

THE WILD CAMEL PROTECTION FOUNDATION

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Hon. Life Patron: Dr. Jane Goodall D.B.E.

Patrons: The Marchioness of Bute, The Countess of Chichester, Lady Grant, Professor Yuan Guoying, Peter Hall, Jane McMorland Hunter of Hafton, Gerald Kidd, Damon de Laszlo, Lulu Lytle, Colin McIntosh, Professor David Munro, Romy Shovelton.

March 2016 - Newsletter Number 36

Dear Wild Camel Supporter,

WCPF PATRONS

We are delighted to announce that Romy Shovelton has joined us as a WCPF Patron. Romy has been a great supporter of ours for many years, buying a motorbike for Tsog Erdene our herdsman at the Breeding Centre in Mongolia, and has given us considerable help and time, especially on our camel race days, where in the past she has not only provided a public address system but also participated in the races as a colourful jockey. Romy is a great enthusiast, is full of ideas and a resolute supporter of the wild camel. I am sure she will be a huge asset. She runs a retreat and meditation centre in Wales called the Wikima and Tyddyn Retreat - The Mid Wales Retreat & Meeting Centre. For further details of this please see:

www.walescottageandvenue.com

CAMEL RACE DAY – SUNDAY, 4th of SEPTEMBER 2016

Plans are moving ahead for the 2016 Camel Race Day at CHILHAM CASTLE, which is located between Ashford and Canterbury in Kent. At the time of writing 18 stallholders are firmly booked and we are hoping for a total of 25 or 30. The date is SUNDAY, the 4th of SEPTEMBER. Chilham Castle is a magnificent setting to hold the races as will be seen from their website. <www.chilham-castle.co.uk>

Chilham is used to hosting horse trials and is well equipped to hold our event. The picturesque village of Chilham is in the valley of the Great Stour River and beside the A28 road 6 miles (10 km) southwest of Canterbury. There is a railway station at Chilham and one train an hour leaves Charing Cross on the Ramsgate and Canterbury line. The station is a ten-minute walk from the castle.

The day will be similar to the event we held in 2014 with camel racing (the Fossett's racing camels are booked), Mongolian wrestlers, food and musicians and of course our magnificent puppet Gobi (War Camel). **Please note the date in your diaries** and try to come and support WCPF on our big fund-raising event of the year. All funds raised go to buy winter hay for the wild camels at the Breeding Centre to ensure they have adequate stocks of hay to help them last through the harsh Mongolian winter. **VOLUNTEERS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE TOMBOLA, A RAFFLE AND THE WCPF STALL. PLEASE CONTACT ME IF YOU CAN HELP EVEN FOR AN HOUR.**

MONGOLIA

THE RELEASE OF SIX WILD CAMELS IN SEPTEMBER 2015

We are receiving data every month showing the whereabouts of the 4 satellite collared camels from the second release of 6 captive bred male Wild Camels (*Camelus ferus*) from the WCPF Hunter Hall Wild Camel Breeding Centre (the Breeding Centre) at Zakhyn Us, Mongolia. As we only obtained four satellite collars two of the camels were released without them. They appear to have split up with each male camel following an individual route. They tend to follow their own line, but the excellent news is it appears that they have survived the winter months and the project has so far been a success.

CAMEL DOCUMENTARY ON FRENCH TV

An excellent French documentary film about our work in Mongolia and on the camel in general was aired on the French TV channel Arte in February. Francois Brey, Director of the Camelomanes Association of France, a loyal supporter of WCPF for over 15 years, a great camel enthusiast and a highly talented photographer, made this film. It is excellent and accurately displays and explains the work we are doing at the breeding centre and the history of the Camelid. We are greatly indebted to Francois for his lucid explanation of our work.

The distributors have sent us a link, which has an English commentary, and I would encourage you to watch the film:

<http://www.gad-distribution.com/video-full-829?p=rpibufqlgyuqbdbielvdiyatdpcdxtjgmeeqmqxddfwhfct&lang=eng>

BREEDING CENTRE MANAGEMENT

Dovchin, the Director of Gobi "A" and, the manager of the wild camel Breeding Centre sends us periodically excellent reports. His latest, sent in March 2016, states:

It was a nice winter in Bayan Toroi. Although it snowed a lot, it did not reach to a serious level. The wild camels in the breeding center are fine. We are preparing to receive 3 calves this spring. The camel, John was active and dominant compared to other males. We hope that we would receive his offspring next year. Our administration work is fine. It is good to tell you that Tsog Erdene received the award called "Labour champion in the Soum (administrative area)".

The governor, O. Amgalanbaatar of Gobi-Altai province visited twice (January 22 and February 18) to the breeding center and promised us that local governance will give support to works related with conservation on camels, especially advertising information on TV without charge/fees. Foreign Minister, L. Purevsuren (Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) visited the center on February 18. He praised our breeding center and give the name, ASEM to the calf of "Uugan shar". The reason of the name was that Mongolian government is planning to organise the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) conference in Mongolia this year.

In spite of the lack of proper Internet facilities at Bayan Toroi he is communicating very well and has made many improvements to the Breeding Centre. We are, unfortunately, still waiting to be advised of the figures from the wild camel count in Mongolia's Gobi "A", which was undertaken by ZSL assisted by Gobi "A" staff in December 2014. I understand from ZSL, that the report has not yet been finalised.

CHINA

All is well in China and Dr. Yuan Lei reports to us regularly. He has now finished his PhD. WCPF put him forward to the Wildlife Conservation Network in the USA and he received financial support for the cost of his PhD. My personal relationship with Yuan Lei goes back to my early expeditions in China starting in 1995 with his father Dr. Yuan Goying. Dr. Yuan Lei, who is a WCPF trustee, has been a long-standing and loyal supporter and we are delighted at his academic success. I hope to visit him and the Lop Nur Wild Camel Nature Reserve after the camel race day, together with WCPF Communications Manager, Anna Jemmett..

