Institution for Promoting the Natural History of India, (1804-1808)
Barrackpore Menagerie Collection 1800-1880

Barrackpore Menagerie (Chas D'Oyeley, circa 1820) - venue of the pioneering Indian Natural History Project (1804-08) - did not come to an end when the project closed.
Subsequent governors and their families took interest from time to time and animals continued to be sent for the collection, albeit for a different purpose.

Purchased in 1785 and taken in hand by Lord Arthur Wellesley in 1801,
Barrackpore Park was a landmark of relief and pleasure for British governors and their visitors. A Menagerie and an Elephant Stud were attractions enjoyed by the public as well.

The painting of Ardea poepoei and the description of Ardea minimum in the unpublished manuscript by Buchanan-Hamilton very closely resembles the description and colour illustration in All (1996) although the exact validity of Buchanan's species needs to be verified.

Scleropus indicus Cuvier, a full grown male in the menagerie. Dr. Moore sent a living specimen to the menangerie writes that the animal is gregarious, found on large trees in the hillsy country and eats fruit and wild berries.

Sample of Buchanan ms

Barrackpore was closed down between 1976 and 1980. During this time 54 animals, 41 mammals, 12 birds and 1 reptile (a total of 23 species were transferred to the Alipore Zoological Garden, Calcutta.

Author (left), biographer of B. B. Sanyal (centre) & Director, Alipore Zoo (right) at the gate of Barrackpore Park.

Police inspector at Barrackpore Cant who wanted to start a Deer Park in 1998. Author showing slides of the old zoo.

Leopardus alleni B. White leopard from Malabar. The animal is probably a 'double recessive mutant as the description the eyes as 'milky white', not purple as in an albino.

Poster presentation prepared by SPHeZ'NHIA for the Annual Conference and Meeting of the Society for History of Natural History, themed 'Lost, Stolen or Strayed: The Fate of Missing Natural History Collections', Leiden, 10-11 May 2001.
"Lost, stolen or strayed: the fate of missing natural history collections"
13th International Conference & AGM of the Society for the History of Natural History

The 13th International Conference of SHNH will be held in the Naturalis, National Museum of Natural History (Nationale Natuurhistorische Museum), Darwinweg, Leiden, Netherlands.

All lectures will take place in the lecture theatre at the Naturalis Museum, in old buildings converted from a former plague hospital. The cloakroom facilities, cafe and bookshop are close by. The ultra-modern museum displays are across a footbridge.

In May 2001 there will be the added attraction of the nearby Keukenhof Park with its annual spectacular display of bulbs and spring flowers. The Ramsbottom Lecture will be given by Pat Morris, Royal Holloway College, London, UK

A provisional programme of speakers has been selected and provisional themes and titles of presentations are given here.

The conference will include the following contributions (some as poster papers or shorter presentations). Themes and titles of papers are still provisional: further information will be circulated nearer the date of the meeting.

Theme 1: Lost natural history collections:
MacGregor, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK
Natural history collections at the Ashmolean, 17th-19th Century
Paul Foster, West Sussex College, UK
Gilbert White and the Gibraltar Collections
Clemency Fisher, NMG Merseyside, Liverpool, UK
From deadhead thickheads to wandering webbings-the Limbo Birds (lost & found Australian birds).
Violani, Universita di Pavia, Italy
The lost bird collection of C. S. Rafinesque: sunk in the Atlantic Ocean

Theme 2: Lost & found natural history books and manuscripts
Christa Riedl-Dorn, Naturhistorisches Museum Archiv, Vienna. Displaced documents (treasures) - the strange fate of archive materials (collections) and drawings of the Vienna Natural History Museum.

Florike Egmond The Hague, Netherlands
Two little-known Dutch manuscripts on natural curiosities.
Joy Kaiser, Museum, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, USA
Hamilton L. Smith’s Diatomacearum Species Typicae and his lost library of Diatom literature
Verena Stagli, Natural History Museum, Vienna
The unknown manuscript of Polydore Roux in the Crustacea collection of the Vienna Museum.
Gavin Bridson, Hunt Institute, Pittsburgh, USA
The paper trail: tracing lost private libraries

Theme 3: Lost living collections
Herman Reichenbach, Germany
Lost zoos: The decline and disappearance of zoological gardens Vernon Kisling, USA
Extinct Zoos - What Happened to the Animal Collections?
John Edwards: UK
The Jardin d’Acclimatization.

Sally Walker: India
The Institution for Promoting the Natural History of India (1804-1808) and the Barrackpore Menagerie (1804-1880)

Theme 4: Retrieving and interpreting what remains.
Simon Chaplin, Museums of The Royal College of Surgeons of England
Recovering John Hunter’s missing museum
W. Conner Sorensen USA
Nineteenth Century American entomological collections: a success story with exceptions
R.Prys-Jones, Natural History Museum (Bird section), UK
The bird collections of Richard Meinertzhagen: fraud, its detection and some happy endings.

Theme 5: Safeguarding collections for the future
Patrick J. Boylan, City University, UK
International Cultural Property Law and the Protection of Natural History Collections
Simon Knell, Department of Museum Studies, Leicester, UK
The social and curatorial factors and processes which result in the loss of collections

The Society for the History of Natural History
C/o The Natural History Museum
Cromwell Road
London SW7 5BD, U.K.
Mr. Gian Chand Jain, one of the important industrialists whose main hobby is bird keeping has assembled a large collection of birds at his business premises in Dhrangadhra which is about 100 miles from Ahmedabad in Gujarat State. The status of his collection now is 14 orders, 44 families, 278 species or kinds and 829 individual birds. This collection is considered a nucleus for the formation of one of the biggest Bird Zoos in India. Arrangements are being made to establish the Indian Ornithological Garden in the National Park area near Bombay.

The Maharajah of Mysore, the present Governor of Madras is the patron-in-chief. Mr. B.V. Ramanuju who was the Director of the Delhi Zoological Park is now organizing and directing the Indian Ornithological Garden in an honorary capacity.

The main objectives of the Indian Ornithological Garden are as follows:

- To exhibit and maintain a representative collection of the different species of birds of the world under suitable conditions and systematically displayed for scientific study and research.
- To endeavour to evolve improved techniques and conditions for keeping birds in captivity.
- To aid conservation by protecting and saving from extinction the threatened species of birds and increase their numbers by breeding in captivity for the purpose of their reintroduction to their native land.
- To set up a comprehensive library exclusively dedicated to bird study and a bird museum for the display of such birds which cannot easily be maintained in captivity.
- To foster the interest of the people in birds and the problems concerning their protection.

The Indian Ornithological Garden is bringing out a bi-monthly journal called THE PEACOCK which is a useful journal for all bird lovers and zoo men. The Peacock is a free journal which can be obtained on request to the Honorary Director, the Indian Ornithological Gardens, Dhrangadhra.

The Indian Ornithological Garden is in a position to arrange collection and supply of Indian Birds to various zoos in the continents purely on an exchange basis.

