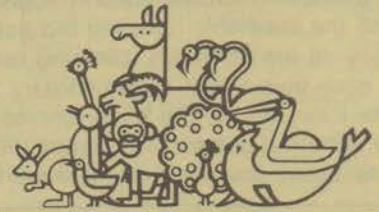


# Penscynor NEWS

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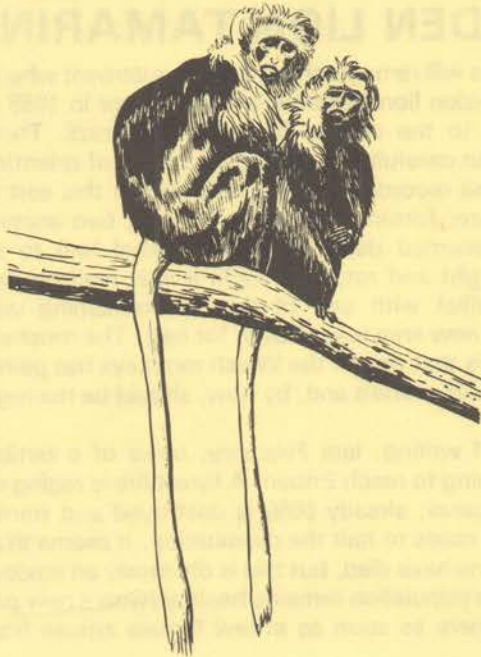


## PASS ME A COLOBUS

Fans of best selling author Gerald Durrell are doubtless familiar with the early efforts to establish captive populations of the endangered West African black and white colobus monkey (*Colobus polykomos*). These fascinating leaf-eating monkeys were the stars of Durrell's famous "Catch Me a Colobus" book.

One of the problems facing the managers of the captive population has been the high number of males born into the two main breeding groups at London and Jersey Zoos. In the wild, one male will defend several females and will fiercely deny access to any other male. Adolescent and sub-adult males move out of their families to form bachelor groups.

This situation now needs to be mimicked in captivity and so, in August 1989, father 'Kassim' and son 'Hajji' moved from London to Penscynor as the founding members of Britain's first *polykomos* bachelor group. If all goes according to plan this group may well expand to include other, currently and temporarily, "surplus" males. In time these animals will be moved in and out of breeding situations, as and when the geneticists overseeing the programme advise.



## LLAMA or GUANACO; ASS or DONKEY?

Regular visitors, accustomed over the last 15 years to the pleasure of hand-feeding our small herd of guanaco, may well wonder at the new fencing which now ensures that these animals can get nowhere near a visitor. This is the latest manifestation of the "nanny knows best" thinking which is sweeping the zoo world.

A pressure group, whose avowed principal is to close every zoo in the world, recently lobbied Neath Borough Council to recognise the guanaco at Penscynor as a threat to life, limb and public order and demanded that the Council act to save you from unimaginable horrors.

A law designed to control the keeping of wild animals in private houses (the Dangerous Wild Animals Act) does list the guanaco as an animal that can only be privately kept subject to inspection and licensing (ie. your neighbour's facilities must be approved before he can hold a herd in his garden). Therefore, the animal is DANGEROUS claimed the pressure group!

A different law (the Zoo Licensing Act) controls all aspects of zoo operations, including your safety. A government appointed panel of experts makes periodic inspections of every zoo and grants a licence to operate only when every aspect is satisfactory. No inspection-team has ever had any problem with Penscynor's guanaco arrangement, so we confidently challenged the Council's instructions to deny you any contact with these animals—doubly confident, as no-one was suggesting that our llama (same animal, coloured wool) were to be regarded as dangerous.

A panel of learned lawyers considered the conflict for two long days. They heard that these animals are largely toothless in the upper jaw; that, when severely provoked, these animals spit as an ultimate act of violence; that no-one knows of any guanaco related accident in the whole history

of zoos; that the animals are wandering in the fields of various farm-parks of Britain.

Their conclusion? — these animals are DANGEROUS, YOU must be protected! And the llama (same animal, coloured wool)? — no problem, as you were! It isn't on a list.

So as you wander home, beating off Rottweilers and dodging farm bulls, give thanks for the vigilance of big-brother, and wonder if the law might be different if called a donkey, not an ass.

