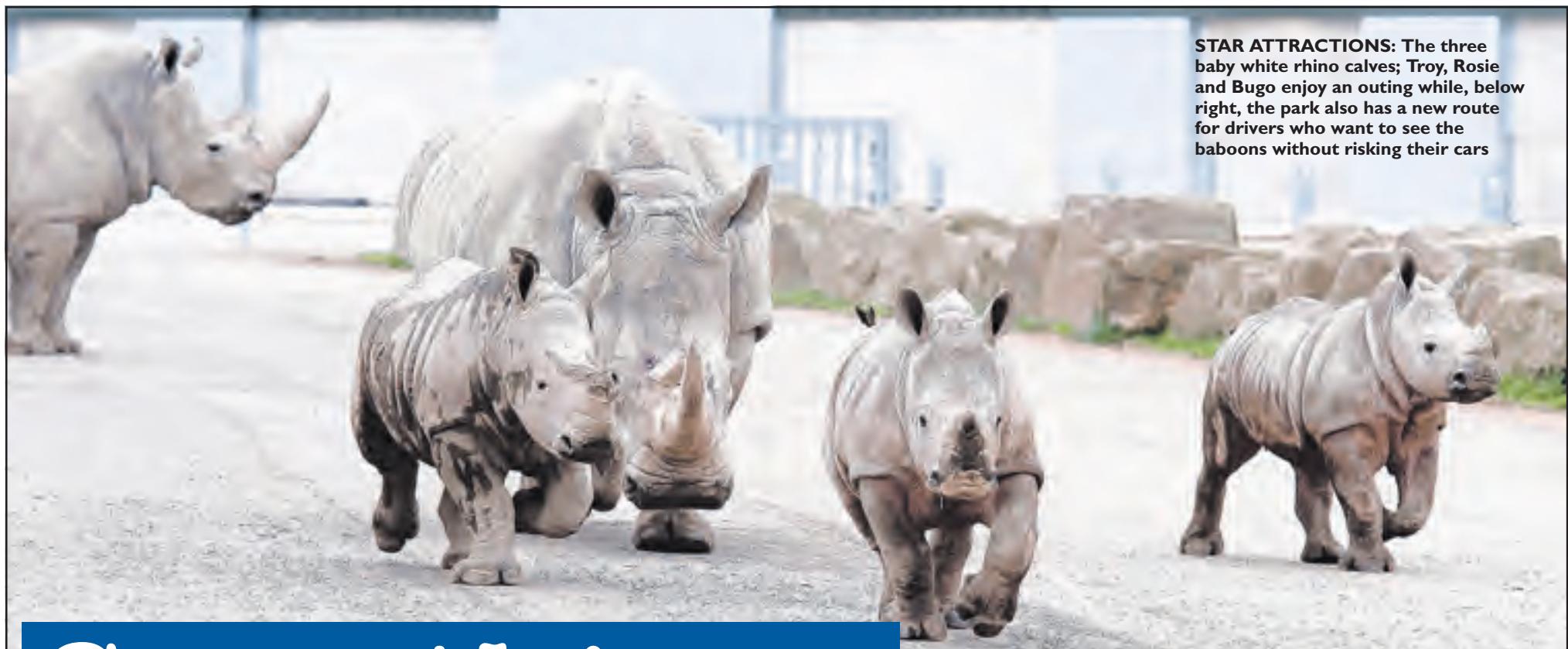
There have been many milestones across the 40 year history of Knowsley Safari Park.

Here are just some of the most important:

