

A Message from our Chairlady



Datuk Susan Sheward MBE

When I first sat down to compile our latest newsletter I was concerned that there was only sad and upsetting news out there ever since the coronavirus showed its ugly head at the beginning of 2020. But the more I thought, I remembered some amazing things that had happened during this stressful time.

Firstly, I think we will all remember Sir Tom Moore who raised nearly £33 million GBP to help the NHS on his 100th birthday by walking 100 laps of his garden – amazing man! Also there was the camaraderie that started to emerge in our communities, where strangers did everything they could to help neighbours and people who were affected by the lock-down. Then my manageress, Adrienne, reminded me that we had a celebration of our own to acknowledge in this newsletter as it is the “APPEAL’S 20TH ANNIVERSARY” this summer! During this time we have been able to make a huge difference to conservation and to our closest

cousins the critically endangered orangutans and also to the critically endangered Bornean pygmy elephant!

To date, we have raised over £3 million GBP to help save these iconic creatures from extinction and we have also contributed to saving the amazing rainforests that they live in! So this is definitely worth a celebration and a huge **THANK YOU** to all our supporters and to our Patron Paul O’Grady for his generous support.

WE COULDN’T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!

The doors to Sepilok were closed for 3 months to limit the spread of the virus to the orangutans, we have therefore been losing vital income to feed and care for them.



SO - WE NOW NEED YOUR HELP MORE THAN EVER!

Thankyou

Susan Sheward MBE

Sepilok Lockdown

At the beginning of March 2020 when the Coronavirus pandemic rose its ugly head the Malaysian government issued a ‘Movement Control Order’ and everyone was told they must remain at home, including the staff at Sepilok Rehabilitation Centre. Fortunately, OAUk’s staff at Sepilok agreed to move into the Centre for the duration of the lockdown and care for the young orangutans in the nursery and also keep a watchful eye on the ones living in the reserve.

We thought you may like to know how the orangutans got on during this time, so here is our Team Leader, Lineker’s, Report.



Bidu-Bidu

Bidu-Bidu – Male – 7 years old

Bidu-Bidu is still going to the Indoor Nursery and trying to make trouble. He likes to play under the large outside enclosure. He is hanging around with Kolapis all the time and when he goes to Outdoor Nursery he will be with Wulan a lot.

Alagu – Female – 6 years old

Alagu is with Beryl constantly whether they are in Outdoor or go to Indoor Nurseries they are always together. She also likes to play with young Sepilok around Outdoor Nursery. She enjoys being with Malim the large male who lives in the reserve and if Malim goes anywhere they all like to follow him.



Alagu



Sepilok

Sepilok – Male – 6 years old

Young Sepilok has been to Indoor Nursery again with Betty and they stay there most of the day and then we bring them back to Outdoor Nursery. They really like playing together and with Myohun (male, aged 4 years old). Sepilok loves eating coconut and sharing it with Myohun. He will open the shell for Myohun and then they eat the inside together.

Beryl - Female – 9 years old

Beryl has been hanging around the boardwalk the last few days. She will follow Wulan, Bidu and Kolapis most places they go. She likes to eat papaya. If she sees the older females with their babies she will run away and keep away from them in case she may get bitten.



Beryl



Koko

Koko - Female – 5 years old

Koko is always with Ospie, like usual they hang around the nursery a lot and love playing on the roof of the outdoor building. She got a bite from Mimi and was very scared but it was not serious and she was confident to go outside again the next day. She likes eating honeydew melon.

Ospie – Female - 5 years old

Ospie is with Koko most of the time. She likes to pick up stones on the ground and throw them. She really likes Malim the older male orangutan now and looks very happy when he is around and will try to be close to him and play with him. She will always wait for us after we finished lunch and sit by the tap outside waiting for us to wash her hands and feet!



Ospie

Myohun - Male – 4 years old

Myohun likes to hang around with Sepilok and Betty. He went to Indoor Nursery once following Bidu. He stayed there one day and then we brought him back at the end of the day. He really loves sawi leaves and bananas. He will always be the last one to the feeding platform to eat...he enjoys playing too much.



