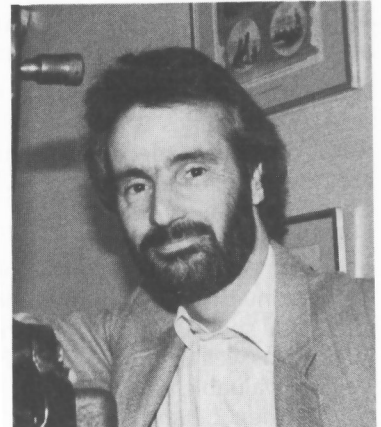


FFPS news



FFPS Council Members

Dr Lee Durrell and Stephen Bankler-Dukes were among the new FFPS Council Members elected at the 82nd Annual General Meeting on 10 September 1986.



Lee Durrell

Lee Durrell was born in Memphis, Tennessee, USA, in 1949. Her first recollection is, as a child of three, throwing out her dolls' clothes from a small case to make room for a dead squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*, which she carried around for several weeks until maternal wrath made her dispose of it. Lee's enthusiasm for biology in high school led to her being placed on an advanced biology course when she arrived at university, but upon being asked by a formidable professor, in tones that brooked no negative reply, 'You have dissected a dogfish, haven't you?', she promptly switched her studies to philosophy and gained a BA in that subject in 1971.

Lee's latent biological yearnings found expression in the 'ecology movement' of the early 1970s, but philosophically she decided that she needed an appropriate degree before she could really help the cause. Combining her interest in animals *per se* with ecology, she studied the behavioural ecology of Malagasy fauna. Conservation issues really hit her hard while doing her two-year spell of field work in Madagascar. Returning to the States, Lee wrote her thesis while also teaching biology at Duke University. In 1979 Lee was awarded her PhD by Duke University, married Gerald Durrell and moved to Jersey.

With Gerald, she has travelled extensively, inquiring gently about conservation matters. They also spend a lot of time in Jersey, with a flat in the middle of the zoo, and Lee is involved in discussions concerning the various breeding and

conservation programmes of the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust (JWPT). They spend about a third of each year in a small cottage in the South of France, where they write, go on naturalist excursions into the countryside, and enjoy the food, wine and sunshine.

Lee's current interests are in conservation worldwide, with a particular focus on Madagascar and a special interest in the genetics and dynamics of small island populations. Since 1983 she has been Chairman of the International Advisory Group of Scientists for Madagascar and a Member of Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust's Council. In 1984 she was elected to the Conservation Committee and to the *ad hoc* Scientific Advisory Committee of JWPT. She joined the Malagasy Section of the Primate Specialist Group of IUCN's Species Survival Commission in 1985. Her publications include *The Amateur Naturalist* (1982) and *Durrell in Russia* (1986), both written with her husband as co-author, and the *State of the Ark*, published by the Bodley Head in 1986 and reviewed in this issue of *Oryx*. Lee is a familiar face on British television, having appeared with Gerald in three Channel 4 series: 'The Amateur Naturalist' (1984), 'Durrell in Russia' (1986) and 'Ourselves and Other Animals' (1987).

Stephen Bankler-Jukes

Stephen Bankler-Jukes is an unusual mixture. A professional film-maker, he is also an archaeologist turned palaeontologist, with a passion for primatology.

Oryx Vol 21 No 3, July 1987

FFPS news

Having graduated in Law, Stephen gained a Diploma in Archaeology, specializing in Palaeopathology. For more than 20 years he has been involved in mesolithic excavation. Some five years ago he discovered the remains of a Plesiosaur and thus commenced a close working relationship with the British Museum (Natural History), which has included several joint 'digs'.

A life-long interest and concern with conservation and natural history has now translated into Stephen's professional life. He is presently directing and producing a major cinema film entitled 'Dinosaur . . . The Film', which is scheduled for general release in the summer of 1988.

Stephen's recent productions include 'Jamaica Inn' (with Jane Seymour and Patrick MacGoohan) and 'The Chef's Apprentice'—due for screening this autumn on ITV.

Stephen is married and lives in Richmond with his wife and small daughter.

Oryx 100% Fund grants

At its meeting on 12 March 1987, the FFPS Council approved the following grants from the Oryx 100% Fund.

£500 to the Tortoise Village project at Massif des Maures Conservation Centre in France. This is the latest development in the SOPTOM (Station d'observation et de protection des tortues des Maures) tortoise conservation programme launched in 1985. The tortoise village will provide a focus for conservation in the region and be a base for SOPTOM's practical work. Enclosures will be built to breed and rear tortoises for release into the wild, and there will be sales stalls and conservation displays for visitors. The FFPS contribution was presented by David Stubbs on behalf of FFPS on 23 May 1987 at the launch of a funding appeal on the site, which was donated by the Municipal Council of Gonfaron.

