

A Potted History of Llamas in the UK (1)

The Early Years – 19th century

It has proven impossible to find out exactly when the first llama, dead or alive, arrived on British shores. Where they came from (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru?), whether directly from South America or via other nations such as Spain, with what intention and for what purpose.

However, somehow and for whatever reason some unmistakably got here but probably in small numbers alongside other products shipped home from South America. Early references to llamas in the media include mention in the *Morning Post* (March 23, 1805) of a llama exhibited at *Brooke's Menagerie* in the Haymarket, Piccadilly London where visitors paid two shillings each to see these odd animals. An article in *The Observer* (6th April 1806) claimed these same 'Peruvian Sheep' to be the first imported into the UK. Shortly after, newspaper reports referenced llama appearances at agricultural fairs and shows such as at Norwich and Yarmouth (*Ipswich Journal*, 30th April 1814).

Possible next mention of a llama (referred to as an 'Elapho Camelus') is on a poster bill for Wombwell's Touring Menagerie, undated but thought, by virtue of a written note on it, to be 22 August 1825.

"A most extraordinary Animal from the New World, and the first ever imported in this country..."

"It is about four feet high; its body, comprehending the head and neck, is six feet long, the head is small and well proportioned; the eyes large, the nose somewhat long, the lips thick, the upper one being divided, and the under one a little pendulous. It has neither incisive nor canine teeth in the upper jaw; its ears are four inches long, and are moved with great agility; its tail is eight inches long, small, straight and a little turned up at the end. It is cloven footed, but it has a kind of spur behind which assists the animal to support itself over precipices and ragged ways; its back, crupper, and tail are clothed with a short but fine wool, and is very long on the belly and sides."

Whether these ones were one and the same llama(s), since there is more than one claim to be the first ever imported into the UK, I have failed to clarify but a further poster for Wombwell's Menagerie quoted in an article in *Llama Link* (Winter, 2011, p.10) by Tracey Glasspool, thought to be 20 August 1828, suggests there was more than one Elapho Camelus (note slightly different spelling) in the show and noted

"An adequate description of this animal cannot be given in this bill. The animal stands high upon its legs, has a long neck, and a small head and its face resembles that of a Camel; some are brown, some are black; but this is of a most delicate white colour; it is accompanied by a brown one; both of them are but just imported by the proprietor from the Straits of Magellan."

What appears clear in these descriptions is that these animals were hitherto unknown to UK audiences and largely a novelty item appealing to natural human curiosity with no specific ‘serious’ purpose in mind at that point in time. They certainly aroused much interest and speculation as to their character, behaviour and care.

Goldsmith in his famous *History of Man and Quadriceps* (1838, p. 326) claims that George III had several llamas at Windsor Park but not were long lived. Perhaps the answer lies in what he writes:

‘It appears formed for that indolent race of masters which it is obliged to serve: it requires no care, nor no expense in the attending or providing for its sustenance; it is supplied with a warm covering, and therefore does not require to be housed; satisfied with vegetables and grass, it wants neither corn nor hay to subsist; it is no less moderate in what it drinks.’

First mention of a llama in a zoo I found was at the London Zoological Society Gardens in 1829, only a year after it first opened. It was described as a brown and white one but photography had not yet been invented and so there are no other illustrations to give us a clue to what they looked like (*Guide to the Gardens of the Zoological Society* 1829, pp. 8-9). Unfortunately, for those of us who have grown to love and appreciate these animals, they were usually described negatively as morose and stubborn animals with an unpredictable mind of their own. It is probably out of ignorance, especially not being able to predict and understand their actions having not previously had the chance to get to know them. This is a trend that has continued to the present day in some circles and one can but wonder if such early comments were responsible for tarnishing their reputation for the years that were to follow.



1- The Llama Hut was one of the earliest buildings on-site, it was designed by Decimus Burton. It was the first animal house to be built from brick and was completed by 16 May 1828. A clock tower was added in 1829. The building still exists today as a First Aid Centre

After independence came to parts of South America in 1820, Britain deliberately sought to replace the Spanish in economic and cultural affairs. Business men flocked in their droves to some of the new South American nations in response to their desperate call for foreign investment and trade. It seems reasonable to assume that this may have grown the interest and trade in llamas alongside other South American camelids (alpacas, guanacos and vicunas) and commodities.

Clearly they were growing in number and appearance. In 1835, the “*List of the Animals in the Liverpool Zoological Gardens*” tells us some thing about the llama and mentions it was donated by a Mr Charles Tayleur who kept them not far away at Parkfield, the Dingle, Liverpool. In fact, he had at least five of them which may or may not have been quite an odd site for the Dingle residents.[Footnote - For those who do not know the area, being the home

of many Liverpool dockers, it is renowned as one of character and was the setting for the very popular BBC sit com *Bread* in the 1980s/90s]

25. *Pair of Lamas.*

Camelus llacma, Linn.

One presented by Charles Tayleur, Esq. Dingle Park.

The Lamas congregate together in considerable herds on the sides of the Andes, and generally in the colder and more elevated regions.—When the Spaniards first arrived in Peru, they were the only beast of burden employed by the natives; and even at the present day, when the horse has become so common, they are preferred for passing the mountains, on which their sureness of footing, exceeding that of the mule, gives them a manifest superiority. Generally speaking, they are quiet, docile, and timid; but they occasionally exhibit much spitefulness, especially if teased: their mode of evincing this is very peculiar, and consists in darting their saliva through their nostrils with considerable force.

2 - List of the animals in the Liverpool Zoological Gardens 1835

Later that same year, a llama residing at the Liverpool Zoological Gardens was reported to be making its appearance in the town at the Christmas pantomime – *Blue Beard* (*Liverpool Mercury* November 27, 1835) which one might reasonably assume was the same one. The extent of llamas and alpacas nationwide is reflected in Robert Kemp Philip's *The History of Progress in Great Britain*, Volume 1, (London: Houlston and Wright, 1859, p. 121) which suggests that in 1841 there were around 79 in the UK. Unfortunately, the balance of camelids (alpacas, guanacos, llamas, crosses) is not indicated and so we cannot rely on how many exactly were llamas.

† There have been several llamas and alpacas introduced at various times.

In 1841 there were in England:—at the Earl of Derby's, Knowsley Hall, Lancashire, 16; at the Marquis of Breadalbane's, 6; Duke of Montrose's, 3; Earl Fitzwilliam's, 1; Zoological Gardens, Dublin, 6; Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, 2; J. J. Hegan's, Esq., Harrow Hall, Cheshire, 7; Charles Tayleur's, Esq., Parkfield, near Liverpool, 5; John Edwards', Esq., Pye Nest, Halifax, 6; Mr. Stephenson's, Olan, 6; Wm. Bennett's, Esq., Farringdon, 12; Surrey Zoological Gardens, 1; Zoological Gardens, Liverpool, 3; travelling caravans, 4; total,

3 - Extract from The History of Progress

As can be observed from the narrative above, these were often associated with country estates (where it was fashionable to show off something ‘different’ or unique for purposes of conspicuous consumption), zoological gardens and travelling fairs. The *Morning Post* (26/12/1851) suggested that Lord Derby had 21 llamas and alpacas (again not sure of the respective numbers) roaming his estate in Liverpool (today’s Knowsley Safari Park). This was further described as being unrivalled in Europe, although this might have related to quality rather than number and possibly with a view to promoting a local sale event since this is a Liverpool based newspaper.

