

Roger Edwards, 2002

THE VISIT OF AN INDIAN RHINOCEROS TO GLASGOW IN 1835

INTRODUCTION

In August 1835 the Indian rhinoceros owned by Mr Thomas Atkins of Liverpool Zoological Gardens was put on show in Dublin for a month. The animal was subsequently sent for display to Scotland, first Glasgow and then Edinburgh before returning to Liverpool, where it probably died in the 1840s. The skeleton of a rhinoceros now in Bangor in Wales may be from this animal.

A recent request was received at Glasgow Zoo for contemporary reports on this animal while it was in Scotland. What follows is the a set of transcriptions from two Glaswegian newspapers, the Glasgow Herald and the Glasgow Argus, and two Edinburgh newspapers, the Scotsman and the Edinburgh Evening Courant

For information and references the please see the following article:

L. CORNELIS ROOKMAAKER: The Mysterious "Liverpool Rhinoceros"
Zool. Garten N.F. 63 (1993) 4, S. 246-258.

The Glasgow Herald

Monday, DECEMBER 7, 1835.

The Rhinoceros . -- The Rhinoceros now exhibiting in Virginia Street, opposite the Glasgow Union Bank, is said to be a great curiosity. -- See *Adv* .

ARRIVAL OF THE RHINOCEROS.

THE Inhabitants of Glasgow and its Vicinity are respectfully informed that the RHINOCEROS, which cost the Proprietor of the Liverpool Zoological Gardens One Thousand Guineas, is now arrived in this City, and is exhibiting at No. 14, Virginia Street, opposite the Glasgow Union Bank, adjoining Mr. Donald's Sale Rooms.

Admission, One Shilling.

The Glasgow Herald

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1835.

The Rhinoceros . -- No one should neglect to go and see this very interesting stranger. The Argus of Monday says:- "*The animal recently arrived in this city is a remarkably fine and healthy specimen of the one-horned Rhinoceros. The gentleman is evidently one of those characters not to be met with everyday. He is firmly set on his pins, though they are rather of the bandy order, and his feet are more substantial than symmetrical. When his hind-quarters are turned to, the huge fold of his tough hide laps over his thighs with something of the effect of a Dutchman's trunk-hose. The expression of his countenance keeps up the analogy. His little peering winking eyes are altogether Dutch, and his upper lip is the most epicurean we have ever seen. His habits confirm the impression made by his dress and physiognomy.*"

The Glasgow Herald

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1835.

THE RHINOCEROS

THE Inhabitants of Glasgow and its Vicinity are most respectfully informed that the fine MALE INDIAN RHINOCEROS from the Ganges, decidedly the largest ever exhibited in Europe, being over two tons weight, now exhibiting at 14, Virginia Street, will continue in this City for a short time only previous to its removal to Edinburgh being obliged to return to the Zoological Gardens by the first of March. *Admittance - Ladies and Gentlemen, One Shilling - Working People and Children, Sixpence.*

The Glasgow Herald

MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 1836.

THE RHINOCEROS

BY PARTICULAR DESIRE - THIS DAY AND
TO-MORROW

THE Inhabitants of Glasgow and its Vicinity are most respectfully informed that the fine MALE INDIAN RHINOCEROS from the Ganges, decidedly the largest ever exhibited in Europe, being above two tons weight, now exhibiting at 14, Virginia Street, will continue in this City for This Day and To-morrow only, previous to its removal to Edinburgh, being obliged to return to the Zoological Gardens by the first of March.

Admittance - Ladies and Gentlemen, One Shilling - Working People and Children, Sixpence.

Glasgow, 4th Jan., 1836.

Glasgow Argus

MONDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 7, 1835

THE RHINOCEROS.

We wish to bespeak the politest attentions of our fellow-citizens for this illustrious stranger, now sojourning among us. The most cautious in their intercourse with foreigners need not be afraid of compromising themselves. He has nothing about his akin to O'Connell. Indeed his *tail*, from its extreme smallness, brings us very much to mind of Lord Stanley's, with his six appendages - the inmates of the Darby-dilly.

