



WOLF CHRONICLE

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From the Editor

Dear Members

Sadly this will be the last issue of the Wolf Chronicle as the Wolf Trust is closing to the public at the end of August 2018. The wolves will continue to be well looked after by the Directors and the usual volunteers, so nothing will change for them, although I am sure that the wolves will miss seeing you all on open days and events. They will still go on their walks with the volunteers and have their treat filled melons and coconuts and meaty ice lollies for enrichment.

We thank you for continuing to support us for so many years. We have been able to donate £355,000 to projects abroad



that work to keep wolves safe in the wild and we could not have done this without your ongoing help. Thank you so much for all the many photos and articles you have sent in and the money raised by various events you have run. You have been truly amazing.

The UK wolf Conservation Trust website will continue in some form and there will be updates of the wolves from time to time, so you can still see how your favourite wolf is doing.

I have greatly enjoyed co-producing this magazine with the Trust's office manager Lynn Kent who does all the complicated graphic design works. I sincerely hope that you will continue to learn about wolves from other zoos and wildlife parks in your area. Conservation is so important for every species.



Wendy



DIRECTORS LETTER

After a great deal of thought and with much sadness we have decided not to renew our zoo licence in September, and will revert to holding a Dangerous Wild Animals Act licence. Consequently, the Trust will close its doors to Wednesday visitors and all public events with the wolves at the end of August.

Since my late husband Roger started the UK Wolf Conservation Trust in 1995, it has significantly grown in popularity. Last year we had almost 12,000 visitors. In truth we have struggled to cope with this number with our limited facilities on site, especially during the wet winter months when we are unable to use the field for car parking.

As I approach retirement age and a quieter life I have made this decision with a heavy heart. The wolves will remain here in their enclosures, with sufficient funds saved over the years to care for them. Volunteers who know them well will continue to walk and socialise with them. My children Lara, Johnny and I will ultimately share the responsibility for their welfare. As you know Torak, Mosi, Mai and Motomo are reaching the twilight years of their life and particularly deserve the optimum care and attention. Since 1995 we've had around 200,000 visitors to the Trust here at Butlers Farm and in the early days, by taking the wolves to a number of large country shows, we probably introduced the wolves to at least another 200,000. We are very proud of what the Trust has achieved, from breeding the first European wolves in the UK for over 350 years, importing the first Arctic wolves to the UK, educating people worldwide, to supporting and donating over £355,000

to vital wolf conservation projects across the globe.

The perception of the wolf has changed immeasurably since Roger obtained his first wolf cub "My Lady" in the early 1970s. After the passing of the Berne Convention in 1982, the wolf is now a protected species in Europe. There is an action plan for the conservation of wolves in Europe and their numbers are steadily increasing. The wolf is defying our prejudice and living increasingly successfully alongside us. Wolves only returned to Germany at the start of the century but now there are 60 packs totalling between 150 and 160 adult wolves. Last winter Denmark welcomed its first pack for more than two centuries. Wolves have been sighted in the Netherlands, Northern France and even Luxembourg. A wolf recently returned to Belgium, the last continental European country without wild wolves.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff, volunteers, members and visitors who have supported the Trust over the years and made it such a success. I do hope you will visit us during the summer months.

Tsa Palmer
Director



Roger & Tsa Palmer with Quatro



TORAK'S TASTE OF THE WILD

Can Torak lay claim to being the first wolf to run wild in England since the 16th Century? What media attention it attracted! The way the media reacted, somehow I don't feel that introducing wolves into Scotland as some are advocating would stand a chance! Early in the morning on 18 January the telephone rang. It was a friend in the village and while walking his dogs at 7.30am, he had seen one of the wolves loping along the footpath going towards Douai Abbey. The previous night had been very windy with Storm Fionn sweeping through the UK. Obviously concerned, my Jack Russell Parsnip and I walked across to the Trust to check. Mosi, Torak's devoted female companion was barking an alarm call, something wolves only do in times of unease. There was no sign of Torak, so I began to fear that my friend Peter might indeed be right. I put Mosi into the adjoining holding pen to make sure she was secure. Then I walked round outside the perimeter fence of the enclosure which is bordered by trees. All the fencing was intact. Puzzled, I retraced my steps and to my horror discovered the large gate at the front of the enclosure was ajar -

about a foot – the padlocks were still locked. It had been forced open in the night – levered so that the bolts came out of the eyes that hold them. It was a deliberate act by an intruder. This is how Torak had escaped.

