

From the Editor

Postscript

Recently, while sorting out some old books at home, I came across a yellowed, but intact document dating from 1678 titled, 'Isles and Territories Belonging to His Majesty in America'. In it New York is described as, 'large, containing about 500 well-built houses', whose inhabitants, 'drive a considerable trade with the Indians for skins of Eels, Deers, Bears, also for those of Beaver, Otter and other furs.' It's interesting to think that when these pages were printed there were probably still Dodos on Mauritius and Elephant Birds on Madagascar, the flintlock rifle had only recently been invented and the world's great ecosystems remained intact. I doubt that anyone alive in 1678 could have guessed at what the world would be like in 2003 and we, in turn, find it equally difficult to project our imaginations three and a quarter centuries into the future.

If however, in 2327, someone should find this journal in the 24th century equivalent of a dusty attic, wouldn't it be pleasant to think that the animals mentioned in it, Sumatran Tigers, American Bison, Mexican Wolves, Gorillas and Orang utans might still be around in real life, and not just on paper and celluloid?

We know that, as educators, we have a vital role to play in preserving biodiversity. Sometimes just one good idea can act as a catalyst to achieve real results and that's why the conferences we arrange and the communications around and in between them are so important. A former boss of mine, a past president of IZE, once told me that if he came home from a conference with even just one good idea he could implement back home, then that made it worth attending. As for me, if you find just one good idea among the excellent submissions in this journal that you can apply to your own situation then it will have made all the work involved in putting it together well worthwhile!

I can't finish without thanking our Regional Editors, Louise, Melissa and Martin for their support and, here at Chester, Kate Brankin for all her help without which, as editors are fond of saying, this journal would not have happened.

Just as this journal was going to print we received the sad news of the death of Karl Ruf and two colleagues in Uganda. We therefore begin this journal with a tribute from Gilman International Conservation followed by a reprint of Karl's impromptu but memorable speech from the IZE Conference in Guadalajara, Mexico in 2000. I know that everyone in the international zoo education community will wish to extend their heartfelt sympathies to the families of Karl, Kambale and Jean. We will remember with gratitude the huge contributions these men made in helping to protect the Ituri forest and all its inhabitants.

Stephen McKeown