

Back When . . . & Then ?

Newsletter of the Society for Promotion of History of Zoos* and Natural History in India**

(* and captive animal collections in any form ** SPHoZ*aNHI - pronounced spo-zan-ee)

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SPOHZ*NHI - an Indian specialist history society

The Society for Promotion of History of Zoos* and Natural History in India was founded a few months ago with several high objectives. Probably the most important objective was to get Indian zoo personnel more interested in the history of their zoo and of the natural history of the country. While we have had some new members come on board who are Indian, the majority of persons taking interest in SPOHZ*NHI are from Europe and U. K. ! While we are happy to have members from outside the country, SPOHZ*NHI is meant for Indians, and Back When is also meant for Indian writing notes, articles, book reviews, even lists ... anything.

SPOHZ*NHI needs a logo

The Society for Promotion of History of Zoos* and Natural History in India needs a logo. Suggestions, drawings, ideas are requested. Since the society encompasses both animal and plant life, it would be nice if the logo could incorporate both a plant and a wild animal in it. There are many possibilities for a style but something somewhat "old" looking would be nice, a sort of woodcutty look. Perhaps some readers of ZOOS' PRINT and Back When could look into it. Send your suggestions, sketches and other contributions to

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If nobody comes up with a better idea, we'll use the one up top !

SPHoZ*aNHI searches for a logo

What do you think ?



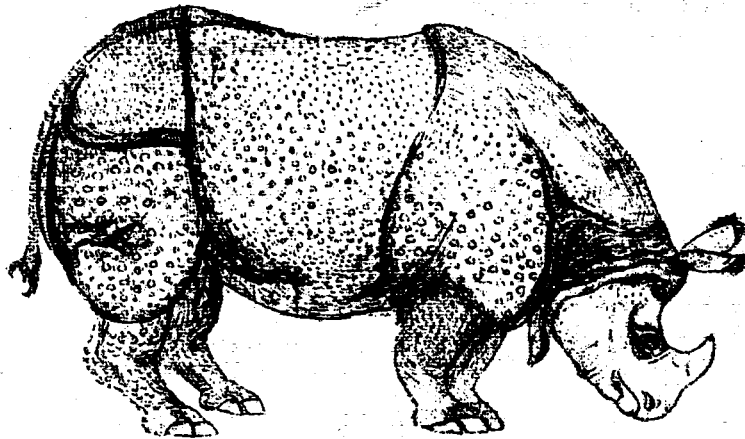
SPHoZ*aNHI OBJECTIVES

1. To promote interest in research, collection and dissemination of historical information about zoos and captive animal collections in any form and natural history of India and bordering countries.
2. To encourage zoos, natural history institutions and conservation organisations to start Archives for the collection of historical information and artifacts.
3. To encourage and help zoos and natural history museums, with their tremendous advantage of public visitation, to create awareness in the public of their own institutional history as well as the history of zoos and captive wild animal collections and of natural history in India. This will be done by creating model graphics which can be utilised as they are or modified by zoos.
4. To promote the writing of articles specifically to promote interest in the public, such as for newspapers, magazines, etc.
5. To locate historical material and archives which is not available for use by historians or is inaccessible and attempt to acquire it for a public institution in India, such as a library, zoo, museum, or other organisation or institution with library facilities.
6. To find and attempt to repatriate Indian historical materials abroad which would be more appropriately located in India.
7. To produce and publish Newsletters, Journals, articles, and books relevant to the history of zoos* and natural history.
8. To create a mechanism for recognising persons who have made an outstanding contribution to the history of zoos* and natural history in India.
9. To raise funds for the achievement of these objectives by society members and any others deemed worthy of support.
10. To conduct Workshops and Symposia relevant to history of zoos* and natural history.

Records of an animal collection in Poona at the end of the eighteenth century

Koes Rookmaaker

Sally Walker (1996) has documented convincing evidence that the Barrackpore Menagerie in Calcutta was the first zoological garden in the Indian subcontinent, being opened around 1803. However, earlier collections of animals must have existed. It is to be hoped that members of the new Society of Promotion of History of Zoos and Natural History in India will unearth the available information.



