



The St Francis Messenger

Edition 2 – Summer 2007

The Quarterly Newsletter for Compass Education Ltd

It does not seem long since we published our first edition of the Messenger and here we are with edition 2 and already the days are getting shorter and the nights colder, somehow Summer seemed to bypass us somewhere in between.

In amongst the normal routine of conducting the courses we seem to have had a season of audits and assessments, all of which have gone very well I must add.

The animal sanctuary has had a run of bad luck in that the last three animals brought to us have all been too badly injured to survive. The first was a red squirrel, closely followed by a baby rabbit and more recently we lost a buzzard shortly after surgery to pin a broken wing. It is disheartening but we cannot stand by and not try.

Once again I would ask for any interesting animal related articles from readers as contributions to future issues, so get your pens and cameras out, we would love to hear from you.

David Montgomery

Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*)

In southern Africa 90% of wild Black Rhinoceroses have been poached for their horns, due to the drastic decline of these animals captive breeding programmes were introduced. In captivity all over the world over 50% of rhinos have died prematurely of Haemolytic anaemia. Haemolytic anaemia is an excess of iron in the body, this causes several problems including liver damage, loss of weight, skin lesion and often death.

At Chipangali Wildlife Orphanage which is situated 24km from Zimbabwe's second biggest city, Bulawayo a year long intense study is being carried out on their four Black rhinos. Two of the rhinos at Chipangali are in their twenties and came as young calves from the Zambezi valley as part of a captive breeding programme.

The other two rhinos were born at the orphanage. One is a female which was mother reared.

The other is twelve year old hand reared male called Baleka. Baleka is what instigated the study as he has a very unstable weight condition. The research is being carried out to monitor the iron levels in the Black rhinos throughout the year while carrying out a number of experiments to see if the iron level can be managed. The rhinos at the orphanage are all kept in captive conditions where they are unable to browse freely. Everyday leaves are freshly cut from the wild and feed to the rhinos throughout the day. The rhinos are also given game cubes and other supplements.

In this study the types of leaves are identified and weighed, daily water intake is recorded and behaviour is monitored. Once a week each rhino is weighed and over the year a number of blood samples will be taken and sent to be analysed.

We are hoping by the end of our research that we will have more of an understanding of why rhinos in captivity build up excess iron and ways these levels can be controlled. Our results can then further help other organisations in the housing and welfare of their rhinos.



Claire Lupton

Scotland's wildcats down to the last 400

There has been much media attention recently to the plight of the tiger and other highly endangered big cat species, and rightly so. Yet one of the world's most endangered cat species is the UK's own Wildcat, and it is our entire fault. Recent genetic tests have shown that there are fewer than 400 true wildcats left.

For further information about Scottish Wildcats, or to find out how you can help with their predicament, go to www.scottishwildcats.co.uk



Steve Piper of the Scottish Wildcats Association writes:-

Cats evolved in Europe and wildcats have walked the European forests for about 12 million years, here in the UK bones have been found from 2 million years ago though they were probably here well before that; existing alongside things like mammoths, cave bears, lynx and cave lions. 9000 years ago melt water from the ice age glaciers formed the English Channel stranding a population of European wildcats here. For most of those millennia things have been just fine, however as sport hunting has become popular (since the Roman invasions) and more recently the agricultural and then industrial revolutions have broken, natural land has disappeared and the cats have been heavily persecuted along with all the other British predators (2000 years ago we had brown bear, lynx and wolf all resident here). Through the Victorian era of gaming estates the wildcat came to the brink of extinction because they were blamed for killing game birds; they certainly do kill birds but comparatively rarely, the main thing they kill are rabbits making them a good friend to crop farmers, estates spread outrageous propaganda about wildcats wiping out whole herds of deer, packs of hounds, seasons of lambs and even unwary crofters to help justify the persecution.

Two more Compass tutors awarded MSc

Tracey Hammond has been presented with an MSc (with distinction) in Equine Science at Writtle College. For her Masters dissertation, Tracey investigated the use of grazing muzzles to control grass intake and its affect on behaviour. Some may remember that Tracey gave a presentation on equine nutrition at the 2004 IACE AGM.