Janine Chen, a master student in Landscape Architecture from the University of Hong Kong visited the LNWCNR headquarters very recently and after conducting water research on the Tarim River Basis she sent us this Email:

Sincerely thank you for offering me this precious communication opportunity with Dr Yuan Lei, I really appreciate it. My field trip of this time has turned out to be quite fruitful and rewarding. Dr Yuan Lei has also generously offered me a great deal of help, and the information he provided shall be quite useful reference for my research. After four days' intensive itinerary mainly surrounding the downstream of Tarim River and the green corridor alongside it, my preliminary interpretation of the local ecological

crisis might be the uneven distribution of water (volume and quality), this issue is also crucial for the survival of wild camels.

Although she was working outside the boundaries of the Lop Nur Wild Camel Nature Reserve, the Tarim River area impacts on the diversity of the Reserve and her research on water levels is therefore every important to us. She will send us a full report by the end of May this year.

SUPPORT FROM ZOOS AROUND THE WORLD

The Knowsley Safari Park has joined the Cotswold Wildlife Park and the Yorkshire Wildlife Park Foundation in becoming a financial sponsor of a newly born camel at our breeding centre in Mongolia. I have been asked to give a talk at the Knowsley Safari Park in August. I have not received a firm date yet but if you would like to come please look at their website: www.knowsleysafariexperience.co.uk for the details.

As I reported in the last newsletter, we are delighted that WCPF has recently received, in addition to UK support, a great deal of support and funding from American zoos - Alaska, Detroit, Cincinnati and the American Association of Zookeepers - Potawatomi Zoo Chapter. This is hugely encouraging and is much appreciated. It is clear that our work and message is spreading through the Zoo Network in the USA and the UK and is increasingly recognised by the scientific community.

EDUCATIONAL BOOKS

The **three educational booklets** that we published for schoolchildren in China and Mongolia are also published in **English** and are informative on all aspects of the wild camel and the wider camelid family. They are fully illustrated with superb photographs. If any member would like to receive a set I can send them in the UK for the special price of £10 plus £2.80 postage. I also have a new **stock of hats, and scarves made from wild camel wool** harvested at the Breeding Centre. They cost £35.00 plus £2.80 postage. There are also superb **Mongolian slippers** (large, medium, small) at £30.00 plus £2.80 postage. All these goods can be viewed on our website <www.wildcamels.com> under **SHOP**.

WEBSITE, TWITTER and FACEBOOK

Anna Jemmett continues to do a brilliant job with our communications on Facebook and Twitter and will be helping us with project writing and fundraising for future Breeding Centre field projects. Our website is maintained and updated by Deborah Swain and her costs are funded by a generous Beijing supporter who has been a member of WCPF since the beginning. Please do continue to visit our website which is constantly being updated and contains a great deal of relevant information and pictures from both China and Mongolia. Photos and a commentary on the release are on the site as is the link to the French TV documentary. Please see:

www.wildcamels.com

www.facebook.com/WildCamels

www.twitter.com/WildCamels

LECTURES

I continue to give talks to schools and other institutions, such as the National Trust and U3A's. On November 19th 2016 I have been invited to give a talk in Berlin by the German Camel Club. If anyone knows of any suitable audiences who might be interested in a talk in this country or overseas, could they please let me know. I have found the contacts made after a talk are frequently invaluable and sometimes lead to substantial funding for the wild camel.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Your annual subscription is used entirely for funding the Mongolian Breeding Centre Budget. So please remember to renew your annual membership and if you haven't, please send £20.00 (or its equivalent in foreign currency). With over 550 members and only volunteer staff we rely on members to send us the subscription themselves. You can pay by going direct to the website www.wildcamels.com using PayPal, or by setting up a direct debit with your bank. If you are paying in US dollars or Euros you can also transfer funds direct into the WCPF's Euro or US dollar accounts. **Please email us for the WCPF bank ACCOUNT and transfer details.**

Thank you to the many members who already pay by **standing order** direct to the WCPF account. **We will send you our bank details on request.** This is cost effective and a huge help for the work of WCPF, as with this regular income we pay the monthly costs at the Breeding Centre.

SPONSORING A YOUNG WILD CAMEL

With three young wild camels calves shortly to be born at the Breeding Centre we are looking for their sponsorship. If you are already sponsoring a young wild camel at the Breeding Centre, your sponsorship covers vaccines, veterinary advice, hay and medicines. Please remember to send your annual payment, which was due **1st March 2016.** **We have a generous sponsor in the USA who is sponsoring two of the wild camel calves born in 2015.**

Renewed thanks for your great support for our on-going work – the protection of the critically endangered wild camel from extinction. It is with your help and your generous support that we are able to achieve so much.

Very best wishes

John Hare
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POSTSCRIPT - OTHER MATTERS

For those of you who are interested in “other matters” I also give a talk on “**The Historical Background to Boko Haram**”. In the early 1960s I worked for the British and Nigerian Governments in the area recently occupied by Boko Haram and stayed in villages in the area many times. I knew the tribal structures well and whereas I cannot talk about the current situation, I do have knowledge of the historical background to this horrific uprising. This talk has been very well received at a number of institutions and at the end I attempt to switch the audience’s attention away from the horrors of man to the magnificent wild camel!

My book, **LAST MAN IN - the end of Empire in Northern Nigeria** which covers this and other topics relating both to the area and the period is available from me at £20 hardback and £15 paperback plus £2.80 postage. In this case, cheques should be made out to John Hare