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Full transcript of an address to the Kensington and Norwood Historical
Society:

THE DARK SIDE OF THE ZOO

by TREVOR KLEIN

on 6 February 2013

Recording available on CD

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DARK SIDE OF THE ZOO

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Introduction by Pam Whittle, President of the Society: Trevor was born and grew up in North Adelaide, only a short walk from the Adelaide Zoo. He started visiting there as a three year old with his grandfather [grandmother], and so began a lifelong interest in animals, and their behaviour. He became friends with the keepers, and constantly asked them questions about the animals in their charge. And unlike many of us here tonight, he has an exceptionally good memory and recalls details of those early visits, and many facts and stories from the zoo. In adult life Trevor became a member of the zoo, and trained to be a volunteer guide, and later became the trainer for the new volunteers. He regularly talks to public groups about the zoo and will be happy to answer any of your questions at the end of his talk. But for now, a different story – the Dark Side of Zoos, and some stories that I doubt you have heard before. Welcome Trevor.

Applause.

Note: Copies of many of the photos mentioned have been donated to the State Library and are available for viewing with the Oral History interview OH 1006/6

Thank you. Is there anyone here who has worked at the zoo or has relatives who have worked at the Adelaide Zoo? Yes, that's good. If you have any extra information on the stories I am going to tell you tonight, I'd be very pleased to hear it. The information I am giving you tonight comes from the official history of the first one hundred years of the zoo, but very little from there; it comes from newspaper clippings, from the thirtieth of November 1956 until the present, and it comes from newspaper clippings from the Adelaide Zoo library. So everything I am telling you is from the public domain. I need to tell you that I am very fond of the Adelaide Zoo, and even though I am going to talk to you about the dark side of the zoo, that does not in any way demerit my love of the Adelaide Zoo. The scriptures tell us that love covers a multitude of sins, and consequently, because I have great affection and love, appreciation and empathy for the zoo, and all that it contains, I also realise there's often a dark side to things. Every parent hopes their child will grow up to be an outstanding citizen. Some children don't do that, but that doesn't mean their parents love them any less than the child that does. And within the balance of good and bad, light and dark, a positive attitude always, and an open heart and an open mind, and open emotions to those things, wins the day. So I am going to tell you some dreadful stories tonight. And they're all factual. And if you can add to them I will be very pleased to hear what you can add.

The Adelaide Zoo started off in the Botanic Gardens, and this is a picture – you are welcome to look at all these things later. This is a picture of the Monkey House in the Botanic Gardens in the 1870s. The Adelaide Zoo opened in May 1883, so this is

about seven years before the zoo opened. The bottom portion of this building is still in the Botanic Gardens, and it is against the wall with the Adelaide Hospital on the other side, and it's a very scruffy, unkempt sort of place where you might sit in the shade, and the creepers which are running over the beams once held up the roof of this building, sort of making the beams sag. And unfortunately, like the zoo, the Botanic Gardens hasn't got any money to currently repair it.

This scene of the Adelaide Zoo you might recognise, not just like this, because none of us are quite old enough to see it like this, but these are two guinea pig houses, school for girls and school for boys, but there were both sexes in each school. And this is how they first appeared in the zoo, they were in a very barren landscape, and they had fences around them. Later they appeared like this, behind a Chinese gate. I'm sorry some of these things are not clear, but the original photographs aren't either. That's why I am inviting you to look at them later. You'll notice that there are some greenery and shrubbery starting to grow around them, and in 1923, they looked like this, the trees are well developed. The Chinese pagoda is still there, I have no idea why, guinea pigs don't come from China, but it was just a bit of ethnic difference I suppose.

My talk tonight is going to cover human death, despair, drunkenness, animal death, degradation, debt and a little more degradation, because I am talking about the 'Ds,' the Dark Side. So I have selected subjects that all start with D. I need to tell you that the first three Directors of the Adelaide Zoo, Richard Ernest Minchin, Alfred Corker Minchin and Ronald Richard Luther Minchin were grandfather, father and son.

There was a fourth Minchin in there, a very handsome man called Alfred Keith Minchin, who contracted polio, and used to get around Adelaide in a wicker wheelchair. And he opened, on the Adelaide Parklands, through conniving with the Council, the Adelaide Council, something called the Snake Farm, which after a few accidents changed its name to the Koala Farm. And one accident was simply this, that the keeper was demonstrating [to] a snake keeper who had come from Canada, a friend of Minchin, was demonstrating how a constricting snake wraps itself around you and starts constricting. But instead of the snake doing that it actually opened its big mouth and clamped onto the top of his head. And, we are told in the history, and I've got the book at home, an Adelaide history, but unfortunately I didn't bring it tonight, that two men fainted. There were several women watching and they didn't faint. So what does that say about men in the early nineteen hundreds I wonder. But one man, a doctor from McLaren Vale, was watching this strange exhibition, and he had his umbrella with him, so he put the umbrella up between the man's head and into the snake, into the top of its palette, which is very sensitive, and they released the keeper. The keeper was, some months later, was handling a very venomous Australian snake, and it bit him. And they didn't get him to the Royal Adelaide Hospital quickly enough, and it's just up the hill on Frome Road, so he died. So the name was changed from the Snake Park to the Koala Park. I think koalas are less offensive and less likely to cause quick death if they bite you. So he was the fourth