Tracey Hammond, M.Sc. (Dist) B.Sc. (Hons)

Joanne Martin has been presented with an MSc in Science from the Open University. The modular course consisted of studies in Brain and Behaviour, Molecules in Medicine and Contemporary Issues in Science Education. Projects included studying how drugs and naturally occurring brain chemicals can affect behaviour, and a review of pharmacological treatments of cancer and infectious diseases.



Galloway Wildlife Conservation Park

The park is set in 27 acres of mixed woodland, is the wild animal conservation centre of southern Scotland.

The mission of the Wildlife Conservation Park is: 'To establish a conservation breeding centre for small animals, to conserve wildlife, wildlife habitats and sites of geological importance, to provide opportunities for the public to enjoy and learn about the area they live in.'

A varied collection of nearly 150 animals from all over the world can be seen within the peaceful and natural settings where the woodland has been tailored to provide large and imaginative enclosures.

There is a constant programme of construction and improvement to facilities for the animal, birds and visitors.

An essential role of the park is the conservation of threatened species. Through its captive breeding programmes, it plays an important part in the international effort to conserve rare and endangered species.

Visitors may be able to catch a glimpse of one of the Zoo's newest arrivals; a rare Red Panda cub that is beginning to take its first steps into the enclosure, from a nest box that has been its home since it was born on June 9th 2007.



The park is well worth a visit and if you ever find yourself in this corner of Scotland we recommend that you take the time to find out for yourself.

(see: www.gallowaywildlife.co.uk).

Kindness Clubs in Ghana

The Nkwanta Animal Kindness Clubs (KC'S) is located in the Nkwanta District of the Volta Region of Ghana. It is made up of largely volunteer members mostly students and quite a good number of adults.

Our main goal is to promote animal welfare to the highest standard in Ghana. We have been in operation since the year 2001.

Ever since the formation of the Nkwanta kindness clubs under WSPA, we have performed incredibly and we are very hopeful of performing better in the future.

Activities that we carry out include the following:

Student Members attend meetings three times a week. At meetings, members study issues concerning animal welfare, respect for animals, handling of animals and challenges during campaigns.

Members of the kindness clubs go from church to church, school to school, mosque to mosque, individual to individual and at public forums campaigning on animal welfare, rights, freedoms and protection.

Members occasionally group themselves and visit the District veterinary office and wild life offices for a talk on interesting subjects concerning animals. They also visit individuals and animal owners to discuss animal welfare, care of animals and responsibilities of animal owners.

The kindness clubs newsletters produced by the African Regional Office of WSPA in Kenya (currently now in Tanzania) is normally circulated to members and through them to town folks and later the newsletters returned for library stocking.

Each year, members of the club all come down to Nkwanta town to join in the celebration. The weekly celebration for each year has always taken place in October in the first week or second week. During the celebration, drama, poetry, songs and speeches concerning animal welfare are recited to the general public that is attending.

Since members spend much of their time with the group working to promote animal welfare, they sometimes have very little time to study and as a result, we the teachers among them sometimes organize academic work for the student members to participate in and hence improve themselves.

Last year a branch of the kindness clubs was formed in Dodowa in the Dangbe West of Greater Accra Region. Here members are currently learning policies concerning animal welfare are yet to carry out most of the activities mentioned above.

Carrying out all mentioned above hasn't been easy in terms of logistics and funds. We therefore call on any benevolent individuals and organizations to assist us continue this noble task. For we believe that through this, we can make the world a harmonious place for both humans and animals to habit.

Ujakpa Martin Mabeifem

(CEO--SWAGH)/Coordinator-NKC's)

Reintroduction of Beavers to Scotland



THEY'RE CUTE, they cut down trees and at last they could be coming home. After seven years of political delays, beavers now look set to be reintroduced to Scotland.

The new environment minister, Michael Russell, wants to bring the tail-slapping, dam-building, tree-gnawing mammals back. And he's prepared to risk the wrath of landowners to do so.