On Lord Derby's death in 1851, some of these were sold alongside other exotic animals from his menagerie at a sale and from here went to various countries of the continent and other parts of the UK including the estate of Sir Titus Salt in Yorkshire who was to go on and make his fortune from alpaca wool.

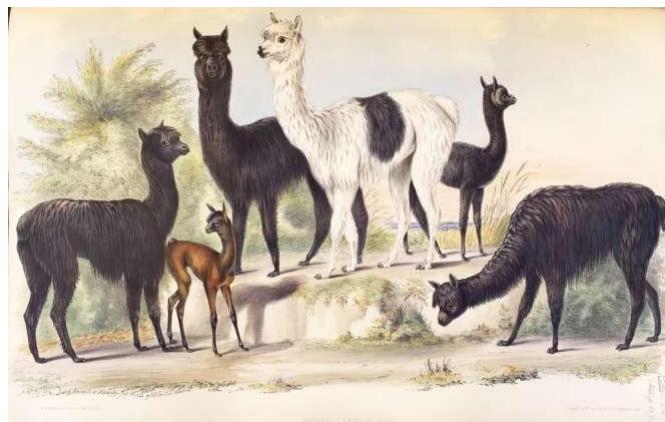
According to the *Morning Post*, ‘1 llama sold for £28 to Mr Atkins, Liverpool; 1 llama (old), past its best days sold for £26 to Jamrach, a German from Hamburg; 1 llama, females sold for £33 to Herring of London for Sir W. Fielding, Fennisaule, Lancashire, 1 llama female sold for £30 to Mr Atkins for out of the country; 1 llama female (fawn) sold for £28 to Mr Vekeman, Antwerp Zoological Society’. Mr Fielding had a menagerie at his country estate in North Lancashire.

A passion for natural history : the life and legacy of the 13th Earl of Derby (edited by Clemency Fisher, Liverpool: National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside, 2002), gives us the first clue as to what these animals looked like.



4- Lithograph of llamas at Knowsley Hall drawn from life December 1844 by B. Waterhouse Hawkins, Plate LI

A similar lithograph helps distinguish them from the pure alpaca type.



5 -Lithograph of alpacas drawn from life July 23 1844 by B. Waterhouse Hawkins at Knowsley Hall, Plate LII

(William Danson *Alpaca, The Original Peruvian Sheep, Before the Spaniards Invaded South America, for Naturalisation in other Countries. Recommended through the Natural History Society of Liverpool in 1839*. By William Danson of 6, Shaw Street, Liverpool. Printed by M. Rourke, 3, South John Street, Liverpool, 1852).

A number of other prints and engravings around this time depicted llamas.



**Camelids. Equus Quaccha,
Dromedary and Lama.**



by Latreille from Cuvier; Animal Kingdom 1834

History of the Earth and Animated Nature. Oliver Goldsmith 1857



SPCK Plates Illustrative of Natural History 1845.



Cassell's Popular Natural History c1865

What these illustrate is quite a diversity and one supposes cross and hybrid breeding in their native settings. Perhaps this is unsurprising given the earlier discussion of llamas being nothing less than hybrids derived from guanacos and crosses with vicunas and alpacas.

Writing in 1836, Goldman (*ibid*) had mentioned the versatility of llamas when he wrote:

Their flesh is excellent food, their hair, or rather wool, maybe spun into beautiful clothing and they are capable, in the most rugged and dangerous ways, of carrying burthens , not exceeding a hundred weight, with the greatest safety.

Interest in these animals by industrialists like Sir Titus Salt marked a significant development in the history of camelids in the UK since it was now recognised they might have commercial possibilities. The great hope by now was that these hardy animals, along with alpacas, capable of surviving on bare scrub in the Andes could populate the moorlands of Lancashire and Yorkshire, the Welsh and Scottish mountains providing a ready, reliable, voluminous source of quality fibre for the burgeoning textile industry, especially now that techniques for processing at more specialist fibres had been invented. The idea was this would reduce the cost of importing raw fleece from South America and hence profitability. Numerous adverts appeared in the press for garments made of llama wool which were described as warm and light and available in exclusive outlets. *The Scotsman* (11/12/1862) also carried an ad. for the sale of a stuffed female llama, presumably to grace a wealthy household.

**D A W B A R N A N D S O N ,
T A I L O R S , R O B E , A N D H A B I T M A K E R S ,
110, B O L D - S T R E E T , L I V E R P O O L ,**

BE G to apprise those Gentlemen who are about visiting the *Moors* and the Highlands of Scotland this season, that they will find at their Establishment, in addition to REGISTERED PALETOT OF LLAMA CLOTH, an unique assortment of SHOOTING JACKETS and WAISTCOATS, not only made in Plain Colours, but in all the various Fashionable Mixtures of the present day. Prices of the LLAMA CLOTH JACKETS, 42s.; MIXTURES, 38s.; WAISTCOATS, 12s. 6d. and 16s.

**D A W B A R N A N D S O N ,
M E R C H A N T T A I L O R S ,
110, B O L D - S T R E E T , L I V E R P O O L .**

Unfortunately, the llamas, alpacas and various cross breeds failed to prosper in the UK which was thought to be from a lack of suitable vegetation. In countries like Bolivia and Peru they flourished on coarse grasses (ichu and alfalfa) and clover (George Ledger *The Alpaca: Its Introduction Into Australia, and the Probabilities of Its Acclimatisation there* Melbourne: Acclimatisation Society of Victoria Acclimatisation Society of Victoria, 1861). It was for this reason Sir Titus Salt decided to send a breeding male and two female llamas to Adelaide, South Australia to see if they would fare any better on their vegetation and climate. He and others had already experimented with alpacas in this respect with some positive results. The successful rehabilitation of imported llamas later on suggests it may be more to do more with the long and intrepid journeys (several weeks) and lack of understanding how to feed and look after them. One is reminded here of the fate of the Windsor Great Park llamas.

With the prospect of llamas providing a much in demand raw material to the textile industry, not surprisingly entrepreneurs started to spring up in all parts of the supply chain. Peru had imposed sanctions preventing the export of live animals in 1836 but Frenchman Eugen Roehn managed to smuggle a large number of selected animals from the northern slopes of the country through neighbouring Guayaquil, Ecuador and across land almost 4,000 miles to Panama. From here they were shipped to New York City aboard the steamer *Santiago*. The animals were detained in Aspinwall, Panama for three weeks whilst waiting for a shipping vessel to take them to Baltimore in the US. In the heat of the summer that year around 20 lost their lives to snakes, scorpions and poisonous herbage. The ship they ended up being transported in was inadequate for the number of llamas resulting in the death of another two cria. On arrival in New York, via the port of Baltimore, the 42 final survivors were in very poor condition due to the long trek and very confined accommodation on board ship (*New York Tribune*, 23 March 1857). They were wintered on Manhattan Island in an attempt to build them up for resale and also test their ability to deal with the harsh New York climatic conditions. Although most survived the heavy snow and freezing temperatures, they barely prospered as the keepers struggled to find suitable fodder. Hence the interest and sale price was disappointing for the agent. After exhibition at the Crystal Palace, New York they were auction at Dykman Farm on the 20th of March, 1858. (*The Sydney Morning Herald* Tuesday 3 August 1858).