The Indian Ornithological Garden has achieved success in breeding the following Birds:

Order: Galliformes
1. Chukar Partridge (Alectoris graeca)*
2. Grey Partridge (Francolinus pondicerianus)
3. Rain Quail (Perdicula asiatica)
4. Bobwhite Quail (Colinus virginianus)*
5. Californian Quail (Callipepla californica)
6. Golden pheasant (Cryolophus pictus)*
7. Silver Pheasant (Lophura nythemera)*
8. Kalij Pheasant (Lophura hayami)*
9. Ring neck pheasant (Phasianus colchicus)
10. Bel’s Silver Pheasant (Lophura nythemera beli)
11. Blue eared Pheasant (Crossoptilon auritum)
12. Monal pheasant (Lophophorus impejanus)
13. White Peafowl (Pavo cristatus)
14. Grey Jungle fowl (Gallus sonnerati)

Order: Psittaciformes
15. Lesser Sulphur crested Cockatoo (Cacatua sulphurea)
16. Moluccan Cockatoo (Cacatua moluccensis)
17. Roseate Cockatoo (Cacatua roseicapilla)
18. Cockatiels (Nymphicus hollandicus)*
19. Chattering Lory (Dubicilla garilla)
20. Purple-naped lory (Dubicilla domicilla)
21. Masked Love bird (Agapornis personata)*
22. Blue-masked Love bird (Agapornis personate)*
23. Peach-faced Love bird (Agapornis rosicollis)*
24. Fisher’s Love bird (Agapornis fischeri)*
25. Turquoiseine Parrakeet (Neophema pulchella)
26. Red rump Parrot (Fsephicus haematotus)*
27. African Grey Parrot (Psittacus erithacus)
28. Moustache Parrakeet (Psittacula alexandrae fasciata)*
29. Blue-winged Parrakeet (Psittacula columboides)*
30. Ring-necked Parrakeet (Psittacula krameri)*
31. Lutino ring necked Parrakeet (Psittacula krameri)*
32. Budgerigar (Melopsittacus undulatus)*

Order: Columbiformes
33. Diamond Dove (Geopelia cuneata)*
34. Ring Doves (Streptopelia decauco)*
35. Rufous Turtle Dove (Steriotelis orientalis)

Order: Passeriformes
36. Black-headed Mynah (Sturnus pugadorum)
37. Zebra Finch (Taenopygia castanotis)*
38. Canary (Serinus canarius)*
39. Gouldian Finch (Poephila gouldiae)
40. Java Sparrow (Padda oryzivora)*
41. White-throated Munia (Lonchura malabarica)*
42. Cinnamon tree Sparrow (Passer rutilans)*
43. Purple Sunbird (Nectarinia asiatica)*

Order: Piciformes
44. Maharaja woodpecker (Dryobates mahratensis)*

* indicates birds successfully raised.

Source:
Raol Shri Dharmakumarsinhji, one of the great old birdmen ... one of the great old wildlifers.

There are only a few who can claim high distinction in this field of activity, and among them late Raol Shri Dharmakumarsinhji has distinguished himself as one eminently fitted to pursue the study of birds. Unlike academic ornithologists who spend considerable time working with cabinet specimens, Dharmakumarsinhji’s understanding of ecology, if not inborn, is the lesson of the field: he is one who spends considerable number of hours out-of-doors to study nature in all its aspects.

Dharmakumarsinhji is the third son of His Highness Sir Bhavsinghji K.C.S.I., Maharaja of Bhavnagar and Maharani Saheba Nand Kunverba C.I. Having been orphaned in his infancy Dharmakumarsinhji grew up under the care of Sir Prabha Shankar Patni, C.I.E., the then President of the Council of Minority Administration of the Bhavnagar State in Kathiawar, Gujarat. He is now about 49.

Dharmakumarsinhji joined the Stanmore Park Preparatory School in England in 1925 at the age of ten. There he evinced keen interest in games and soon excelled in fencing. He became the school champion at the age of 12 winning a number of sports events including that of miniature range shooting. It was here that he started his interest in bird life. In the lovely surroundings of the school he had ample opportunity to watch birds. He discovered his first nest, the mud-lined nest of the song thrush with blue eggs speckled black. He soon became an egg-collector, and at the time of leaving school he had a small but representative collection of British bird’s eggs.

Dharmakumarsinhji joined the famous Harrow Public School, where apart from his regular studies and games continued his interest in birds. He was getting two shillings and six pence pocket money per week and from his savings bought books on British birds and commenced drawing lessons in color pastels under Mr. Clark, the Art Master, and acquired proficiency in bird-painting.

On account of ill-health he returned to India and joined the Samaldas College at Bhavnagar. On his return he realised that he knew more about British birds and their eggs than about those of his own country, and so began an intensive study of the birds of Saurashtra. He began to watch the seasonal movements of the enormous number of birds that visited India. The recognition of the different species became a persistent obsession and it soon became evident that he would have to shoot them to make absolutely sure of the species. His interest in game bird shooting gave him an advantage, as he could shoot whenever he was in doubt about identification. In this way he accumulated great deal of information. He made free use of Stuart Baker’s Series of Fauna of British India and Salim Ali’s Birds of Kutch for identifying birds. He travelled throughout the country and visited the outlying islands and made important field observations. His 15 year’s of untiring bird-watching in and out of seasons, and his colossal field notes gathered during this long period, resulted in his fine book, “The Birds of Saurashtra” which is the first authoritative record of the Birds of this region, and this book got him the National award for the best bird book with illustrations.

He has made notable contributions to ornithological literature. He always believes that young bird watchers could contribute very much by their accurate and minute observations. His exhaustive articles are well-worth reading today for they show intensive observations of the intimate ways and habits of birds dealt with.

Dharmakumarsinhji began bird banding under the directions of His Highness, the late Maharaja of Bhavnagar who was the first ruler to start a banding scheme. The lesser florican whose local migration is still obscure was the subject of the migratory research scheme. Those who have seen his coloured films of lesser floricans and their displays, courtship activities etc., or have heard him discuss the identification of eagles, or the migratory habits of the waders, known him to be a capable and accurate observer, and one who had made a most of his abundant opportunities for bird study. He has a very quick eye to spot birds and their nests, and his uncanny ability to identify birds while in flight or by their callnotes is very characteristic.

He helped Dr. Walter Koelz, the noted American ornithologist to collect bird specimens in Saurashtra and a number of new species have been recognised by the American Museum of Natural History. To cite an example of a bird which bears his name is the Small Minivet (Pericrocotus perigrinus dharmakumari) Koelz.

Dharmakumarsinhji’s sporting activities include the birds also. He developed great interest in falconry and was trained by professional hereditary falconers of the
Bhavnagar state. He perfected the art of falconry to such an extent that he achieved high international standards of hawking cranes and sand grouses and received the title of "Bazbahadur" (falcon-king) from the late Highness the Maharaja of Bhavnagar. The noted American falconers, the Craighead brothers who studied falconry in India under Dharmakumarsinhji wrote a beautiful account, "Life with an Indian Prince" in the National Geographical Magazine in 1942.

He was for some time the member of the Executive committee of the Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay from where he represented the Society at the VIIIth Internation Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources Congress held at Nairobi, Kenya in 1963. He also attended the XVIIth International Zoological Congress held at Washington, D.C. During this trip he took a short training course at the Yellowstone National Park in the United States on the census of grizzly bears under the administration of Dr. J.J. and F.C. Craigheads. He had conducted wild life surveys in India and he is the first to make aerial census of black buck in Rajasthan. He is the author of "A field Guide, to Big Game census in India".

On account of his brilliant career in Sports he was made the Vice-President, and later the President of the Bhavnagar Veer Bhadrasinhji Olympic Games and was recognised as the official umpire in hockey. He has been the president of the Bombay and Maharashtra State Amateur Athletic Association and Vice-President of the Amateur Athletic Federation of India.

His interests do not rest with birds and sports; he is the president of the Bombay Aquarist's society; he indulges in Wild Life photography, Indian music and pastel drawing in his spare time.

There are really few competent ornithologists who are also expert bird keepers. Dharmakumarsinhji has absorbing interest in Aviculture. He is a life member of the Avicultural Society, and one of its regular contributors. Breeding rare birds in captivity has been one of his special interests as opposed to mere keeping for ornamentation. Besides many other breeding achievements he distinguished himself in the world of Aviculture by breeding the Empress of Germany's bird of Paradise in his aviaries. He is now actively interested in the protection of the Great Indian Bustard which is fast vanishing. He has successfully reared the Great Indian Bustard many a time and is confident that these birds could become numerous again if proper protection is afforded to them. His papers on zoogeographical distribution of the family OTIDIDAE has been highly commended.