"The beaver is a part of our natural heritage which was destroyed by man," Russell told the Sunday Herald. "I think the time is right to ask SNH to make new proposals, taking into account the objections that led to the refusal, and I look forward to considering them as soon as they can be brought forward."

He pointed out that SNH's previous proposal had had "strong backing" and that beavers had been successfully reintroduced in over 20 European countries. "Given the loss of species worldwide we are going to have to learn a lot about reintroduction," he said.

Beavers were hunted to extinction in Scotland more than 400 years ago. They were killed both for their fur and for castoreum, the oil they secrete.

Bringing beavers back now would be the first ever planned reintroduction of a mammal into Scotland. To date only birds, such as the sea eagle and the red kite, have been officially reintroduced.

But local landowners vociferously objected, fearing that the incomers might damage the environment.

The plan has been welcomed by Simon Milne, chief executive of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. "As a keystone species, the beaver will help to restore depleted wetland habitats and bring benefits to a wide range of species," he said.

British floods threaten wildlife

We have all no doubt at least seen on the television, read about or even experienced the extreme weather that has hit Britain this Summer.

Devastation to houses and businesses have been well covered by the press but little has been said about the effect it has had on Britain's wildlife. It does not take very much imagination to understand what floods do to burrowing animals such as rabbits but the consequences will go much further than that. Species such as bees and water voles also live underground and will have been drowned. Many wading birds, particularly Bitterns and Lapwings have had nests complete with eggs and chicks simply washed away and many insect species have either simply been inundated or unable to fly which has affected foraging and mating. In short complete ecosystems and food webs have been shattered by the wettest Summer on record.



Whilst populations of rabbits are sufficiently numerous to probably bounce back many species that were already rare or just beginning to re-establish through conservation efforts are now likely to suffer local extinction.

Canine Corner

Help for children with reading difficulties

Children who have trouble reading out loud often give up because of ridicule or embarrassment. A woman in the USA has an idea that could help those struggling students gain confidence in their reading skills.

Now there is a programme called "Reading with Rover" that uses certified therapy dogs in schools and libraries to help children overcome their fear of reading out loud. The student doesn't face his or her peers but reads to the dog instead.

"The animal is not going to judge them or laugh at them," she said. "It certainly helps the child's self-esteem."

She has offered the unique service with her dog Dozer to E.C. Best Elementary School where her boys, ages 5 and 7, attend. Dozer is part English Mastiff and part Bull Mastiff - a black gentle giant of dog.

According to the Reading with Rover Website, studies have shown that having a dog nearby while an at-risk student reads turns off anxiety, creates safety and intimacy and improves expectations.

Teachers in Washington, where the program is based, reported increased self-confidence, less absenteeism and that children become more active in other school lessons after reading to a dog. Those pupils also began reading aloud in class without fear and learn that reading is fun. Dozer was rescued from the Churchill Animal Protection Society more than two years ago. The dog had been surrendered by a Navy wife who found caring for dogs, children and a family while her husband was overseas too much to handle.

"One man's trash is another man's treasure," she said. "He's an absolute sweetheart."

NSARDA



Search Dogs have been around for years, but during the last tens years there has been a growing interest in the ability of dogs and their scenting ability. As usual the dogs are far ahead of us handlers and National Search And Rescue Dog Association (NSARDA) need to give handlers a greater understanding of what a fantastic device the nose of a dog is, as well as getting a true friend into the bargain. We have people who have no previous knowledge regarding dogs, let alone how to begin to train them and it is for them this new and exciting course is being developed. The aim is to take the handlers from how to choose and look after a puppy to having a fully trained Search Dog ready to respond to a call for help for a lost or injured person, be they on the high mountains, on open Mooreland, collapsed buildings, underwater or walked out of the nursing home.

Producing a fully qualified search dog takes time and it is imperative to get the very best out of your dog you need to understand how a puppy develops, how it interacts with other dogs and humans.

What happens when your dog is unwell and what diseases you need to be mindful of? If your dog is injured during a search what are the correct actions to take, how to feed your dog during a protracted incident and in bad weather. There is a lot to know and with the great assistance of Compass Education and Training NSARDA have been able to have the expert guidance and advice needed to produce staged learning for our handlers.