I then put our escape wolf procedure plan 'Operation Felan' into action and rang the two expert wildlife dart men to tell them to come urgently. It was now 8.20am and a police car arrived telling me that Torak had now been sighted by the lake at Elstree School. Our wolf keeper Mike and I grabbed two leads and jumped into the back of the Astra police car, lights flashing along the A4. Torak had moved on by the time we arrived at Elstree and was on Bucklebury Common. He ran for a while along the road. By this time there was a Sky news helicopter and a police helicopter with thermal imaging above, ten policemen and two police marksmen all involved in the search. The police wanted a good outcome and were very positive. We lost sightings of Torak for around half an hour as the helicopter's thermal imaging kept spotting deer in the wooded area around Hopgood Green! Then Torak was sighted in a garden by Downe House School. By this time there were a growing number of reporters and TV cameras following us. I was at this stage still hoping we could dart/catch Torak, although he seemed to be running in a more determined manner. The countryside around here is pretty wooded and in order to fire a tranquilliser into a running animal you need to be about 15 feet away with no wind. We had one dart gun expert ahead of Torak and one behind him in the hope of being successful.



Turn over for more!



On Torak ran, past a dustcart by a farm whose driver reported a sighting and across the Newbury Hermitage road towards Curridge. It was at this stage the police said for the first time that if he went near the M4 he would have to be shot for public safety. I was beginning to inwardly panic but still we kept having sightings through people's gardens and a stables. Then the helicopter reported him running through a field of sheep and they said he was disorientated by the flock.

There was another sighting in the woods and we followed in our Astra down a muddy track where I and my colleague Linda, who had also known Torak since he was ten days old, were amazed to see him only about 25 feet to our right. We knelt down and I called his name. He stopped and then very cautiously we approached him and slipped the collar over his neck. He was tired after eight miles and ready to come home!

I really had no knowledge that Torak's escape had so prominently featured in the media. Indeed I am told that this story put Macron's and May's meeting in France into second position for top news stories. I had left the house with no phone, no breakfast and had been swept up in the surreal chase for nearly five hours. The press reports were very largely positive. It really helped that the locals in Beenham were calm in their response, saying they were not concerned about Torak being loose and that they very much hoped for his safe return.

Beenham School was in lockdown with a policeman on the gate all morning. The emblem on the school children's uniform is a wolf and the school has a close affinity to the Trust and regularly visits the wolves.

Without the help of the police helicopter from RAF Benson with its thermal imagery I believe we would have had a very different outcome. The camera is a valuable tool that can be used to locate people who are missing. Never before to find a wolf!

Mosi was distraught for the six hours Torak was away – their reunion was very emotional for us to watch. It could have been a very different outcome. It beggars belief that anyone would deliberately let a wolf free. Torak was really frightened while out loose. We have upgraded our CCTV cameras and general security. I would like to record our thanks to Thames Valley Police for their amazing support. We have donated £5,000 to Thames Valley Cadets as a gesture of our gratitude.





VALENTINE'S EVENT

Heart shaped cardboard boxes were decorated with heart designs and a wolf's name and then filled by the children with black pudding, cheese, cooked sausages, fish and eggs. There were also 4 large heart shaped cakes and 24 heart shaped biscuits made from tuna, eggs, flour and water that the children coated in low fat cream cheese.

The Beenhams were the first to receive the treats and Nuka did his usual licking off cream cheese and then grabbing boxes to eat. Tala found several treats whilst Tundra was more reserved and went for the boxes farthest away.

Motomo and Mai's boxes and cakes had to be thrown over. Motomo is very clever at catching food and Mai just scooped up biscuits and any food that fell out of the boxes. One handler behind the barrier got covered in the contents of a box after a child's throwing wasn't quite so good!!