Minchin. He was also the person who put a large aquarium on the end of the Glenelg jetty, and one day in a big storm [1948] it washed away with half the jetty. The sea water fished loved it, that were in the aquarium, but the fresh water fish did not cope very, very well.

The zoo had some polar bears. These dreadful photographs, the photographs are quite good actually, but what's contained in the photographs are dreadful. This very small enclosure contained two brown bears. This extremely small enclosure contained two black bears and this enclosure contained two polar bears. The polar bears in this container had no pond or area that they could get into water, so in the heat of summer they sweltered in there. And there was a little depression about 30 centimetres deep in there in the middle with a drip, drip, drip of water coming from a hose in the ceiling and that was all that they had. Now they were locked in those conditions for many, many years. And the keeper called Samuel May was their main keeper. Eventually on this side, and you will be able to see a bit later that there is a door there that goes up on a chain, it was always kept locked, until an extension was put on, called the Day Yard. And there's a picture of it. And it's full of sun, concrete floor, there's no shade whatsoever. And polar bears got bored in there, including this polar bear that's climbing up those bars to sniff at some eucalypt leaves that had landed on top.

It wasn't only the polar bears that were totally bored in the zoo. Here's George the orangutan, you might remember him, sitting against the bars looking totally bored. His only amusement was when someone threw him a cigarette that was lit, and he would actually smoke it. He had a bag that he used to pull over his head and hide from people. The enclosure had a wooden floor, it had a room out the back, it had two tyres hanging on rope, and that was all. George was in prison.

And if that's not bad enough here's an early photograph of the zoo with a lion with its nose right up against the bars. And why is that? Because this enclosure was only nine feet deep, which is a little under three metres. So when the animal laid itself out looking at the bars there was no room. Bars at the front, backside against the wall. If he laid sideways he had plenty of room. So things were a little bit dark at the zoo. The reason I am telling you about the polar bears is simply this, that in 1902 a keeper was treating, not the polar bears, but the brown bears. We'll come to the polar bear in a minute, they're the killers. He was going into an enclosure that had brown bears in it. His name was Mr Dorricott. In fact he was R. H. Dorricott, and he would feed the brown bears every morning. And there was a portcullis between the night quarters and the day quarters. Do you know what a portcullis is? It's one of those wonderful iron gates that drop down on a castle. So when knights gallop over the moat and you don't want them to come in the castle, you drop this iron grille. That's a portcullis. There was one of those. When he rattled the chain to drop the portcullis the obedient brown bears always went into their night quarters. Except one day a brown bear decided it wasn't going to do that – one went in and one did not. Mr Dorricott was so used to opening the door and going into the bears' enclosure

without checking that he opened the door and went in and pulled the door behind him, and locked it. And the bear, the male bear, was still in the yard. And the male bear sprang up, grabbed him, and started to chew his shoulder, and lacerated his body. And he screamed. And Mr Minchin, the second Mr Minchin, came running with some keepers with big guns, and they shot the big brown bear. Mr Dorricott was wrapped in a sack to stop the bleeding, because by this time his arm was detached. And he was put on the back of a horse and dray. It galloped out of the front gate of the Adelaide Zoo, straight up Frome Road to the back gate of the Royal Adelaide Hospital. And he was in shock. He was in hospital for some time. And he survived. This happened on the twenty second of January 1902. And Mr Dorricott was a married man and he had been employed at the Garden for many years, and this is what happened:

[reads from newspaper article] 'Mr Richard Henry Dorricott' – sorry this is written in May so that happened in February, and this is May, some months later. It appeared in the Advertiser, Thursday May first 1902.