- October 1970 – The 18th Earl of Derby obtains planning permission for a new wildlife and game reserve on 346 acres of his Knowsley estate. It will be the first safari park in the north of England and the first near a big city.
- June 1971 – A TV company screens a Knowsley Safari Park advert early by mistake and creates chaos, as thousands of people are turned away at the gates.
- July 1971 – Knowsley Safari Park opens its gates for the first time. One of the key attractions – the herd of elephants – arrives just in time after being delayed by a dock strike in Kenya.
- August 1971 – 200,000 people visit the park in the first month, creating five-mile tailbacks. On one day 6,500 cars carrying over 30,000 people pass through the park. Over 150 vehicles break down.
- 1972 – A dolphinarium is the latest addition to the park. Four dolphins – Duchess, Flipper, Dozy and Scouse – give daily performances.
- 1973 – The safari drive at Knowsley is extended from 3.5 to 5 miles to create a new white rhino reserve, making the drive at the attraction the longest in the UK.
- Mid 1970s – The UK is hit by a major recession and Knowsley Safari Park suffers a decline in visitors.
- Early 1980s – For several years, stages of the RAC Rally are held at Knowsley Safari Park to generate interest and income.
- 1982 – The park opens a new theatre to stage its daily sealion shows.
- 1993 – Knowsley takes delivery of new animals following the closure of Windsor Safari Park including seven elephants, creating the largest jumbo herd in Europe at the time.
- 1994 – The 19th Earl of Derby takes over the running of the Knowsley Estate and park and immediately announces a major redevelopment programme. This regeneration project heralds the start of a new era of ever-rising visitor numbers at the park.
- 1994 – Knowsley Safari Park is voted as the area's top attraction in the Merseyside Tourism Awards.
- 1997 – One of the most famous events in the park's history occurs when a camel is killed by lightning during a summer thunderstorm.
- 1998 – The profile of the park soars when it is the subject of a Granada reality TV series.
- 2000 – The park receives its first royal visit – the Duke of Edinburgh.
- 2001 – The UK is hit by a major outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, the first since 1967. As a result the park is forced to close its gates for many weeks.
- 2002 – Knowsley Safari Park introduces a car and coach-friendly route around the monkey jungle for visitors wishing to avoid its infamous baboons.
- 2004 – The Safari School welcomes its first children. This purpose-built education centre offers a range of sessions on animal-related themes linked to the National Curriculum.
- 2005 – Knowsley celebrates the arrival of the first-ever critically endangered Pere David's Deer twin fawns to be born in captivity.
- 2005 – Visitor numbers at Knowsley Safari Park are at a 30-year high. The attraction welcomes 500,000 people during the year.
- 2006 – Knowsley unveils its new baboon house, built by contractors who have to be fenced in to protect them from the inhabitants of the monkey jungle.
- 2007 – The Aerial Extreme adventure ropes course opens.
- 2008 – Knowsley launches its new £600,000 sealion facility.
- 2009 – The park is forced to issue a warning to visitors with rooftop luggage boxes on their cars after the Knowsley baboons master the art of breaking into them.
- 2010 – Knowsley Safari Park is voted Britain's top wildlife attraction by viewers of the documentary TV channel Eden.
- 2011 – Three white rhino calves are born at Knowsley in the space of two months, reinforcing the park's conservation credentials.



KNOWSLEY SAFARI PARK ● THE PARK TODAY



STAR ATTRACTIONS: The three baby white rhino calves; Troy, Rosie and Bugo enjoy an outing while, below right, the park also has a new route for drivers who want to see the baboons without risking their cars

Something to suit all tastes

FOORTY years after opening its gates for the first time, Knowsley Safari Park remains one of the North West's most popular attractions giving visitors the chance to get 'up close and personal' with around 700 exotic animals from all over the globe.

These include rhinos, camels, buffalo, bison, wildebeest, lions, tigers, monkeys, deer, antelope, wallabies and – of course – Knowsley's infamous baboons!

The good news for drivers concerned about their vehicles is that these days they can choose to view these mischievous inhabitants of the monkey jungle from the safety of the car and coach-friendly route.

Highlights at Knowsley this year alone have included three white rhino calves – Troy, Rosie and Bugo – and the park's biggest-ever pride of lions, including five young cubs.

Visitors can go around the safari drive as many times as they like during the day, and each time the experience will be different.

But there's lots of other things to do while at the park other than the safari

drive. Other attractions include the safari village with its woodland walk, miniature railway and walkaround animal area where elephants, giraffes, meerkats and otters can be viewed at close quarters.

A major feature in this area is the park's revamped sealion facility, with a larger outdoor pool and underwater viewing facilities, which enable visitors to watch the sealions' antics throughout the day, not just at show times.

Meanwhile, Knowsley's Bug House offers everything from snakes and lizards to spiders and cockroaches, while there are goats, lambs, cattle and horses for the children to pet and enjoy at Lake Farm.