£400 to the University of East Anglia St Lucia Expedition to study three endemic endangered birds, which are restricted to the north-east corner of the island. The project aims to map populations of the white-breasted thrasher *Ramphocinclus brachyurus santalucias* and the St Lucia wren *Troglodytes aedon mesoleucus*, and to try to relocate Semper's warbler *Leucopezza semperi*,

FFPS news

the most recent confirmed sighting of which was in 1972. The reasons for the species' declines will be investigated and the team will be in close touch with the Forestry Department and the St Lucia Natural History Society. The FFPS grant is to be used for the publication of a report on the findings of the expedition.

£400 to enable Keith Corbett to travel to Hungary on behalf of the Societas Europaea Herpetologica, to liaise with, advise and assist the Hungarian authorities on protection and management for the meadow viper *Vipera (ursini) rakosiensis*, Europe's most endangered snake. Prompt action is needed to prevent the extinction of this species whose habitats are now seriously fragmented and under heavy agricultural pressure.

£400 to Dr D. J. Du Puy of the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, Surrey, UK, to carry out field work on Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean. The primary objective is to ensure the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the Flora of Christmas Island, which is due for publication in 1987, but a number of other field studies whose results should be of conservation value will be undertaken. These include: identifying the forest types and species used as nesting sites by the Christmas Island frigate bird *Fregata andrewsii* and the Abbott's booby *Sula abbottii*; identifying species suitable for recolonizing abandoned mine sites; collecting seeds and establishing propagation techniques; and identifying the most important wildlife sites.

If you would like to support any of the above projects, please send a donation to the Oryx 100% Fund; all donations received go direct to projects—nothing is deducted for administration.

Conservation Bonds—a new way to help the FFPS

Last October the Ecology Building Society, based in Yorkshire, UK, launched a new form of savings account called Conservation Bonds, which were designed to benefit conservation

FFPS news

organizations as well as the investor. The bonds are one-year term investments, with a minimum investment of £1000 and a maximum of £10,000. When the interest (the initial rate was set at 8.25 per cent) is calculated at the end of 12 months, 0.5 per cent of it will be sent to a conservation organization of the investor's choice, and the remainder may be repaid or re-invested.

If you would like further details and application forms, please write to: The Ecology Building Society, 8 Main Street, Cross Hills, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD20 8TB, UK. Telephone: (0535) 35933.

Give as you earn

Since April of this year, a new system of giving to charities has been introduced in the UK. In effect it enables you to get the taxman to top up your payments. Anyone who is in employment may now be presented by their employer with a long form, which invites you to make regular contributions to charity from untaxed income. This could be as little as 25p per week (£1 per month) or a maximum of £2.30 per week (£10 per month). Because this sum is deducted at source, for basic taxpayers, it means that a £1 contribution only costs you 71p.

Any registered charity may benefit from your regular contributions, and you can choose to benefit more than one. Naturally, the FFPS hopes that enthusiasts will choose to benefit the Society, so please help to spread the word among your friends and colleagues when your employer distributes the form, which may be at any time during the next year. You may prompt your employer to introduce the scheme, although there is no obligation for him or her to do so. The FFPS is well briefed on this subject, so if you have any queries please do not hesitate to ask our advice.

Sue Runyard

FFPS botanist

Michael Read, formerly with the Wiltshire Trust for Nature Conservation, was appointed Botanical Conservation Officer with the FFPS for an initial period of one year from 30 March 1987.

202

The FFPS has long felt the need for a much greater input into its flora activities, and feels that Mike's appointment marks an effective start in establishing a permanent role for the FFPS in plant conservation. Mike will initially be largely concerned with international plants, especially the trade in cyclamens and bulbs, and will be taking a close look at garden centres and other sources of supply of plants.

Mike is a graduate of London University, with an MSc Honours degree in Botany, and a further MSc in Environmental Technology, specializing in Ecological Management. Mike has a wide range of practical experience, including working on the ecology of the purple emperor butterfly for the World Wildlife Fund, on mosquito ecology at Oregon University, and 'botanizing' in Pakistan and Nepal with emphasis on collecting seed of potential horticultural merit. His work with the Wiltshire Trust for Nature Conservation included leading a team surveying the flora and fauna, and writing management plans for the Trust's nature reserves.

Mike Read has contributed to a number of publications, and lists among his interests horticulture, especially cultivation of 'exotics', including cacti and succulents, and wildlife photography. We wish him a happy and productive stay with the FFPS.

Herpetological Programme

Britain's first toad tunnel

The first tunnel for toads in Britain was opened at Hambleden, near Henley on Thames, on 13 March by Lord Skelmersdale, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment, who is a committed conservationist and a former FFPS Council Member. One month later the success of the tunnel was demonstrated by the fact that more than 3000 toads had used it. It was the latest stage in the 'Toads on Roads' campaign launched by the FFPS in 1984 and, as Lord Skelmersdale commented, 'highlighted just what can be achieved when industrialists, conservationists, government and local authorities work together as envisaged in the World Conservation Strategy'.

Oryx Vol 21 No 3, July 1987

FFPS news



ACO Polymer Products, one of the world's leading polymer concrete manufacturers, which worked with the FFPS on the toad tunnel project and supplied the tunnel, has funded the publication of a booklet, *Toads on Roads*. It describes the development of toad tunnels and the FFPS campaign, and will be useful for local authorities and other road and land managers as well as the general public, particularly in the UK, Germany and the USA. It is available at £1.95, including postage, from the FFPS office.