## THREE LEGS ON MY MUNTJAC

Reeves' muntjac deer, shy inhabitants of Asian forests, have a reputation as extremely nervous, easily panicked animals that zoo keepers are very wary of handling in any way for fear of provoking injury or even heart attack. So, it was with great dismay that keepers noticed adult female Misty nursing an obviously broken leg. As Misty had recently been in season, it seemed likely that an over-enthusiastic Rambo, lead male of the Penscynor group, was responsible.

It was with considerable relief that keepers successfully restrained Misty for veterinary examination, but it was ob-



WHAT HAS THREE LEGS AND GOES WHERE IT LIKES

vious from the severity of the break that recovery was not going to be straightforward.

What followed throughout the next three months was a revelation to all at Pencynor. The fracture stubbornly refused to heal despite several operations, including pinning with metal plates and screws. Astonishingly, Misty not only put up with all the inevitable handling but actually seemed to begin to enjoy all the attention, climbing readily into her handling crate each time a visit to the surgery was necessary. Sadly, despite every effort, the bone refused to mend and the vet. finally admitted defeat: amputation was the only course left. No-one could imagine how a three-legged Muntjac could

cope with life; everyone agreed that if anyone could manage it was Misty.

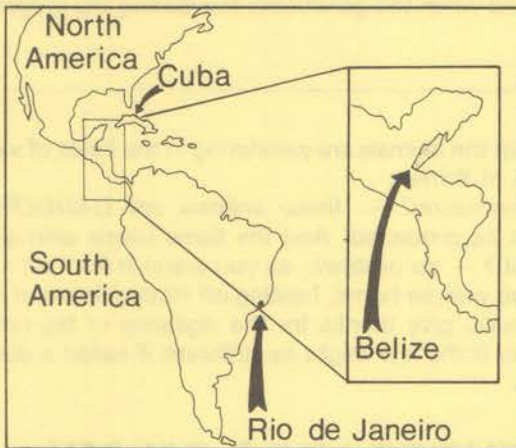
Sure enough, this amazing animal, convalescing in cosy, heated quarters, recovered at astonishing speed. Within a few weeks of the operation, Misty was as mobile as ever. A variety of enclosures failed to contain her and she has become a familiar sight around the grounds, munching daffodils and browsing on choicest roses. With the possible exception of the gardener, everyone is delighted with the progress of this amazing animal. Misty now holds a special place in the affection of all.

## Endangered Boa breeds at Pencynor

Two pairs of Cuban boas arrived at Pencynor on breeding loan from Bristol Zoo at the end of 1986. In 1988 signs of breeding behaviour were first observed but mating was not seen until the summer of 1989. We were delighted to find a litter of three baby snakes on 4th February 1990.

Unlike many snakes, which lay eggs, boas give birth to live young. Cuban boas have up to 6 young in a litter. After their first slough (shedding of the skin) they are large enough to tackle small mice.

Cuban boas can reach 5m in length and like many other large snakes are hated and feared by the local peoples although they are not venomous. Their forest habitat is also being lost to agriculture. These threats mean it is vital that a captive population is maintained as a safety net in the event of the species becoming extinct in Cuba.



## ICBP: "PROTECT THE PARROT CAMPAIGN"

In Autumn 1989 the International Council for Bird Preservation launched a series of measures designed to address parrot conservation under the programme heading "Protect the Parrots".

An Action Plan is to be developed to address problems facing this group globally, but particular attention is initially being directed to the Caribbean. A long-term programme, in conjunction with the Republic of Dominica government, seeks to aid both Imperial and Red-necked amazon parrots; similarly, on Jamaica, the establishment of new protected areas and the heightening of conservation awareness are being pursued.

The campaign has very positive things to say about the keeping of, and trade in, parrot species. A "buy-captive-bred" campaign is one of the initiatives designed to stem the importation of threatened species into the E.E.C. member states. A "habitat tax" is proposed so that purchasers of parrots contribute directly to the conservation of these birds.

One of the proposals is for a series of exhibitions to be mounted in U.K. zoos to publicise the campaign. Pencynor is pleased to have donated two thousand pounds to I.C.B.P. in support of this initiative.



## GOLDEN LION TAMARINS

Regular visitors will remember our great excitement when a family of five Golden lion tamarins left Pencynor in 1988 to be reintroduced to the coastal forest of SE Brazil. These animals have been carefully monitored by a team of scientists and their progress recorded. As is inevitable in this sort of pioneering venture, fortunes have been mixed: two animals disappeared, presumed dead, and one animal had to be repeatedly recaptured and returned (until it was realised that she was in conflict with one of the few remaining wild animals, when a new area was chosen for her). The most encouraging news is that one of the Welsh monkeys has paired with one of the wild animals and, by now, should be rearing a family.