Dharmakumarsinhji is a member of the subcommittee of the Natural History section of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay. Dharmakumarsinhji is a member of the British Ornithological Union. He is the founder patron of the Indian Ornithological Garden. He is on the Editorial Board of "PÄVO" the Indian Journal of ornithology. Dharmakumarsinhji is indeed a rare species classifiable as "Ornitho-Nautalist-Sportsman."

Reprinted: The Peacock: January-February 1966, pp. 4-6
The Craighead twins' day-by-day diary of their fabled trip to India in 1940-41.
Excerpt published in The Journal of the North American Falconers' Association

Over sixty years ago, my twin brother Frank and I embarked on what was to be an adventure of a lifetime. At the time, 1940, there was no way we could have anticipated that we were to observe the final days of a thousand-year-old sporting tradition of the Indian Rajput. Momentous world events combined to make the lifetime adventure of two young American boys the last possible adventure of its kind. During our visit to R. S. Dharanakumarsinhji, youngest brother to His Highness Maharaj Shri Sir Krishnakumarsinhji Saheb of Bhavnagar, K.S.C.I., World War II was breaking out altering the lives of all concerned. After the war, India acquired independence from two centuries of British rule. The native states were swallowed up in the formation of a new, democratic nation. The traditions and sporting pursuits of the old Moghul emperors and their Rajput princes disappeared overnight and, along with them, the professions which supported the royal, shikar, or hunting sport.

Frank and I also found our lives swiftly changing. We met our obligation to the National Geographic Society, which helped finance our journey to Bhavnagar, by publishing an article entitled "Life With an Indian Prince" in the February, 1942 Volume of the National Geographic Magazine and by producing a lecture-film with the same title and showing it at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. With America fully engaged in the battles of World War II, we were shortly inducted into the Navy and charged with setting up survival training programs for Naval aviators.

At the war's end, Frank and I became deeply engrossed in pursuing professional careers, studying for doctorates at the University of Michigan and starting families. A book on what we had learned of Indian falconry techniques and our experiences with Bapa and his brothers was never written, and won't be for sixty years have passed since the details of memory were sharp and our passion for the sport was at its highest. My purpose as well as that of the Archives of American Falconry is to simply publish a document "for the record" of that adventure to a place and time that is no more, to honor a friendship that lasted a lifetime. The text is composed strictly from the daily journals Frank and I kept. They have been lightly edited for good sentence structure and clarification, when required. The only exception is the first chapter. None of our early correspondence with Bapa remains, only an incomplete essay drafted by Frank soon after Bapa's first visit to our home in Washington D.C. This essay has been reworked to serve as an introduction to our friendship with Bapa, and it explains how and why two, twenty-year old, teenage American boys teamed up with an Indian Prince. Photo captions and sidebars provide additional information.

It would have been possible to confine this volume strictly to those events of most interest to falconers, the time spent with the Royal family in Bhavnagar and our daily pursuit of hawking, cheetah coursing, and shooting, but early in the planning of this volume it was decided that the journey should be "recorded" from beginning to end.

This adventure included a sea voyage that eventually brought us full circle around the globe. At sea we contended with typhoons. Shipboard we grew more worldly as we met and visited with passengers from around the globe, some returning home from adventures of their own, others homeless, refugees of an impending world crisis. We explored exotic ports of call with romantic names: Honolulu, Yokohama, Hong Kong, and Penang. Cities which would in a few short years become household words as the Pacific war effort brought news of them into American homes daily. Our travels included the crossing of two continents. The first by motor car across the North American continent from east coast to west, the second journey was of equal length but in the relative luxury of a Maharajah's special train; crossing North Indian from the Gujarat Peninsula on the Arabian Sea to the jungle capital of Tripura at Agartala near the banks of the Ganges River. Here we were guests at double ceremonies, the enthronement of the royal heir to Tripura and the marriage of a princess to her prince. These travels and events were secondary to the main purpose of our adventure which was to observe the practice of Indian Falconry as guests of His Highness Maharaj of Bhavnagar and his younger brother R. S. Dharanakumarsinhji, whom we knew as Bapa.

Back When, and Then

Vol. V, No. 1, May 2001
A Day of Sport with an Indian Prince
Diary Excerpts from John and Frank Craighead during their 1940 trip to India

This excerpt and photos are provided from the Archives of American Falconry and S. Kent Carnie, December 4, 1941. It is nearing ten P.M. almost the end of a perfect day, and a long day too; for as usual, we were up and moving before sunrise. I would like to designate this day as "A Day of Sport with an Indian Prince," because it encapsulates many of the interesting events that occur whenever we go afield. Bapa had planned ambitiously; there would be much for us to do. In fact, today was closer to an American day, of long hours rushing to and fro, than any we have experienced here so far. Like any day where a maximum of projects must be completed in a minimum of time, the schedule had to be well planned in advance.

We gulped tea and munched crackers in the gray darkness of early morning, then met Bapa and, with three of his men, we drove toward the hills and forests of Sihor. One of Bapa's men had reported an eagle's nest on a cliff in this region. According to his account, there had been five eggs, but three had been broken by falling stones, and the nest was now deserted. Five eggs seemed very unusual for an eagle. Perhaps it was a peacock. At any rate we decided to investigate and to look at another previously located nest as a possibility for future photographing. Bapa had told his men that we desired to photograph an eagle's nest and had urged them to keep a sharp lookout for all possibilities. Bapa parked the car in a forest road among thorny Acacias. We climbed several hundred feet until we reached the cliff on which the nest was located. Neither John nor I felt any effects from this slight climb, but Bapa, still feeling the effects of a malaria attack, paused several times to rest. John offered to go over the cliff and get the eggs. Bape didn't think he should and said that one of his men would do it. However, it was evident that they were not at all anxious; so I tied the "dry-roiled" rope around John and lowered him over. He wrapped the two unbroken eggs in his jacket, held the package in his teeth, and climbed back up. I took several pictures while Bapa's men anxiously watched us move freely about the cliff. They were relieved when we departed as Bapa ventured quite close to the edge. The eggs will have to be identified later. It must be exceptionally rare to find five eagle eggs in one nest.

From this eyrie we hiked across the volcanic rock of the "mountain top" toward the other eagle nest. On the way we passed the cave of an old ascetic who had spent forty years of self exile among the heat, rocks, and thorns before he passed on to something his faith told him was far better. But was it? Bapa, John and I had our doubts. The three of us have much in common, basic religious beliefs, philosophy, and skepticism about a hereafter. I guess we are heretics, preferring to follow Omar Khayyam's philosophy and live the present as best we can and plan for the near future with the prospects of getting the most from life for as he says "Not one returns to tell us of the road, which to discover we must travel too."

Bapa with a favourite lugger
At any rate we left the cave, now occupied by a new tenant, and attained the summit, where a fascinating view spread before us. Several hundred feet directly below was a village of mud and brick houses; the red and black tiled roofs gleaming in the morning sun. A hum, as though from a hive of bees, rose from the awakening village. People's voices, children's calls, cocks crowing, birds singing, dogs barking, the rumbling of oxen carts on cobbled stones-every sound of a new day's activity in the narrow streets and open courtyards rose up to us as a powerful, but subdued hum that was the voice of the village. Sihor was the old capitol of Bhavagar State, and it was easy to see why this site had been selected. The rugged hills on which we stood formed a perfect fortress to the rear. A river and numerous wells supplied water. To the west was the frontier and open plain, but a rock wall and a series of forts formed a line of defense. Sihor was located with an eye to retaining a conquered land and such had been a near impregnable city. Numerous temples dotted the surrounding hilltops. A dam and a reservoir were the only visible marks of recent changes. To all appearances, Sihor could have been a lost city cut off from the rest of the world. As the novelty of the view wore off, I thought of pictures and scrambled up the walled lookout post to take a photograph. If an old Rajput sentry could have heard me when I found I had only one exposure left, he would have signaled the fort for the troops. Sometime I'll have to return to take the pictures left undone.

