

WCPF Newsletter 12: October 2004

Dear Supporter,

Soane, 50 Pimlico Road, London

Lulu Lytle who runs Soane, a shop selling antiques and new furniture at 50 Pimlico Road, is a great camel lover and is organising an exhibition, THE CAMEL in her shop from 30th November to 4th December. There will be camel-related displays and members are invited to visit Soane if they are in London before Christmas. Profits from the sale of items will directly benefit the Foundation so please encourage generous friends to make a visit too! They are sure to find a great deal of interesting items. Lulu has secured a cast, Victorian design, of a wooden bench, with a cast iron base of resting camels, from the original bench which flanks Cleopatra's Needle on the Embankment. She is making exact replicas cast in bronze, to sell and a share of the proceeds will go to the Foundation. Also on sale will be a specially commissioned bronze of a wild Bactrian camel and a range of pieces from 18th century oil paintings of camels, to 6th century Silk Road textiles depicting camels and a camel-back sofa.

Captive Wild Bactrian Breeding Programme. Mongolia

The captive wild Bactrian camel breeding programme established by the WCPF near at Zakyn-Uus near Bayan Tooroi north of the Great Gobi Reserve A continues to flourish and four captive calves (three females and one bull calf) have been born this year. Dr Ulli Wernery, a leading camel veterinarian who works for Sheikh Mohammed Mahtoum in Dubai is undertaking DNA tests on all the captive camels including the newly born calves to ensure that they are all genetically pure. I am travelling to Dubai in March at the invitation of Ulli to see if Sheikh Mohammed is interested in supporting our work. Bilgee, the project manager continues to impress and has organised the site remarkably well. If any member is planning to visit Mongolia and would like to see the work that we are engaged in at Zakhyn-Uus then please contact me direct.

A Mongolian veterinarian has been appointed on a part-time basis to ensure that we have a vet on hand should one of the wild camels need attention. It is difficult to over-emphasise the responsibility we have for maintaining and protecting what is the only herd of captive wild Bactrian camels in the world. Both Kate and I are acutely conscious of this. In September I paid a visit both to Mongolia and Urumqi. I had lengthy talks with Bilgee on a variety of matters and initiated budgetary checks on costs and expenditure. We are extremely grateful to the Australian Mr. Peter Hall who through his charitable foundation, Hunter Hall Investment Management Ltd., has ensured that we have sufficient funds to undertake this vitally important project. Without his continued support we could not possibly have undertaken this project and I hope very much that Peter Hall will accompany us on a visit to Zakhyn-Uus in 2005.

Visit to China and Mongolia. September 2004

I paid a visit to Ulaan Baator, Beijing and Urumqi in September this year. As well as discussing the future development of the captive wild Bactrian breeding programme with Bilgee in Mongolia, I also met with government officials. The WCPF was asked by the Ministry of Nature and the Environment if they would be interested in mounting surveys of the wild Bactrian camel population in the Great Gobi Reserve A. Although, as members know, we have been concerned for nearly ten years in undertaking surveys in the Lop Nur area, we have never been invited to undertake the same type of programme in Mongolia. We are in the process of finding out exactly what the authorities would like us to do and Kate Rae will shortly respond with a suitable draft proposal and agreement. We consider this is a good opportunity for WCPF to become more established in Mongolia and are pleased that the Mongolians have recognised our achievements in China and our recent work in establishing the captive wild Bactrian camel breeding programme in Mongolia. Similarly, when in China, the Wild Camel Protection Foundation was invited to put forward a document including a plan for initiating a biodiversity project in the Lop Nur Wild Camel Reserve in Xinjiang. Again, we are delighted to be asked and will discuss with them the terms of reference before preparing an initial draft proposal for discussion which the relevant Chinese authorities in Xinjiang and the State Ministry of Environment (SEPA).