Our visitor is of ancient lineage, though we are by no means certain that it can be traced quite so far back as his flatterers have attempted to do. Some have represented him as the lineal descendant of the *Reem*, of whom mention is made in the Books of Number and Deuteronomy, in the Psalms, in Job, and in Isaiah. The genealogy is not very clearly made out. In the kindred dialect of the Arabic, *Rem* denotes an antelope. Of course this does not prove that the Hebrew *Reem* was an antelope; for only from scientific zoologists can we expect critical accuracy in the matter of names, and we know well the carelessness with which colonists apply the names of the beasts and birds of their fatherland to those which they find in their new domicile. On the other hand, the text of the Septuagint favours the identity of the *Reem* with the rhinoceros, by translating it *monoceros*. The Ethiopic translation of the Scriptures renders it *Arwe Harish*, the names of the rhinoceros; this, however, is of little consequence, as it seems now to be admitted that that translation was made from the Septuagint. This latter, however, was effected before the birth of our Saviour, by Jews resident in Egypt, at a time when the rhinoceros was frequently exhibited there as a part of the royal pomp of the Ptolemies.

The account given of the form and habits of the *Reem*, in the sacred books, are far too slender to add anything satisfactory to this vague guess-work. In one passage it seems implied that the *Reem* was abundant on the *north-east* frontier of the Israelites, from Anti-Lebanon towards Bozrah. In "Job" the strength of the animal, and the impossibility of making it available in agricultural labour, is hinted at. The elevation of the horn is always the most prominent, if indeed not the only feature alluded to. In the twenty-second Psalm, it would almost seem, from the juxtaposition, that the "shooting of the lip" was the image which raised up the *Reem* in the poet's imagination. Altogether, these combined hints produce a very faint and indistinct picture of the animal.

Since the days of Ptolemy Philadelphus the Rhinoceros has been well known, whatever the claims of his family to earlier distinction may be. It occurs frequently on the imperial medals of Rome. The animal recently arrived in this city is a remarkably fine and healthy specimen of the one-horned Rhinoceros. The gentleman is evidently one of those characters not to be met with everyday. He is firmly set on his pins, though they are rather of the bandy order, and his feet are more substantial than symmetrical. When his hind-quarters are turned to you [1], the huge fold of his tough hide laps over his thighs with something of the effect of a Dutchman's trunk-hose. The expression of his countenance keeps up the analogy. His little peering winking eyes are altogether Dutch, and his upper lip is the most epicurean we have ever seen. His habits confirm the impression made by his dress and physiognomy. He is fond of lying in shady places among fens. He is naturally of a phlegmatic peaceable disposition, more inclined to make out of the way of quarrelsome intruders, than to give battle. He moves off at a swinging

long trot, gradually increasing to a rate of which his unwieldy carcass would seem incapable, yet not so fast as to escape a man mounted on horseback. He looks straight before him, and neither turns or doubles. When the hunter passes him his corruption is roused, and he makes up his mind for mischief, proving himself, with his nasal weapon and huge strength, an ugly customer. In every respect but one, he is in the animal world, what the *Batavier* is in the human - phlegmatic, not easily roused to anger or exertion, yet possessed of unwonted fleetness and strength, terrible when his wrath is fairly awakened.

In one respect he is unlike the Dutchman - there is no possibility of teaching him to make himself useful. Whether he be naturally too stupid to learn, or too knowing to show that he can learn, no efforts of man have ever made him an available assistant. In this feature of his character we recognise the *reem* as described by Job. The strange flexibility and power of his upper lip - by means of which he browses on the highest and tenderest leaves and twigs - is in keeping with the transition (?) of the Psalm we have above alluded to, although the gossamer links which bind the imaginative pictures are a frail foundation for a solid superstructure. Out of the horn nothing can be made; for, in the first place, the two-horned is as common as the one-horned rhinoceros; in the second place, the Scripture attributes *horns* to the *reem* as often as one horn.

The thick tough hide of the Rhinoceros is kept soft and pliant by a continual oozing of a greasy substance through its pores. The degree of animal heat, if we may judge from a specimen kept in confinement, is very high. Altogether, in form, habits, and physical qualities, he is one of those huge unwieldy creatures which form a link between those inhabitants of the early world, whose remains we find incrusting the surface of the globe, and the more fully developed organisation of the existing tribes of animals. As man advances he disappears. In South Africa not a single *Dwyka* (the appellation there given him) is to be found within two hundred miles of the river crossing the great Karroo, which takes its name from him. The flesh of the Rhinoceros is said to resemble hog's flesh, but is coarser and more tasteless, with a slight dash of a musky flavour. The grizzly soles of his feet are said to be delicate. His skin is converted into shields; his horn is used in making handles for knives. The Rhinoceros is found in Asia and Africa, throughout a region extending about thirty degrees to the north and as many to the south of the equator. [2] .