The Arctic pack watched eagerly where the children put the food and Massak got the large cake before Pukak could get to it and Sikko quietly went round eating biscuits and box contents letting her brothers compete for the rest. Mosi and Torak were the last to get their Valentine's Day treats and Torak picked up a box and strolled to the back of the enclosure to enjoy the treats leaving Mosi dashing about sniffing boxes to see which had the best contents. Whilst Mosi was busily wolfing down food, Torak quietly took the largest cake and walked over the top of the mound to savour it in private. Everyone had a fantastic time and the volunteers were kept busy answering all the questions the visitors had.



Trust Wolves



Since the last issue **Torak** went on a tour of the local countryside making him an International celebrity! **Mosi** spent an anxious day whining and pacing and when Torak returned she bounded after him excitedly whimpering and trying to nibble his muzzle.

Both Torak and Mosi are looking stunning with thicker shiny coats and long fluffy tails. Old age certainly suits them. Pat Melton and I made their straw beds anew in their kennels. We have to look after our captive OAP's. They would not be alive in the wild at this age, so need our duty of care in captivity. The wolves rarely use their kennels at night but when it is extremely cold the older wolves leave "wolf shaped" indentations in the straw beds indicating that they have gone inside for a while. I did see Torak come out one early morning stretching and yawning sleepily.

When Torak and Mosi play it is amusing to watch them bounding at high speed with Torak's long legs always making him harder to keep up with. He twists and turns with great dexterity confusing Mosi. Then he decides it is time for another siesta under his favourite tree and playtime is over.

Sometimes Mosi is in a playful mood when Torak isn't, so he ignores her and sleeps. Frustrated she runs and jumps on him which certainly gets his attention-probably not the kind she was hoping for and she soon finds herself on her back with an angry Torak snarling over her. The children's' Christmas cracker event was enjoyed by both Torak and Mosi and at dusk Torak appeared over the top of the mound with a cracker in his jaws. What a photograph that made.

On the Valentine's Day children's event children filled heart shaped boxes with meaty treats and covered heart shaped cakes made from fish and eggs +with cream cheese. Mosi went round smelling the boxes to see which were the fullest, whilst Torak calmly took a full box to eat at the back of the enclosure. Torak trotted down later on to claim the largest heart shaped cake and was last seen disappearing over the top of the mound with it.

Torak is a magnificent example of a wolf and perfect for photography opportunities whilst Mosi is so people friendly and loves to be the centre of attention on open days. They are both very popular with visitors.





Trust Wolves

Watching the Arctic pack visitors can understand how majestic, impressive and magical **Massak, Sikko & Pukak** are. But as 'magical' as they are, the wet and cold days mean their magnificent white coats are covered in thick mud as they fence-run with their neighbours, Mai and Motomo. The latter occasionally taunt the Arctics, who haven't yet received their food, by eating their own food at the fence. At our ever-popular Children's Christmas cracker event, children filled toilet roll middles with an assortment of hot dog sausages, black pudding, ham, eggs and roast pork and wrapped them in Christmas paper. With the wolves in their side enclosure, the children placed their crackers on the Christmas tree in the main enclosure and then Massak, Sikko and Pukak were then allowed back in to devour the treats. There were also Christmas cakes made with fish, eggs and flour, coated in delicious cream cheese. Massak showed his appreciation by consuming his whole! Pukak and Sikko were more reserved in fully tasting every bite. On the Valentine's Day event children filled heart shaped boxes with treats for the wolves to find. We are always looking for new and interesting enrichment for the wolves.

When some dead geese were donated to the Trust, we hung the birds in one of the trees in the wolves' enclosure. This is the first time that the wolves had seen geese up close and they were wary at first, but it wasn't long before Pukak began investigating and jumping up to try to work out how to pull the tasty treat from the tree. It provided a good enrichment for them.

The breeding season between January and March mean that all animals want to look their best to entice a mate. The Arctic wolves are no exception and in spring, they show off their fabulous coats at their best. They seem to almost double in size as their soft winter coat fully develops and thickens. They are truly iconic wolves.



Turn over for more!