Interest was very disappointing and many of the animal lots failed to reach their reserve. A newspaper report of the time suggested that the poor choice of venue and lack of promotion was partly to blame. Mr Benjamin Whitehead Gee, originally from of Acton (London) but currently living in New South Wales (Australia) and a representative of the NSW Agricultural Society, purchased the surviving 38 llamas (of which 23 were female) and had them shipped to Glasgow aboard *The City of New York* steamer where they were exhibited at the local agricultural show ground at a charge of 6d each and had as many as 1200 visitors. He then showed them in Birmingham on the occasion of Queen Victoria's visit before moving them onto London where they were pastured in Ealing (*Birmingham Daily Post*, June 17 1858). The idea no doubt was that this might stimulate awareness and interest adding to their re sale value. Eventually, he sold two to a Mr Patterson, two to a Miss Angela Burdett Coutts (who later became a major figure in the RSPCA) and ten to a Mr George A Lloyd of London who it is reported sold them on for more than twice the original £25 each. These were shipped to Sydney in June 1858 and arrived on the 28th of November where they were

sold for £600 and move to live in Moreton Bay. ((Robert Kemp Philip's *The History of Progress in Great Britain*, Volume 1, London: Houlston and Wright, 1859)

23 were purchased by Australian merchants Messrs McKinnon and Westgarth and shipped to Melbourne, Victoria, arriving in February 1859. (10)

.A Mr E. Wilson of Melbourne took the remainder of the herd at a rate of £23 per head

He (Mr. Gee) subsequently bought the animals, and took them by the steamer, *City of New York*, to Glasgow, where they arrived shortly before the agricultural show in that city. He exhibited them at a charge of sixpence each, and had as many as 1,200 visitors. He afterwards brought them to Birmingham, at the time of the Queen's State visit, and although there were about a million of people congregated on that occasion, not more than twenty-eight persons honored his alpacas with a visit. The people seemed to have no idea what the animals were. Then he brought them to London, in the hot weather of June. He sold three to Mr. Pattison, two to Miss Coutts, and ten to Mr. G. A. Lloyd, the latter at £25 each, which paid him very well, but they afterwards sold for £60 each. Mr. E. Wilson, the well-known editor of the *Melbourne Argus*, took the remainder of the flock for £700, which was at the rate of £23 per head. During the time the flock was in his possession, they grazed at Acton, about five miles from London, and they got quite fat. They started for Australia, and like most other emigrants, they did even better there.

Fig. 7 -

The *Illustrated London News* (July, 1858) carried an engraving of what these imported animals looked like but it is hard to tell what is what. Again, this is not helped by the fact that alpacas, llamas, guanacos and even vicunas were often referred to as one and the same or their names regarded as interchangeable and of course many were also cross breeds as herdsmen/farmers experimented with pooling the desired traits from several into the one animal. Llamas were traditionally bigger and therefore the potential to carry more fleece, alpacas and vicunas on the other hand generally had finer quality fibre without the coarser guard hair to separate. In principle at least, this made them overall more suited to the textile industry and is why they were imported in greater numbers. Interestingly, there is debate in the press of the time as to exactly what some of those bought by Mr Gee were. (alpacas, llamas, cross breeds). My best guess, supported by the illustration is that they were very much a mixed bunch. It is also known that indigenous Peruvians often tricked European merchants and sold them only old or hybrid stock.

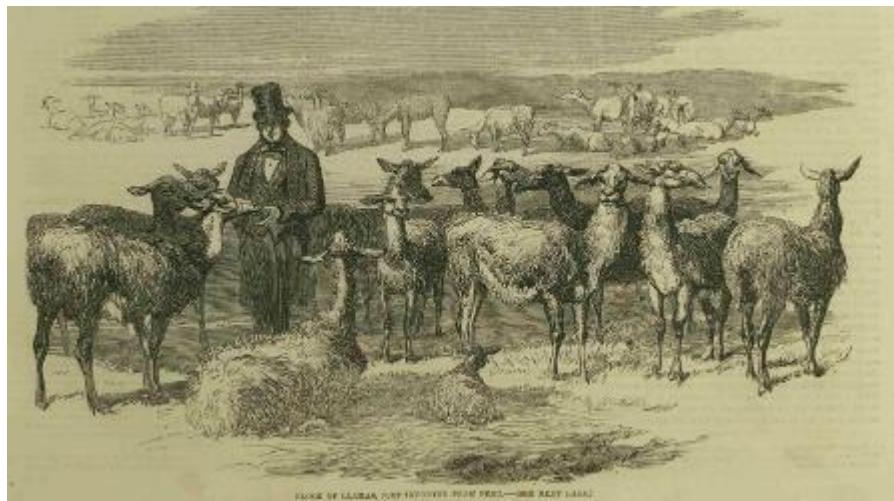


Fig. 8- Imported Llamas Illustrated London News, 29 May 1858

As already alluded to, problem in the early days had been transportation of live animals. Very few survived the long and torturous sea voyage over thousands of miles crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Worse still was the journey to the far off colonies of the British Empire. Of the two males and three females Sir Titus Salt sent to South Australia one of each sex died in transit although one also gave birth to what in those days they referred to commonly as lambs. Only 280 of the 322 alpacas and llamas shipped from Chile to Australia in 1858 survived the journey and 29 of the 42 llamas shipped to New Zealand directly from New York also died in transit but these were far more successful results than some of the earlier voyages such in 1842 when 270 alpacas aboard the Sir Charles Napier died from inhaling guano fumes. In another expedition organised by Alexander Duffield only 1 out of 1,500 alpacas survived and another transportation in which all the 400 died in transit to Europe (Danson ibid.) .

Helen Cowie, in her excellent book (*Llamas* London: Reaktion, 2017), mentions pioneering work by Liverpool scientist Alfred Higginson in understanding camelid metabolism. He was the first to professionally dissect an alpaca which led to a better understanding of camelid anatomy and physiology which in turn helped inform their dietary processes and needs. Discussion and debate between scientists and the farming community ensued in the *Liverpool Mercury*. Liverpool naturalist Thomas Atkins who had overseen llamas and alpacas at his Liverpool Zoological gardens wrote technical guidance notes on the welfare of these animals including during transit. Increased interest in these animals also led to even greater diversity in objectives for these animals and selective breeding to meet different needs.

Better informed naturalists also started to travel further afield and spread the word to shepherds in far flung parts of the British Empire.

As the textile boom of 19th century declined and processing moved overseas, interest in llamas also started to wane. Decline of the manufacturing industry also manifested itself in the decline of the aristocrats and *nouveau riche* who could no longer maintain their extravagant estates with menageries of exotic animals and walled gardens with their orangeries growing exotic fruits. Although a few have survived to the present day by opening their grounds to the paying public (eg. Knowsley Safari Park, Longleat, Woburn, etc.) many did not and ended up selling their exotic animals, including llamas, to zoos. Same too with travelling fairs. Glasspool (ibid) makes reference to auction of Wombwell's menagerie at this point owned by

Alexander Fairgrieve, in Edinburgh in 1872 at which a llama was sold to a Mr Charles Jamach for £15. This was, in fact, the same German who bought at the 1851 sale mentioned earlier. He turns out to be a London based exotic animal dealer who often bought animals at auctions. His main competitor was a William Cross of Liverpool, who also imported quite a lot of llamas in the late 19C , though it is not clear who bought them.

