

WILD CAMEL PROTECTION FOUNDATION

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

Patrons:

The Marchioness of Bute, Damon de Laszlo, Lulu Lytle,

Jane McMorland Hunter of Hafton,

Professor David Munro, The Marchioness of Reading,

Lady Grant, Peter Hall, Professor Yuan Guoying.

May 2010 - Newsletter Number 23

Dear Supporter,

Trustees and Patrons

Jasper Evans, a Founding Trustee of WCPF, was born in Kenya and lived there all his life and at one time kept over 250 Dromedary camels on Ol Maisor his Laikipia ranch in northern Kenya. He was a man of great charm and someone who had a prodigious amount of practical and historical knowledge, not only of Kenya but also of the Dromedary and Bactrian camels. He wrote a definitive guide to managing camels and accompanied me into the Chinese Gobi in 1997, from Lake Chad to Tripoli across the Sahara in 2001/2002 and to Mongolia to see the breeding centre in 2005. A great camel man and a very good friend, Jasper sadly died suddenly in February this year aged 85.

We have invited his daughter Amanda Perrett, who lives on Ol Maisor and runs camel safaris and environmental educational programmes for school groups to be a Trustee of the WCPF.

We have also invited Yuan Lei from the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve in China to be a WCPF Trustee. Yuan Lei has come with me on the five expeditions I have made since 1995 into the Gashun Gobi and the Desert of Lop in China. He has also made a further five wild Bactrian camel surveys with scientists from the head office of the Reserve in Urumqi, China. He is organizing the September 2010 field survey and expedition into the Taklamakan Desert. He will be a great asset to the Foundation.

His father, Professor Yuan Guoying has kindly agreed to become a Patron of the Foundation. As many of you know Professor Yuan Guoying was responsible for my invitation to visit China in 1994. He was also crucial in securing the establishment of the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve. The Professor was also a member of the team, which crossed the Sahara from Lake Chad to Tripoli in 2001/2 and was honoured by the Chinese Government as the first Chinese person to cross the Sahara on a camel in recorded history. An eminent zoologist, with a keen love of nature, his appointment to be a Patron of WCPF continues the firm link to both Jasper and the early formation of the Foundation and the future work of the WCPF in China.

KENYA CAMEL SAFARIS

John and Amanda Perrett have organised dromedary camel safaris since 1982, around Ol Maisor ranch on Kenya's Laikipia plateau and beyond to Kenya's borders. The well-trained Ol Maisor camels are sensitively handled and guided by an experienced team from different Kenyan tribes, most of whom have grown up with their charges.

Perrett safaris can be a one day introduction to the camel's placid and curious nature, or as long as you like with time to appreciate the uncomplaining (although they don't sound that way) nature of the camel and its strengths. Camels often become personal friends and on safari with their help, you are able to attune to the natural world and escape the rush, noise and pollution of modern life.

The boundless sense of humour of the hard working African handlers, their spontaneous chatter and song, match the rhythm of life in the African bush. Safaris are unstructured to cater for individual requirements. They can be fully organised, or clients can merely hire the camel team and do their own thing. The camel caravans carry all the food and luggage required for basic comforts, and if desired can also carry the client where terrain permits. There is no vehicle assistance or communication with the outside world and clients are advised to take out adequate medical insurance and Flying Doctor evacuation in case of an unfortunate accident.

I hope to be on Ol Maisor in Kenya during some of the winter months and will talk to, advise and possibly accompany some of the groups on a Perrett camel safari. John and Amanda have a campsite on Ol Maisor where visitors can stay prior to going on a camel trek.

If any members would like to go alone or with friends on a Perrett camel safari please contact John and Amanda at olmaisor@africaonline.co.ke or me at harecamel@aol.com.

FUND-RAISING EVENTS

Last year, Joe and Rebecca Fossett very kindly held a Bactrian camel day on their farm in Idlicote, Warwickshire to raise funds for the wild Bactrian camels. In spite of rain at midday it proved to be a great success and many of our members attended the camel and pig races and participated in side-shows. So we are delighted the Fossett's have once again offered to stage the event on their farm. This time there will be a Bactrian camel polo match, as well as pig racing, with the WCPF entering a polo team (of two). The date is Sunday, June 27th at 2.00pm. There is plenty of parking at White House Farm, Idlicote, near Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire.

The Fossetts have a business called 'Joseph and his Amazing Camels and race these domestic Bactrian camels at agricultural shows and similar events all over the country. If you cannot attend in person, maybe you can alert friends who live in the area. A full programme of events and directions to Idlicote comes with this newsletter

WCPF PATRONS' LUNCH

A WCPF Patrons' Lunch has been arranged for Tuesday, 29th of June at the Reform Club. We are delighted that our Life Patron, Dr. Jane Goodall DBE will be attending.

