

WILD CAMEL PROTECTION FOUNDATION
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Hon. Life Patron: Dr. Jane Goodall D.B.E.

Patrons:

The Marchioness of Bute, Lady 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, The Dowager Marchioness of Reading.

September 2011 - Newsletter Number 26

Dear Wild Camel Supporter,

New Patrons

A warm welcome to Lady Chichester, a new Patron of the WCPF. With her knowledge of Bactrian camels and great enthusiasm for the camels world-wide, we appreciate her keenness to support the WCPF to protect the wild camels. Lady Chichester owns a very remarkable domestic Bactrian camel called Therese. Therese has participated in the Lord Mayor's Show, performs dressage to a high standard (including a flying change) and thoroughly enjoys being the centre of attention. If anyone doubts the assertion that camels are more intelligent than horses they ought to meet Therese. We send a big and warm welcome to Colin McIntosh, our first American patron. Colin has generously supported wild camel protection over the past four years and takes a great interest in our field work both in China and Mongolia.

Brighton Marathon for the Wild Camels

Jane McMorland Hunter completed the Brighton Marathon, a first for her, which she ran in fine style, on behalf of the wild camels and raised substantial funds for the WCPF. A huge thank you to the intrepid Jane, and ALL the WCPF members who most generously supported her marathon fund-raising efforts. Jane works for Slightly Foxed (www.foxedquarterly.com) the Real Readers Quarterly, a delightful literary quarterly magazine, and WCPF supporter, at their bookshop at 23 Gloucester Rd., London SW7 4TE.

[HAY APPEAL - URGENT](#)

Winter is approaching and it is the time of year to ensure there is sufficient hay at the Breeding Centre so the wild camels survive a Mongolian winter. This is an annual funding commitment and vital to the success of the Breeding Centre. Thank you very much, to those of you who have

given money already for hay. The Director is trying to source hay locally this year, both to support the local economy, and save on the high transport and fuel costs. Fund-raising for Hay is very difficult, so all donations towards hay will be most gratefully received.

Expedition and Survey by Vehicle and Domestic Bactrian Camel, China

I completed the 2011 spring expedition in China which Prince Albert of Monaco's Foundation for Endangered Species and Ran Fiennes's Transglobe Expedition Trust generously supported. The Trip consisted of two separate Expeditions.

Expedition One:

With me on this field expedition, were Professor Yuan Guoying and Yuan Lei, who have worked with me on wild camel conservation for over 16 years. We travelled up the Keriya River, which stretches 250 miles from the town of Keriya to the south of the Taklamakan Desert and the Kunlun Mountains. These mountains form the northern escarpment of Tibet, and border the vast Taklamakan sand dune desert - the largest in the world. The purpose of this field expedition was to investigate a report that wild camels had been seen near the point where the Keriya River finally drains into the desert sands. We reached the end of the river having interviewed herdsman and elders along the way and made our final investigations at the village of Dariya. After thorough research the conclusion we reached is there are definitely herds of wild camels in the Taklamakan (possibly three herds) and their total number varies between 30 and 50. The Xinjiang government did not give us permission to proceed further with domestic camels into the vast area of Taklamakan sand dunes because of our proximity to oil exploration. We had to terminate our investigations at Dariya - but our findings are highly significant. These 30- 50 wild camels are outside the area of the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve which WCPF helped the Chinese government to establish in 2002 after four surveys of the area. Our next task is to work out how best to protect these herds of wild camels. It is NOT possible to create a new Reserve among the shifting dunes of sand and it would be very difficult to manage the area. The conclusion I reached in discussion with the Chinese team was to concentrate on implementing an awareness-raising project for the local communities and a specific environmental education programme for the local schools. The local Chinese team would implement it through a series of Workshops and the distribution of awareness raising materials. WCPF based on the results of this expedition and field survey will apply for further funding from Prince Albert's Foundation and other funding agencies.

Expedition Two:

I travelled with Yuan Lei and four Kazakh herdsman and fifteen (15) domestic camels on a 325 mile journey over two huge barriers of sand dunes from the Hongliugou valley to Lapeiquan Spring which follows the southern boundary of the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve. The route we took had not been attempted before and we were slightly unnerved to find we were faced with sand dunes over 400 metres high, one which took over 2 hours to cross. The

complete journey lasted just under three weeks. We encountered extremely low temperatures and two sand storms of considerable intensity and our head Kazakh herdsman (one of four) had his right arm removed from its socket by a kick from a camel. The arm was manipulated by the other three herdsmen and went back into place with a resounding 'plop' amidst a grind of gristle. Another Kazakh suspended himself upside down by one leg on a rope for half an hour to cure what he said was a 'a swollen knee.'