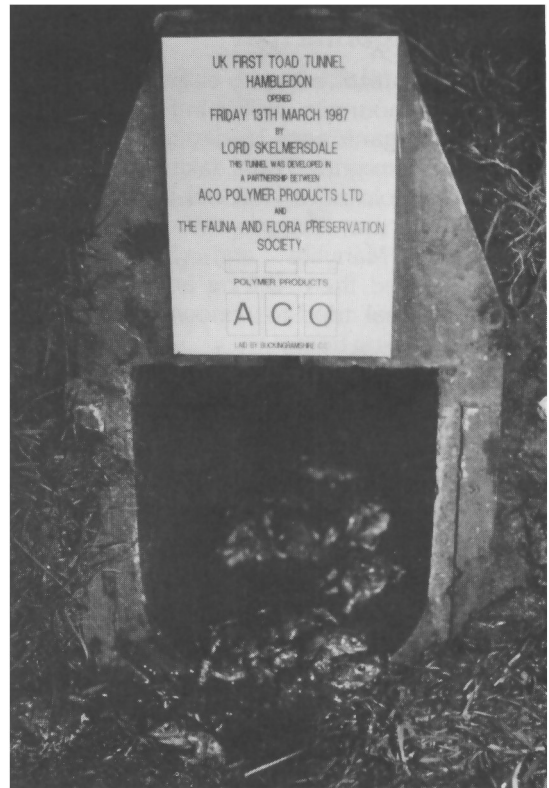
Bat Project

A partnership to conserve Britain's bats

The FFPS has formed a partnership with the Nature Conservancy Council and the Vincent Wildlife Trust to further bat conservation in Britain. The NCC and Vincent Wildlife Trust will provide funding to finance staff salaries, office costs, and project and publicity costs, while the FFPS will carry out the work on the projects. The partnership, which will run initially for 15 months, was inaugurated in January 1987, and has already agreed a list of projects: among the priorities are the publication of a poster, and a series of leaflets/booklets. These will include a general education leaflet, leaflets on individual species, a booklet on 'Bats in Houses' and a code of practice for bat workers/cavers visiting and protecting underground sites.

Additional funding will, of course, continue to be sought as necessary to enable the vital work of conserving bats to flourish.

FFPS news.



Top left: At the opening of the UK's first toad tunnel (left to right): ACO Polymer Products' Managing Director Robin Lipscombe, Lord Skelmersdale, FFPS Executive Secretary John Burton.

Above: Toads using the toad tunnel.

FFPS news

Mountain Gorilla Project

As part of its continuing commitment to the Mountain Gorilla Project (MGP) in Rwanda, the FFPS recently sent a parcel of waterproof capes for the use of the guards in the Volcanoes National Park. Jean-Pierre von der Becke photographed some of the guards as they opened the parcel. Their patrol work, much of which is in wet and cold conditions, is essential to the safety of the gorillas.

A progress report on the MGP will appear in the October issue of *Oryx*.



Mountain gorilla tour

The Society receives many enquiries about how to visit the mountain gorillas in Rwanda. We are therefore organizing a 16-day tour, in collaboration with Peregrine Tours, taking in a visit to the gorillas in Volcanoes National Park and game-viewing in the Akagera. We will also visit Serengeti, Manyara and Ngorongoro in Tanzania, and there will be an opportunity to make optional trips to various sites in Kenya before returning home.

The tour, which will take place in February/March 1988, will be accompanied by Roger Wilson, the FFPS Field Officer on the Mountain Gorilla Project, 1982–1985. If you are interested in the tour, please contact Pat Hodgkins, Peregrine Tours, 41 South Parade, Oxford [Telephone (0865) 511341] for details.

Falkland Islands Foundation

The Falkland Islands Foundation (FIF) started life in 1979 in the FFPS office, with the Society providing much of the administrative support. It grew, spread its wings, and was later housed by the WWF. However, it has recently returned to the FFPS office, where we are providing a small space for Roger Wilson (*ex FFPS Field Officer for the Mountain Gorilla Project in Rwanda*) who was appointed Executive Secretary of the FIF in November 1986.

204

Members' meetings

FFPS Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at 6.30 pm on Thursday 1 October 1987 in the Meeting Rooms of the Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY. For details of this and other meetings please see the insert in this issue of *Oryx*.

The contact people for local group meetings are given below. Please send a stamped self-addressed envelope with enquiries.

Bristol and the West of England Group

Ian Redmond, 60 Seymore Avenue, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 9HN.

Cambridge Group

Sandy Harcourt, University of Cambridge, Department of Applied Biology, Pembroke Street, Cambridge CB2 3DX.

Friday 15 May: An evening with orchids.

Oxford Group

David Macdonald, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PS.

North-West Group

Nick Ellerton, Chester Zoo, Caughall Road, Upton, Chester CH2 1LH.

Oryx Vol 21 No 3, July 1987