Myohun



Betty

Betty – Female – 3 years old

Betty has gone to Indoor nursery once this month. She has very large appetite and is one of the heaviest juvenile females now. She likes to eat everything and will cry if she does not get to eat what she wants. She really likes to play on the ropes in Outdoor Nursery. If she is tired she will be the first to want to come back inside.

Our Sepilok Staff working through lockdown

We thought you would also be interested in what OAUK staff have been doing - we have made a special video. WATCH THE VIDEO HERE: www.orangutan-appeal.org.uk/about-us/news/article/orangutan-care-during-this-crisis You can also watch WRU's elephant rescue: www.orangutan-appeal.org.uk/about-us/news/article/wru-elephant



My adventure as Sepilok's Liaison Officer

In February 2020 I embarked on an adventure-of-a-lifetime to be OAUk's new Liaison Officer based at the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in Sabah.

I visited the Centre as a tourist last year and had been following the work of Sepilok and OAUk ever since, so when I arrived in Borneo I was extremely excited to jump right in and get to work.

After the long 19 hour journey I had just enough time to drop my stuff at my accommodation, a small bungalow in the rangers' village adjacent to the Centre, before heading over to begin my week-long training. Although tired, reuniting with the orangutans immediately gave me the huge boost of energy!

The role of the Liaison Officer is demanding with a lot to learn, including educating the public about the orangutans, promoting and administering adoptions, as well as, accounting, coordinating weekly reports from the local OAUk team, and sharing pictures and updates on social media. Learning everything I needed to do was a little daunting at first, but with support from the OAUk team, I soon got into the swing.

Over the following 4 weeks, my time at Sepilok was truly unforgettable. It was a real privilege to work so closely with the beautiful orangutans, and to get the opportunity to observe them on a daily basis. Walking down to the feeding platform each day and seeing these fascinating creatures was something that never failed to fill me with joy and no two days were ever the same.

Although I had previous experience caring for primates at Howletts Wildlife Park in Kent, I didn't expect the orangutans to be as boisterous and cheeky as they are! In my mind they were always the best behaved of the Great Apes but I was reminded that this doesn't stop them from being ingenious and naughty! This can include tampering with locks and appearing in places we'd rather them not be! One night an orangutan broke into my merchandise locker and made quite a mess!

My favourite orangutan was Betty because she is perceptive and intelligent beyond her years, which makes her really fascinating to watch. She had recently graduated from the indoor nursery, so it was amazing to see her 'finding her footing' in her new environment with new and larger orangutans and a greater need to rely on herself. Although she may initially have been picked on by some of the larger orangutans, she quickly found the 'right crowd' for protection.

My favourite part of this experience was getting the opportunity to talk and educate the public about the orangutans and the Centre. I hadn't fully realised until I got there, how many people had waited years, decades, or even their whole lives just to visit Sepilok. Seeing their excitement and joy that they had finally made it was fantastic.



Vandalised Locker

The staff at the Centre were also equally wonderful; kind, warm, and extremely hardworking and dedicated to their purpose. I have never worked in a place where everyone, without exception, was absolutely aligned to the same goal, which in Sepilok's case is to support the conservation of these fascinating animals. I was also privileged to have the opportunity to live in the rangers' village and work closely with the



Casey with Sue

dedicated OAUk staff every day and to feel that I was both living and working in the heart of the action.

During my time at Sepilok there were, of course, some challenges, such as the heat and lack of sleep as the jungle is noisy but these challenges were far outweighed by the good!

Unfortunately, in mid-March my time at the Centre was cut short by the coronavirus outbreak. We had known the virus was likely to come to the island which was a cause for concern. Additional precautions were swiftly implemented for the protection of staff, visitors and of course, most importantly, the orangutans and ensuring they were not exposed.

As things began to escalate, the order to close the doors to the public came, which had been inevitable, and sadly I was told by OAUk that I would need to return home. The next morning, I awoke to find that my flight had been booked for me to return to England later that day.

This left me an hour or so to pack up and say my goodbyes to my new human and orangutan family. While I knew that this was likely coming, when it did come it was no less devastating to say goodbye.

My emotions were a mixture of sadness for having to leave such a special place but also concern in knowing that my departure was also going to coincide with the Centre being closed to visitors, which is a critical source of funding. However, knowing that the dedicated OAUk Staff at Sepilok would continue to ensure every effort was made to maintain high standards of care for our orange cousins calmed my fears.