At the time of writing, late February, news of a terrible disaster is beginning to reach Britain. A forest fire is raging on the tamarins' reserve; already 50% is destroyed and frantic efforts are being made to halt the devastation. It seems that, as yet, no tamarins have died, but this is obviously an anxious time. The captive population remains healthy (with a new pair to be made up here as soon as a new female arrives from Belfast).

## A BIT OF BELIZE

One of the most challenging problems of habitat conservation in developing countries is the reconciliation of the desire for economic growth and the needs of wildlife.

A major new initiative in the Central American country of Belize seeks to encourage "wildlife tourism" as a major part of a strategy for protecting some of the most important and intact rainforest in the Neotropics. "Programme for Belize" seeks to establish a rainforest reserve of c.150,000 acres: 4000 of these acres have been donated by Coca Cola Foods and the remainder is to be purchased and maintained using money raised internationally.

Twenty five pounds is needed to secure the future of each acre. Early indications are that this sum will be raised.

Denise Cox, Pencynor's Education Officer, painted the faces of over 1000 children during the Summer of 1989, at 50p a time. The £511.66 that Pencynor forwarded to the "Programme for Belize" secured 20 acres.

If you wish to contribute, or receive more details, contact "Programme for Belize", P.O. Box 99 Saxmundham, Suffolk. IP17 2LB.

## BLUE FACES AND RED BOTTOMS

Mandrills are one of the most endangered and colourful of the baboon family of monkeys with their yellow, red and blue faces and red rumps. Pencynor now has two of them on loan from London and Colchester Zoos: Deegie, the female, who was born in Warsaw Zoo in 1983, and Luke who was born in London in 1985.

Wild Mandrills live on the forest floor of tropical west-central Africa, but they are decreasing in numbers mainly due to the destruction of their forest home. This makes it very important to keep such monkeys in captivity to ensure that there will always be some Mandrills around in the future.



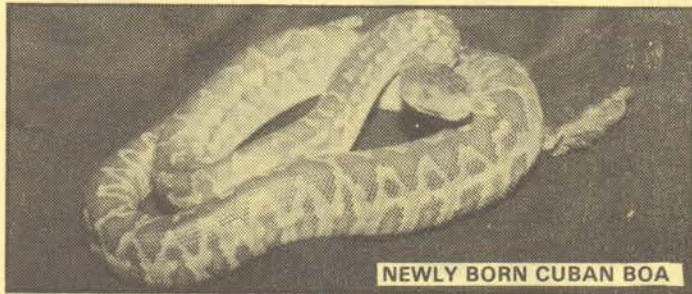
A CASE FOR CONCERN

## ANYTHING TO DECLARE?

Have you ever brought a souvenir home from your holiday? It probably wasn't a live animal, but it may have been something made from a wild animal such as a skin handbag or purse, a stuffed animal, an ivory bangle or a piece of coral jewellery. This trade in tourist souvenirs is threatening many species of animal and is causing the degradation of many habitats.

To help people become more aware of the plight of many animals, Pencyrnor Zoo Centre has a display of such articles confiscated by Customs and Excise and on loan to the Wildlife Park. If you attempt to bring such souvenirs into Great Britain they will be confiscated and you may be liable to a fine or even to imprisonment.

So pause before you buy any holiday memento, and think about whether you would be contributing to the decline of our worlds' wildlife.



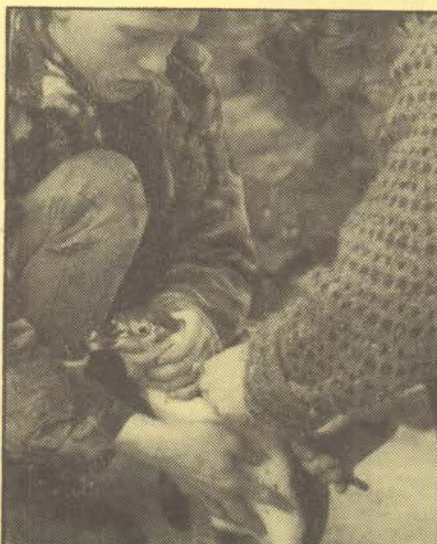
NEWLY BORN CUBAN BOA

## RECENT ARRIVALS

- 1 Pair Mandrills
- 2 Male Western Black & White Colobus
- 1 Pair Lar Gibbons
- 1 Chilean Flamingo
- 2 Pair Scarlet Ibis
- 10 Sacred Ibis
- 5 Night Heron
- 1 Pair Royal Pythons
- 1 Male Otter
- 1 Female Squirrel Monkey
- 1 Pair Cotton-top Tamarins
- 1 Male Sun Conure