Knowsley is also home to Aerial Extreme – the North West's largest adventure ropes course – and an amusement park with a wide selection of rides for the family. (Additional costs apply for the

LEARN THE ROPES:

Visitors enjoy the safari park's Aerial Extreme attraction

ropes course and rides).

Safari Park general manager, David Ross, explained: "Because of all our new animals and developments over the years there's a huge amount to see and do at the park, which is why we're one of the North West's few genuine all-day attractions.

"As a result, we offer excellent value for money which is why I am confident that we will continue to attract large numbers of visitors, old and new, during the course of our fortieth anniversary year."

The park is open daily throughout the summer and weekends during the winter.

Tickets cost £15 for adults and £11 for children and OAPs and include a free full-colour guidebook and audio guide for each vehicle.

For more details about Knowsley Safari Park ring the 24-hour information line on 0151-430 9009 or log on to www.knowsleysafarixperience.co.uk

SAFARI FACT

In total there are more than 15 miles of fences in and around the attraction



IN THE SWIM: The revamped sealion enclosure with its bigger outdoor pool and above, the safari park has its biggest ever pride of lions this year



CONFIDENT:
Knowsley Safari Park
general manager,
David Ross

Freddie finds his flippers

SAFARI FACT

The park is home to around 700 mammals from 30 species

FISHY BUSINESS: Andrew 'Freddie' Flintoff learns how to be a sealion trainer at Knowsley Safari Park

Knowsley Safari Park

prides itself on there always being something new to see or providing a new experience. Here are a few snippets from the park's history – and some surprising facts from today

● In 2007 cricketing legend Freddie Flintoff spent time at Knowsley learning to be a sealion show presenter. The Lancashire and England star was filming for a Sky TV series which saw him trying his hand at a range of careers which also included working as a bingo caller and an Elvis impersonator!

● In 2005 hundreds of birdwatchers converged on Knowsley after a rare red-necked grebe took up residence on one of the park lakes. According to the RSPB, fewer than 20 of the birds from Finland and Russia stay in this country in the summer, and then almost always around the south and east coasts.

● The animals at Knowsley include African hunting dogs which are becoming increasingly rare in the wild. The Latin name for the dogs means 'painted wolf' which reflects their colourful coats of brown, black, yellow and white patches. Rather like fingerprints in humans, no two dogs have exactly the same pattern on their fur.

● A top London dentist swapped his West End clinic

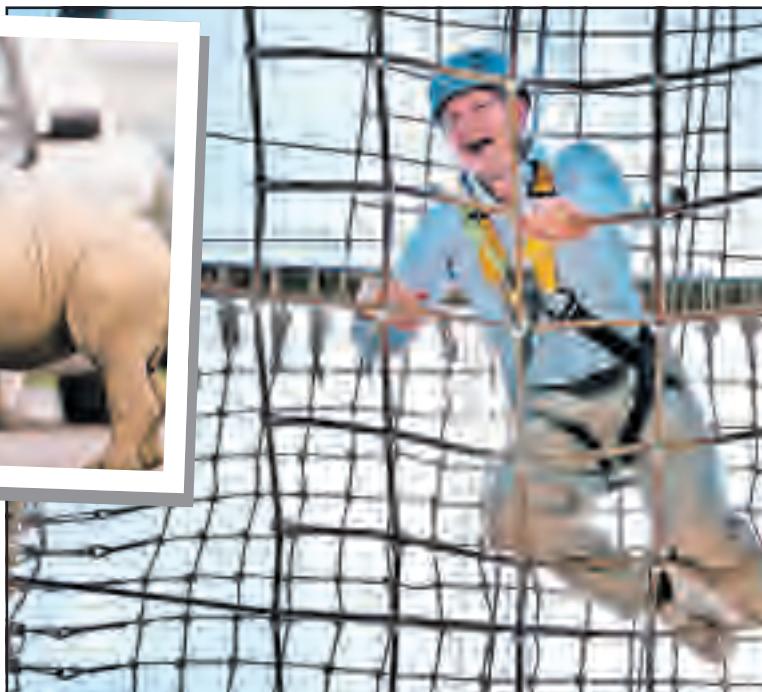


RARE: African hunting dogs at the safari park



CLOSE UP: Flannery, the white rhino, named after Saints star Chris Flannery, shows a bit too much interest in the visitors' cars

for Knowsley to work on an elephant's broken tusk. African bull elephant Nissim needed the treatment – the equivalent of a human root canal filling on a mammoth scale – from Peter Kertesz because the risk of serious infection from an untreated injury of this type is high and can be fatal.