Arctic wolves: Mike Collins



Trust Wolves

The Beenham pack is coming up to seven years old so they are at the peak of adulthood. They continue to enjoy excellent health and are always interested in everything. The bottom corner of the enclosure is one place they have a full view up to the food shed and **Nuka** in particular likes to station himself there so he doesn't miss the moment the food buckets come out. If something is going on, all three wolves will cluster in the corner, jostling to get



 the best view. Sometimes this can cause a bit of sibling strife and visitors will get a thrilling insight into pack behaviour as the wolves' growl, snap and shove each other. It sounds and looks very serious but it is all sorted out very quickly with no harm done.

It's always interesting to see how the wolves' characters develop as they age.



So far Nuka has retained his relaxed and friendly demeanour and is happy to hang around the front of the enclosure, checking out everyone who passes. This makes him popular with visitors and volunteers alike. Nuka is a terrific peacemaker and doesn't tolerate too much nonsense from his sisters. If **Tundra** gets too uppity with **Tala**, he has been seen to drag her off by her tail! Tala will come down to the fence to see new people but she always checks to see if Tundra is watching.

Tundra remains an aloof wolf, wary of anyone she's not familiar with, although she is still affectionate to people that she trusts. One day Nuka was being made a fuss of at the fence and growled when she came near so Tundra ran across to Tala and started a fight. Nuka, as peacemaker, had to intervene. Tundra let him nearly reach them and then ran down to the fence to be made a fuss of. Clever girl! 





Trust Wolves

During the breeding season **Mai** preferred to lie at the edge of the wood in the top corner of the enclosure. Her interest in food also changed and she either cached uneaten food or urinated on it to mark it as 'hers' so Motomo didn't eat it – although he rarely got the message! **Motomo** will always dig up Mai's cached pheasants, pigeons and magpies for a midnight snack!

Mai has got her howl back, after her winter hoarseness. She's now happy to respond in full voice when hearing the other wolves howling.

Motomo loves to interact with the Arctics in the adjoining enclosure; if Pukak or more importantly, Massak, approach the fence Motomo will try to intimidate them by standing stiff-legged, tail and hackles raised and staring. If that doesn't work, he will rush at the fence, which is usually enough to get Massak to do some fence-running, Motomo joining him in a full-speed charge to the top of the enclosure and back again, showering mud, grass and water everywhere. If a threat-posture or fence-rush by Motomo isn't enough to wind Massak up, Motomo then rears up on his hind legs to repeatedly kick at the fence with his front paws, inevitably getting a result!

It's not unusual to see both wolves with yellowy brown mud 'highlights' on their heads and coats after digging dens in the mound. Wolf fur is remarkably good at repelling dirt and a few hours after a digging session the fur is clean again.



