



# ANIMAL CONCERN NEWS

*Campaigning for animals since 1876*

SPRING 2006



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## YOU'VE HAD YOUR LOTTO!



Manatees may be spared the rigours of life in the east end of Glasgow thanks to the wisdom of lottery fund grant makers.

Photo courtesy of:  
Patrick M. Rose,  
Save the Manatee Club.

In the last Animal Concern News we revealed that Edinburgh Zoo, in conjunction with what is left of the old Glasgow and West of Scotland Zoological Society, plan to create a £35 million "Amazonian Rainforest Experience" at Cunnigar Loop on the banks of the Clyde.

David Windmill, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Zoo, said in November last year that the new project would need lottery funding. It was also reported that a meeting had been held with senior planners and development officers from funding bodies Clyde Gateway and Scottish Enterprise. George Redmond, Chairman of Clyde Gateway, reportedly said of that meeting: "Everybody was very positive about it. One of the things that gives you great optimism that it can go ahead is that a lot of money for it can be easily released."

Mr. Redmond may be wrong. Daniel Wood of the Big Lottery Fund confirmed: "Our focus is very much on projects for people, so we would not under any circumstances provide money for zoos and/or aquaria." Jack Perry, Chief Executive of Scottish Enterprise, stated: "Scottish Enterprise has no involvement in this matter."

Animal Concern and our members have asked a few questions about this proposed new zoo. We discovered that David Windmill has given the new zoo a name; "Imuya". However he is not yet able to tell us how much of the 4 acre recreation of the Amazon Rain Forest would be flooded to provide accommodation for the manatees. Before taking on his job at Edinburgh Zoo, David Windmill was a top executive in the factory salmon farming business. Not such a great leap - both salmon farming and zoos try to make money by exploiting animals kept in less than natural surroundings. I hope he realises manatee would fare even worse than salmon if crammed into too small an environment.

David Windmill believes that Imuya is the way forward for zoos and that this project will pull in the paying punters. If that is the case then let us see if he decides to try and take this forward without public funding via cash-strapped Scottish Enterprise or the good cause money generated by The National Lottery.

# EDINBURGH ZOO SEEKS WORLD DOMINATION

Since we issued our last newsletter David Windmill of Edinburgh Zoo has announced yet more expansion plans. Not only does he want to recreate the Amazonian Rain Forest on a four acre bend in the River Clyde he has launched his "MasterPlan" to revamp Edinburgh Zoo. If this simply meant improving and upgrading the enclosures and habitat for the animals already in the Zoo we would give our full support.

The problem is that the bold Mr. Windmill is still talking about restarting a polar bear breeding programme and bringing in other animals to breed from. He wants to give visitors to the zoo "a good day out" and "inspire them to care about and become involved in the conservation of our threatened habitats". He hopes that over the next 20 years he can increase annual paying visitor numbers from 600,000 to 850,000 a year. To kick things off he has already secured £1.8 million of public money from the generous folk at Squander Scotland, sorry Scottish Enterprise.

David Windmill has been at Edinburgh Zoo for three years this month. The zoo boasts that "Over the past three years we have worked hard to prepare the animal collection for the MasterPlan, making sure we have the species in most need of conservation". Obviously his previous 18 years at the top of the international factory fish farming business has taught David to think big. Perhaps so big he cannot see the bigger picture.

Breeding animals in captivity does little or nothing to aid conservation. Zoo bred animals can rarely be released into the wild. People learn more about animals through the magnificent work of wildlife film makers who show us real animals in the real world, not museum pieces in gilded cages. Visitors coming to zoos can be fooled into thinking all is well because endangered animals are being kept safe in captivity. They think that so long as we keep some of the animals in the zoo all will not be lost when the last acre of natural rain forest is cut down to make way for a beef farm or soya fields producing meal to feed to the cattle.

It is also important to think of the individual animals in the zoo. A mad, cage-pacing polar bear does not care if s/he is the saviour of the species.

For all their talk of conservation and habitat protection Edinburgh Zoo gave the game away with a few poignant words in their press release of 22<sup>nd</sup> February. They write about Edinburgh Zoo's "animal collection" and of turning the Zoo into "a world class visitor attraction".

These phrases are just so 80's (1880's that is). Like their Victorian predecessors the bosses at Edinburgh Zoo are using an animal collection to pull in the paying public.