We reached the spring of Kum Su which we had 'discovered' in 1999 a spring deep below the level of the desert sands and which contained not only fresh water but a naive population of wildlife - wildlife which had never experienced the presence of man. On returning there in 2005 from the east, we discovered the spring had been polluted by illegal gold miners using potassium cyanide. On my return to England in 2005 I protested through various channels (the Chinese Embassy in London, the Ministry of the Environment in Beijing, the National Geographic and the RGS) to the Chinese Government who said they would clean up the pollution. It was a huge relief to find they had kept their promise, and that the wildlife was returning. They are no longer naive, only too aware of what a polluting species 'man' is. Lastly and by no means least, we spotted 128 wild camels out of a Chinese total population of 600 which is very encouraging. However, we were concerned to see very few two-year-old and three-year-old wild camels, the decrease due perhaps to the increase in the wolf population. The Chinese government has forbidden herdsmen to carry shotguns, in the interests of 'security', so they cannot protect their flocks from predators and this has meant an increase in the wolf population.

Conclusions:

The Chinese provincial government in Xinjiang considers our expedition to have been a great success - and so do I.

1. We confirmed there were 30 - 50 wild camels in the Taklamakan desert.
2. We pioneered a previously unmarked route over huge sand dunes and proved it was negotiable. (All within the National Nature Reserve)
3. We saw 128 wild camels
4. We discovered Kum Su spring had been cleaned up by the Federal Government, and wildlife has returned to the area.
5. WCPF agreed a plan with the Chinese Nature Reserve Director for raising awareness locally of the importance of the wild camel - a Chinese Red Book listed species.

The wild camels in the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve appear to be holding their own and numbers are neither increasing nor declining to any significant degree. However, the pressures from illegal mining and wolf predation are increasing and given the speed of Chinese economic development they will continue to do so. The Reserve Director is very conscious of this as he struggles with limited staff to maintain surveillance of the Reserve - an area the size of Europe. With some members of the Provincial Council keen to maximize development within Xinjiang province, it may be some of the core areas of wild camel habitat within the Reserve are re-defined by the authorities to allow areas where the wild camel never enters to be made available for strictly controlled mineral prospecting. This is a very difficult decision o support,

however, if this can be counterbalanced by enforcing strict control within the core areas then given the continuous pressure to develop, this seems to be a way forward.

Mongolia - Hunter Hall Wild Camel Conservation, Breeding and Research Centre

We have now signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Nature and the Environment and Tourism (MNET) regarding the management of the Breeding Centre. Mijjidorj, the Director of the Great Gobi SPA 'A' (the wild camel reserve) is now managing the breeding centre which is in the Buffer Zone of the protected area on behalf of the MNET and in close consultation with WCPFK. WCPF will still continue to fund ALL the Breeding Centre costs and some of the costs of the Great Gobi SPA'A'. With the success of the Breeding Centre and the increased number wild camels there now, it is very important to involve the Director in the management of the Breeding Centre wild camels. Since the signing of the MOU six weeks ago, the wild camels have all been vaccinated, the Director has put forward significant proposals for future development and the young calves born this season are thriving. A science graduate student from Scotland, Anna Jemmett, has just left for Mongolia via Beijing where she will spend at least two months, as a volunteer working on an observational survey of wild camel behaviour at the breeding centre. Anna will be staying at the Breeding Centre and also observing the new management system.

If readers missed the explanation of the new management structure at the Breeding Centre please go to www.wildcamels.com and access Newsletter 25 where full details are given.

FUND RAISING

Camel day in Warwickshire

The camel day at Idlicote in Warwickshire, most generously organized by Joseph and Rebecca Fossett was a huge success. After days of rain, the sun shone and the public turned up to cheer on the camel racing and the polo players and give their opinions on the camel beauty pageant. The ever-popular pig racing provided much amusement, as did the plate smashing. A huge thank you to both Joe and Rebecca and their three wonderful children, for working so hard to ensure such a successful day for the wild camels.

Next year the event we hope will be held in Kent, at Hole Park, Rolvenden by kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Barham. The Fossett's have very kindly agreed to bring their racing camels to Kent, so all the excitement of the wild camel day will be brought closer to the Headquarters of the Wild Camel Protection Foundation. The date for 2012 and details will be circulated as soon as it is finalised.

Fund-raising camel day at Ol Maisor in Kenya

Amanda (WCPFUK Trustee) and John Perrett organised a very successful wild camel day on the late Jasper Evans's ranch in Kenya. Here is Amanda's report:

The Camel day seems to have been a success as far as the event went. All seemed to have enjoyed it, although John and I think the camel guys, felt it wasn't such a good atmosphere this time. Those who hadn't been last time obviously didn't know the difference. We had an inch of rain the night before, on top of another inch during the week, so John had to make a new run route round the property at 6 pm as the bridge across the swamp went under water! It was a fiasco in the campsite trying to get people settled into leaking tents in the down-pour, but our three youths valiantly soldiered on in good spirits and kept everyone smiling and fed. John delayed the start by an hour so it could dry out a little. The "hare" rider slipped in a puddle and fell off his piki pik leading the Fun Runners so they overtook him and all got lost doing about 12 kms instead of the 10! We couldn't get anyone to sponsor the camel races after the first one, so just ran three before the rain came in again, two with our own guys just to keep the crowd happy. In hindsight John thinks Barabara fixed the race so that the Chief won it, which then put anyone else off sponsoring.