20th Century

The earliest evidence of llamas at zoos in the UK I have found are at: London Zoo (1829), Liverpool (1835), Belle Vue, Manchester (1855), Ampthill (1907), Edinburgh (1929), Cobham (1931), Chessington (1932), Whipsnade (1938), Paignton (1940s), Dudley (1941), Wellingborough (1943), Battersea Children's Zoo (1957), Blackpool (1960s), Chester (1960s), Bristol (1963), Colchester (1966), Twycross (1970), Knaresborough (1972), Aberdeen (1976), Basildon (1980s), Windsor Safari Park (1990) This does not necessarily mean they did not already exist before these dates or indeed at other zoos but a new arrival, via import or birth, usually attracted public interest. Zoos and visitor centres no doubt wanted to capitalise on this to draw in extra visitors so made sure local newspapers knew about them. The newspapers in turn knew that a picture of 'quirky adult animal' or ever so cute cria would in turn attract their reader's attention.

Also looking to draw interest and commercial opportunities, some llama keepers explored more novel uses of the animal. *The Bystander* (7 August 1907) has a photograph of llamas being ridden and the *Daily Telegraph* 31 January 1916 of a llama being used to pull carts. Some pundits speculated about other uses for llamas and *Punch* (7 April, 1909) rather satirically depicts llamas being used in hunts. During a period of growth and expansion as zoos became very popular, exchanges of exotic animals between them regularly took place to increase their range although in times of austerity the reverse has been true. Chester Zoo once homed all four types of 'New World Camelids' but today does not have any as its collection has become much more focussed on specific and endangered species. .



Fig. 9 - Sailor Lads and the Llama (Daily Telegraph 3/1/1914)

I have not yet managed to discover much about the use of llamas in travelling circus although they were known to be a part of some pre and post Second World War companies. For example, in the

1940s, *Bertrand Mills Circus* had a performing llama named *Bagley*, sadly he died from Rhododendron poisoning following an escape from the winter compound near Ascot and was replaced by another llama Bertram Mills acquired from Whipsnade Zoo (*Camelids Chronicle*, 54, 3 (2001), p.5). Also, *The Picture Post* carries a photograph of llamas belonging to Chessington Circus in 1942 before declining in use alongside most other animals in circus settings amid popular protests. This may have been the reason for Mary Chipperfield's circus auctioning off its llamas and other animals in 1980 (*The Guardian*, 20 November, 1980). A number of circus photographs containing performing llamas can be found at: <http://www.mountlehmanllamas.com/trivia78.html>.

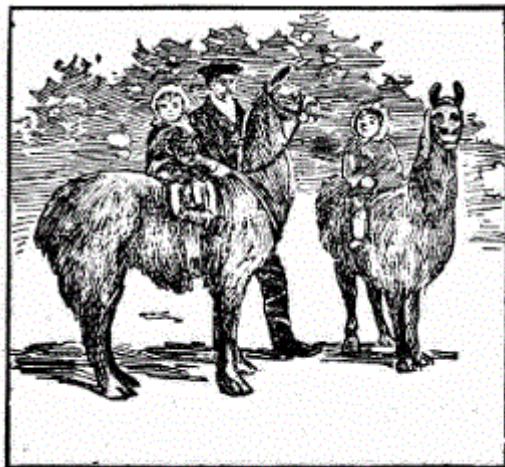


Fig. 10 - Children riding Llama at Ampthill, Beds. The Times, 1 April 1912.

Otherwise, it has been very difficult to find any mention of llamas in the public press, in this period, perhaps not surprising when priorities were probably focussed on other matters, especially with all the political unrest in Europe and two world wars.

An amusing piece in *The Western Times* of October 3, 1902 describes the behaviour of a Naval llama mascot as follows:

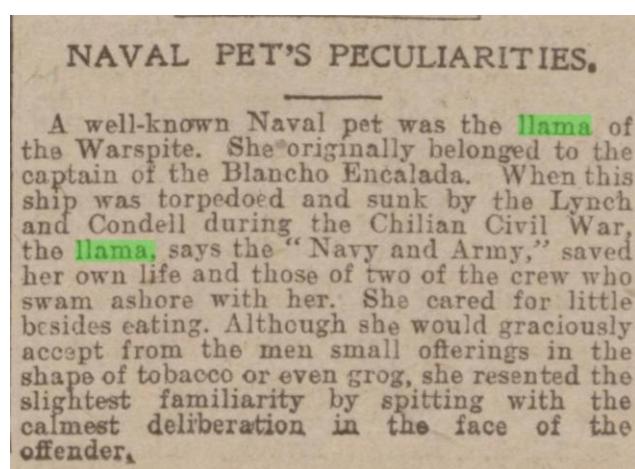


Fig. 11- Western Times (Exeter, England), Friday, October 3, 1902, Issue 16385, p.3.

Some further importation did take place and again it was into the North West of the country. On the 3rd of May, 1930, 12 llamas arrived in Liverpool aboard a ship from Buenos Aires. They were the

property of Mr H. E. Roper of Mossley Hill, Liverpool who kept some for his own zoo and distributed the rest to zoos around the UK. (*The Scotsman* 25 May 5, 1930).

Possibly a red herring but alternatively revealing of an attitude or perception of llamas at the time was an article in *The Times* (September 16, 1933) of a gentleman found guilty of being drunk in charge of a llama in Brixton High Street using the animal to help promote a new film showing at the local cinema. It is difficult to tell whether it made the national press because of its novelty value or potential for a laugh, but I doubt that if it was a sheep he was parading for a film with a sheep in it would have received the same media attention. Still it remains an animal of curiosity, amusement, unpredictability as possibly suggested in the children's expressions and composition of the photograph below.[Are the young lady's thoughts-weird isn't it, the boy's – hurry up I don't want to be spat at?]

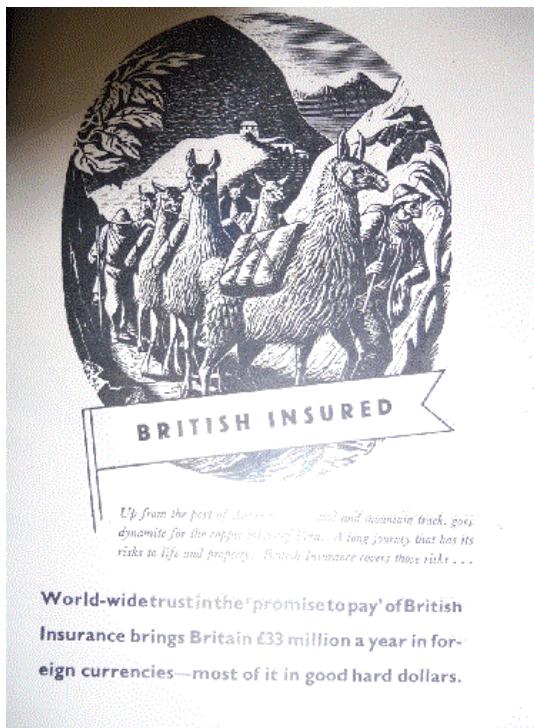


Fig. 12 – A school visit to Edinburgh Zoo. Evening Telegraph (Dundee), August 17, 1931, Issue 17074, p.6.