## BALLOCH FISH BOWL

I regret there is nothing positive to report on this front. Conversion of Drumkinnon Tower into an aquarium is well under way.

The Chief Investigating Officer for Ethical Standards in Public Life has interviewed me as part of the investigation into the conduct of Councillor O'Sullivan. She is the Councillor who sits on the Board of Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire (who lease Drumkinnon Tower to Merlin Entertainments) and also took part in the West Dunbartonshire Council Licensing Committee Meeting which granted the crucial Zoo License to Merlin!

No action has been taken over our concern that the work at Drumkinnon might disturb polluted soil. However new information has emerged and we are following this up.

**ACTION CALL:** Please write to Sir John Ward CBE, Chairman, Scottish Enterprise, FREEPOST SCO7559 Glasgow G2 8BR (E-mail [network.helpline@scotent.co.uk](mailto:network.helpline@scotent.co.uk)). Ask Sir John how he can justify spending £1.8 million on Edinburgh Zoo and a further £3.4 million turning Drumkinnon Tower into an aquatic zoo at a time when Scottish Enterprise has overspent at least £30 million of our money. Also ask that your letter be brought to the attention of the Board. If you get a reply from Jack Perry the Chief Executive write back and remind him you wrote to his boss and you would like a reply from the decision makers on the Board, not the staff.

Please also write to: The Council and Honorary Fellows, The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Corstorphine, Edinburgh EH12 6TS. (E-mail: [info@rzss.org.uk](mailto:info@rzss.org.uk)). Ask The Council to consider turning the Zoo into a non-breeding sanctuary for animals rescued from closing zoos, circuses, laboratories and the exotic pet trade. If you get a reply from Chief Executive David Windmill write back and remind him you wrote to his bosses and you would like a reply from the decision makers on The Council, not from the staff.

## Dangerous Wild Animal Act

Two of our Directors learned about an application by a Mr. Todd Dalton for a License under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 to allow him to keep various big cats including clouded leopard, margay and ocelot. Mr. Dalton wants to keep and breed these animals at his home - in Peckham.

Mr. Dalton is from Louisiana and runs a restaurant and food import business called Edible in London. Edible specialises in exotic meats and has cobra and crocodile curries, rattlesnake rolls, alligator stew, fried bullfrog, antelope steaks, piranha fish and various insect based delicacies on the menu.

You can learn more about Edible on their website at <http://www.edible.com>.

Believe it or not Edible boasts that it donates 5% of profits to wildlife conservation projects around the world. However Mr. Dalton told one reporter that he gives "25% of the profits from my business to worldwide conservation projects." He also claimed to have kept exotic animals for nearly 20 years and to be passionate about conservation. His age is variously quoted as being between 26 and 30 so he must have been keeping exotic pets since he left kindergarten.

He did admit the big cats are not pets and claimed he is registered with a "European breeding programme". I for one would be wary of any breeding programme which allows participants to keep dangerous big cats in 12 foot high cages in the back garden of urban houses.

With only a few hours to spare we e-mailed all the councillors on the Southwark Council Licensing Sub Committee and asked them to reject the application. I'm pleased to say they agreed with us but Mr. Dalton has decided to appeal the decision and we may have to give evidence at the Licensing Court when it comes up in the next couple of months.

## LOCAL ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUPS

If you want to get active with local animal rights groups in Scotland please contact:

SCOTTISH ANIMAL RIGHTS ALLIANCE  
PO BOX 1929, LIVINGSTON, EH54 6XZ  
E-mail: [scotland@animalrightsalliance.org.uk](mailto:scotland@animalrightsalliance.org.uk)  
Website: <http://www.animalrightsalliance.org.uk>  
Telephone: 08454 082385

For groups in other parts of the UK contact our office and we'll point you in the right direction.

## Animal Experiments

For decades Animal Concern has promoted the argument that one of the main reasons for putting an end to animal experiments is not to spare animals from suffering but to protect people from the lethal consequences of bad science. The reasoning behind our approach is simple: people are selfish.

That campaign gained added impetus in March when six human volunteers became critically ill when given a new drug which had been passed as safe in animal experiments.

This was reinforced when a journalist from Scotland On Sunday revealed that official figures show that in the last five years an average of one person a day in the UK suffers serious medical harm while taking part in clinical trials of medicines passed as safe in animal studies.