INTREPID: Lord Derby tackles the high wire course at Knowsley Safari Park. Right: the meerkats are hugely popular

● One of the stars of Knowsley's exotic bird show went 'flyabout' in 2006. Sally, a 16-year-old Blue and Gold Macaw, was missing for more than a week and keepers were extremely concerned about her welfare. Fortunately, she was found safe and well five miles away in a tree in the

garden of a Kirkby couple.

● Lord Derby was one of the first people to brave Knowsley's Aerial Extreme adventure ropes course when it opened in spring 2007. 60-foot-high poles were imported from Norway to create the course which features 60 different obstacles including rope bridges, steel rope traverses, scramble nets, zip wires, vines, swinging logs and a climbing wall.

● Meerkat mania arrived at Knowsley Safari Park in 2009 thanks to high-profile TV coverage of the species. The small mammals shot up to number two in the attraction's popularity charts – just behind the baboons – thanks to the antics of Aleksandr, star of the 'compare the meerkat' TV commercials, and

programmes like Meerkat Manor.

● Knowsley bosses launched a special taxi advertising campaign during last year's football World Cup. 30 cabs were covered with photos of the park's infamous baboons taken during the 2006 tournament when the inhabitants of the monkey jungle amassed a huge collection of England flags stolen from visitors' cars.

● In 2007 park bosses named their latest baby rhino Flannery to mark a sponsorship deal with St Helens Rugby Club lock forward, Chris Flannery. The young rhino was soon making the headlines himself, after his interest in visitors' cars resulted in him blocking the safari drive and causing long queues.





KNOWSLEY SAFARI PARK ● ANIMALS DO THE FUNNIEST THINGS



WE'RE IN: The pack of baboons easily open the luggage rack on top of the car



HELP YOURSELVES: By now it's a complete free for all with baboons coming from all over to get a piece of the action while the hapless owners can only look on helplessly

Pictures: MARTIN BIRCHALL

You cheeky monkeys!

ANIMALS can do the funniest things – and that's certainly been true at Knowsley Safari Park over the years.

Often, it's been the park's baboons that have been the main culprits, most notably in 2009 when the inhabitants of the monkey jungle learnt how to break into car rooftop luggage boxes.

A number of families had to watch helplessly as hairy hands grabbed the contents of the boxes and the baboons disappeared into the distance – and up the trees – with clothes, hats, shoes and other holiday items.

As a result, Knowsley bosses had to warn visitors with cargo boxes on their vehicles to use the alternative car-friendly route around. They staged a demonstration, too, of what could happen, and photos of the baboons' antics appeared in many national newspapers as well as on TV stations as far afield as America, China and Australia.

Safari Park General Manager, David Ross, reflects: "When the first luggage box was broken into we didn't really take an awful lot of notice – we just thought it was a one-off incident with a faulty box or lock."

"However, when the problem kept happening, it quickly became clear that the baboons had acquired an unfortunate new skill."

"Their technique involves the largest baboons jumping up and down on the box,

flexing it until the lock bursts open, when the rest of the baboons pile in to see what they can find.

"Obviously, we're well used to them helping themselves to the odd wing mirror or wiper blade, but this has taken things to a whole new level. Let's face it, nobody wants to see a baboon running up a tree with their underwear."

The Knowsley baboons have made the headlines for other reasons, too. In the run-up to the football World Cup in Germany in 2006, they amassed a huge collection of England flags stolen from visitors' cars.

Over the last two very cold winters, photos of keepers giving the baboons baked potatoes to help them keep warm have also appeared widely in both the press and broadcast media.

Meanwhile, back in 2005 the park was forced to issue a visitor

warning of a different kind, this time to the drivers of Smart cars.

While larger, more substantial vehicles barely raised an eyebrow amongst the park's pride of lions, those arriving in Smart cars were being routinely chased by aggressive lions.

Experts believe this was because the vehicle is a similar size to the lions' principal prey such as antelope and gazelle.

In the same year, the press were also reporting how a kitchen stove saved the lives of two baby ostriches at Knowsley.