The second eagle nest was still further down the ridge, but we had spent too much time looking down on Sihor to visit the nest. It was already getting late for crow trapping and crow trapping was the next event on our program. The crow is a wily intelligent bird wherever found, so I was particularly anxious to see how these expert trappers would catch him in a net. If the crow sees something new and unusual or becomes the least bit suspicious, he is off and away.

Bapa had acquired a young quail trapper from the Panjab who was also an expert at crow trapping and while we had
been visiting the eagle’s nest he had located a likely spot in a
field just outside a small village and there he had carefully set
his net. The net is pegged flat on the ground and a long
drawstring runs from it to a point some distance away. The
net is covered with a thin layer of fine soil and when pulled,
flies over the crows in an arc similar to a bow net. Only the
whole set is much simpler, much more effective and infinitely
more ingenious. When we arrived at the scene the trapper
from Punjab doffed his turban, coat, and trousers and put
the garb of a Brahman.

The Brahmanas (teacher caste) wear white cotton garb and
throughout India can be recognized by their dress. As a
dictate of their religion, they share their food with the birds
and with other animals. The crow being an intelligent bird
knows this from past experience and quickly recognizes a
Brahman. The house crow has learned that Brahmanas will
feed, but not harm him. The trapper planned to take advan-
tage of the crow’s greater bird intelligence. Our “Trapper
Brahman” left us concealed at some distance from the net
while he entered the town 1/3 of a mile
away. He put on a wonderful act of
mumbling the Brahman prayers and calling “ow ow ow” (“come, come”) to the dogs and
crows. First he called the dogs and fed
them. As the dogs began to congregate, the
crows took notice and soon were fluttering
about him scaring a morsel now and then
and waiting for more. When the Brahman
had gathered a good following, he slowly
walked out of town like the Pied Piper of
Hamlin. We saw him as he left the buildings
and sauntered toward the fields feeding his
gullible train of dogs and crows. Now and
then he stopped, sat down, and gathered his
flock in a tight group as he offered food and
spoke softly to them. Crows were flying all
about his head, others were speeding
toward him from a distance and still more
were hopping about at his feet. It was an
unbelievable sight, crow and man as
brethren, with India the only place where this could have
occurred. The trapper moved closer and closer to his hidden
net, still stopping now and then to gather the crows enmass.
He then left them feeding and moved on to call them once
again. Finally, he reached the net and, drawing food from the
folds of his gown, threw it in front of the net. The crows
gathered in a compact, unloading mass fighting, eating, and
cawing. The dogs were also there and must be dealt with, as
the net would never spring free if they remained. The
Brahman moved aside, called away the dogs with other food,
but left the crows eating. He now had two separate feeding
units. Leaving the dogs, he walked alone to the draw cord,
gave a quick, strong pull, and with a puff of dust the black gill
net arched over the crows; not one escaped. Only those that
were in the air or some distance away went free. Twenty-five
crows were trapped and not one could raise a voice in protest.
They had entered the affair of their own free will and with
their eyes open. They had been played for suckers and I think
they knew it. Their greater cunning in recognizing food and a
harmless friend had been their undoing. John, using a
telephoto lens, had captured the whole procedure on movie
film and I took still pictures. The whole show was so amazing
that I could scarcely believe it. The trapper said we could
easily have caught 75 crows if we had done it earlier in the
day as many of the crows had already fed.

Not all crow trappers are as expert as this man is. You must
look like a Brahman and act like one. In fact, you must be a
superb actor to fool the villagers and the Brahmanas, as well as
the crows. If the real Brahmanas had recognized the trapper as
a fake, he’d be stoned right out of the village. If the villagers
knew that he intended to catch crows, they also would beat
or severely punish him. The trapper must fool them all and
usually when he has sprung his net he shoves it, crows and
all, into a large bag and skips away before the surprised
villagers realize what has happened or how the crows have
been trapped. In this case it was not necessary, as Bapa was
present to prevent any such treatment being handed out to
his trapper. It will be a long time before I forget that Brahman
with his following of crows and the net as it flew over them in a
cloud of dust.

[The thought arose that this would be an
excellent way to catch pigeons. Set the net,
feed the pigeons, lure them to the trap and, if
necessary, dress up like the old women who
feed them in the parks. Like the Brahman, we
could stuff pigeons in a bag and jump in the car and speed away. It is a
wonderful method of getting hawk food. We
had enough crows to last the hawks for
several days.]

Before continuing with our plans for the day,
we pulled beneath and Acacia tree and were
served coffee and cookies by our driver. Then
we drove on to fly Bapa’s tiercel at another
bagged ibis. The tiercel was keen for flying;
earlier or later would not have been as
propitious. Everything was working as Bapa
had planned. The ibis was fixed so that it
could not fly well and was then released. The
tiercel was then unhooded and took off in
pursuit. He brought the ibis down in a short
flight and was allowed to feed on his quarry. Each time he
kills a bagged ibis he becomes better acquainted with this prey-to-be.

By the time the tiercel was fed it was getting quite warm, but
not too hot to fly the lugger, a desert falcon. Accordingly,
Bapa sent his men into the surrounding fields to locate
partridges. Before long we got the signal and Bapa put up the
lugger. Waiting on 300 feet above us she struck and bound to
her quarry when flushed from a cactus hedge. The lugger
had taken her ninth partridge and we added photographs to a
growing collection.

At noon we finished flying the lugger and were already late
for lunch at Nanabhari’s. Bapa sped along the dirt roads
dodging men, women, children, oxcart, goats, and carriages.
At the guest house we changed to our Indian clothes and
were back on schedule by one o’clock. His Highness were
present. Lunch was delicious, especially the dessert, which
was a combination of layers of cake, fruit, gelatin, and cream.
After lunch we talked with His Highness about such diverse
subjects as the coming marriage, the morning flights, and the
possibilities of big game hunting in America. When His Highness left we rushed back to the hotel, changed clothes, flew our Shahins, and then returned to Nanabhai’s for a cheetah hunt.

At 3.00 P.M., we rumbled out of the Nanabhai’s gateway in the army Ford truck and a station wagon. I was in the Ford with Nanabhai; John was in the station wagon with Bapa. We drove to the coastal flats and immediately spotted a herd of three black buck does. Nanabhai raced after these and while still some distance away released a cheetah. The cheetah took after the females, timed her run well, and almost made a kill. She had formed a bad habit of chasing does rather than bucks. By tiring the cheetah on this first chase and then getting her close to a buck for an easier chase, Nanabhai reasoned she might think that female antelopes were too difficult to catch and that bucks were easier. When released she would then chase only bucks. Unfortunately, the next step did not work out as hoped. Nanabhai got the cheetah close to a buck, but she ran halfheartedly and did not catch it. But there were other cheetahs to run and soon Nanabhai and I were racing across country in pursuit of two large bucks. The speedometer rose higher and higher and the car skidded as we turned sharply to head the buck in the desired direction. When quite close, Nanabhai braked the truck and gave the order for release. The cheetah sprang in pursuit, selected his quarry, the largest blackest one, and then slowly started gathering speed. As he began to overtake the buck, the antelope turned and ran perpendicular to the car. The cheetah then put on the full spurt. The buck dodged and raced directly toward us. Pursuer and pursued were only a short distance away when the cheetah overtook the market buck and struck it with a hard blow with a slap of his paw. The cheetah and buck lost their feet, both turning somersault in a cloud of dust. The cheetah quickly regained his feet and sprang for the buck’s throat before it could rise. The black buck tried to regain his feet, but the cheetah held firmly.