Mai & Motomo: Alan Vaughan





EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA

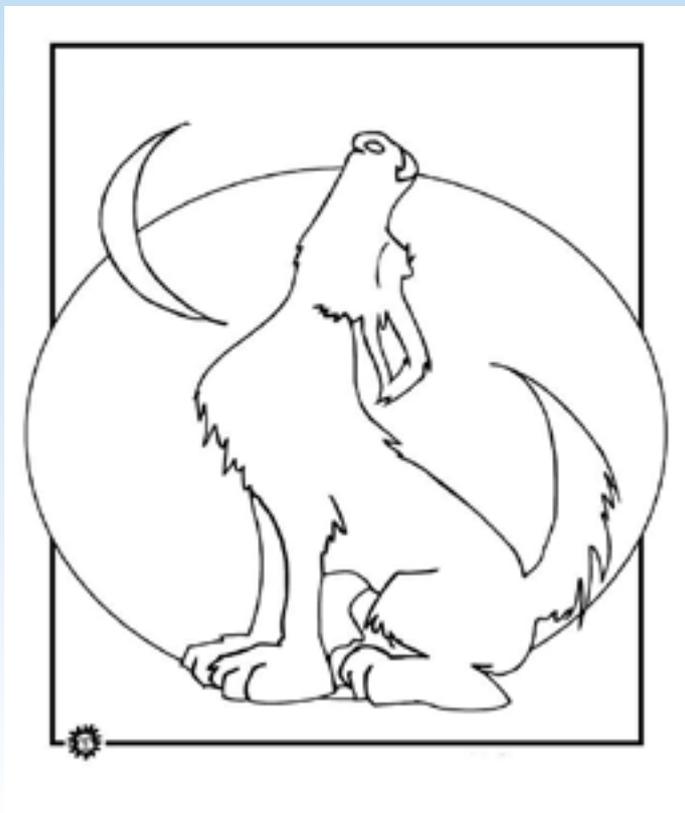
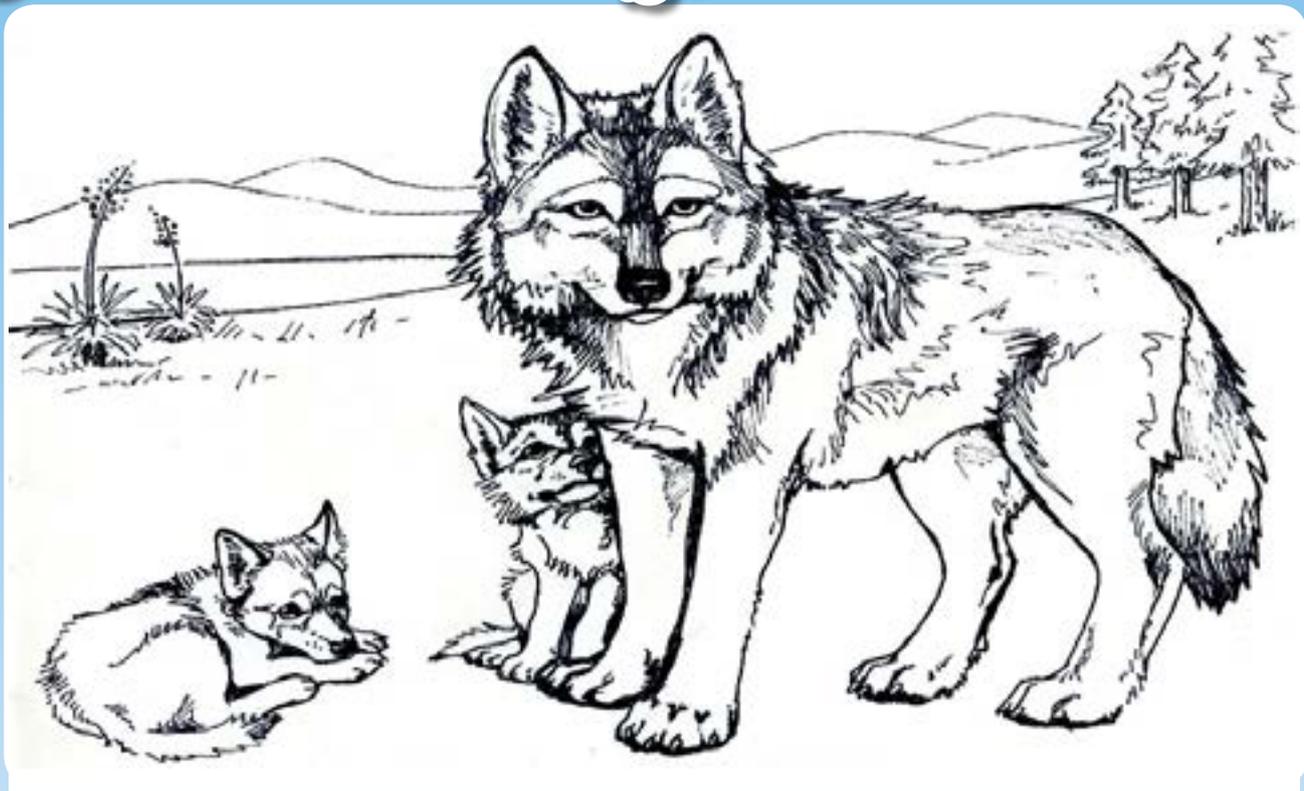
The children coloured cardboard eggs and filled them and colourful Easter bags to the brim with eggs, sausages, cheese, hot dogs and black pudding. They then chose the wolf they wanted to give the treats to and then carefully carried their eggs and bags and hid them in the wolf's enclosure. Once the children were safely out, the wolves were let in to "wolf" down the treats. (The wolves had been watching from their side enclosures so knew where to find them!)