The drama began when an ostrich nest at the park was flooded out in torrential

overnight rain and three eggs were abandoned by the mother.

By the time the waterlogged eggs were discovered next morning, they were very cold and keepers thought that the chicks had been lost.

However, a member of staff decided to make a last-ditch attempt to save the eggs by popping

them in the oven to try and revive them with heat.

After the eggs had been in the oven on a low light for several days, hopes of success were fading fast when – remarkably, and against all odds – two of the three hatched out successfully a week later.

Bearing in mind their remarkable entry into the world, the ostrich babies were named Harry and Houdini after the famous American escapologist.

Another story that attracted the attention of the press at home and abroad occurred when one of the Knowsley keepers welcomed a 'deer' friend into her home as a lodger.

Section Head Emma Gatcliffe effectively let her spare bedroom to Sultana, a baby Sitatunga antelope she was hand rearing after the fawn was abandoned by her mother.

Because Sultana needed bottle feeding every four hours, Emma took her home from the park each evening in a dog carrier in her car.

Emma said at the time: "This arrangement has been working very well for the last few weeks, although it hasn't done wonders for my bedroom carpet!"

Sultana is very affectionate and has quickly got used to our routine – she's waiting by my car ready to come home every evening."

Proof, if it were needed, that animals really do have minds of their own

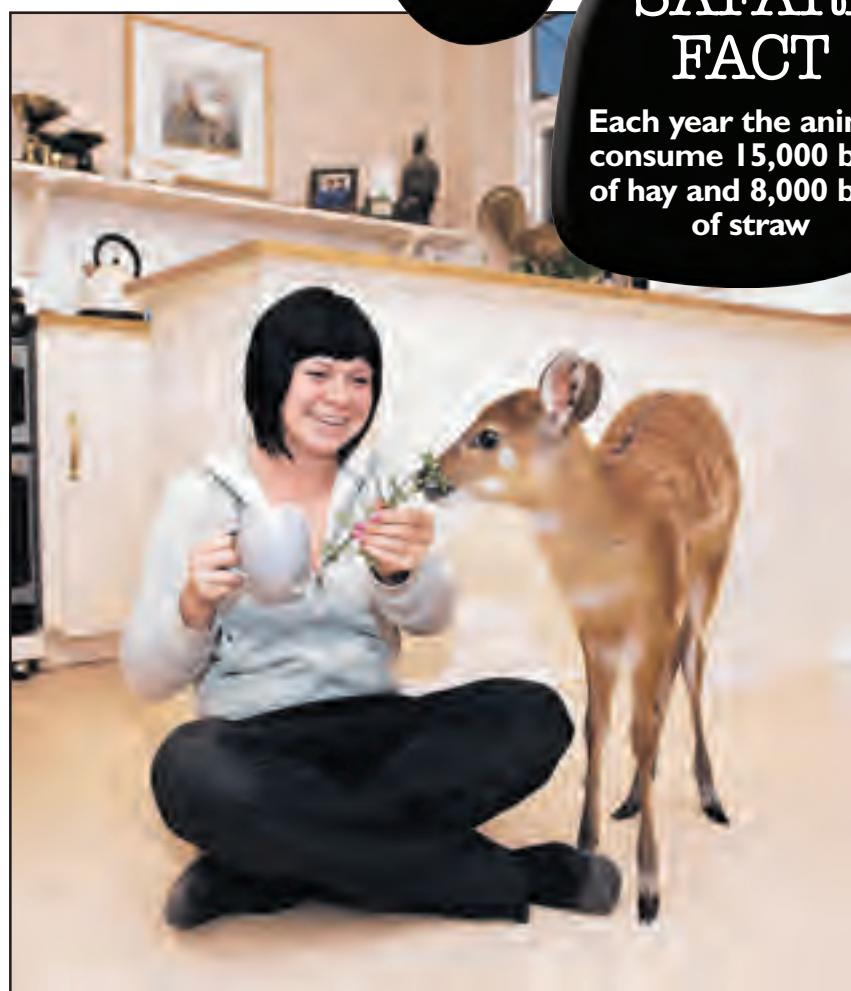
FLYING THE FLAG: A baboon with an England flag swiped from a visitor's car





SAFARI FACT

Each year the animals consume 15,000 bales of hay and 8,000 bales of straw



MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME: Knowsley keeper Emma Gatcliffe let Sultana the baby Sitatunga antelope lodge in her home when the fawn was abandoned by its mother

Picture: MARTIN BIRCHALL

Get even closer to the safari animals!