Glasgow Argus

MONDAY EVENING DECEMBER 28, 1835

THE RHINOCEROS - It will be seen, by an advertisement, that, among the fashionable departures from our city, that of the celebrated male Indian Rhinoceros, will shortly take place. The stay of the interesting stranger in this city is necessarily limited, as he must be again in the Zoological Gardens before the first of March. Such of the citizens, therefore, as have not yet personally paid their respects to the illustrious foreigner, ought to do so without delay. [3]

The Scotsman

Saturday, January 9, 1836

ARRIVAL OF
THE RHINOCEROS.

THE INHABITANTS of EDINBURGH, and its vicinity, are respectfully informed that the fine MALE INDIAN RHINOCEROS, from the Zoological Gardens, which cost the Proprietors One Thousand Guineas, has arrived, and is now Exhibiting at No. 13, SOUTH ST DAVID STREET.

Hours from 10 morning till 9 evening.
Admittance, 1s - Trades-people and Children, 6d. [4]

The Rhinoceros . - It will be seen that this wonderful animal has now arrived, and is being exhibited in this town. We understand it is well worth seeing. [5]

The Scotsman

Saturday, January 16, 1836

The Rhinoceros . - This extraordinary animal, from the Zoological Gardens, London, which is now exhibiting in St David Street, is a very rare specimen of this quadruped. He was taken on the banks of the Ganges, and is covered with a coat of mail so hard as to resist the effect of a musket shot. The proprietor, we believe, has been at considerable expence in bringing him to this city, and from his enterprise deserves public patronage. - *See Advt* .

Saturday, January 23, 1836

THE RHINOCEROS. - The fine specimen of this rare and powerful quadruped, now exhibiting at 13, South St David Street, forms a zoological attraction well worth the attention of all who take an interest in contemplating the remarkable and diversified forms which nature has given to animated existence. The Rhinoceros is encased with a tough horny hide, which is said to be impenetrable to a musket-ball, and it is so jointed and overlapped at the moveable parts of the limbs and neck, that the whole body is completely defended as with a coat of armour. A large horn issues from his snout, which the animal in its natural state can use with prodigious force, so that even the tiger and elephant eschew such a formidable foe. In fact, it may be literally said of this wonderful animal, that with him "darts are counted as stubble; he laugheth at the striking of a spear." We learn that several gentlemen in the magistracy and a number of professors have already visited the Rhinoceros, and when his arrival in this city becomes generally known, we believe few will miss the opportunity of witnessing so rare and interesting a production of nature.

The Scotsman

Saturday, February 6, 1836

THE RHINOCEROS

THE INHABITANTS OF EDINBURGH and its VICINITY, are most respectfully informed, that the Manager of the Exhibition of the RHINOCEROS, in returning thanks for the patronage he has received in this City, respectfully solicits the prompt attention of Naturalists and the Public, to that rare and valuable Animal, having received directions from the Zoological Society to return to the Gardens by the first of March.

13, St David Street. [6]

Rhinoceros . - We beg to remind the citizens that this wonderful animal is still exhibiting in this city, and it is well worth a visit both from the students of Natural History, and the curious and enquiring of all classes.

The Scotsman

Wednesday, February 17, 1836

LAST WEEK BUT ONE.
THE RHINOCEROS.

THE INHABITANTS OF EDINBURGH and its VICINITY, are most respectfully informed, that the Manager of the Exhibition of the RHINOCEROS, in returning thanks for the patronage he has received in this City, respectfully solicits the prompt attention of Naturalists and the Public, to that rare and valuable Animal, having received directions from the Zoological Society to return to the Gardens by the first of March.

13, St David Street. [7]

Rhinoceros . - It will be seen by an advertisement in another column, that this rare animal leaves this city next week, so that all who wish to gratify their curiosity, or extend their information in regard to its appearance and habits, have no time to lose.

The Scotsman.

Wednesday, February 24, 1836

POSITIVELY THE LAST WEEK OF
THE RHINOCEROS.

THE INHABITANTS of EDINBURGH and its VICINITY, are most respectfully informed, that the fine Male Indian RHINOCEROS will leave this City for the Zoological Gardens on Monday next.

The Scotsman.

Saturday, February 27, 1836.

UNAVOIDABLE POSTPONEMENT
OF THE
REMOVAL OF THE RHINOCEROS.

THE MANAGER of the RHINOCEROS begs to inform the Public, that the recent fall of Snow having rendered the Roads impassable for his immense travelling Caravan, the removal is postponed till Wednesday next, weather permitting. [8]

The Edinburgh Evening Courant [9]

Saturday, January 9, 1836

THE RHINOCEROS. - It will be observed from an advertisement, that an animal of this singular and rare species is now exhibiting in this city.