REPORTS

During February I spent three weeks lecturing aboard a cruise ship about the wild Bactrian camel. This awareness-raising, mainly to an American and Canadian audience, has resulted in several new members and substantial donations to WPCF.

I will be appearing at the Buxton Literary Festival, Opera House Venue at 10.00am on July 8th with Ranulf Fiennes and Robin Hanbury-Tenison on a panel answering the question, '**What's the point of expeditions?** Matthew Parris - a great WCPF supporter - will be in the chair. Members who live near Buxton might be interested in coming to give support. I will also be speaking at the Canterbury Festival on October 25th at 5.30 pm. The topic will be the current problems facing the critically endangered wild Bactrian camel.

CHINA

Wild Bactrian camels have been sighted in the Taklamakan Desert outside the protected area around Lop Nur, and there is a plan to ascertain how many there are and whether it is feasible to consider establishing a nature reserve in this area. I have been invited to join one of the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve's scientific surveys in September/October 2010 into the area of the Taklamakan Desert where these wild Bactrian camels have been sighted. The Budget for the field survey expedition with domestic bactrian camels is US\$60,000. We have managed to raise US\$40,000 and are actively fund-raising as I write. This field trip will also include a survey of the area in the Desert of Lop where we found evidence of illegal mining in 2005. It is crucial to see what further effects illegal mining is having in the Xinjiang Lop Nur Wild Camel Nature Reserve so we can alert the Chinese and International authorities.

MONGOLIA

AUGUST WORKSHOP - 'NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AND STRATEGY FOR THE WILD BACTRIAN CAMEL'

The Ministry of Nature and Environment and Tourism (MNET) and the Mongolian Wild Camel Protection Foundation NGO are hosting a five day Workshop in Mongolia from August 25th until August 31st. The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and the WCPF UK are also as co-hosts of the Workshop. The aim of this Workshop is with the participation of stakeholders to develop and agree a National Strategy in Mongolia for the future of the wild Bactrian camel. Participants will include leading MNET government officials, local government governors and officials and international wild Bactrian camel experts. Kate Rae and I will be attending. The Workshop aims to examine current knowledge of *Camelus bactrianus ferus*, prioritise actions necessary for the species' survival, and establish a National strategy which will be adopted by the MNET and identify through which agencies implementation of specific actions will occur and to an agreed

timetable. This is vital to safeguard a firm policy for protecting the 8th most critically endangered large mammal in the world. The Workshop will also agree proposals to implement a release programme from the WCPF Hunter Hall breeding centre at Zakhyn Us in Mongolia.

IMPACT OF MINING AND THREAT TO DE-GAZETTE PROTECTED AREAS

Many members will have read of the rapid increase in mining in Mongolia. The catalyst for investors was a decision last August by Mongolia's new president to repeal a punitive windfall tax on copper and gold profits imposed in 2005 by a previous left of centre government. The government has finalized a deal with the Canadian-listed Ivanhoe Mines to develop a \$5 billion gold and copper mine. The scale of Mongolia's projected wealth is enormous with another 15 areas identified as being \$15 billion sites. Tragically, one of them is situated in between the Gobi 'A' and Gobi 'B' Protected Areas. As the Gobi 'A' is the home of the wild Bactrian camel this news impacts seriously on our work protecting the wild Bactrian camel and its habitat. It has been established by the illegal 'ninja' miners that there is gold within Gobi 'A' and dozens of illegal miners have already entered the area. Gold mining legal and illegal is particularly hazardous to the fragile desert ecosystem and destroys the water points for the wild Bactrian camels. The WCPF has given financial support to the Gobi 'A' authorities to assist the Director and the Rangers in their work, particularly their field patrols within the Great Gobi Special Protected Area 'A'. It is mainly for the cost of petrol as the area which the patrols have to cover is vast and the cost of petrol very expensive. We would like if possible to make a regular contribution of US\$1,500 every quarter, to the cost of their patrols. So if any member would like to contribute directly to these costs please contact me. We are waiting for the latest update from the Project Director.

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, voices have also been raised to de-gazette Mongolian wildlife reserves in which mineral wealth is found. WCPF is monitoring the situation closely and we will do all in our power to resist possible de-gazetting of the Great Gobi 'A'. The critically endangered Gobi bear and the endangered wild ass and black-tailed gazelle also live in Gobi 'A' so we are co-operating with all the national and International organisations interested in protecting this fragile desert ecosystem. However, Mongolian 'gold fever' is rampant at the moment and mining is undoubtedly going to change the country irrevocably.