Knowsley Safari Park's success has been built on offering a great-value day out for all the family. But if you want to get up close and personal to the animals to an even greater extent there are several exclusive behind-the-scenes opportunities on offer to visitors as well. Perfect as a birthday or Christmas gift or as a treat for yourself the range of 'experiences' are an ideal way to get closer than ever to the park's inhabitants

VIP TOURS

THIS is the ultimate safari experience. A deluxe day out featuring a fully-guided tour in one of the park's vehicles, taking you off the beaten track to many areas not normally open to the public.

Get up close and personal with iconic species like the elephants and the giraffes. You can meet the stars of the sealion show.

It all adds up to a day you'll never forget.

ANIMAL EXPERIENCES

FIND out more about your favourite species of animal by meeting and working with one of the keepers who look after them.

This is a unique opportunity to go behind the scenes and learn more from the experts about the exotic animal that most interests you.

From ants to elephants, and baboons to big cats, the choice is yours.

KEEPER FOR A DAY

JOIN the team of expert keepers for a day and find out what Knowsley's 700 animals are really like, and how they're looked after to ensure they're in tip-top condition.

From checking on the inhabitants of the bug house, to mucking out the elephants, you're guaranteed a day of memorable behind-the-scenes experiences and hands-on encounters.

CLASSROOM ANIMAL EXPERIENCES

DID you know Knowsley Safari Park offers an OUTREACH service, delivering educational sessions for nursery groups through to secondary schools and beyond?

They provide a range of national curriculum based sessions involving an array of live animals and bio artefacts.

They are also happy to chat about tailor-made sessions, depending on your needs or interests.

For more information and cost details, contact the park on 0151 430 9009 (ext 211) or email OUTREACH officer Nikki, n.burton@knowsley.com



SLIPPERY CUSTOMERS: School pupils get to hold a snake and stick insect during a visit from a Knowsley Safari Park keeper to their school



KNOWSLEY SAFARI PARK ● CONSERVATION AND BREEDING



TINY: The safari park sponsor the Primate Society of Great Britain which helps protect species like this marmoset

Protecting endangered species

CONSERVATION

ANIMAL collections across the world are increasingly putting conservation in the wild at the top of their agenda.

Knowsley's Research and Conservation Team was formed to take the lead in this key area. Team members are involved in a wide range of activities, for example sponsoring organisations such as the Primate Society of Great Britain which has helped to fund research into endangered species like the tarsier and slow loris in Asia.

Much closer to home, a record of native species biodiversity is being accumulated to assess the Knowsley Estate's role as a wildlife safe haven. Findings over the coming years will allow the park to improve habitats, create new ones and provide additional nest boxes and roost sites.

To celebrate the park's 40th anniversary, the team has also organised a series of special events including animal talks, evening bat walks and early morning bird walks.

Further afield, it is committed to supporting conservation initiatives like the REGUA project in Brazil which involves saving large areas of rainforest.

Knowsley continues to support the Endangered Wildlife Trust which helps to protect African hunting dogs by funding anti-poaching teams, radio-tracking collars and vehicles.

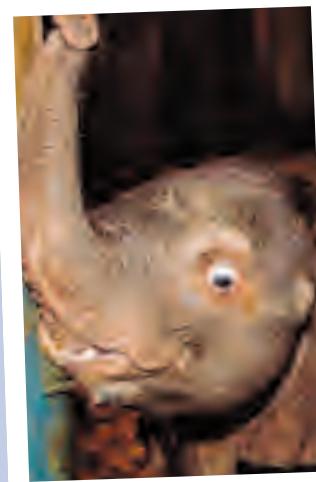
New links have been forged with Save The Rhino, and the park has pledged £6,000 to the charity this year.

Team members are in frequent contact with other collections about moving male and female animals around to allow successful breeding and maintain high genetic diversity.