We have written to the Prime Minister asking him to finally make good his pre-election promise to set up a Royal Commission to investigate the validity of animal experiments.

**ACTION CALL:** Please write to the PM and to your own MP calling for a Royal Commission on vivisection to be set up in the wake of the disastrous London drug trials.

## NEW ANIMAL WELFARE LAWS

These continue to progress through Westminster and Holyrood. If you are in Scotland and received this letter in the post you should have found a card about tail docking from our colleagues over at Advocates for Animals. Please send it to your main MSP and, if you want more to send to your list MSPs, just let us know. Details of your MSPs and MPs from your library, parliamentary websites or by asking us (include your post code).

### ADVERTISEMENT

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# RANTING ROBINS



With a name like mine I am thinking about putting myself into quarantine until all this bird flu hype is over.

I'm getting calls about bird flu almost every day to the Animal Concern Advice Line. All I can tell people is not to panic and to report any unusual numbers of dead birds to DEFRA on their bird report line: 08459-335577.

I hope DEFRA and the other agencies involved will publish full reports on the findings of their studies of recovered bird carcasses. It would be interesting to learn how many of the birds brought in have died from airgun pellet wounds, ingesting lead shotgun pellets and fishing weights, deliberate poisoning by gamekeepers or simply by starving to death as a result of commercial over fishing of our seas.

If bird flu does hit hard we will oppose mass culling of birds. We have all seen film from abroad of thousands of chickens, hens, ducks and geese being burned and buried alive. This must not happen here. If flocks have to be destroyed it should be done humanely - at least the birds will be spared the horror of transportation and commercial slaughter.

Pet birds and those in sanctuaries and zoos must be vaccinated and quarantined and not, like so many innocent animals caught up in the madness of the last Foot and Mouth epidemic, put to death in a political charade designed to appease the public.

If our politicians want to help they should ban the many commercial bird markets which take place up and down the country. Breeders and dealers bring thousands of birds to these events with little control over where the birds have come from or who they are sold to.

Perhaps they will do something about the import of poultry from countries where welfare and hygiene standards are even worse than ours? It is madness to raise welfare standards here only to allow the import of cheap poultry from countries which do not even have basic standards of welfare on the farm, during transport and at slaughter.

It has taken me two hours to get from the last sentence to this one! The middle pages of this AC News are printing as I speak and I'm afraid the copier jammed and, although I've cleared the jam and cleaned the bits I can reach, the copies are coming out with a dirty streak across them. Problem is the engineer does not come out at 4am on a Thursday morning so my apologies for the smudges on your newsletter. I'll get it sorted before next time.

## FIREWORKS FIASCO

I ran out of space in the last AC News so forgive me for writing about fireworks a bit out of season.

As you know we have been campaigning for many years to have the sale of fireworks to the general public banned and to have fireworks restricted to licensed public displays only.

All our politicians have done is tweaked the law by slightly reducing the power of fireworks on general sale, slightly increasing the age at which people can buy fireworks and restricting the time of day at which fireworks can be set off.

Have these new laws worked? Sadly not. Over the four or five weeks around November 5<sup>th</sup> we received dozens of calls about animals scared by fireworks. These included an eagle owl which flew through a window after being terrified by bangers.

It was also reported that youths in Glasgow bought a hamster, taped it to a powerful rocket and then set it off, blowing the poor creature to bits. In Yorkshire youths tied a miniature Yorkshire terrier to a huge firework and blew her to bits. In both cases the sick sadists filmed their actions on their video phones.

**ACTION CALL:** Please write to your MP and ask him or her to call on the Home Secretary to ban the sale of all fireworks to the general public and restrict the use of fireworks to licensed public displays only.

## NEW SUPPORTERS NEEDED

Animal Concern is 130 years old this year. Formed as The Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society in 1876 we are currently down to under 300 members. We try to tackle issues the bigger groups do not deal with and strive to be as effective as we can despite our limited resources. However we really do need to increase our number of supporters if we are to continue to campaign for animals.

Membership is £100 Life, £10 Ordinary, £5 Unwaged and only £2.00 for Under 16's. To join or to get more information please write to: Animal Concern, PO Box 5178, Dumbarton G82 5YJ.

Please help us to continue helping those with no voice of their own.