## RECENT BIRTHS

Humboldts' Penguins, Splendid Parakeets, Sooty Mangabey, Brown Capuchin, Cotton-top Tamarins, Pygmy Marmosets, Goeldi Monkey, Cuban Boas, African Giant Land Snail, Blue & Gold Macaw, Eclectus Parrot, Yellow Naped Macaw, Hawkhead Parrot.



CATCHING AND TAGGING PENGUINS IN THE EXPANDING COLONY

## A ROOM FOR ALL SEASONS.

Question: What's large, white on the outside and often full of Children?

Answer: The new Zoo Centre!

Yes folks, Pencyrnor now boasts a brand new Zoo Centre. This large interactive space was opened by Mr. Wyn Roberts, Minister of State for Wales, in June 1989 as part of Pencyrnor's efforts to teach people about the wonderful world of wildlife and the important role of zoos in conservation.

All sorts of activities occur in the Zoo Centre. During school term it is used as a classroom with a difference — children are able to handle live animals such as snakes, penguins, tree frogs and stick insects. They can also use a wide array of stuffed animals, skins, skulls, feathers and eggs; the slide projector and large screen video are also popular. During the school holidays the Zoo Centre becomes an Aladdin's cave of animal exhibitions, touch tables, quizzes, appeals, animal encounters and more.

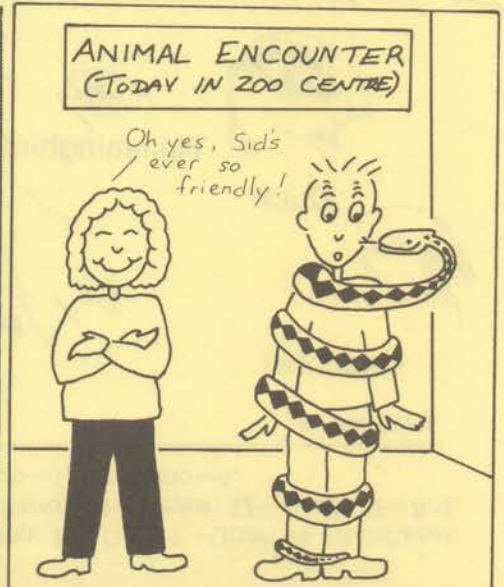


GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE SUBJECT

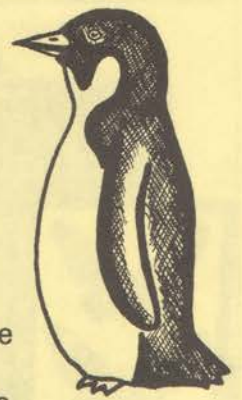
## RETURN OF THE SKINK

Round Island's animal and plant population declined due to the introduction of animals such as goats and rabbits (as a food source for passing sailors). To prevent the extinction of the Round Island Skink (a small lizard) a few were sent to Jersey Zoo to initiate a captive breeding programme, in which Pencyrnor has been involved since 1987.

Now that the introduced rabbits and goats have been eliminated from the island the wild population is making a strong recovery, and plans are now being made to repopulate some of the other Mascarene islands (Indian ocean), which long-ago lost their skinks. As a first step, a captive group is being established on the island of Mauritius; a group of five Pencyrnor-bred skinks flew out in 1989 to help found this new population.



# PIPPIN THE PENGUIN SAYS ~ 'Hi kids, this page is for you.'



Pippin the Penguin says .....

"Read about what happens during Penguin Club meetings, and then have a go at the puzzles."

Six o'clock on a November evening, the Penguin Club gathered at a farmer's gate somewhere near Pontardawe. It was dark and still, and a bit muddy from yesterdays rain. With torches covered by red filters (to prevent disturbing the wildlife) we all set off up the hillside to look for badgers. Twenty minutes of scrambling through a wood and we were at the sett. Quietly we sat and waited for the badgers: we waited and waited. An owl screeched overhead, but we still waited and listened for the badgers. A shooting star trailed green as it burned up in the atmosphere, but still no sign of the badgers. An hour of quiet, patient vigilance and we decided that they must have left the sett to go hunting for grubs and worms before we even arrived. So we went for a closer look at the sett, with its tracks, old bedding and scratch posts and then we set off down the hill for a nice cup of tea. We all decided not to give up, and so we will go again, and you never know we may get lucky next time.