This is not to say that their attributes were not acknowledged and respected in some contexts, the sure footedness and security of llamas were used in advertising cars and insurance below.



5-Advert Picture Post 1956



6Fig. - Insurance advertisement

A New Dawn (1980-)

Apart from the reporting of recent llama births at the better known zoos, mention of llamas in the media also remained sparse for several years following the Second World War. It was not until the early 1960s when the UK government granted licences for the ownership of llamas outside of zoos and some zoos, most notably Whipsnade and Basildon, applied to sell surplus stock to private individuals. Although certainly not the first owner outside a zoo as claimed in the book (Mr Derek Wallis bought his first llama in 1964 - personal communication), Ruth Ruck obtained some llamas from Knaresborough Zoo in 1974. These she made famous via authorship of *Along Came a Llama* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978). A number of future keepers claimed to have been inspired by her book to purchase llamas (eg. Pam Roe of Caernarvon and Candia Midworth *The Times* 1/2/1997) but so far, I have not managed to find another stated reason for llamas growth in popularity at this time. As someone who moved between the US and UK at this time, I cannot but speculate that it might just have been another of those aspects of popular culture the British were keen to embrace. The rise in popularity of llamas in the US at this time was phenomenal. Animals were changing hands at staggering amounts. The *New York Times* (March 11, 1986) reports an auction sale of 247 llamas grossing \$1.5m with a top price of \$54K for one male llama (Oscar). Others followed most notably Fred Hartman's sale of Bolivian imports December 19, 1987. (https://wyomingfirstperson.blogspot.com/2016/10/how-fred-hartman-invented-50000-llama.html?fbclid=IwAR3zzk8cLXRpnzD3VCFsCKYr9i4vEV_xvsAVUz-i5ieNtTS-S6_w1u0nkQ) The same was true of alpacas although these generally managed to secure higher prices on the basis of supplying a more regular source of fibre. (Alpacas generally needed shearing annually whereas some llamas never did and even the woollier varieties only biannually).

Ranches with upwards of 500 llamas were not unknown and the Pattersons, well known early breeders in Oregon, were producing around 200 cria a year (The History and Philosophy of Patterson Llamas, *Llama Life*, 31, Autumn 1995). Don Ricks (in the 'Hartman' article above) describes how he was able to retire young on the proceeds of a sale of his herd and Paul and Sally Taylor, on their website (<http://taylorllamas.com/index.html>) describe how they made their fortune out of a few llamas via importing and developing embryo transfer techniques. Some of their sought-after males sired hundreds of progeny and their females as many as two dozen and more embryos a year for transplant. Many newspapers correspondents at the time were stunned by this phenomenal interest and struggled to explain the reasons why they could fetch such high prices. However, it appears to come down to little more than a gold rush description of how the frenzy was generated by clever marketing see 'How Fred Hartman Invented the \$50,000 Llama', https://wyomingfirstperson.blogspot.com/2016/10/how-fred-hartman-invented-50000-llama.html?fbclid=IwAR3zzk8cLXRpnzD3VCFsCKYr9i4vEV_xvsAVUz-i5ieNtTS-S6_w1u0nkQ which as predicted by some was mere pyramid selling that would not stand the test of time.

Among the wealthier owners it was seen as some kind of tax evasion for as long as they had at least one male and 3 females they qualified for tax breaks in the US. As a llama owner, I also like to think in perhaps a romantic kind of way, that the llamas' personal charm had something to do with their emerging popularity.

Although prices plummeted towards the end of the Millennium, interest in owning llamas did not wane entirely. By now the show scene had established itself. Here was a popular activity that was social, educational and also had a serious purpose in developing the species. Classes were created for all types of llamas and in a variety of activities. Children were trained up in llama handling and travelled great distances to exhibit and test their skills against other handlers in competition of llama

appearance and agility, whilst adults could exhibit the outcomes of their breeding programmes. These graded competitions took place at regional, state and national level.

Back in the UK, whilst some developments mirrored those in the US, these were certainly on a much smaller scale, numbers remained very few and those interested in breeding llamas had a very limited gene pool on which to draw, often resorting, I am informed via several personal communications, to inbreeding (father/daughter, etc.) and crossbreeding with their ancestral phenotype - guanacos and related species – alpacas, vicunas. Not surprisingly, various types emerged with ‘new’ and mixed traits and in some cases congenital defects. A breeder of the period explained to me that the wilder nature of the guanacos sometimes resulted in more aggressive cross-breed animals, males in particular, that were unsuited for the domestic market and in some instances ended up having to be destroyed (Derek Wallis – personal communication 2.2.2019). Certainly, guanacos tended to be wild in the sense of flighty and less willing to be halter-trained, groomed etc.

Some breeders were concerned by this and sought ways of overcoming the problem. This was at the same time that some dealers and entrepreneurs, possibly influenced by what was happening across the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, saw a chance for commercial gain. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 had opened up access to the Eastern bloc and a number of UK businessmen bought up a significant number of llamas from zoos and brought them back to the UK. Gerald Walker of Maplehurst Llamas organised an auction of these llamas, together with alpacas and guanacos at the National Agricultural Centre in Stoneleigh on the 12th of October 1989 (*The Times*, 12th of October 1989). A report on the sale in *Llama Life* (Winter, 1989/90) mentions that 400 people attended and offered for sale were 12 male and 8 female llamas from Sweden and Poland along with a number of alpacas and guanacos. Several of the buyers were said to be first time llama owners. The most successful buyer, the report continued, was Dick Chandler of Bristol who purchased ‘probably the best male llama in the sale (I understand to have been named *Goliath* – Norma Chandler telephone conversation 7.3.19) and two of the best females, one with a cria at foot’. Also amongst the successful purchasers was Geoffrey Shringley who ran a rare breeds farm near Glasgow. In a personal communication (6.2.2019) Peter Bourne also recalls buying a female and cria that came from a zoo in Prague.

One of the pioneers in buying, breeding and selling llamas in the UK in this era was Paul Rose who resided in the Cotswolds and later Devon. Like so many llama enthusiasts of the era, curiosity about these unusual animals had led to acquisition of one or two as interesting pets. Smitten by an unexpected cria he soon entered into serious breeding llamas learning as he went but not from a traditional stock breeding background. A desire to breed responsibly meant widening the gene pool looking for traits that reflected good form. He imported a few from Holland and a report in *The Times* newspaper (26 June, 1990) mentions he also acquired a number of llamas from Zoos in Eastern Europe. Private correspondence confirmed these to be from Poland (Warsaw Zoo), Hungary and Russia. Some of these were offspring of llamas imported from Chile and so from a broad gene pool. Inspired by the birth of *Crackerjack*, an exceptionally woolly llama, he started to selectively breed for this particular feature, amongst many others.



Figure 7 - Roseland Crackerjack

Crackerjack went on to sire a significant number of llamas in the UK, but Paul Rose also dabbled in a limited amount of cross-breeding and was known to have experimented with using two male vicunas to improve fleece quality. He found himself courted by the media (there are several articles and letters in the national press), which no doubt enhanced his profile and helped secure some return on his investments and some of his good llamas started to command good prices in the very late 20th and early 21st centuries. His selective breeding programme marked a major step in enhancing the quality of the UK herd and many owners were proud to have a *Roseland* llama in their herd.