'The Adelaide Zoo. The injured keeper Mr Dorricott convalescent. Mr Richard Henry Dorricott, who on January the twenty second was seriously maltreated by a big brown bear at the Adelaide Zoological Gardens, has partly recovered from the effects of the encounter, although he is still looking feeble. The injured man was treated in the Adelaide Hospital, and is still an outdoor patient at that institution. He speaks in terms of praise, of the attention shown him by doctors and nurses, and is also appreciative in his references to the Convalescent Home, where he spent about nine days. On Wednesday afternoon he was seen by a representative of "The Advertiser," and in referring to his injuries he said he still bore the marks of the bear on all parts of his body. The most serious matter to him was the loss of his right arm. He thinks it will be about three weeks or a month before he is sufficiently recovered to undertake any sort of regular work. Speaking of the accident, Mr Dorricott said he could imagine nothing more awful than the sensation he experienced when he first found himself face to face with the bear. He was performing his usual routine duties, and had, as he supposed, taken the necessary precautions to get the animal into the compartment of the cage where he was accustomed to entice it, while he entered to clean the front part. The brute, however, had not been properly secured in the rear compartment, and on entering the cage Mr Dorricott was pounced upon by the bear. No words he could use would suffice to describe the horror he felt, and it was difficult to give even a meagre description of the situation. Since his rescue, which was effected by Mr Minchin shooting the animal, he had suffered severe physical pain, and the thought of the dread moment when he was in the clutches of the bear would haunt him even when his suffering was severest. He could not for a time get rid of the recurring idea that he was going through the horrible ordeal again. Mr Dorricott went on to explain that he had been engaged in the work of attending to the carnivora for eight or nine years, and had as a consequence become accustomed to the position, and thus thought but little of the danger. He was unable to say whether

or not he would return to his employment at the Gardens. The loss of an arm, he was afraid, would incapacitate him for many forms of employment which might otherwise be open to him, but he was emphatic in his desire not to see the bear again, even though stuffed and harmless now. He asserted that he had seen too much of the animal already.'

And if you want to know what happened to that brown bear, it's the big brown bear in the Museum in the Mammals Hall on the left hand side as you go in. Quite a few of the animals in the Museum are ex-inhabitants of the Adelaide Zoo, including the first elephant Miss Siam, who stands there with a crack around her trunk, and she is slowly deteriorating and falling apart. Well that happened in 1902 and we can empathise and sympathise with Mr Dorricott. But why did it happen? It's because the cages were not built for the safety of keepers and they were not built, really, for the safety or well being of the animals. And it is only within the past ten years that some of the doors into the back areas of the animal enclosures at the zoo, have been increased from the height of this table to about here, so that the keepers don't have to get down on their hands and knees to crawl into them.

The next story I am going to tell you is Mr Samuel May. He also lost a part of his arm to a bear. But Mr Samuel May had scratches and marks all over his face from a prior encounter with a Sun Bear, because the Sun Bears were in a pit. And to get into the pit, the keeper had to crawl along a tunnel. And to get out of the pit the keeper had to crawl backwards along the tunnel. So when he got half way down the tunnel, he could pull a lever which would open the night quarters so that the Bears could come back into their pit after the keeper had cleaned it. Consequently, if the bear raced out quickly and the keeper wasn't agile enough in crawling backwards, there was every possibility that the bear could get him. Well the bear didn't actually get Mr keeper and kill him, but he scratched his face before Samuel May was able to get out of that silly little tunnel.

So here's the story. The polar bears that I showed you in the yard, every morning would come out and Samuel May would hose out the yard. And then he would play with the polar bears with the hose, because he knew that they were bored. And he knew they weren't cool enough in summer. So by squirting him with a hose he set them up for at least a cool half hour before the heat of the day came on. And one day he was watering with the hose, and the polar bear came down the bars as it usually did. And Samuel May went to turn the hose on it, and the polar bear grabbed his arm, and ripped it off at the elbow. Mr May screamed and the same poor Mr Minchin, the second Director of the Zoo, once again came running with his big gun. But he didn't shoot the polar bears. He saw May on the ground, and he quickly tied off the end of his arm. And they got him, this time not in a horse and cart, but in a lorry or a buckboard, or the ute type vehicle, and got him to the Royal Adelaide Hospital, and put him into the hospital. And he was treated very well. His arm was amputated a little higher as the bone had been broken by the bear and was sharp at the ends. And Samuel May, in serious condition, and suffering from shock was left

overnight at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. And that all happened on February sixteenth 1920 and it was reported in the Melbourne Argus. And the Argus Melbourne, Tuesday the seventeenth reported this:

‘Adelaide Zoo Mishap. Adelaide. Monday. Samuel May the keeper in the Zoological Garden who had his arm torn off by a polar bear on Sunday morning died in the Adelaide Hospital today. He was sixty five years of age, and the shock of the terrible occurrence proved too much for him. The Director of the Gardens, Mr Minchin, stated today that he heard a fearful cry, and ran to where May was watering the bears’ cage. As he approached May said “It is all up with me, I am gone. This is going to be the end of me.” May’s arm was so lacerated that it was impossible to tie it up.’ Though Minchin actually did do that. ‘And the missing member could not be found. The bear had ripped off his fingers, and they couldn’t find the fingers that should have been attached to the rest of the arm. The bear must have eaten them. May had met with a previous accident at the zoo, having his head clawed by a Sun Bear when he was getting out of the bear pit.’ That was the story I just told you. ‘He was an experienced keeper. The Director added that the polar bears were always bad tempered, and were the most treacherous animals in the zoo. They will put out their claws sideways, and make a slap at you. If you are watering from one end they will watch you and slide along. You know where you are with lions and tigers. But these fellows will take a biscuit out of your hands one day, and put their paw out to take your arm the next.’

