

## BLACK RHINO AT WHIPSNADE 1960

Chris Brack

I have for many years always collected the Annual Reports or, as they seem to be called these days, Reviews, from the major zoos around the world. Among my most treasured are those of the Zoological Society of London, not to be compared with more recent "reviews" which contain nothing of zoological interest or about the present collection (oh, sorry, that's another expression not to be used these days!) the 1994-95 Annual Report does mention the animal stock with, at the back, an animal inventory, this later was issued separately, as was its style and presentation.

The 1960 Annual Report is full of details pertaining to Regents Park and Whipsnade with the mention among the mammal species arriving at Whipsnade of 3 Black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* on the 14th June 1960.

In Kees Rookmaaker's "*The Rhinoceros in Captivity*" they are sexed as 1.2 with one female returned to the dealer John Seago on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1960. I wrote to Hannah Jenkins, ZSL registrar, and Hannah kindly responded but from her records could not add any more information other than this female was returned, but there was uncertainty about it's true sex.

*The male, in 1961, that arrived with two 'females'*  
Photo: J. KARADZAS



As John Seago had died in 1978, I managed to get in contact with his business partner, Anthony (Tony) Parkinson, through a friend in the US who used to visit him every year in his new home on the Philippines. Tony was very helpful and told me he caught these rhino with another catcher Ken Randall (I think he also caught rhino for the Chipperfields) during 1958 in Kenya. He told me that John's family owned a farm in Norfolk, that in 1960 he was away in the UK for the whole year, that no rhino was ever returned to the farm in Kenya and facilities on his farm in the UK would not have permitted him to have kept her there. Then, looking through *the International Studbook for the African Black Rhino* No. 10 on page 62, there is a reference to a MALE Black rhino leaving Whipsnade on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1960 and arriving in Washington D C on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1960 with the name "Tony" (studbook no:0046 Was 05). Tony could not confirm who accompanied this male on his journey to Washington, it could have been John but he doubts that.



*The then new Black Rhino enclosure at Whipsnade, so these two rhino are Bwana Mkubwa and Mama Kidogo which arrived on 27th July 1963 also from John Seago.*  
Photos: taken 1964/65 Chris Brack

Then, in 1961, Tony and his wife Thelma took a shipment of animals by ship to the USA which included a mate for the male rhinoceros "Tony", this mate was called "Thelma" as these rhinoceroses had been named by the director Dr. Theodore Reed in honor of their catchers. Tony Parkinson had previously accompanied 1.1 Northern white rhino *C. s. cottoni* to the National Zoo, Washington D. C. in 1956 and knew Ted Reed well.

It is strange that the ZSL never recorded the 3 rhino with the studbook, as a previous female, "Kathleen" is; she had been received on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1939, and died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1939. "Tony" was registered, after leaving Whippsnade, with a studbook number. In Rookmaaker's book, the deaths of a female on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1960 and the male on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1962 are recorded. On the 27<sup>th</sup> July 1963 1.1 Black rhino arrive from John Seago - WHI 1 and WHI 2, "Bwana Mkuba" and "Mama Kidogo" - to lay the foundations for the successful breeding record at both ZSL parks.

Were the trio not in good health when they arrived? The studbook collation started in 1966 by Prof. Klös at Berlin Zoo. It would be interesting to find out if anybody made notes during this period in the section records, it is usual that the keepers would have given these rhino's names.

*References:*

International Studbook for the Black Rhino.10. 01.01.2005. Published by Zoologischer Garten Berlin AG

The Rhinoceros in Captivity. L .C. Rookmaaker 1998 SPB Academic Publishing

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## MEMORIES FROM BRISTOL

The first Spring Meeting to be held by the Bartlett Society was at Bristol Zoo, on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 1993. Christine Grant has located this photograph which she believes was taken by Dennis Elliott's then girlfriend, now wife, Sheila. Of the following named, six people are sadly now deceased but all, apart from two, of the rest are still members of the Bartlett Society.

*Front, right to left: André Verstraete, David Watson, Dennis Elliott, Christine Grant, Pam Keeling, Roy Brookes, back row left to right: Tim May, (an unidentified person behind Roy Brookes), Chris Mosier, Roy Vaughan, Clin Keeling, Gordon Brown, John Edwards, and Dennis Levy.*