For now all I can do is urge friends, family, and the public to continue to support OAUk through donations or the other fundraising methods - **Your support is really vital!**

Casey

It's OAUK's 20th Anniversary - 2000 – 2020

IN THE BEGINNING: I met my first orangutan at the Durrell Institute and Wildlife Conservation Trust at Jersey Zoo. The famous Gerald Durrell founded the Trust in 1963 with a mission to save all manner of species from extinction. My first encounter with this amazingly humanoid Great Ape impressed me so much that I wanted to follow Durrell's lead and commit my future to saving them from extinction.

Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in Sabah, north Borneo was established in 1964 by the Sabah Wildlife Department with the aim of returning orphaned apes back to the wild and in recent years has expanded to

include conservation education, to assist endangered species. The Centre is owned and funded by the government but in 2000 it lacked essential funding for equipment and updating and desperately needed help.

When I offered to raise funds and find the labour to build an exercise enclosure for the young orphans at Sepilok I never realised that it would trigger such an enormous amount of interest in both Sabah and in the UK. It is now 20 years since this all started and my passion and commitment to save this ape from extinction is still a huge part of my daily existence even though the challenge gets harder by the day.

What have we achieved?

NURSERIES

Our first task was to provide an exercise enclosure for the youngsters to use daily.



Old nursery



New nursery

New hygienic nursery, night wards and a quarantine ward

We completely refurbished and fitted them with tiled floors and stainless steel enclosures. A veterinary clinic and intensive care unit was installed where sick orangutans could receive round the clock care away from other individuals.



Old night nursery

The wards were equipped with medical equipment such as a stainless steel operating table, X-ray machine and a blood and urine analyser, which were all necessary to provide a good level of care.



Refurbished nursery

RESCUES & RELEASES

OAUK have assisted with the rescue and release of young and old orangutans into remote reserves so they can return to the wild.

In 2001 King Ghaz a large dominant male was successfully rehabilitated and released by helicopter into the remote protected forest reserve of Tabin. This was the first time that such a task had been attempted as King was carried inside the helicopter rather than in a crate strung underneath.

Following this success the Appeal helicoptered a further three males and two females into Tabin.



King makes history

A new Land Rover 4x4 rescue vehicle was purchased for Sepilok, which was ideal for forging a track through the jungle to rescue orphaned and injured orangutans and many other species of wildlife, such as sun bears, gibbons and even crocodiles. In 2016, as the original vehicle showed signs of ageing a new rescue vehicle was purchased to ensure they were able to continue their vital work. Fortunately, this was just in time for us to release Rosalinda and Ganang into Tabin Reserve.



Rosalinda's release

In 2009 we set up the ground-breaking **Post Release Monitoring Research Project** in Tabin Reserve, which has been highly successful. During the project we released 11 orangutans in total into the reserve which were monitored by the team. To date we have achieved 100% successful birth rate for the project's rehabilitated females which has attracted attention worldwide and will benefit reintroduction projects everywhere. Five of these females have now given birth to wild babies. Otan, a ten year old female, gave birth to a male baby in May 2013, who was named Spike.



Tabin research team

OAUK have carried out many more releases and rescues than we can mention here.

OAUK MALAYSIAN STAFF

We are very proud of our 8 local staff at Sepilok who have been with the Appeal for many years. During the pandemic in 2020 the doors were closed to the public at Sepilok and the government introduced a 'Movement Control Order' throughout the state which restricted all travel. OAUK's staff bravely stepped up and volunteered to move into the Centre and keep the youngsters in the nurseries cared for.

A video of our hardworking staff can be seen on our website:

www.orangutan-appeal.org.uk/about-us/news/article/orangutan-care-during-this-crisis

MEET THE ORANGUTANS

In 2015 Animal Planet filmed OAUK at work for this 8 part series which has been shown all over the world and has spread the plight of the orangutan across many continents.



Filming 'Meet the Orangutans'

In 2018 OAUK pledged RM1 million to the Chief Minister of Sabah to help fund conservation efforts. The first project to benefit was the Wildlife Rescue Unit who were presented with **three 4x4 Toyota rescue vehicles** at a handing over ceremony in Kota Kinabalu.