Samuel May died. Samuel May was supporting two daughters and the zoo paid him four hundred dollars, or paid the family, sorry, four hundred pounds over his death. So that’s human death in the zoo.

Now despair. Do you know who Joy Adamson is? She’s the wonderful woman from Africa who loves lions and who raised orphan lions, and who wrote the screenplay for a film about she and her husband George’s experience with lions. Well, she visited the Adelaide Zoo in 1963 on the seventeenth of October, sorry she visited on the sixteenth of October. On the seventeenth of October the Advertiser had a report about her visit to the zoo: ‘Joy Adamson said in Melbourne that the the Adelaide Zoo is the worse she has seen. I sent the Adelaide Zoo people a nasty letter after my visit. She was not impressed.’ That wasn’t all she had to say. ‘Sixteen, eleven, nineteen sixty three, the Advertiser: ‘The Zoo – what is your view? Joy Adamson wept after visiting the zoo recently. She said it was archaic, and the animals’ enclosures were far too small.’ She was right. And, guess what happened? Many letters of complaint followed those comments in the Advertiser. Well that’s all we have to say about Joy Adamson.

And now we are going to move onto something else. It’s called drunkenness. The keepers at the Adelaide Zoo in the 1950s were prone to drinking, and they would come into duty intoxicated, and during the course of the day increase the level of intoxication. And this was very bad because some of them were handling rather

large animals, and very dangerous animals. And the animal that seemed to have the most intoxicated keepers was Samorn the elephant. Samorn the elephant was the fourth elephant in the Adelaide Zoo. Her predecessor Lillian had started to go down in health, and as a child I remember seeing her looking like a skeleton with just a grey skin thrown over her. And eventually it was decided by the Zoo Board that she was an embarrassment to the zoo, though she had served very, very faithfully. And so they decided to get a new elephant, and the new elephant was Samorn. But when they heard that Samorn was coming, they had a problem. They still had Lillian. So consequently, one night, after hours, at 5.30, when the zoo had shut, Lillian was taken out of her enclosure and put down. And she was shot from behind the ears, and she dropped immediately and was pronounced dead by the vet immediately. But to make sure, two shots were fired through her forehead into her brain to make sure that she was dead. Four keepers were then employed for the night to dismember her body, because the zoo was very small, and there was not much private space. They were paid a bonus of four pounds each to do that work overnight, and it had to be very precise. They had to cut her body into strips no wider than nine inches, and of this length, because her body was going to be put into a mincer, and she was going to be minced away. And she was. I don't know what happened to her skeleton, it may have been taken off somewhere and buried, or the bones may have been hacked up with an axe. We don't know what happened to her skeleton but we know what happened to her body. Now, that's how animals were disposed of once they had reached their no longer needed date. And she was one of those animals that suffered that death.

When she left and Samorn came and some new elephant keepers were brought into the zoo. I'm not going to read you all of this, but they drank a lot. And this comes from the official archives of the zoo. OK. One of the keepers who earned the four pound bonus was Albert Von Hatt. Is anyone related to him, because I'm going to tell you a story about one of your relatives you may not have heard before? Well, Alfred Von Hatt was a new keeper into the zoo when Samorn came. And when Samorn travelled from Sydney, a Sydney keeper who had had her in his care, a very excellent keeper by the name of Moyle, came with her, to make sure that the long journey from Sydney to Adelaide, she was on the back of semi-trailer, which had to stop regularly, because she needed to be taken off and exercised. And children learned the route of the trailer so, from Sydney to Adelaide, whenever she stopped in a country town and was taken off to exercise and given a big drink of water, would come out to meet her. And Samorn loved that because she had already been oriented towards children before she arrived in Australia, and certainly at Sydney, because she was such a docile young animal, they encouraged contact with small children. So they would greet her all along the way, they would bring buns and fruit, they'd just hug her trunk and she would respond beautifully. And Mr Moyle kept her under control, and there was not a problem transporting her all the way to Adelaide. When he got here he trained Von Hatt, and another fellow, Kobiak, and another man called Bennett, all of them alcoholics, in handling Samorn. And they did, to more or