We raced to the kill and in one swift slash, the trainer slit the windpipe and jugular vein of the buck. Blood gushed out in a torrent and was caught in the wooden ladle. The cheetah hung grimly to the buck’s neck and even before the prey was dead the trainer ripped the underside of the buck’s legs and severed a leg. Blood spurted over the trainers, gushing from the jugular vein with the sucking noise of water draining from a tub. It was indeed a gory affair and I can well believe Nanabhai when he said that a friend of his fainted when he saw this part of the hunt. He had then said to Nanabhai: “I believe you could murder a man just as heartlessly.”

Nanabhai retorted, “No, killing a human being is something entirely different”. These people get their meat in this manner and certainly it is no worse than the killing that occurs in our stockyards. Killing is never a pleasant sight, but this is what occurs every day in nature and it soon has little emotional effect if one does not let his mind ponder on the scene. I must admit, however, that I prefer being an onlooker rather than an active participant. The men who do the killing justify their act by repeating several verses from their Bible (Koran) as the knife slides back and forth and the pulsating blood stream gushes out: This chase would have made a wonderful movie, but Nanabhai wants us to wait and get a hunt from the ox carts. We ran the first cheetah again and John went along while I remained with Bapa. The cheetah, unfortunately, did not perform. We returned the cheetahs to their quarters and I saw the Caracal lynx that is trained on hare. We had evening tea at Bapa’s and talked about the possibilities of Bapa coming to America to study for a year; of course, that would include hunting as well.

This was a time for exercises, while conversing about the local news, and events of his men, chit-chat of the royal family, and the planning for Nanabhai’s wedding. We, in turn, urged him to make skins of all the bustards, florikan, and button quail that he gets. They are rare in collections and someday may be useful to him as bargaining power for exchange specimens. I am sure it was a thought we need not have expressed. We returned to the hotel to read the same war headlines that have been appearing for the last two weeks.

A perfect day with an Indian Prince had ended. It was a day well planned to realize the most and best from each undertaking.

North American Falcons’ Association Life of a Prince, 1999 Pp. 6-10

The Natural History Museum at South Kensington
Published By The Natural History Museum.
ISBN: 0 565 09030 5; RRP: £ 30.00;
440 pp; Illustrations: 88 b/w

The Natural History Museum at South Kensington provides a fascinating insight into the story behind the Museum and its collections. Written by a highly respected natural historian, this was the first book to cover the complete history of the Museum, from its formation as part of the British Museum to its present incarnation. After some years of being out of print, this classic text has been reprinted in limited numbers to allow enthusiasts a chance to discover the history of one of the world’s most important scientific institutions.

Special discount for members of The Society for the History of Natural History

The Natural History Museum at South Kensington is now on sale in the Museum Bookshop priced at Pounds 30.00. It is offered to members of The Society for the History of Natural History at a discount of 15% (discount price: £25.50 plus £1.50 UK postage & packing).

Please place orders directly through the Museum’s Bookshop.
The Natural History Museum Bookshop
The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road
London SW7 5BD. Tel: 0181 938 9022, Fax: 0181 938 8880.
Articles about Asia from recent volumes of the Archives of Natural History

The Society for History of Natural History has permitted SPHoZaNHIA to (within reason) offer xeroxed material from their excellent journal Archives of Natural History to members. We have started with a few issues from last two years and will add more from time to time. SHNH Council has generously agreed to donate back issues and has set aside a big box of them awaiting transport to India.

We have listed separately the articles which would be of most interest to Indians and other Asians. This is below. If you want to order xerox copies of articles please send Rs. 1.50 per page stating clearly which article you want. For Indian members this is no problem but for other countries, you will have to include the cost of postage. Also this only applies to Asian countries, nowhere else.

Other articles about subject matter outside of Asia are listed on the next pages. For a copy of the complete abstract of these and other details you can order the xeroxed pages for Rs. 0.75 each page.

We hope our members will avail this facility and become inspired to join SHNH for the sake of this excellent publication.

Founder Secretary, SPHoZaNHIA, Editor BW&T, SHNH Representative for South Asia.

Archives of Natural History, February 1998, Vol. 25, Part 1
The Indian bird paintings by Ferdinand Lucas Bauer in the Zoological Survey of India: a preliminary note (Xeroxed 1 Page, Rs. 1.50 excluding postage charges)
ANN DATTA, Zoology Library,
The Natural History Museum,
Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.

Book reviews

Bidtenland China: Zierpflanzen und Nutz- und Heilpflanzen.

Francis Hamilton and the freshwater stingrays described in his Gangetic fishes (1822)
By TYSON R. ROBERTS, Department of Ichthyology,
California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, CA 94118, U.S.A.

Abstract
Direct evidence bearing on identification of the two new species of Gangetic stingrays named Raia fluviatilis and R. sancur by Hamilton, 1822 comprises 1) the first written account by Hamilton (then Buchanan) of his encounters with Gangetic stingrays in 1807-1813, written at the time in manuscript, but not published until 1877; 2) Hamilton’s accounts of Raia fluviatilis and Raia sancur published in 1822; 3) Hamilton drawing IV 7 in the archives of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (never published, original now lost); and 4) Hamilton drawing IV 65 in the same archives (published by Hora, 1929, original now lost; this drawing is not a copy or a version of drawing IV 7). The description of R. sancur clearly is based on a species of the genus Pastinachus. Drawing IV 7 presumably is the unfinished drawing of R. sancur mentioned by Hamilton, 1822, and is therefore also of a Pastinachus. Drawing IV 65, not mentioned by Hamilton, a complete drawing with dorsal and ventral views of a newborn male Pastinachus with an intact sting, is identified as based on Raia fluviatilis. Pending revision of the genus Pastinachus, the Gangetic species is tentatively identified as P. sephen (Forsskal, 1775). Identification of Raia fluviatilis with a large freshwater species of Gangetic Himantura advocated by Annandale, 1910; Chaudhuri, 1912; Compagno and Cook, 1996; and Zorzi, 1996 is based on unwarranted assumptions. There is no definitive evidence that Hamilton ever saw a Gangetic Himantura Himantura chaophraya Monkolprasit and Roberts, 1990 is the only available name applicable to huge large tropical Asian freshwater stingrays of the dasyatid genus Himantura. No specimens of Gangetic Himantura exist in present museum collections. (Xeroxed pp. 7, Rs. 12.25 excluding postal charges)

Archives of Natural History, October 1998 Vol. 25, Part 3
Colonial menageries and the exchange of exotic faunas
By VERNON N. KISLING, JR
Marston Science Library, University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida 32611-7011, U.S.A.

Abstract
The discovery of new worlds with their exotic faunas was part
of European life during the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries.
Animals representing these faunas were shipped to European
menageries from the earliest discovery of the new worlds, and
increased significantly during this time period with shipments
to menageries throughout the world. The exchange of these
exotic faunas was carried out in many different ways and was
facilitated by natural history networks comprised of individuals
and institutions involved in commercial, agricultural and scient-
ific activities. Colonial menageries, first in the form of animal
holding areas or acclimatization farms and later in the form of
zoos, were initially dependant on the various company net-
works supporting botanical collecting stations. Later they were
the result of official and quasi-official government efforts. These
efforts evolved into the modern colonial zoological gardens.
The exhibition of exotic faunas, the utilization of commercially
important exotic species, and the acclimatization of domestic
breeds to colonial conditions were all part of the great zoologi-
ical exchange that began as a trickle in the fifteenth century and
increased significantly to a flood by the nineteenth century.
(Xeroxed pp. 303-320, Rs. 15.00 excluding postal charges)

Dates of publication of J.E. Gray’s Illustrations of
Indian Zoology (1830-1835)
By ALWYNE WHEELER
Department of Zoology, The Natural History Museum,
Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.