Saturday, January 16, 1836

THE RHINOCEROS. - This extraordinary animal from the Zoological Gardens, London, which is now exhibiting in St David Street, is a very rare specimen of this quadruped. He was taken on the banks of the Ganges, and is covered with a coat of mail so hard as to resist the effect of a musket shot. The proprietor, we believe, has been at considerable expence in bringing him to this city, and from his enterprise deserves public patronage. - See Advt . [10]

Saturday, January 23, 1836.

THE RHINOCEROS. - This interesting animal has been visited since its arrival in town by the Lord Provost, Sir William Jardine, Professors Jameson and Wilson, and a number of other scientific gentlemen. The animal is singularly docile, and moves at the command of his keeper with as much obedience as one of our own domesticated animals. From his habits, his unwieldy bulk, and his peculiar conformation, it may be safely pronounced that he is one of the most interesting specimens of zoology which have for a long time past visited our city.

The Edinburgh Evening Courant

Thursday, February 4, 1836

THE RHINOCEROS. - This singular animal, which is exhibiting in St David Street, measures from the snout to the tail nearly 13 feet, and round the body nine feet five inches, and altogether weighs two tons. It will be observed from the advertisement, that it is soon to be removed to the Zoological Gardens, London, and is not likely again to visit this country; those who have not seen this extraordinary quadruped should not omit the present opportunity.

Thursday, February 18, 1836

Rhinoceros. - It will be seen by an advertisement in another column, that this rare animal leaves this city next week, so that all who wish to gratify their curiosity, or extend their information in regard to its appearance and habits, have no time to lose. It has lately been visited by several distinguished naturalists.
[11]

Thursday, February 25, 1836

THE RHINOCEROS. - The exhibition of this extraordinary animal, we observe, is to close in a few days; those, therefore, who wish to see a living specimen, should not lose the present opportunity. Several eminent zoologists have visited the exhibition and taken drawings of the very rare animal.

Monday, February 29, 1836

It will be seen that the state of the weather has induced the proprietors of the Rhinoceros to prolong its stay in this city for another week.

References

- 1] 'you' had been omitted in the Herald version.
- 2] The Glasgow Argus carried advertisements for the rhinoceros on Thursday December 3, Thursday December 17, and Monday December 28, essentially the same as those in the Glasgow Herald.
- 3] The Argus on December 28 also reports an incident from the Manchester Guardian about the death by poison of one of Mr Wombwell's lions whilst in Salford.
- 4] Advertisements with the same text appear in The Scotsman on Saturday January 16, Saturday January 23 and Saturday January 30 (no associated article).
- 5] On most days when there is an advertisement there is also a newspaper article. There is never an article on the rhinoceros in a paper without an advertisement for it. This may indicate that the 'Manager of the Rhinoceros' negotiated these associated articles and possibly provided some of the text in the articles.
- 6] This advertisement also appears on Saturday February 13.
- 7] The Scotsman at this period was published twice weekly. This is the first time the rhinoceros features in a Wednesday issue. The same advertisement appears again on Saturday February 20 with, this time, no accompanying article.
- 8] There was no associated article with either of these advertisements.
- 9] The Edinburgh Evening Courant came out on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Advertisements appeared on Saturday January 9, Saturday January 16, Saturday January 23, Thursday February 4, Thursday February 11 (no associated article), Thursday February 18, Thursday February 25, and Monday February 29. Essentially the wording is the same as the advertisements in The Scotsman; there is less use of capital letters and 13 St David Street is described as 'opposite the office of the Saturday Evening Post' or 'opposite the Edinburgh Evening Post'.
- 10] The same text appeared in The Scotsman on Saturday January 16.
- 11] Apart from the final sentence, the text is identical to the article in The Scotsman of Wednesday February 17.

We are indebted to Don A. McDonald, Curator of the pastpresent.com gallery www.pastpresent.com for the following:

drawing of that animal (drawn by Sir William Jardine and engraved by W.H. Lizars of Edinburgh) and thought you might be interested in seeing it. It might make a nice addition to the page on this animal.

Here is a quote that Jardine wrote about this animal in 1836:

"The animal in question is a male, and was brought from Bengal, having been for some time kept in the garden of the Governor-General at Calcutta. He has been sixteen months in Britain, during which time he has visited London, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, and is at present the property of the proprietors of the Zoological Gardens at Liverpool."