less to a good, but often very bad, standard. There used to be a big wallow for Samorn and all the elephants in the enclosure, before a pool was built there in Samorn's time. And one day she was in the wallow, and Bennett had been hosing her down and there was lots of mud, and she was loving it. Elephants love to coat themselves in mud, it kills lice. And then when they brush it off, whatever has been biting them and infecting them, is encased in the mud, and they skirt it off with their trunks. Well Bennett saw her in the wallow and decided that wasn't good for the exhibit. She was laying on her side. So he got on her back, well on the side of her, and tried to get her out. While he was doing that the Superintendent of Mammals came by and watched, thinking this is very unusual. She was covered with mud and soon he was covered with mud because she just went on spraying herself. And he didn't get off. And the Supervisor thought 'What is going on here?' When Samorn decided to get up and leave the mud wallow she just stood up and he fell off. And then the Supervisor got very concerned thinking something is definitely wrong here. Bennett then staggered to the other side of the elephant enclosure to where there was a tap on the wall, attached a hose to it, and squirted himself down, and then he proceeded to squirt Samorn down and then he saw the Supervisor of Mammals, and then he waved as though absolutely nothing was wrong. And that really confirmed to the Supervisor that something was very wrong. Anyway, he got called up and was suspended for a while. But Mr Von Hatt, this is from November 1963. Von Hatt, about one fifteen p.m. rang the Director's front door, which is in Minchin House at the zoo. He was drunk and in a lot of muddled talking said he would resign. Next day he said he didn't want to resign. In other circumstances I would have dismissed him immediately but decided not to do so, because much time had been spent by the man who had brought the elephant from Sydney, in training Von Hatt and Bennett and Mr Kobiak in handling her. And if he got rid of her [him], one of the others, Bennett's already displayed his drunkenness, he's only got one keeper to look after the elephant.

And they weren't sure at that stage that Mr Kobiak wasn't also an alcoholic, which he was. So consequently, the largest, most powerful and strong, an animal with massive strength in the zoo, is being looked after by men who come to work inebriated. That animal is being led through the zoo every day to the exercise yard, it's towing children around the lawn in a cart, and the people in control of it aren't in control of themselves. Dark days for the Adelaide Zoo. Mr Von Hack should have been suspended from work, but the next day suspended himself. But he didn't resign, he went off without pay. I don't know what he was doing, but he came back and was re-appointed. Mr Von Hack had a motor car accident while working at the zoo, but, not only, that but I've discovered that, if you Google you find the most amazing things about people. I Googled Von Hack trying to find out how long he continued at the zoo but he didn't come up. He came up as a zoo employee, but it didn't tell me that, it told me this –

'In the Advertiser, the fourteenth September 1954, on page 17, Albert Von Hack was fined ten pounds for stealing a four shilling table cloth from the Commercial Hotel at Port Adelaide.'

And then it tells us where he lived in Camden Gardens. So I think the man had big problems. And I know zoo staff don't get paid very much, and I know he was drinking his pay away, but that was a shocking position to be in.

In 1962 the zoo fell into legal problems. They were very lax about the management of exporting and importing animals from other countries. And they engaged a person to act as their import-export agent. Now smuggling Australian fauna was rife at this stage. So the zoo sent a consignment of Gouldian finches, they're from the Northern Territory, they're very brightly coloured, they're very beautiful. And people overseas, now, pay thousands of dollars for them. They're a little finch that lives five years and dies. So consequently, they were sending a consignment of them overseas through the agent, but the agent had illegally trapped cockatoos and parrots, and other things, and added them all into the consignment, because it was going under the name of the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia, and Customs would not bother, knowing that it was an esteemed and reputable business. So several shipments went backwards and forwards before it was discovered what was going on. And when legal people visited the zoo, and people from Quarantine and other areas came to visit the zoo, the zoo didn't have a clue. And the zoo really should have been in charge of all that was happening. And so this was the first time that the government officials had been appointed to the Board of the zoo to stop this happening. The trader was arrested in England. I don't know if he went to gaol or not, but the zoo is the only zoo in Australia that has had such a charge made against it.

Not only that, earlier, when the zoo was importing birds from Asia, quite often they would be met at the port by the importing agent. The birds would then arrive at the Adelaide Zoo in cages that had perches that were extremely sticky. Some of us have heard this story recently from one of the bird superintendents who told it to us and I have it from the minutes. What was happening, as the birds were coming through Asia from Europe or anywhere else, the Asians would drill holes in the perches, and fill them up with opium, and then plug them up again. And there was an agent in Port Adelaide who knew then to go to those cages, and to take those perches out, unplug them, take the opium out, and put the perches back in, without washing off the opium. So consequently, when the birds got to the Adelaide Zoo, they were completely zonked out and they were very happy – no, no. That did not happen. The birds didn't take the opium, but the zoo was once again caught up in a very illegal situation. And they had noticed sticky perches for some time but no one had bothered to find out what that might be all about.