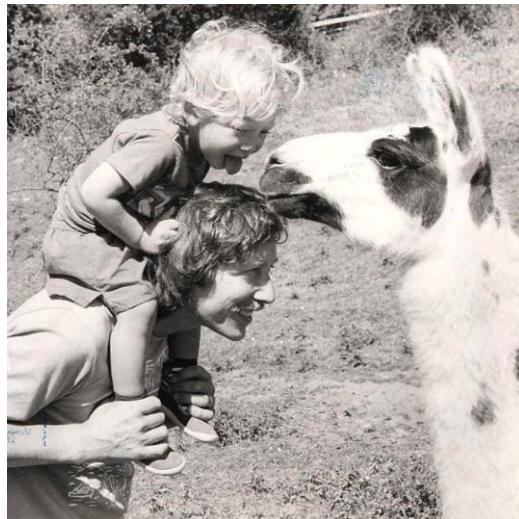


Fig. 14 - Paul Rose and llama Lucy

As wealthier and business-oriented llama owners started to import a significant number of camelids, the UK government, imposed a restriction because of the threat of bringing disease into the country with them. They set up a lottery system and very strict regulations relating to importation. I have not, as yet, identified who did import animals through this mechanism although Peter Bourne mentions that he was on the list and that Sir Robert McAlpine, the building and engineering magnate, was said to have set up a llama and alpaca farm for his daughter with 400+ animals (Peter Bourne, personal communication 25.3.2019). For there to be that number it might be that some must have been imported from South America (An obituary in the *Tatler* magazine. 14/09/2017 also mentions his llamas)

Increasingly, the trend to import the woollier or so called *tampuli* type can, I think, be put down to the taste and market foresight of Paul Rose. Hitherto, most llamas in Britain had been of the *classic* or *ccara* type. Some breeders considered this woolly type required too much maintenance to keep in

good order and others that they were not best suited to their trekking business, but this does not appear to have put new owners off being attracted by their ‘cuddly appearance’. It is difficult to determine whether it was the chicken or egg which came first but around this time, there were several renewed attempts to sell the idea of there being profit to be made in llama fleece. In a lengthy article in *The Observer* (19 November 1989). Peter Knowles Brown, President of *British Camelids*, tried to make a convincing case of how the economics could stack up and a few years later an article in *The Times* (19 August, 1992) described initiatives at the Universities of Aberystwyth and Aberdeen to resurrect the ailing British woolen industry via Guanacos. The BLS were invited to visit and produced a Report in *Camelids Chronicle*, 18, Summer 1992). According to the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, llama wool was the new ‘super fibre of the future’ (August 22, 1988, Issue 41417, p.9).

History suggests that the economics stood up neither for llama ‘wool’ nor alpaca. Any ‘wool’ that came off an alpaca (animal) or llama that was *under* 28 microns, was mixed and collectively declared alpaca ('wool') Any wool that came off an alpaca (animal) that was *over* 28 microns was *not* given the “Alpaca mark”. The reality was that many of the alpacas that were imported into the UK were over 28 microns. (Paul Rose, Personal communication 4.5.2019)

It was at this time the first ‘llama related’ company was registered with Companies House (eg. *Elite Llamas Ltd.* By Paul Rose in 1988 – *Companies House*). The Rowett Institute, later affiliated to the University of Aberdeen in 1987, recruited a herd of llamas and guanacos and pioneered IVF and ET breeding techniques ([Theriogenology Volume 44, Issue 2](#), 15 July 1995, Pages 255-268; Bourke, D. A., Adam, C. L., & Kyle, C. E. (1991). Successful Pregnancy Following Nonsurgical Embryo Transfer in Llamas. *Veterinary Record*, 128(3), 68-68) and when the project came to a close sold them at an auction in Carlisle on the 16th of April , 2008 to private purchasers (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/north_east/7348645.stm). Richard Chandler talks of an earlier auction of Rowett llamas in Carlisle in the early 1990s at which he purchased *Eilean Donan* their first ET bred llama. A trip to the Institute was organized by the British Camelids Society around this time.

When the first suri llama appeared in the UK I have been unable to establish. There was first talk of suri llamas for sale in 2001 but Dick Chandler refuted their existence here but it was rather Llama/suri alpaca crosses that were beginning to appear (*Camelids Chronicle*, 54, 3 (2001), p.6. Certainly, *Watertown Llamas* had imported true suri llamas and llama crosses in 2018.



Figs. 15/16 - Chip, an Argentine type llama imported by Hillview Llamas from the US

Presently, there are a very small number of breeders who have recently imported llamas into the UK from North America and continental Europe, including a few from Chile (the only South American country still permitting live export of llamas) via Europe. Their motivations have been to ensure quality stock both in terms of widening the UK gene pool but also in some cases breed back to the traditional types bred over centuries in South America. This has been a trend in North America in recent years as well as producing hybrid stereotypes suited for purpose such as wilderness trekking (capable of carrying large loads over long distances) or 'silky llamas' providing fibre for the fleece cooperatives .

Of course there are many issues relating to importing animals from overseas. Beyond expense and the red tape bureaucracy, are all the welfare issues that can arise as animals are subjected to long journey, lengthy periods of quarantine, repeated testing, cramped accommodation, etc. Those of you who have read my writings elsewhere will be familiar with my drive to perfect movement of genes via AI and/or embryo transfer, well proven techniques in the bovine and equine species but one that has peculiar difficulties when it comes to camelids. This is due in part to the collection (trickle ejaculators) and consistency of semen (viscous) in the case of AI and the freezing and thawing of embryos, necessary when long distances are involved. ET is a well proven, reliable technique locally and was behind the tremendous rapid growth of top quality llamas in North America. However, embryos are usually more matured by the time they enter the uterus with a thicker outer wall.

Annie Austen of *Watertown Llamas* was the next breeder to invest in importing foreign stock, first from Europe and then North America and more recently *Llama Land* (miniatures), *West Wight*, *Quinta Da Llama* (from Italy) and *Hillview Llamas* (from North America) have imported foreign stock to add to the gene pool.

A significant issue for llamas and indeed all types of camelid in the UK in this modern era has been their susceptibility to and association with Bovine Tuberculosis (TB). Attempting to eradicate TB from the British dairy herd has been a major issue for the British Government and farming industry, especially in the 21st century. As a disease potentially harmful to humans and an industry critical to the British economy, testing for and attempts to eradicate it have been extensive. Few would agree that the commonly used testing regimes are satisfactory or fool proof. Animals showing signs and even potential signs of the disease are isolated, culled and the farm shut down to animal movements. The farm or holding is then subject to 6 monthly retesting and the results show the herd to be completely free of the disease on two successive occasions before sanctions are lifted. Neighbouring (contiguous) farms are then also tested as a check on whether the disease has spread locally. The consequences can be catastrophic, large numbers of animals culled that were later discovered on post mortem not to have contracted the disease, emotional and financial hardships for the farmers who stock was affected. Several llama breeders fell victim to this and one can but wonder just how badly the British llama herd may have been affected in this respect. On the basis of knowing the quality of some of the llamas that did fall victim, my suspicion is that it was set back several years, not just because of the good llamas lost but because investors in stock, especially from abroad, saw the risk too great. At first the Government could not insist that llamas showing positive or inconclusive were culled but when they could financial compensation was introduced to owners. However, since most llama owners were not typically commercial, this was not the main issue. Nobody wanted to lose their valued animals and no money could compensate for loss of the emotional attachments they had to their pets. On the other hand, for those who had invested heavily in stock, the Government compensation scheme did not recognise the relative importance or cost of the culled animal. It did not matter whether you had picked up a sub standard stud llama for free via the internet or spent a fortune

buying and bringing one with super genetics half way round the world from one of the top breeders in the world, you still received the same level of financial compensation.