Abstract
A brief account is given of J.E. Gray’s Illustrations of Indian
Zoology, with notes on the sources of the illustrations pub-

lished, the engravers of the plates and the publishers. The dates
of publication of the 16 parts (12 parts of 10 plates each, three
double parts of 20 plates each, and one double part of 22 plates)
are given from two sources. An index to trivial names of all
included taxa is given so that it is possible to identify the part in
which the name appears, as well as the number of the plate in
bound copies. A brief discussion of the authorship of the new
taxa in this work proposes that, with the exception of the
testudines (terapins), all should be attributed to J.E. Gray.
(Xeroxed pp. 345-354, Rs. 3.00 excluding postal charges)

February 1999 Vol. 26, Part 1
J.W. Bennett’s Fishes of Ceylon, dates of publication
from supplementary sources with notes on copies of the
book, alleged original drawings, and the
author’s specimens
By ALWYNE WHEELER
Department of Zoology, The Natural History Museum,
Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.

Abstract
Several sources are used to establish the dates of
publication of the six parts of J.W. Bennett’s Fishes of Ceylon
(1828-1830). Previous datings of this uncommon work are
confirmed for the year but refined dates are established for
the month of publication in most cases. Attention is drawn to
the number of copies available stated to be first editions,
which by the dates on the plates are a mixture of editions.
Bennett’s specimens are no longer in existence.
(Xeroxed pp. 51-54, Rs. 2.25 excluding postal charges)

June 1999 Vol. 26, Part 2
William Daniell’s depictions of the rhinoceros in
India
By L.C. ROOKMAKER
The Rhinoceros Museum, P.O. Box 157,
Vaalwater 0530, South Africa.
(Xeroxed pp. 205-210, Rs. 3.00)

Articles and their Authors in recent issues of Archives of Natural
History

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From science to imperialism: Robert Schomburgk’s humani-
tarianism - By PETER RIVIERE
Simon Rood Pittard (1821-1861) Curator of the Australian Mu-
seum - By MICHAEL VAN LEEUWEN
Sir William Jardine’s account of the formation of the Ray
Society - By PETER DAVIS
Darwin’s dogleg: the last stage of Darwin’s Welsh field trip of
1831 - By MICHAEL B. ROBERTS
K.C. Meuschen (1799-1811), an eighteenth-century diplomat-
naturalist - By L.B. HOLTHUIS
Publication dates of the Recherches zoologiques pour servir a
l’histoire de la faune de l’Amerique centrale et du Mexique -
By ALAIN CROSNIER
Historical connections between the discovery of the new
and the neotropical brazierwood, Caesalpinia echinata Lam. - By
ROBERT A. DEFLIPPS
John White’s journal of a voyage to new South Wales (Lon-
don 1790): bibliographic notes - By E. CHARLES NELSON
The Cabinet… an apparently unrecorded natural history
book - By BRIAN O.C. GARDINER

Short notes
Archival resources of Richard Spruce: a further listing - By
M.B. PEARSON
The Indian bird paintings by Ferdinand Lucas Bauer in the Zo-
ological Survey of India: a preliminary note - By ANN Datta

John White A.M., M.D., F.L.S. (c.1756-1832), Surgeon-General
of New South Wales: a new biography of the messenger of the
echidna and waratah - By E. CHARLES NELSON
The pencil landscape drawings made by Ferdinand Bauer in
Norfolk Island, from August 1804 to February 1805 in The Natu-
ral History Museum, London - By D.T. MOORE
A ‘truly amiable gentleman’: new light on the life and work of
Marmaduke Tunstall (1743-1790) of Wycliffe, North Yorkshire -
By M.J. BOYD
William John Burchell’s travels in Brazil, 1825-1830, with details of
the surviving mammal and bird collections - By JANE
PICKERING
Francis Hamilton and the freshwater stingrays described in his
Gaetetic fishes (1822) - By TYSON R. ROBERTS
Jean-Etienne Guettard’s travel journal in Poland and northern
Europe (1760-1762) - By PIOTR DASZKIEWICZ
A history of botanical collections in the Luangwa Valley, Zambia -
By F.S.M. FHERI and D.M. MOORE

Back When, and Then
Colonial menageries and the exchange of exotic faunas - By VERNON N. KISLING, JR
A bibliography of the scientific papers of Charles Kerremans - By C.L. BELLAMY
Insect collections made by Captain E.P. King in South America 1826-1830, with a list of some of the beetles - By RICHARD T. THOMPSON

Dates of publication of J.F. Gray's Illustrations of Indian Zoology (1830-1835) - By ALWYNE WHEELER
The association between James Bolten of Halifax and Edward Robson of Darlington - By ALAN W. LEGG
On parallel lines: natural history and biology from the late Victorian period - By D.E. ALLEN
Mapping Britain's mollusc fauna: history, development and personalities - By IAN J. KLILEEN

Gentlemen and players in malacology, An appreciation of A.E. Quelch and E. Quick - By N.J. EVANS
Cepaea research 1900-1950, too many problems for a solution? - By R.A.D. CAMERON
Varieties, forms and freaks of nature: breeding experiments by Charles Oldham and A.W. Stelfox - By L.M. COOK
Henry Edward Crampton and Mendelian evolution - By JAMES MURRAY
Charles Maurice Yonge (1899-1986) - By BRIAN MORTON

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Writing natural history for survival-1820-1850: the case of Sarah Bowdich, later Sarah Lee - By DONALD deB. BEAVER
The fate of Marmaduke Tunstall's collections - By L. JESSOP
J.W. Bennett's Fishes of Ceylon, dates of publication from supplementary sources with notes on copies of the book, alleged original drawings, and the author's specimens - By ALWYNE WHEELER
Thomas Sydenham, John Ray, and some contemporaries on species - By A.J. CAIN
Sir James Edward Smith and the introduction of botany in Greece during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries - By GEORGE N. VLAHAKIS
A review of some early testimony from the New World in respect of the Great Auk, Pinguinus impennis - By JEREMY M. GASKELL
Going, going, gone the 'Durham' Great Auk - By R.A. BAKER
An "uninteresting scrawl"... some correspondence of Marmaduke Tunstall (1743-1790) - By L. JESSOP and M.J. BOYD
A note on the term 'lichenologist' and its synonyms - By M.E. MITCHELL

Systematics of Conchylia-Cabinet von Martini und Chemnitz (1837-1920), bibliography of the volumes in Götingen - By PW. WEITER-SCHULTES
William Daniell's depictions of the rhinoceros in India - By I.C. ROCKMAKER
Historic background of Egyptian cotton (2600 BC-AD 1910) - By WAFAA M. AMER and OSMAAA. MOMTAZ
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Plants-distribution patterns: the first British map - By FRANK HORSMAN
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Note on the Fritz Müller-Charles Darwin correspondence - ANNA-K. MAYER

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Information in the Lisle letters from Calais in the early sixteenth century relating to the development of the English bird trade - By W.A.P. BOURNE
Danish natural history and African colonialism at the close of the eighteenth century: Peter Thormann's 'scientific journey' to the Guinea Coast, 1799-1803 - By DANIEL HOPKINS
Charles Morris Woodford C.M.G. (1852-1927): Pacific adventurer and forgotten Solomon Islands naturalist - By W. JOHN TENDTEN
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J.E. Gilbert's phytogeographic map of Lithuania - By PIOTR DASZKIEWICZ