OK. Now I need to talk to you about the thing that has been dogging the zoo most of all and after this you can ask questions. And it's the zoo debt and everywhere I go

out and do outside speaking, one of the questions people always ask is, 'What's happening to the zoo debt?' Well, in the middle of the 1990s, the chairman of China decided to give a goodwill gift to Australia. It was a pair of those big black giant big black and white creatures, they're bears, and we have the in the zoo at the moment, a pair of them. And so, Alexander Downer, who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was speaking to the Chairman of China and said he would love them to go to the Adelaide Zoo, because Alexander Downer's grandfather had been on the Board of the Adelaide Zoo. So the two big black and white bears from Asia were designated to come to the Adelaide Zoo. The Adelaide Zoo got a bit of a shock when they discovered they were the selected zoo to have them and consequently went into a state of panic, because the zoo couldn't secure them. The perimeter fence of the zoo as it was, and now is, the new fence, people can get over. And animals have been stolen from the zoo on many, many occasions. And killed on many, many occasions. And in March 1985 sixty four animals were killed in the Adelaide Zoo when three young men, who were drug addicted, climbed over the fence, and, in a state of drug highness, slashed the animals throats with knives or beat them to death with steel bars. And ten years later someone climbed into the zoo and beat to death in the Children's Zoo, all the guinea pigs. And then a little while ago, about four years ago, someone came into the zoo and slit the wire in some of the aviaries and killed some of the birds and stole two African red tailed grey parrots. So people have been coming in and out of the zoo and doing dreadful things in the zoo for a long time. This was one of my favourite animals. This is Daisy the alligator, and Daisy lived opposite the elephant. This is a photograph of Daisy opposite the elephant. Daisy had been in the zoo for over fifty years, and was believed to be the oldest Mississippi Alligator in the world. And when those vandals broke into the zoo they – I got off debt – sorry I'll come back to debt in a minute. They killed Daisy by driving bars through the body of this animal, and they cut the four feet off. And they left them in the enclosure with the dead animal. It was only after that, when an autopsy was conducted on the body of Daisy that they actually discovered that Daisy was male, and not female. Daisy would come out of his pond where he hibernated, and come down to the front of the enclosure when he wanted the keepers to feed him. They fed him once a month for six months of the year only. He had six meals a year, and then he would go back into hibernation. And he was the most incredible, incredible animal. And my grandmother could not understand why I loved this animal more than any other in the zoo at that particular time. But he represented longevity, which I didn't understand as a child. But I did understand the concept of something being very old. Now I've got to being very old, I really understand that concept.

The debt. When those panda (oops), when those large black and white bears came to the Adelaide Zoo, the Adelaide Zoo really couldn't afford to have them. And the Federal Government said they would give six million dollars to build the enclosure that they live in. But unfortunately that wasn't signed off before the Federal Government, which was Liberal at that time, became the Federal Labor Government. So that six million dollars did not come to the zoo. Not only that, the Federal

Government is paying one million dollars to China annually for the rent of those two animals. And if they have a baby, then they have to pay another two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to the Chinese government, until that baby is sent back to China in three years. The zoo had to secure the property. It had to secure the area that the animals were going to be put into, and so it started borrowing money from Westpac. And as you know from the popular press and public domain, it ended up being twenty six million dollars. Some of that money was used to buy into Warrawong, and to refurbish a lot of Warrawong. And now you would have heard this week that the zoo, on the first of March is no longer going to be involved with Warrawong. And so they will stop spending money there, but the money that has been spent there isn't ever going to come back. The zoo has a debt of seven and a half million dollars and I think the State Government is paying the interest on that at the moment. And Westpac is carrying the debt. Consequently there is land on the side of Monarto, four hundred and ninety five hectares, which is going to be sold off. But I believe that won't happen until the end of the year. And when that does that will offset some of the debt. But it is not going to take away the debt completely. What concerns me most of all is that the Chief Executive Officer, the President of the Zoological Society, the Board of the Zoological Society could actually let this happen. And it was a big shock to the other staff at the zoo when they discovered the level of the debt. So consequently those big black and white animals are going to be there for another seven years, and they are not going to bring in one million dollars extra on gate keepings to offset that debt by a million dollars a year and get rid of that debt before they go back to China. So consequently for many years yet to come, the zoo will be in debt and paying that debt off. The zoo is extremely grateful for the generosity of the State Government and to Westpac Bank in underpinning all of this, and for letting the zoo exist, because there is every reason that it could have been closed down. With the closure of Warrawong, some of the staff at Warrawong will be re-appointed to positions at Adelaide Zoo and at Monarto Zoo. The animals that have been put there by the zoo, excluding the platypuses, will go back to the zoo at Monarto or in Adelaide. I'm not sure if that means all the animals. I don't know if there were many animals there before the zoo started putting extra beasts in.