Diary farmers dependent upon their animals for their livelihood were sometimes understandably eager to blame someone or something for their loss and gain revenge. I do not wish to enter the badger culling debate here since this is a major issue in itself but what I do know is that in some areas, camelid owners were suspected and in some cases accused of being responsible for bringing TB into the area and affecting their herds. I know of no clear evidence of this and to my knowledge know of few infected herds but understand why, as potential carriers of the disease, some dairy farmers insisted camelids residing in contiguous areas are also subject to testing. Where the camelid community strongly disagreed is in respect of the testing protocol itself.

The universal skin test used for all animals was to inject into the front armpits bovine tuberculin to prime the antibody response and the resultant reaction measured with calipers 3 days later. This was very stressful for the animal, difficult and dangerous to perform on animals that in some cases have not been handled as much as say cows, were more sensitive in this body region and the owners less likely to own suitable restraints such as a crush or chute (although the British Llama Society did purchase one for members to borrow).

The British Camelid Association argued for replacing the full skin test with a simple injection of bovine tuberculin anywhere on the body, blood samples taken 10-30 days later and tested with the Enferplex test or the combination of IDDEX and DPP (the owners' choice). A compelling argument to use the blood tests was also that sensitivity to the tuberculin would be increased by 10 or more percent over the simple skin test.

DEFRA and APHA in 2018 agreed to implement the change to contiguous contacts with immediate effect, but retained the full skin test for herds that had already had positive reactors. This, of course, is a very simple account of what was for some a very distressing experience with significant and unnecessary losses. It took some very determined and tenacious lobbying to achieve these relatively minor changes and as I write we have the ongoing case of an alpaca owner attempting a stay of execution for her prized stud male Geromino who she is contesting in the courts, supported by crowd funding from the camelid community. (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-45361856>) The challenging question here is whether priming with tuberculin as a normal part of the skin test has the effect of "priming" the anti-body response of an animal such that a subsequent blood test is a bit more sensitive and thus TB is more likely to be detected. However work remains to be done to look at the effects of multiple priming over a relatively short time and whether it can cause false positives.

Only time will tell how effective Government regimes are in eradicating the disease. But, there again, even if it can be eliminated, there is nothing to suggest camelids and llamas in particular, cannot become subject to some other awful diseases currently prevalent in some camelid herds in other countries (e.g. Blue Tongue).

In terms of organisational infra-structure, a *British Camelids* association was formed (incorporated 20th May 1988 (Companies House) but may have existed several years before this). Representing the llama fraternity as directors were Pamela Walker, Derek Williams and Ann and Peter Knowles-Brown (Scotland) alongside Adele (Pat) Bentley (Scotland) and Jenny Cobb from the alpaca community.

One of its first objectives was to establish a register of camelids in the UK. However, this was not easy, with the base herd consisting of mainly imports with no records and ex-zoo stock with very sketchy, (probably inaccurate) records (Paul Rose, personal communication 4.5.2019).

It also published its own magazine entitled *The Camelids Chronicle* edited by Candy Midworth among others. British Camelids became the *British Llama and Alpaca Association*.in ??? However, the burgeoning commercial ‘alpacas community’, who started to import in significant numbers soon started to swamp the llama (an alpaca) ‘pet community’. Out went the concept of smallholder having fun and in came the ‘ostrich/angora-style marketing/accountancy led businesses’ (Paul Rose, personal communication 4.5.2019). This change of emphasis ultimately led to the formation of separate *British Alpaca* and *British Llama* societies in 2003 and 2006 respectively.

Founding directors of *BLS* were Donald Butler, Linda Johnson, Yvonne Parfitt, David Pryse and Paul Rose. All 3 organisations still exist today but have separate structures and what appear to be different order of objectives beyond general welfare of the species. The *British Alpaca Society* are a much larger organisation (1500 vs 45 Members 26/1/2019) and as a consequence a better resourced organisation. Reading their annual reports and talking to some founding members, they appear to have a stronger focus on stockmanship, showing, education/training, marketing and commercial opportunities. The *British Llama Society*, by contrast, appears driven more by enthusiastic hobbyist for whom the organisation seems to fulfil a social as much as any other role. It organised its own *Llamarama* and *Lamakhama* events, notably at Ascot with various competitions and hosted by its Chair – Ordell Safran (personal communication 2.2019).

The Society was behind the annual llama show at Newbury and exhibits at several others shows mentioned above. Numerous treks were organised, often with the added goal of raising money for charity (eg. Michael Bassett’s Woolacombe Sands trek in aid of Leukemia, Joe Connolly’s Lytham St. Anne’s trek in aid of the *RNLI*). Ordell Safran did a huge amount for many years in terms of organising social and other events, and promoting llamas generally. Her very popular annual Windsor Park Walks with permission of Her Majesty being a great highlight and which brought out llama owners from far and wide (Paul Rose, Personal communication 4.5.2019). Annual treks were also organised in Nottinghamshire (by Vivienne Ives) and one to the top of Cairngorm was organised by Malcolm Curtis in 2002 (*Camelids Chronicle*, 56, 1 (2002), p.7). In recent years, these appear to have fallen by the wayside. Some regions have been more active than others although this has varied over time. In the late 1990s and early 21st century, the South East, Midlands and West regions were holding monthly meetings (see *Camelids Chronicle*) but again this appears to have lapsed in recent years.

It has been suggested that BLS indeed emerged out of a growing rift between those who were motivated to focus the Register on only llamas attaining an agreed standard and those who wanted a more inclusive organisation. However, for Mary Pryse to write

“I have banged on for years about... and the importance of conformation and phenotype when selecting animals for breeding. It has always fallen on deaf ears. ‘They are just pets’ is the constant reason. I think there is an embarrassing ignorance among our members and maybe even some breeders regarding what is desirable and what is not”.

suggests there remained concerns by some in the Society about the direction llama breeding was still being taken by some. Such a concern to llama breeding was not new or confined to the UK.

As far back as 1858, Mr Benjamin Gee critically wrote ‘llamas hitherto have been too much regarded as curiosities or ornaments for gentleman’s parks’ rather than animals of considerable commercial potential and writing in 2005, American, Daniel Powell expressed concerns about what he described a ‘chaotic breeding free for all’ and ‘the desperate need for a sophisticated and ethical approach to llama breeding’. As a stockman with a passion for breed development and breed presentation he was disheartened by ‘the rampant out-crossing and mix & match approach’ that the typical llama breeder had hitherto employed.

‘It was as if llama breeders existed in a vacuum, isolated from all other livestock industries as well as from the breadth of that knowledge those industries had to share’

In the interests of balance, there are some who take a different view especially in respect of what they refer to as responsible cross breeding and suggest that had recognition be given to these types (as in the dog world with cockapoos, etc.) things might have been different. After all, crosses of male llama/female alpaca (*Huarizo*) and male alpaca/female llama (*Misti*) had been common place in indigenous societies and, if the truth be known, most of today’s popular llamas are products of this somewhere down the line.