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John Christopher Thackray (1948-1999), the musician
Confessions of a geological book-collector - J. C. THACKRAY
The two states of Mantell's Illustrations of the geology of Sussex... 1827 and c. 1829 - By R.J. CLEEVELEY and SANDRA D. CHAPMAN
Georges Cuvier's paper museum of fossil bones - MARTIN RUDWICK
I coloured a map: Darwin's attempts at geological mapping in 1831 - By MICHAEL B. ROBERTS
Establishing vertebrate palaeontology at Chicago's Field Columbian Museum, 1893-1898 - PÄUL D. BRÖNCKMAN
The zoological collections of the British Museum (Natural History): how the evacuation of the collections during the war years 1939-1945 - By ALWYNE WHEELER
Inspiration from Nature and some plays written by John O'Keefe (1747-1833) - JEAN BARBARA ARCHER and GORDON LESLIE HERRIES DAVIES
Henry De la Beche and the plesiosaur's neck - By D.B. NORMAN
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A caricature of an Irish naturalist: Revd Dr William Richardson (1740-1820) - By E.C. NELSON

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John White's Journal of a voyage to new South Wales (1790): comments on the natural history and the artistic origins of the plates - By LOUISJ. PIGOT
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Mary Elizabeth Barber: South Africa's first lady natural historian - By ALAN COHEN
Determination and enthusiasm: Richard Norris Wolfenden (1854-1926), his Plutinos studies and other things oceanographical - By DAVID M. DAMKAER
For the 'Promotion' and 'Integration' of various fields: first years of Evolution, 1947-1949 - By JOE CAIN
A note on John Hawkins (1761-1841) and the Hawkins archive - By R.I. CLEEVELEY

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Charles Plummer (1664-1704) and his drawings of French and American fishes - By THEODORE W. PIETSCI
Adrian Woodruffe-Peacock (1858-1922): a pioneer ecologist - By M. R. D. SEAWARD
Archibald Menzies (1754-1842), an early botanist on the northwestern seaboard of North America, 1792-1794, with further notes on his life and work - By ERIK GROVES
A forgotten theory on the origin of fossils: Daines Barrington's concept (1781) - By WILLIAM A. S. SARJEANT and TREVOR A. MITCHELL
Patrick Browne M.D. (c. 1720-1790), an Irish doctor in the Caribbean; his residence on Saint Croix (1757-1765) and his unpublished accounts of volcanic activity on Montserrat - By E. CHARLES NELSON

Back When, and Then
THE SONG OF THE DODO: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinction
By David Quammen, Scribner, 704 pp. 1997
http://www.salon.com/sneaks/sneakpeeks960426.html

In the annals of science there are many instances of pure, unalloyed bad luck thwarting a researcher’s best efforts. But there may be no more heartrending occurrence than that which befell naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, in August of 1852, aboard the ship Helen. For four years Wallace had slogged through the mud, swollen rivers and mosquitoes of the Amazon basin, assembling a huge collection of exotic fauna. Then, in the middle of the Atlantic on his return voyage, the ship’s other cargo of balsam resin spontaneously combusted. Wallace escaped to a lifeboat, and watched every pickled bird and dried butterfly go up in flames. He whited away his time sketching dolphins and seabirds before being rescued. And, as David Quammen notes in “The Song of the Dodo,” something important came of this tragedy: the wreck of the Helen forced Wallace back out into the field to the Malay archipelago where, simultaneously with Darwin, he developed the theory of evolution. Don’t let Quammen’s subtitle — “Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinctions” — scare you off. Yes, this is a big book, over 700 pages, and it deals with big science. But it’s filled with stories of inquisitive humans like Wallace who, almost by chance, have drawn a complex picture of where species come from, and some frightening speculation about how they are headed.

Quammen’s book, put most simply, is a study of the distribution of life on islands. Because, as Quammen notes, “isolation plus time yields divergence,” islands by their geographical isolation have served to “give clarity to evolution.” Nineteenth century naturalists like Wallace and Darwin were drawn to islands not only because of the giant tortoises, lizards and flightless birds that lived there, but because all that gigantism seemed to offer clues to the mystery of evolution in large, easy-to-read letters.

Quammen has spent the last 10 years following modern island biogeographers around the globe, and he makes their work accessible to the lay reader. Most important, though, is his contention that we have, in effect, developed the modern world into a series of biological islands, and have inevitably upped the threat of extinction by doing so. “The Song of the Dodo” could easily have been a hundred pages shorter, but Quammen’s easygoing style, which readers may be familiar with from his columns in Outside magazine, makes the effort worthwhile. This book is a complicated and charming scientific history: a rare species indeed. — Edward Neuert

The Great Hedge of India: The search for the living barrier that divided a nation

The Great Hedge of India is extraordinary - a cross between a travel book and an historical detective story. It offers a keyhole view into the motivations and administration of British imperial India, together with the story of one man’s obsession. This book is of some memories by a nineteenth century British civil servant. The memoirs referred in passing to a great hedge that by the 1850’s ran for 1,500 miles, planted by the East India Company as part of a Customs Line, which divided India from the Himalayas to Orissa. Manured by 12,000 men to extort the hated Salt Tax, it was one of the greatest constructions in history and added significantly to the sum of human misery in India.

The Great ARC: the dramatic tale of how India was mapped and Everest was named.

The Great Indian Arc of the Meridian, began in 1800, was the longest measurement of the earth’s surface ever to have been attempted. The Arc was hailed ‘as one of the most stupendous works in the whole history of science’. It was as near perfect a thing of its kind as has ever been undertaken. The Great Arc made possible the mapping of the entire Indian sub continent and the development of its roads, railways and telegraphs. The Arc also resulted in the first accurate measurements of the Himalayas, an achievement that was acknowledged by the naming of the world’s highest mountain in honor of Everest.


Wild Thoughts from Wild Places - by David Quammen, Simon & Schuster Trade, February 1999

Killer Algae: The True Tale of a Biological Invasion - by Alexandre Meinesz, Daniel Simberloff (Translator) University of Chicago Press. September 1999


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Farewell to John Christopher Thackray 1948-1999

President: 1999;
Vice-President 1982-83;
Honorary. Member 1997;
Secretary 1973-86, 1987-97;
Newsletter Editor 1982-91, 1993-96;
Council 1980-83.

By now, most members will be aware of the untimely death of our President John Thackray, from cancer on May 6, 1999. Although we all knew that John had been fighting this disease, the news still came as a dreadful shock to all of us lucky enough to have known him. His loss is felt keenly, not only by the Society, but in all areas of John's life.

John attended Highgate School and University College London, where he read geology. It was here that he met his future wife, Sue. After University he joined the National Environmental Research Council, based at the then Institute of Geological Sciences in London. He took up the position in 1969, working with the exhibition development team.

In 1973 he obtained an M.Sc. in the history of science from Imperial College. He continued working for IGs at the Geological Museum where he was responsible for a variety of exhibitions, including British Fossils and Geology Serves the Nation. He became Honorary Archivist of the Geological Society in 1981.

In 1985 the Geological Museum merged with the British Museum (Natural History) and John was appointed Archivist of the merged institutions in 1989. He took a diploma in Archives Administration and over the following years transformed the Museum's archives.

His knowledge and advice were given unstintingly; as one friend and colleague has said, it was always service with a smile. Nothing was too much trouble; no requests for help were refused, be it a complicated search through the archives or the provision of a sympathetic ear. The Natural History Museum's archives - and those of the Geological Society, for which he cared in his spare time - are among the best organised you will find anywhere. The principle of achievement so that others would benefit was a constant theme of John's life and these archives now provide a fitting memorial to that life and work.

John was dedicated and diligent in all he undertook, from his commitment to his work to his love of music. He was an accomplished organist and choir master and founded the Chiswick Choir in 1976. He led the Museum Singers for many years and also conducted the Hogarth Singers, Riplieno Choir, Laetarae Singers and Sine Nomine Singers.