RECENT SEVERE WINTER

What will not change, however, is the severity of Mongolian winters and the latest winter has been particularly harsh. We planned ahead and bought much more hay to feed the captive wild Bactrian camels at the breeding centre at Zakhyn Us, but still had to buy additional supplies in March 2010, because of the length of the winter and the depth of snowfall, in some places up to eight foot. Roads and schools were closed and both people and many domestic animals have perished. The report from Bilgee, our project director who has been down there recently will be circulated in our next newsletter.

YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS

We are working with an organization called Yorkshire Schools. They would like to take up to 17 pupils, in 2011, to stay at the Zakhyn Us, Hunter Hall Breeding Centre. They will go on a camel safari to visit Mother Mountain and work on an environmental project with schools local to the Breeding Centre. This working co-operation with an organization, supported by the Royal Geographical Society and of high repute, will encourage cooperation and understanding between British and Mongolian youth, spread awareness of the difficulties facing the wild Bactrian camel, and provide real adventure for Yorkshire school children.

EXPLORERS CLUB, NEW YORK, VISIT TO ZAKHYN US

I have spoken several times at the Explorers Club in New York and to raise awareness of the wild Bactrian camel and the Gobi Desert, the WCPF agreed in 2009 to provide a prize at an Explorers Club auction. The winner will be taken on a camel safari into Gobi 'A' Reserve in Mongolia and also visit the wild Bactrian camel Hunter Hall Breeding Centre at Zakhyn Us and stay in the ger/ yurt at the Centre. Michael J. Manyak, MD, FACS, Professor of Urology, Engineering, Microbiology, and Tropical Medicine won the auction and will be accompanied by two friends – one of whom dived over and surveyed the Titanic. Their trip will take place in August 2010. James of Panoramic Travel is organising their travel within Mongolia and will bring them safely to the Hunter Hall Breeding Centre in Zakhyn-Us.

NEW WEBSITE

WCPF is re-doing the WCPF website www.wildcamels.com to make it easier to use and find information, facilitate donations and allow us to up-date the site as and when the information becomes available. The site has a remarkable number of visits every month, many from school children, researchers and international organizations. The 'shop' site is being expanded to include items knitted from wild Bactrian camel hair, by the families living near the breeding centre. This is an important source of income for them.

We reported in the last newsletter how as part of our work the WCPF supports the Communities local to the Breeding Centre. We are already selling Bactrian camel hair knitted items on the WCPF website and a new batch of knitted goods has arrived in the UK. The WCPF was asked by the women knitters to help with the cost of a local building. The cost to the WCPF would be 50% of the total cost of a building, which will give the knitters of the Bactrian camel items, hats, scarves, gloves and socks, a better place in which to work. They would also be able to knit more items for us to sell, and earn more income for themselves. The total cost of this local Mongolian Community project is \$2,100. The WCPF microfinance funding will be \$1,050 (50%). The knitters are already repaying this loan to the WCPF with knitted items.

NEW ITEMS FOR SALE

Dark green Jerseys, sweaters, fleeces and cloth hats adorned with the WCPF logo are being made as I write this email. They can be ordered from the website. Also our extremely popular milk and dark, solid hand-made chocolate bactrian camels are now on sale. Details will be found shortly on the new website.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Most members have renewed their annual membership for 2006/2007/2008, but if you haven't, please send £20.00 (or its equivalent in foreign currency). You can pay by going 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 and ask for the bank transfer details. After 10 years we have decided to raise our subscription by £5 to £20/\$40/25 Euros. Could members kindly adjust their payments accordingly? Many of our long-standing members pay by **direct debit** from their bank account to the WCPF UK account. This helps us keep costs down. Please SEND AN email for the WCPF bank details. As the WCPF pays for the monthly costs of the Mongolian Wild Camel NGO these regular payments enable us to manage our finances more easily and those members who have not set up such an annual payment are encouraged to do so. Also much thanks to those who have sponsored a camel at the breeding centre.

To all our supporters all over the world I send our thanks. You are our lifeblood and a constant source of encouragement and inspiration.

EMAIL ADDRESS

TO CUT POSTAGE COSTS, PLEASE IF YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS THEN EMAIL IT TO US AT <harecamel@aol.com> or <krae77777@aol.com> ALSO PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND US A CHANGE OF EMAIL ADDRESS. COPIES OF BACK NUMBERS OF THE NEWSLETTER ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE www.wildcamels.com.

FINALLY

I hope to see many of you at the CAMEL POLO and PIG RACING on June 27th at Idliote in Warwickshire - not too far from Oxford and Stratford-on-Avon. All the proceeds from this event go to WCPF.

Very best wishes and renewed thanks for your continued support.

John Hare
Founder
Wild Camel Protection Foundation