

## **What are zoos for?**

### **How did zoos come about?**

[Narrated by Helen Skelton]

Kings and animals and the very wealthy have kept wild animals for thousands of years to symbolise their power.

In 43 AD the Roman Emperor Augustus brought elephants with him when he invaded Britain.

After the Norman Conquest in 1066, William the Conqueror set up his own collection of wild animals in Woodstock.

This royal menagerie including lions and camels moved to the Tower of London in 1210. This was a private menagerie, only open for the pleasure of king and court.

Sadly the animals were not treated well by today's standards. In the 1600s, James I and his courtiers would watch lions and bears fight to the death.

By the 1800s, the public could visit the animals for a shilling. Another public menagerie was opened in London at the Exeter Change on the Strand.

Travelling animal shows gave people their first glimpse of lions and other exotic creatures at British fairs. Even Queen Victoria saw them at a fair in Windsor.

Keeping wild animals was risky. In 1850 Lion Queen, trainer Ellen Bright, was mauled to death by tigers during a show.

A Victorian fascination with natural history saw the opening of the first scientific zoos. London Zoo was only open to members of the Zoological Society. These included Charles Darwin, who saw his first orangutan Jenny.

While most scientific zoos closed due to lack of funds, London Zoo survived by opening to the public in 1847. Zoos were expensive to run so they began exhibiting crowd-pulling animals such as the hippopotamus Obayshe at London Zoo.

At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most zoos in Britain served simply to display animals as a form of entertainment. But things were set to change.

In 1907 a German merchant called Carl Hagenback set up a zoo in Hamburg that tried to mimic the animals' surroundings in the wild. And this idea was on its way to Britain.

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