John had an enviable knowledge of the history of all branches of natural history and an unrivalled knowledge of the development of the Natural History Museum. Behind his unassuming manner there was a fierce determination to get things done. He published numerous books and articles, and at the time of his death he was researching and writing a popular history of the Museum. His interest in the history of science made the SHNH an obvious organisation for him to join and he served the Society continuously from 1973, when he began the first of two tenures as Secretary. John also edited the Newsletter for many years and served as Vice President in 1982/3. His commitment to the Society was recognised when he was given honorary membership in 1997. His election as President was the culmination of his long and dedicated service to the Society. He will be much missed.

With acknowledgment to The Times, The Waterhouse Times and Christopher Mills.

The John Thackray Medal

The first award of this medal, which has been instituted by the Society to commemorate the life and work of John Thackray, was made at this year's Spring Meeting. Firstly, the President made a special presentation of the medal to Mrs. Sue Thackray, John's widow, who said how very touched the family was by the institution of the award and delighted that the Society has chosen to honour his name and memory in this way. The first medals were then presented to The Natural History Museum, London and to freelance writer Dr. Tony Rice for the exhibition and related publication - Voyages of Discovery.

The medal was made by Thomas Fattorini Ltd. of Birmingham who also made our Founders' Medal. John's likeness, taken from a photograph, was cut in plaster and then cast in solid hallmarked silver. The design for the obverse is a modified version of the Society's old logo. There is space along the bottom edge for the medalwinner's name to be engraved.

After all the tedium of registration of the need for a Temple Land, India in 1999, 2000 was not the most active of our periods. We had our first Annual General Body Meeting of SPHoZ*aNHIA on 2nd June 2000. Members of the Managing Committee appreciated our association with SHNH and discussed the project to bring all the SHNH journals available to be held in the Society library. It was decided to start with the journals which have come to the Secretary already, circulating those to members and offering copies at cost of desired articles. This can be seen in this issue of BW&T.

Nonetheless, we did attract some members for SHNH, Mr. Toby Sinclair, a journalist of New Delhi and Dr. Indranie Das, a university professor of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia that we know about and maybe some that we don’t. We distributed SHNH brochures to University history departments as well as our own members. Also our newsletter included an announcement of our association with SHNH and the terms and conditions as well as the services offered.

SPHoZ*aNHIA increased by 6 more members this year, 4 of them LIFE members.

In April of 2000, the Calcutta Zoo celebrated 125 years since its founding. We were much involved in these events. The historical research of our members on Calcutta Zoo, its founding and its relationships with other zoos of the 19th century and our collection of documents from the early history of the zoo (which we compiled into a special issue of our society newsletter Back When ... and Then? which you would have received last May, were much appreciated. The newsletter was utilised by all the politicians and other dignitaries for speech writing and was mentioned many times. We published several hundreds of additional copies which were distributed to all persons attending the anniversary function. We also prepared the briefing material and proceedings of the meeting which followed this anniversary. Some of the compiled material included a short history of the Calcutta Zoo, reprinted original documents such as the Proposal to form a zoological garden in Calcutta from the Calcutta Journal of Natural History (1841) and the Indian Museum and Asiatic Society of Bengal from an 1866 issue of the Calcutta Review. Articles from an old zoo animal dealers magazine, Hamlyn’s Menagerie Magazine, were reproduced as they dated back to 1917 and a short note about the magazine given. The Nature magazine review (1892) of R. B. Sanyal’s first zoo management book was reproduced as well as some Notes from S. S. Flower’s Report on his visit to Calcutta Zoo in 1913.

Another project this year was to compile a list of references to enclosure design and zoo architecture by Indian zoo managers in the early years. Some of this material was used in a lecture Zoo Design Philosophy: Past Examples, Current Priorities and Future Trends presented at the School of Planning and Design, Department of Landscape Architecture. This presentation was one of three selected of 25 presentations in the course to be brought out in a special issue of their design magazine.

The year 2000 we had many more opportunities to contribute essays about Asia to the Encyclopaedia of Zoos of the World and, with the help of members and associates in South and South East Asia, contributed several essays on zoos of Asia, including their history, for that publication. Also this year, the long-awaited History of Zoos of the World was published including three sections on India, Asia and Africa written by Founder, SPHoZ*aNHIA with a great deal of help from history buffs, members and associates all over Asia, USA, and UK.

We have initiated a project to collect biographical information on the oldest living zoo directors in India for archival purposes and for publication in Back When & Then and ZOOS’ PRINT. We may also compile them into a book at some future point. This is in line with the objective of recognizing persons who have made an outstanding contribution to the history of zoos and natural history in India and other parts of Asia.

We have incorporated our old SPHoZ*aNHIA website with our new zooreach web site (www.zooreach.org) and our Treasurer has suggested that it be linked (at least the history section) with SHNH. This is underway.

The society has a number of old periodicals and reports which are of great interest to a few people now and for which the copyright is over. We are in the process of reproducing these for sale.

There is a big project which SPHoZ*aNHIA may consider as a long range goal, e.g., the research of Barrackpore Park where there was a menagerie for the purpose of keeping animals for identification and drawing for scientific purpose. There is a manuscript describing all the animals, some of them for the first time in the study of natural history. This manuscript is with the Founder Secretary. There are also colourful drawings of all the animals in the India Office Library in London. Permission has been granted to SPHoZ*aNHIA to publish these drawings without charge along with the annotated manuscript after purchasing the slides. This is an excellent project which could make the name of the Society known around the world in zoo and natural history circles. Fund for this important project is not available and it is necessary that different funding agencies have to be approached to raise money for this project. SPHoZ*aNHIA has agreed to take up this project and raise funds for it.

SPHoZ*aNHIA President suggested undertake research on history of local zoo (VOC Park) and a Tamil speaking person has been asked to conduct this research. Padma Priya has completed part of the history of VOC Park Zoo.

Induction of SPHoZ*aNHIA Founder on the Board of the Encyclopaedia of the Rhinoceros which is being written by Dr. Kees Roodmaker of South Africa was approved by the Managing Committee of SPHoZ*aNHIA.

The year 2001 has started well. Our Founder is giving a presentation at the SHNH Conference where we hope to get new members and renew old contacts.
Many of you will recall that it was some months ago that I started reading the book Zoo and Aquarium History. I finally finished it last week. I have enjoyed the book immensely and, I suppose, could have read it at a single sitting. As it was there are several other books I am reading at the same time (and projects on the go) and I like to make those I enjoy last longer than most. There are over 400 interesting pages, masses of references, and lists of stories in a well-produced and illustrated book. The references are of particular value and use. Zoo history may not be a hugely popular subject but it is an interesting one.

If you doubt me buy a copy. I am sure you will find something of interest. Everything you wonder about and more besides. It certainly is something that all zoos should have on their bookshelves. There are areas, countries, and regions which have received less attention than they should have. There are some zoos which I know well whose status and record of achievement have been overlooked. No doubt you too will find your own errors and omissions.

On the whole though this book is the best produced so far on this subject. I do recommend it highly. I learnt something new on practically every page. A lot of food for thought and leads to follow up.

Zoo and Aquarium History - Ancient Animal Collections to Zoological Gardens

Edited by Vernon N. Kisling. Contributors are Catherine de Courcy, James F. Ellis Jr., George Ann A. Ellis, Ken Kawata, Clinton H. Keeling, Vernon N. Kisling Jr., Wilhelmus Labuschagne, Leszek Solski, Harro Streiholm, and Sally Walker. ISBN 0-8493-2100-1 Price is £46.99 Order from: Turpin Distribution Services Ltd, Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 1HN UK Tel 44 (0) 1462 46890 Fax: 44 (0) 1462 46301. And if Zoo History is an interest why not subscribe to the Zoo History group. Send a blank e-mail, blank subject to: Zoo-Historians-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Reviewed by Peter Davidson, Zoo News Digest.