The Benefits of Puppy Classes

Becoming the owner of a new puppy means that you are taking on a great deal of responsibility – not only for feeding, health care and training, but also in determining how your puppy approaches life as he matures. A puppy's experiences in early life will dictate how he will deal with anything he encounters in adulthood. Will he like people or fight with other dogs? Will he become a quivering wreck when the vacuum is being used or hide behind the owner when a man comes towards him? All of these behaviours and many more can be avoided by proper programming in the early months of his life.

Until a puppy is around 12-14 weeks, he will easily socialise with both people and other animals and will become used to novel situations easily. After this age, it becomes a bit more difficult, however the "socialisation process" should continue until he is at least 12 months of age. If the owner puts in the effort during those early weeks and months, he is doing as much as possible to ensure that his puppy will mature into a friendly, confident, well-rounded and content dog.



Many new owners attend puppy parties at their veterinary centres where they will be advised on many issues including health and welfare.

Basic training may also be introduced. Often these parties are two weeks in length and in such cases it is vital that the owner continues with the socialisation and training process after finishing. This can be achieved by enrolling in puppy classes.

These classes are usually run for around 6 weeks. Puppies are accepted from second vaccination up to around 20 weeks and classes are usually restricted to around 7 or 8 puppies. The emphasis is not only on learning and socialisation, but also on fun (both for the puppy and the owner!). Owners will learn about timing and rewards and how to get your puppy to be well-mannered and to do those things that you want him to do by using positive reward-based training. At the same time he will undergo gradual introductions to strangers including adults and children of all ages and, of course, the other puppies which is done in a controlled manner.

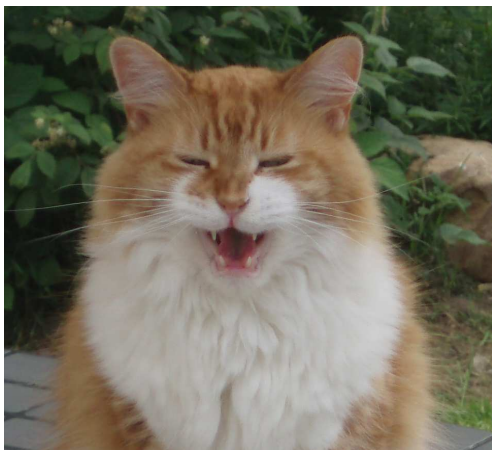
Puppies learn at different rates (as do owners!) however the essential combination of training and socialisation will ensure not only that they gets the best start in life but also help them face the trials and tribulations of the big, wide world as they grow and mature.

For more information on training and socialisation in the Glasgow area, please contact puppyschoolglasgow@ntlworld.com. Elsewhere, please visit the Puppy School website to locate your nearest Puppy School at www.puppyschool.co.uk.

Sheona Brown

Competition

The last edition's competition was not won by anyone (it was the paw of a St Bernard by the way) so this time we thought we would try a caption competition. The question is 'what is the cat saying?' Answers by email, post or even telephone to Compass before the last day of November 2007 please.



Forthcoming Events

UKRCB Annual Symposium

The 15th Annual Symposium of the UKRCB is being held on September 30th 2007 at the Thistle Hotel, East Midlands Airport, Castle Donington, Derby. The topic for this years event is 'Training Methods, Equipment and Effects' and is sponsored by James Wellbeloved. The main speaker is Dr Anne McBride and tickets are £45 which includes lunch.

Anyone interested in attending should contact:

Bob Haynes,
The Larches
Breach Oak Lane
Corley,
Nr Coventry
CV7 8AU

Tel: 01676541155

IACE Seminar Day – 16th Feb 2008

The Institute for Animal Care Education is to hold a seminar day with notable guest speakers on 16th February 2008 at Woodford Community Centre, Cheshire. Annual awards will be made at this event. Come along and meet other members More details to follow or contact:

Charlotte Walsh
The secretary IACE
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