From audience member: 'They said that animals that they had put there and ones which needed special care, so I assume all the ones that are there.'

I hope that means that the very threatened species will come back into the zoo, which is good. So consequently this is the dark side of the zoo. And unfortunately that debt is going to hang for some time, and cast a shadow over the progress and progression of the zoo into the future. But, there are people like me who love the zoo, and have seen the zoo come through bad times before, and who will go on supporting the zoo, and there will be new people coming in to support the zoo also. So while there is a cloud hanging over the zoo, there will still be a lot of sunshine down on the ground, where people's attitude, being positive and affirming and concerned and sympathetic, will just keep everything running. I hope to live for the

next seven and a half years, because I want to see those big black and white animals go back to China. And I will be hosting a celebratory morning tea for any volunteer who hopes to come.

Thank you for listening. Have you got any questions?

Q. Did improving the security to have the black and white animals improve the general security of the zoo, it's not as likely more animals will be murdered?

A. It's since that happened that some animals have been stolen, so people can climb over the fence. It's very simple, you just have to tie a rope onto a branch or a stick or a brick, throw it over the zoo and catch it between the points of the bars at the top and you can shimmy up the rope and get over.

Q. Why isn't it electrified?

A. Because if people touch the fence during the night, who are just walking through the park and there is a pathway quite close to the zoo, the zoo would be liable for millions. So consequently it cannot be electrified.

Q. And no closed circuit television either?

A. No, but it does have lights on it. But I've noticed several of the lights have been smashed by vandals. So consequently it's a no win situation. It was a badly designed fence and when it started going up several volunteers said 'Snakes, feral cats, foxes can get through that fence, and people will be able to get over the top of it.' And all of that has proven true. So consequently there is no money to put solid steel up on the inside of those steel bars, to go all the way around the perimeter. That would probably cost a thousand dollars [million?] in its own right, with labour. So consequently it's just not going to happen.

Q. What about barbed wire?

A. Sorry, barbed wire could go at the top. Fortunately the reptile department are very prompt when a brown or black snake comes up from the River Torrens and someone reports it. They're there immediately, they catch it, it goes into a special holding in the back of the Nocturnal House at the zoo. Then it goes somewhere to have the venom milked or drained and that will go to the Royal Adelaide Hospital for mixing antivenene for anyone around Australia, who might be bitten by one of those snakes.

Q. Trevor, could you tell the story about Lanky and his lion, was it Caesar?

A. Oh, yes it was. This is a true story. Mr Langdon, who was at one time the CEO of the zoo, hand-raised a lion. And time came for the male lion to go out of Mr Lancaster's house, and into a lion enclosure. The day he put it into the lion enclosure he worried about it. Fortunately he didn't put it in with the other lions on either side, it was in a central area by itself. So during the night he went down to see how it was

getting on. And each of those enclosures has an external gate so you don't have to go around the back and through the night quarters. You can enter from the yard. He opened the gate and got inside. The lion was so pleased to see him it came bounding up and landed on his chest and knocked him over, and sat on his chest and he couldn't get up. And when the keepers came in in the morning, the lion was absolutely asleep, draped over his chest, and Lancaster was frozen, except for the bit where the lion was over his chest keeping him warm. And none of the keepers would go in and get the lion off, because it was used to him and not them. It has his smell, but not theirs. So they had to go to the storage area and bring out some horse meat, which they quickly warmed up. And they held it by the bars, and [it] got off of Mr Lancaster, and they encouraged him to go to the far corner, so Lancaster could go to the other corner, and come out the external gate. That is an absolutely true story.

Q. Did he settle, the lion, with the other lions?

A. Yes, he bred. But he was the last breeding lion of the old brigade, in the old lion enclosures at the Adelaide Zoo. There is a lion in there at the moment in an adjoining enclosure to two lionesses, but he cannot breed because he's like some humans, he's epileptic, and he's on anti-epileptic medication and he occasionally starts to show signs of fitting but he doesn't go right into a fit. The reason he is separated from the lionesses is he did have a fit with them, and one of the lionesses attacked him and tried to kill him, because if you are a big African, or other animal, and you need to be strong, or have the appearance of being strong, if you are going to be sick, you still make out you are very strong. But of course, the fit took him over and he had no control, and the lionesses attacked him, so he was removed. He's had a couple of other medical problems since that have been rectified, but he cannot breed and will not be able to be put in with those lionesses ever again because they have the upper hand on him, and while he may be getting bigger than them, they know that, that they have defeated him once, and there's two of them, and they could do it again.

Q. What would you like to see, Trevor, in the enclosure, when those those lovely black and white fluffy things go back to China? Because it's a lovely area.

