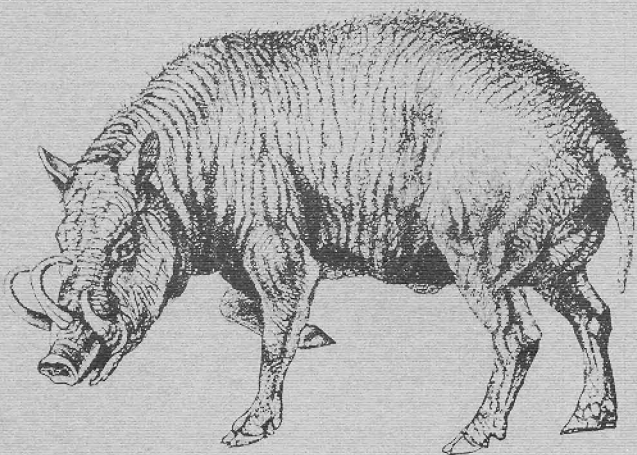


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EVIDENCE ON A JAVAN RHINOCEROS ALIVE IN MANCHESTER CA.1870

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by L.C. Rookmaaker and C.H. Keeling

In 1985. Dr. Cave discussed a skull of an adult male rhinoceros in the Manchester Museum. After careful examination, he referred the skull to the Javan rhinoceros (Rhinoceros sondaicus). The provenance of the specimen was not recorded, but it had been on continuous display since 1914. Judging from osteological characteristics, Cave concluded that the animal "had lived long in captivity." That is quite remarkable. Javan rhinoceroses have been a rare exhibit; only very few have been recorded with certainty. There is no record of any specimen which could have been the one presently preserved in Manchester. The Belle Vue Zoological Gardens exhibited a male rhinoceros from 20 June 1876 until 1804, but we should accept Flower's (1906:26) statement that it was an Indian rhinoceros. However, apparently there was an earlier rhinoceros in Belle Vue. Peel (1903:207) remarked that the animal seen in 1902 was very savage, "in marked contrast to the preceding rhinoceros which was allowed to roam the grounds, and had to be driven for exhibition from his mud bath in the lake on the warm summer days" (our italics). Unfortunately, there don't seem to be further records about this first Belle Vue rhinoceros. Still, this most probably was the specimen of which some remains are now kept in the Manchester Museum. Having reached that conclusion, we should introduce some doubts again. In the 1860's and 1870's there were several rhinoceroses in the various travelling menageries like Wombwell's. Details about those animals are hard to find. It is possible, therefore, that one of those was a Javan rhinoceros which ended up in the Manchester Museum, maybe having been deposited in Belle Vue for a short period.

C.H.Keeling adds the following postscript to the preceding jointly-written article.

The vital clue in this research was the remark made by Richard J Reynolds, the American authority on captive Rhinoceroses, that in the 17th and 18th centuries Javanese princes and nobles often kept the Javan Rhinoceros as a pet on account of its docile disposition.

It is interesting to note that the first Belle Vue rhinoceros had eventually to be permanently caged, owing to its liking for chewing the domestic washing hung out to dry by Mrs Jennison, wife of the place's owner, so clearly it was an especially tractable animal.

#### References

- Cave, A.J.E., 1985. An unrecorded specimen of the Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*). *Journal of Zoology*, London, (A) 207: 527-535.
- Flower, S.S., 1906. Report on mission to Europe, 1905. Cairo.
- Peel, C.V.A., 1903. *The zoological gardens of Europe*. London.

A copy of The Zoological Gardens of Europe has recently been donated to the Bartlett Society Library by Mr Eddie Campbell. This is the work mentioned in the above bibliography, although the gift was made independently of the article.

# Zoological