The other animal drawing, another watercolour and gouache on laid paper, 22 x 36 cm, is reproduced in colour in Hothouse (1986) and is a nice illustration of a male Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*). Again there is an inscription in Marathi by the artist, as well as a comment by Sir Malet.

'This Drawing and Wax

Personally, with a longstanding interest both in the rhinoceros (Rookmaaker 1983) as well as in Indian zoos, I was quite surprised when I found reference to a living rhinoceros kept in Poona in 1790. The source was unexpected as well, being a catalogue of a (sales) exhibition organized in 1986 by a London Gallery called Hobhouse Ltd., located at 39 Duke Street, St. James's London (Hobhouse 1986). As I have been unable to find additional data, the entries in the Hobhouse catalogue will here be summarized.

Hobhouse Ltd. in 1986 exhibited (and probably sold to an unknown party) three drawings and three wax models of animals kept in the 'Royal Menagerie' in Poona in 1790. These work of art were commissioned by Sir Charles Warre Malet, Resident in Poona from 1786 to 1796. The drawings were made by Gangaram Chintaman Tambat, who in all likelihood was a local artist. One of the drawings showing a 'darzi' (pen and ink, watercolour and gouache on laid paper; 13.6 x 16.3 cm) does not need to be described here. All six items came from the collection of Sir Charles Warre Malet by family descent up to 1982.

The first animal drawing shows a dromedary (*Camelus dromedarius*), it was inscribed in ink in Marathi by Charles Malet as follows: 'The Figure of the Common Camel of Hindustan accurately taken from a Living one by Gangaram Chintaman Tambat of the following Dimensions: from the Tip of the upper Lip to the highest Part of the Head between the Ears 1 ft. 10 1/2 ins. Thence to the Middle of the hollow taken with the curve of the neck 4.7. Thence to the Root of the Tail avoiding the Height of the Hump 4.1 1/4. Thence to the tip of the Tail 2:1. From the Top of the Hollow to the Ground 7.5. From the rising between the Hump and the Tail to the Ground 7.4.; Height of the Hump from the edge of the Hair (no measurement).' It is a watercolour and gouache on laid paper. 18.5 x 21.5 cm.

Figure of a Rhinoceros belonging to Mudarao Narrian Peshwa was taken from the Life with great Fidelity at Poona in November 1790 by Gangaram Chintaman Tambat, the Age of the Rhinoceros was supposed to be about 25 years, of the following Dimensions, viz From the Outside of the Tail to the foremost Wrinkle of the Neck 8:7 1/2. From the said Winkle to the Top of the Nose 2:3 1/2. From the forefoot to the Shoulder Height 5:11. From the Hind foot to the Top of the Rump 6.3. From the Root of the Horn nearest the nose to the point 1. It was said by the Keepers that the Horn would grow. Poona 28 Oct. 1790. C.W.M. This animal is Retromingent but the genital parts when activated by concupiscence are projected as in the accompanying drawing in which the urinal line is also described. The colour of the animal is excellently conveyed in the wax figure.' Neither the wax figure nor the drawing of the genital parts was present in this exhibition.

There were three wax figures, all painted and mounted on a wooden base, by an unknown artist.

1. 'The Peshwa's lion', 12.8 cm high (*Panthera leo*).
2. 'A leopard belonging to the Peshwa', 11 cm high (*Panthera pardus*).
3. 'The Peshwa's tiger', 11 cm high (*Panthera tigris*).

It would be interesting to know more about the Royal Menagerie of Mudarao Narrian Peshwa in the city of Poona in 1780.

References

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Rookmaaker, L. C. 1983. *Bibliography of the Rhinoceros: an analysis of the literature on the recent rhinoceroses in culture, history and biology*, Rotterdam, A. A. Balkema.

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