If you live locally and are aged between 8 and 16 years old, you can write to the address on the front page to enquire about becoming a member of the Penscynor Penguin Club.



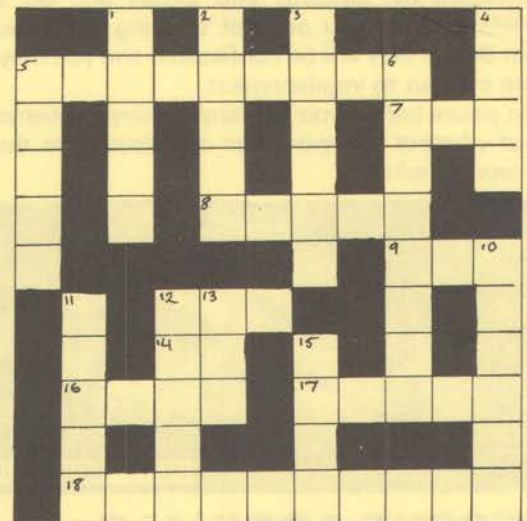
## CROSSWORD PUZZLE.

### ACROSS

5. World's largest living animal.
7. Insects have six of these.
8. Woolly lawn mower?
9. Kangeroos and frogs do this.
12. Lions and tigers for example.
14. The cat sat\_\_ the mat.
16. A carnivore's food.
17. Heroine of the book "Ring of Bright Water". Tarka the \_\_\_\_\_
18. Jungle

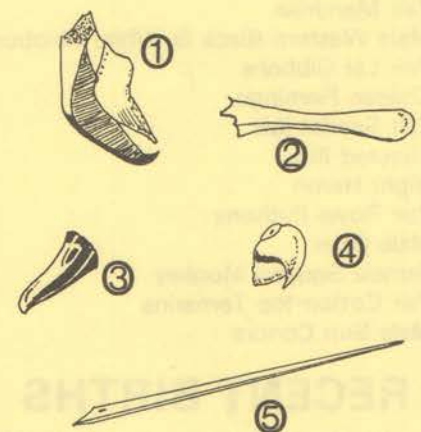
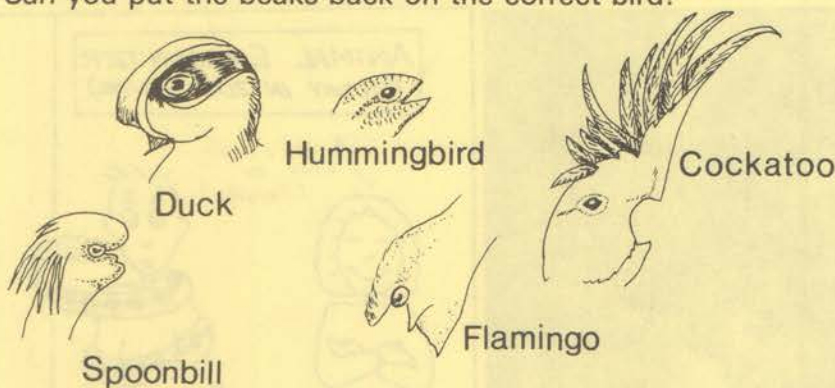
### DOWN

1. Noise made by a duck.
2. Large white birds.
3. British mammal with a black and white face.
4. What chicks hatch from.
5. Feathered animals.
6. African ones have bigger ears than Indian ones.
10. Sick as a \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Madagascan primate.
12. C\_\_\_ mundi, S. American racoon-like animals.
13. Small insect.
15. Dead as a \_\_\_\_\_.Extinct. large, flightless pigeon.



## Beak Baffler

Can you put the beaks back on the correct bird?



### Answers

ANSWERS: CROSSWORD - Across: 5-Bluewhale; 7-Leg; 8-Sheep; 9-Hop; 12-Cat; 17-Otter; 18-Rainforest; 14-Dodo. BEAK BAFLEER: Duck-3; Hummingbird-5; Spoonbill-2; Flamingo-1; Cockatoo-4. Down: 1-Quack; 2-Swans; 3-Badger; 4-Eggs; 5-Birds; 6-Elephant; 10-Parrot; 11-Lemur; 12-Coat; 13-Ant; 15-Dodo.