The wolves grabbed the bags with enthusiasm and soon tore them to shreds with claws and teeth to get at the food inside. The cardboard egg tops were lifted off by the wolves' teeth to reveal the treats inside.

All the visitors asked lots of questions about the wolves' behaviour. It was a fun filled day enjoyed by parents, children and volunteers alike.

by Wendy Brooker





COLOUR ME IN

ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT WOLVES? EMAIL US AT info@ukwolf.org





Wolf Photos



Tundra - Pat Melton



Tala - Alan Vaughan



Nuka - Simon Gibbs



Mai - Alan Vaughan



Torak - Pat Melton



Motomo - Cleo Bolt



Mosi - Pat Melton





Wolf Photos



Sikko - Mike Collins



Massak- Karl Redshaw



Pukak - Mike Collins





Sammy Fodder age 10 yrs old loves drawing wolves



ART WORK



Drawings by Sammy Fodder

Events

Visit Wednesday

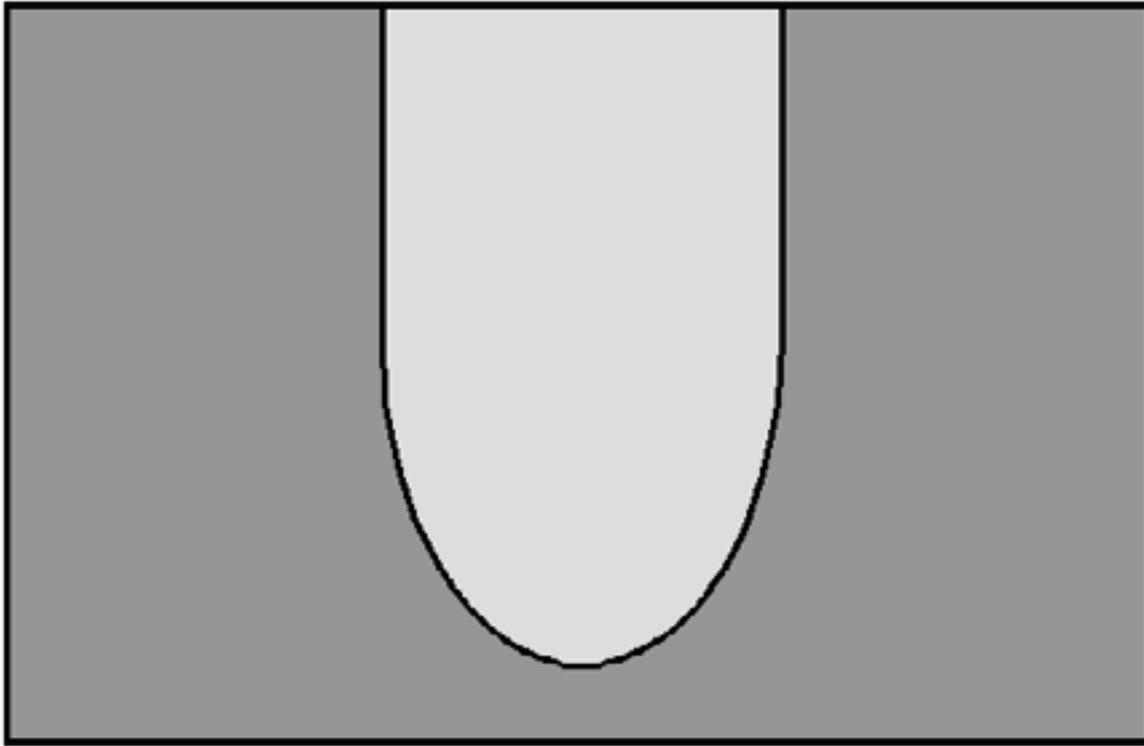
Every Wednesday up till 29th August 11am - 4pm
Come along & see the wolves & at 2pm, watch them being fed. Additional children's activities will be held during school holidays.

Pre booking not required. Junior member free entry on production of entry ticket.

Adults £8, children 3-11 £5, under 3's free.



Make your own wolf



Trim
top roll
if it is
taller
than
this
rectangle