COLOURFUL: The safari park has in the past run a fundraising initiative to help save the world's frogs

Proud of breeding record



DEBUT: Ashanti, the first elephant born at Knowsley

BREEDING

HIGHLIGHT: One of the three baby white rhinos born at Knowsley during the winter

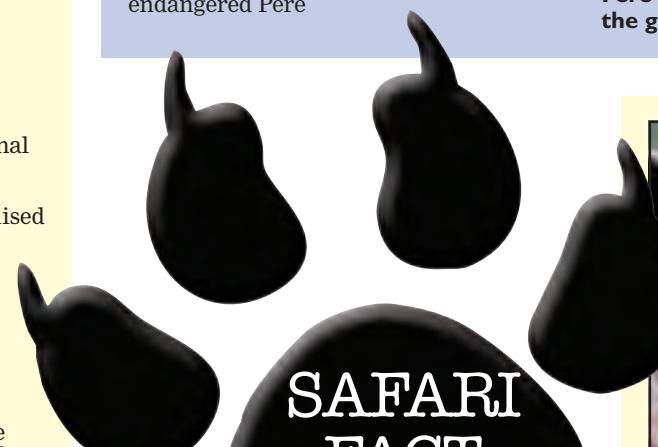


David's Deer twin fawns ever reared in captivity were born at Knowsley.

A current breeding highlight is the park's trio of white rhino calves, born within weeks of each other during the winter.

Knowsley is the only place in the UK – and probably Europe – where three baby rhinos of this age can be seen together.

BEST OF FRIENDS: Mi-Lu the rare Pere David's Deer says hello to Kipper the golden retriever

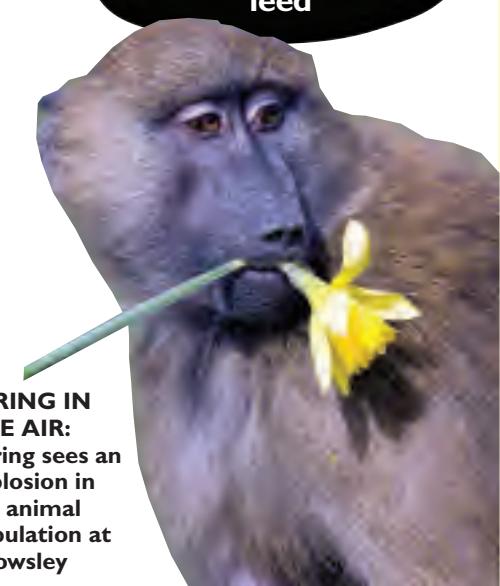


SAFARI FACT

Each year the animals eat 500 tons of fruit and veg and 120 tons of specialist feed



NATIVE: Brown hares are among the homegrown wildlife you might spot at the safari park



SPRING IN THE AIR: Spring sees an explosion in the animal population at Knowsley

BRITISH WILDLIFE

AS WELL as the exotic animals the park is also a haven for a wide range of British wildlife, flora and fauna.

Estate bosses strongly believe that conservation begins at home, so they actively manage the woodlands, lakes and ponds to encourage the diversity of native species.

For example, enthusiasts on a recent early morning birdwalk saw or heard 35 different species.

Ten species of waterfowl normally nest around the

Mizzy Lake and buzzards, kestrels and other birds of prey are also regularly spotted. In total, around 150 types of bird have been recorded at Knowsley since 2000.

Elsewhere at the park brown hares, stoats and weasels also live in the woodland where grey squirrels and even red squirrels can be seen.

'I refused Idi Amin – and lived to tell the tale'

Knowsley Safari Park general manager **David Ross** looks back over his 40 years at the park and his time in the African bush

DAVID Ross has always been fascinated with wildlife so when he joined the team preparing to open Knowsley Safari Park it was the perfect job for him.

But it's a career which hasn't been without danger.

In his time David has tracked and caught elephant in the African bush, succumbed to serious illness there and even entertained Idi Amin.

"It was an extraordinary time and an era that's now long gone," says David of his days in the early 1970s in Africa.

"I suppose I was there during the death throes of colonialism, I saw the Ugandan equivalent of the Happy Valley scene and also saw what Amin did to his own people.

"But I also achieved my boyhood ambition of going to Africa and seeing these wild animals in the bush

"After that I had a whole new adventure with Knowsley."

A life among animals seemed an unlikely prospect for the young David, who, after going to school, was destined for a role within the family building business.