WRU vehicles

Over the years we have provided Sepilok with Liaison Officers to educate tourists as well as local schools and organisations and to help raise much needed funds. We introduced the immensely popular Adoption Scheme and made information films to be shown to visitors.

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE – to date we have raised over £3 Million GBP for Sabah Conservation!!

I never thought it would be easy to save a great ape from extinction but, then I never realised it would be this difficult either! I certainly know we could not have done as much as we have without our dedicated staff and worldwide supporters who have worked so hard to save this **critically endangered ape**. In fact, I have always been taught that anything worth doing is never easy and please believe me when I tell you it really is hard

BUT THE ORANGUTAN CAN'T DO IT ALONE!

Datuk Sue Sheward M B E

Wildlife Rescue Unit (WRU)

For the last 3 years OAUK have been helping support the WRU with grants being made for outstation allowances, back-pay and of course the purchase of the 3 new Toyota 4x4 rescue vehicles, which were presented to them in 2019.

At the outset of the coronavirus outbreak a request was received from the WRU for £2,000 to enable them to purchase "Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)" such



Orangutan rescue

as masks, gloves etc which were vital in this terrible pandemic. OAUK responded to this urgent request and transferred the funds over to enable them to purchase what could be life saving equipment!! When the equipment arrived in Sabah the team received training on how/when the PPE was to be used.

The PPE equipment arrived just in time for the WRU to carry-out a rescue of an orangutan trapped in a plantation near Lahad Datu, where replanting was taking place. The team rushed to the area and darted the terrified orangutan. She was a semi adult female and after an initial examination, which confirmed she had no injuries or fractures, she was taken to Sepilok Rehabilitation Centre to recover.

In April, the WRU returned to Lahad Datu to the Sahabat plantation to rescue a blind baby elephant who had a bilateral eye infection. They decided to transport the youngster to Lok Kawi Wildlife Park where vets provided medical treatment and 24 hour care. The baby elephant was named Sahabat.



Blind baby elephant

Borneo Nature Foundation

In common with the rest of the world, BNF has had to adjust and plan how to continue and strengthen our urgent conservation work, while minimising the risk from this new threat. Important research on surveying orangutan populations using drones has been put on hold. Activities involving groups of people suspended, including school education programmes, community development work, and training sessions for fire-fighting teams. With regards to our field monitoring and vital conservation actions we have adapted procedures to avoid unnecessary risk, which has allowed us to continue carrying out reforestation and canal-blocking, anti-logging and anti-hunting patrols, and maintaining the community firefighting teams that OAUK so generously supports in a state of readiness.

BNF's conservation work is more vital than ever in a Covid-19 world. The threats faced by orangutans, including fire, will not disappear and are likely to increase following the pandemic, especially if local economic hardship ensues, or enforcement or regulations are reduced.

Our fire-fighting work is particularly critical at this time, as peat fires release huge amounts of toxic haze, and evidence from multiple countries suggests that air pollution increases Covid-19 mortality rates.

The health of our environment is essential; wildlife such as orangutans and people are inextricably linked and so reaffirms BNF's firm commitment towards achieving our conservation goals.

With conservation funding around the world becoming increasingly stretched, BNF thanked Orangutan Appeal UK for their ongoing support during this uniquely challenging time.



Wild mum and her daughters

Thank you to all our supporters

We want to say a "BIG SINCERE THANK YOU" to everyone who has adopted, donated, fundraised and provided grants to us over the last 6 months. Your support is very much appreciated and is enabling us to keep our Malay staff working during this very difficult time. The Centre's doors had to close to the public to ensure we keep the orangutans safe so your generosity makes a much needed contribution to supporting these critically endangered orangutans - now more than ever!

We also want to express our gratitude to all our business partners for their continued support, including Banana Tree Restaurants, Jacha Potgieter and the team at Alpine Coffee Shop and Galeri, EXO Foundation, ABN Consultancy and N'eat Healthy.

Wow – Jacha has sold 3 of his paintings to support the orangutans!

We couldn't do it without you all – thank you!



Jacha and his paintings