Expedition April 2005

I signed an agreement with the Lop Nur reserve authorities to undertake an expedition with domestic Bactrian camels from Hohhot the capital of Inner Mongolia to Hami in Xinjiang province. The expedition planned for the Spring of 2005 will take two to two and a half months and will cover 1000 plus miles. This expedition will be a public awareness exercise, to raise awareness of the plight of the wild Bactrian camel and the domestic Bactrian camel and the major problems of desertification and lack of water in these areas of China. It will follow the old camel road (not the Silk Road) from east to west which was last used in the

nineteen fifties and which was described in great detail by Owen Lattimore in his book, 'Journey to Turkestan' published in 1927. Lattimore became a great Mongolist as many members will be aware and was later impeached by Senator McCarthy in the US for allegedly being a communist and a threat to the state. He counteracted this charge in a book entitled 'Ordeal by Slander' and after five years succeeded in clearing his name. A controversial character but a great authority on Mongolia who is remembered affectionately in Mongolia to this day.

The Chinese authorities are contributing to this expedition and WCPF has raised all the other funding except for the last USD\$10,000. If any member has a possible sponsor in mind. Firms in China or with business interest in China, might welcome the good publicity from being associated with an expedition which the Chinese authorities are supporting. There will be substantial coverage of the event in the Chinese newspapers. It is a most unusual and welcome development as anyone who has knowledge of China knows. This reflects the interest that we have generated in the country for protecting the critically endangered wild Bactrian camel

Training, Kenya January/February 2005

Thanks to the support of the London Zoological Society and the Kenya Wildlife Service we are organising a training course for trainers from the Chinese and Mongolians nature reserve and protected area, which we anticipate will enable them to return to their respective countries equipped with knowledge to train their colleagues in reserve management. The course will last two weeks and Jasper Evans, a Foundation Trustee has kindly donated the facilities of his ranch, Ol Maisor. The services of Dr Tim Wachter of the Zoological Society are being given to us free and Tim, an extremely competent instructor in wildlife management, will be in charge of the course. Training is a vital aspect of our work and we are delighted at this development. We are ensuring that Bilgee the manager of Zakhyn-Uus will be attending the course and there should be two other colleagues from Mongolia and two from China.

Sponsorship: Captive Wild Bactrian Camels

The captive wild Bactrian camels have to be protected and properly managed. This will mean paying our herdsman or another person on site to oversee the camels' welfare. During the winter and spring months it will be necessary to buy hay for them and this is expensive to buy and also to transport to the site. The forthcoming winter is forecast has being a hard one. So we are already buying hay and trucking it at vast expense to the site. Medicines will be required for the females and their offspring during the first five years. There will be veterinary fees. Eight Foundation members, individuals and organisations have already generously agreed to sponsor a young camel, while four others have agreed to sponsor four of the thirteen captive wild Bactrian camels. However we urgently require at least five more sponsors as a number of the female camels are pregnant.

If you would like to sponsor a captive wild Bactrian camel and want more information please contact Kate Rae, a WCPF trustee at the following email address: krae77777@aol.com, or you can easily download the SPONSORSHIP FORM from the www.wildcamels.com website and post it to the head office.

The cost of sponsoring a new born camel for five years is £500 per year or £2,500 for five years. (\$750 per year or \$3,750). This covers the cost of winter feed, the herders to protect the young camels from wolves and veterinary costs.

Please those of you who have already sponsored a camel and are paying on a yearly basis, then please send your next year donation as soon as possible.

MSP- Mongolia

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the GEF have, with the Mongolian government drawn up a project for biodiversity protection in the Mongolian Great Gobi Reserve A. This is the same kind of medium-sized project that enabled us to work with SEPA to establish the Lop Nur Wild Camel Nature Reserve in China. Bilgee is working closely with the MSP project director and has attended all the Workshops so far, including the recent Workshop which was held to discuss the management plan for the entire protected area. This draft document should be ready sometime in 2005. We are interested in being involved and once the management plan is ready we will know what role (if any) WCPF has to play. Given our unique experience of both countries we consider that it will involve the fostering of Chinese/Mongolian co-operation on wild bactrian camel matters and inter-country boundary problems.

Funding

As members and supporters you are aware, the work of the Foundation is funded entirely by donations. Your ideas for possible sources of funding are always welcome and assiduously followed up.

Talks

Since the last newsletter I have continued to give talks to institutions, schools and colleges. If any member has ideas for future lectures then please get in touch with either Kate or myself.

Membership Renewal

Will members who have not yet renewed their annual membership for 2003/2004 please send £15 (or its equivalent in foreign currency). Also please send us your email address if you have not already done so as this saves on postage. Thank you once again for all your most generous and highly valued support.

Yours faithfully,

John Hare