Things took a different turn when David was introduced to the Chipperfield family, famous as a circus dynasty but also involved in setting up safari parks in both Longleat and at Woburn.

"I was asked to help with some pre-planning at Woburn, went up there and liked what I saw."

The next step was to accompany Richard Chipperfield on safari to source elephants, among other animals, for Knowsley.

"I remember looking out of the aircraft window at Africa below and thinking 'wow, so this is it. This is Africa'."

The journey to central Uganda, however, was not to be straightforward thanks to a military coup led by Amin.

"I was a greenhorn. Here I was faced with bodies everywhere along the roadside yet our government said the man responsible, Idi Amin, was someone we could do business with."

Later he came face to face with the man himself when Amin drove into David's camp and asked him to trap, among other animals, a pair of cheetah.

"I gave him tea but had to say no. There were none of those species in the area."

"Thinking back I'm probably one of the few men who has ever refused Idi Amin and lived."

Over the following weeks and months David honed his skills in capturing all manner of livestock for shipment back to the UK but it was the challenge provided by elephant that was to prove the most arduous.

"Richard Chipperfield said to me that



PRIVILEGE: David Ross celebrates his 40th year at Knowsley Safari Park with giraffe Rigsby



capturing an elephant was the most exciting thing you could attempt and he wasn't wrong."

David returned to Africa twice more on safari, the last time falling seriously ill with chronic hepatitis and by 1974 he knew his career in the bush was over.

"I did miss it but the buzz here at Knowsley was and is fantastic. I got to see the end product. I had to devote all my time and attention to helping make Knowsley the best."

"People say 'forty years in the same job'. But it's not the same job because every day is different and you never know what to expect. It's a way of life – just like being in the bush."

SAFARI FACT

The carnivores eat 50 tonnes of meat a year – equivalent to 250 zebra or 600 impala in the wild



MISSION: David on a Ugandan safari mission to capture elephants, with local man Murefu, and top left, with one of the elephants at the safari park

KNOWSLEY SAFARI PARK 40th ANNIVERSARY OFFERS



Superb safari offers for readers

KNOWSLEY Safari Park is celebrating its 40th anniversary with two great offers for visitors.

The first – half-price entry during the school summer holiday – is exclusively available to Liverpool ECHO readers presenting the voucher below.

This means that the entry price for adults is only £7.50 while children and OAPs pay just £5.50.

The voucher covers all the passengers in a car and can be used at weekends and during the week at any time between now and August 31, with the exception of Bank Holiday Monday, August 29.

Safari Park general manager, David Ross, explained: "This is the first time we've ever run a half-price offer during our peak period, so we're hoping to welcome large numbers of Liverpool ECHO readers during this summer.

"For people living in the newspaper's circulation area, the safari park is a great option for a day out, especially with fuel prices at their current levels.

"Because we're right on their doorstep Merseysiders can come here without having the added expense of paying for a tank of petrol."

The second 40th anniversary special offer – a huge discount on season ticket prices – is available to all the park's visitors during the summer.

People paying the normal full-price admission of £15 for adults and £11 for children and OAPs can convert their day ticket to a season ticket by paying just £5 extra.

That's just £20 (adults) and £16 (children/OAPs) for unlimited visits to the safari park over the next 12 months.

David Ross added: "This is another fantastic offer which I think will prove incredibly popular over the next few months.

"Because our animals are always doing something different, you can come back here any number of times, and every visit will be unique."

Families can take advantage of this offer – which is also available until August 31 – by taking their tickets and receipt to the park's information desk during their visit.

Visitors who have used the voucher below to enter the park will need to pay the difference between half-price and full-price admission in order to qualify for the season ticket offer.



KNOWSLEY SAFARI PARK 40TH ANNIVERSARY

SPECIAL OFFER FOR LIVERPOOL **ECHO** READERS

This voucher provides half-price entry to all the passengers in a car. Valid from Friday July 22nd 2011 up to and including Wednesday August 31st 2011, with the exception of Bank Holiday Monday, August 29th. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Car entry only. Normal entry price £15 adult/£11 child/OAP.

**OFFER PRICE £7.50:
ADULT £5.50: CHILD/OAP**

Amusement rides not included in the admission price.
Park opens 10am daily. Last entry 4pm.