Typical! The British Army team beat the farm team and the American ladies team so Barabara was very long in the face about that, but the Army team were chuffed and said how much fun it had been, so we were chuffed about that! Think we definitely need more professional help in training the camels next time. The man who'd promised some tuition in the last couple of weeks never materialised. We have been offered sponsorship for next year from a big finance company, so our youth are putting a powerpoint presentation together to take to them. A couple of the prize donors came this time, and I think were impressed by the number of people, so hopefully we'll get better response to sponsorships next year. Also we think we've learnt how to go about it now! None of the eco-stalls came either. The Tuff stuff people were keen but couldn't make it, and the biogas demo guy came but didn't bring our system to demonstrate it. Our camel products went down well. We had a lot more runners this time, the money raised we would like to send to you John for the Wild Camels. It is only a drop in the ocean in terms of what you need, but hopefully next year will be better. We didn't cover our costs from the camping and products by a long way, but if we can get sponsorships for setting it up next year it'll help both of us. The travel writer from the newspaper came and is writing an article on camels, wild camels and the event, so will be interesting to see what she says. The locals are all very happy and say they made a lot of money out of the event. I guess we achieved something then?! The baby camel race was wonderful, and hilarious! Had 15 of them charging full tilt down the track. Each time they practised a different one won, so they were definitely an unknown quantity to bet on. We had enough takers for it to run it, so think we could enlarge on that in future.

Huge thanks to Amanda and John Perrett for all their hard work. We are so very grateful. A photo of the young camel race is attached.

OTHER FUND RAISING EVENTS

Dine in Byron's Set in Albany. Piccadilly

Damon de Laszlo, a WCPF Patron, lives in Byron's former rooms, Albany, Piccadilly and has very kindly offered to host a fund-raising dinner for WCPF and Matthew Parris - a supporter of the wild camel for many years - has agreed to come and give a talk.

The numbers are strictly limited to 18. Places are filling fast. If any member would like an invitation (tickets are £1,000) would they please contact me direct.

Lectures

I have a Lecture Tour (thirteen lectures) planned in the States from September 27th to October 15th 2011 to raise awareness of the wild camels and to fund raise. Joan Digby, a most loyal member based in New York has very kindly put together a programme which takes me from New York to Florida via Philadelphia and Pittsburg. I very much hope this will prove to be a great fund-raising opportunity for WCPF.

UK Lectures:

Eype Literary Festival, Nr Dorchester, October 20th, 6.30 p.m. Contact: Mark Culme-Seymour
Director - Eype Centre for the Arts, MARCO POLO HOUSE - WEST BEXINGTON,
DORCHESTER - DORSET - DT2 9DE
Tel: 44 (0) 1308 898420 - Mobile: 44 (0) 7785 793044

Royal Scottish Geographical Society, 24th/25th/26th/27th of October 2011 at Dumfries,
Borders, Ayr and Helensburgh Contact: mike.robinson@rsgs.org

Royal Geographical Society with Ran Fiennes and Ray Mears on 10th of November 2011.
Tickets £25.00 for this event can be obtained from: **TRANSGLOBE EXPEDITION TRUST**
Walnut Tree Farm, Benhall, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 1JB
01728 604434 (w) 07771713683 (m) TGExpedition@aol.com
www.transglobe-expedition.org

The tickets cost £25. You need to enclose a **stamped envelope** with your application. **Your name and telephone number** should be on the back of your cheque. Doors open at 6.00pm and

refreshments are available. Transglobe Expedition Trust part sponsored my 2011 expedition in China and have been great supporters of WCPF for many years.

Ebenezer Chapel Lecture. 11th November. The Ebenezer Chapel, Riverside, Burrowbridge, Bridgwater, Somerset. TA7 ORE. Contact 07860480035 or 078920654. Email: constantine.ebenzer@virgin.net

NEW WEBSITE

The new website is receiving lots of hits (and compliments). If you have not yet seen it do visit www.wildcamels.com with additional information at <www.johnhare.org.uk>

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Most members have renewed their annual membership but if you haven't, please send £20.00 (or its equivalent in foreign currency). You can pay by going direct to the website www.wildcamels.com using Paypal. 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 and transfer details.** Many members pay by **setting up a standing order** with their bank to pay direct to the WCPF UK account. This keep costs down.

Very best wishes and renewed thanks for your great support for our cause – the prevention of the critically endangered wild camel from extinction.

John Hare
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