A. It's a very foolish area, in as much as it is twenty percent of the the zoo, one fifth of the zoo is devoted to that bamboo forest and what it contains. And it's a large portion of the zoo, and it has been very expensively landscaped, and paved, and the enclosures are world standard, and there's actually nothing else that would go in there, except perhaps sun bears, or some other form of bear. Which means that the whole enclosure, from the entrance back to the middle path way in the zoo, needs to be demolished, and enclosures put there again. Have you been in the new front entrance to the zoo, not new now? Have you noticed that you don't see an animal? – if the hippopotamus are under water, there's no pygmy hippopotomuses, and on the right hand side, there's a big sweeping garden around the back wall of the big black

and white Chinese immigrants' enclosure. Consequently, there were supposed to be aviaries and Asian animals there, but the zoo could not afford to build the enclosures for them, because the debt was growing so quickly, and there was no money. And if it wasn't for the kind and generous attitude by state government and Westpac Bank, goodness knows where the zoo would be right now.

Q. Pity Westpac didn't decide it wasn't going to be a tax deduction and write it off.

A. I don't think legally they could write it off.

Q. So is Alexander Downer going to contribute to the zoo debt then?

A. I was thinking when I was just asked that question, what is going to happen to those enclosures when the Chinese immigrants go back, perhaps Alexander Downer and a few other people who were responsible for that vision, could go there.

While your evening meal is being prepared, I just need to talk to you about another form of degradation which Adelaide Zoo hasn't ventured into, but in the late eighteenth hundreds and nineteenth hundreds, exotic people were displayed in zoos in Europe. And this is what they looked like, quite often they had no clothes. And worst of all, they were put into mixed exhibits. And this man comes from Lapland, so he may have been put in an exhibit with some caribou or other animal that was relevant to that area. This woman was abducted from the north of Australia, along with nine other people, and she would have been in an enclosure without koalas and wombats, and other such things because they weren't generally being shipped to other zoos at that time, but she was on exhibit. There's a terrible story about two Africans, one young man in his late teens, and an older woman in her thirties, who were abducted from Africa, from two different areas, by the German animal collector, Karl Hagenbeck, who is spoken of in revered terms in animal circles, but really was terrible. He abducted them and they went into a zoo in America, and he was wearing some sort of animal loin cloth, and she was wearing some wrap around. And their clothes degenerated and fell off, and they had no clothes. And when snow arrived in America in winter, where that zoo was located, they were given no clothes. And he built fires every day from branches he was breaking off trees to keep them warm for long as possible. They were both dead by the end of that first winter.

Every one of those Aborigines abducted from the north of Australia died from diseases in America. An exhibition was mounted here at the Museum of South Australia, called 'Tambo and Friends' five or six years ago depicting this story, with photographs of them. So if you every see an exhibition coming out about that please go and see it. It's very eye opening. This is Ota Benga, who was a pygmy taken from the Congo, and put in a zoo. He's holding in a picture here, a little chimpanzee. He was put in an exhibit with two chimpanzees and some other monkeys from South America. He was from Africa. At one stage they had him in an enclosure with an orang-utan that comes from South East Asia. And the black Baptist Churches of New York complained and said he was human and he must come out of that zoo

environment, and being exhibited as a creature less than the general populace. And here are all the write-ups, I have all the write-ups that appeared in the newspapers. and it's dated 1906. And he was there from the late eighteen hundreds until 1906. And he committed suicide when he was taken out of the zoo, because he was mentally right out of it. But not only he. African women and others – you are welcome to flick through this and I have much more. This is one of my favourite subjects by the way, I have about ten books on this. And there's lots of it on the web. If you want to find out more go to 'people exhibited in zoos' [on Google] and you'll find a whole lot. A lot of people were exhibited in Germany and in America. Yes?

Q. This week on ABC they said some bears in Adelaide, when they were in there

A. Yes, that was the last pair of polar bears. And they left Adelaide. They said they could not maintain them in Adelaide because they would breed each year but the young always died. The reason the young always died was that when an animal is born in the zoo, the zoo wants to know what sex is it, and so the keepers would go into the night quarters, lock the female bear out, pick the polar bears up, check out their sex, put them back, go out, open the door, and the mother would immediately go in and kill them, because they smelt of humans and not of bears. When they sent that last breeding pair to Indonesia, they went up into the mountains, they put them in refrigerated, air-conditioned comfort in their night dens. They had heaters here in their dens in Adelaide, you can still see them. And they put them into ponds that they could freeze over at night, and they would throw them iceblocks with salmon frozen into iceblocks, all sorts of things that polar bears like. And of course they bred. No keeper went to sex them, sex the off-spring, and their off-spring are now in zoos around the world. It's just animal husbandry quite often that is the success or a non-success of an animal and its viability at the zoo.

[Applause]