There were certainly some who were driven by the commercial imperative creating new business opportunities (*The Daily Telegraph*, 1st September 2002). Today, both *BAS* and *BLS* support the *British Camelid Association* who continue to provide a representative lobby for camelid owners as a whole supporting research and welfare. Finally, a *Camelid Vets Association* was formed in 1994 to help support professionals working with camelid owners in the UK.

The popular image of the llama as rather odd and unpredictable throughout this history in the modern world, appears to remain both its strength and Achilles heel. Earlier, I mentioned the first description of llamas in the UK being a negative one. This was to continue and apart from positive comments about them being relatively easy to halter and lead, have generally been described in a derogatory way. Goldman (*ibid*) wrote

‘It is supplied by Nature with saliva in such large quantities, that it spits it out on every occasion; this saliva seems to be the only offensive weapon that the harmless creature has to testify its resentment... this fluid, which, though probably no way hurtful, the Indians are much afraid of it. They say, that wherever it falls, it is of such acrimonious nature, that it will either burn the skin or cause dangerous eruptions’

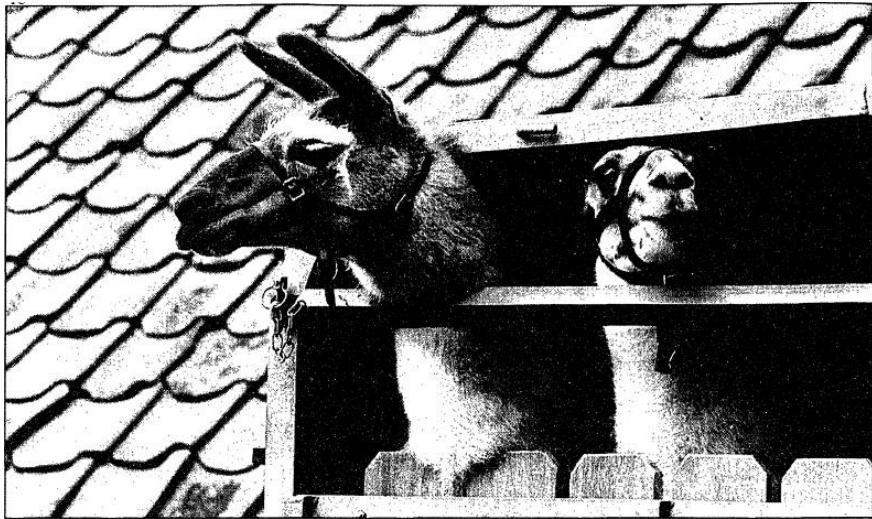
In 1899, the *Illustrated London News* (8th April) described them as ‘very unpleasant animals’. 13 years later in 1912, the *Manchester Guardian* (12th March) described them as ‘having all the bad traits of camels – bad tempers, stupidity, obstinate refusal to work’ and ‘having an objectionable habit of spitting’.

An attempt was made to enhance the image and awareness of llamas’ qualities via a *Llamakhana* organised in June, 1989 at the home of Peter Isaac in Bildeston, Suffolk. This was no doubt linked to the importation of llamas from Eastern Europe and their pending auction sale at Stonleigh mentioned earlier. Sadly, it all went rather wrong according to reports in *The Times* (12 June), *The Observer* (14 November) and *Manchester Guardian* (12/6/1989), due to the lack of cooperation of the animals with their owners. The report further reported that a llama could ‘hit you with spit at 4 foot with a foul smelling spray’. This perception no doubt inspired a solicitor who bought one of the 7 surplus to requirement being auctioned by Mary Chipperfields Circus in Over Wallop, near Andover in 1980 to

train to spit at disliked neighbours over the garden fence. (*The Guardian* 20 Nov 1980: 6). Another Lamakhana event was held at Manor Farm, Notts. in 2001 (*Camelids Chronicle* 2001) as well as a number of other well attended Society events mentioned earlier in the chapter.

Paul Rose recalls an interesting, albeit sad, account of the uphill battle to change commonly held perceptions of llamas when he writes:

When I joined the original British Camelids committee, I made it one of my first jobs to write to every llama-keeping zoo to arrange a visit and discuss the way llamas were being raised in pets corners with the inevitable consequences. I visited several throughout the country, but it was only when I arrived at one small zoo in Suffolk that the manager was very open and honest: "For us it's a win-win situation... with the baby llama in pets corner being bottle-fed we attract crowds of little children and their mums. When the llamas get bigger and start spitting, they go behind a fence and then attract crowds of school children pushing each other forward to get spat at!"



Two contenders anxiously await their turn along with the cream of Britain's llama population at yesterday's competition at Billesdon, Suffolk

PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN REDDELL

Spitting image of love and hate at llama show

Eyewitness

Shyama Perera

"Rupert, if you bite me, I'll bite you back," shouted the llama in jeans as the incensed llama bared its buck teeth at her before chomping down on his half-head butting his rival in love.

The amorous beast was quickly led away to the show ring and the llama in hand continued. At last, the Rupert spot on the half head of his owner, Mr Peter Isaac.

"It seems to me that two llamas in a bush is better than a llama in the hand," a bemused Mr Isaac said.

Angry llamas can hit you with a spit at about four feet. It doesn't have to be a fine smelling spray, projected upwards by their startling long, downward-curving nostrils and protrude like the side of a salami from the nose.

That is why it wasn't for llamas' teeth that the people of Billesdon, Suffolk, turned out that day.

We were witnessing the first ever British Llama Association competition. All three were males and his peers would attempt a llama slalom, showjumping, and racing.

All three are extremely difficult for animals with large heads, bony shoulders and mercurial temperaments. It's a bit like putting a muzz-

le on Dame Edna Everage and asking her to compete at a meeting of the Amateur Alpine Association.

Angry llamas rarely look ahead of them, let alone down, when they are excited or in argumentative natures. As the electronic clock was about to tick over, the first competitors entered the ring, confusion reigned.

Rupert was delighted to produce a commentary if only I knew what was going on."

We were witnessing the first ever British Llama Association competition. All three were males and his peers would attempt a llama slalom, showjumping, and racing.

Rupert meant him to be the best llama which had the tendency to stick his nose in everybody's business. The animal was dealt a deaf blow, with his tail and kicked

soundly in the chest. "See years its ugly head again," explained Mr Isaac. "He was born with it."

"Perhaps you could find out what's happening and let them, let alone down, when they are excited or in argumentative natures. As the electronic clock was about to tick over, the first competitors entered the ring, confusion reigned.

The llamas were put on starting orders; at last a little organza was heard. A few took round the course.

Most eyecatching was Percival, a \$22,000 black and white spotted black alpaca with a stomach only inches off the ground. With him was a llanacross, a young goat learning its lesson.

Rupert meant him to be the best llama which had the tendency to stick his nose in everybody's business. The animal was dealt a deaf blow, with his tail and kicked

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Fig. 17 - Perera, Shyama. *The Guardian* (1959-2003); London (UK) [London (UK)] 12 June 1989: 20.

[Note Dr Dick Clearly should read Dr Dick Chandler]

My research suggests that this was not the popular image of the llama in North America which may, at least in part account for its greater respect and popularity. Writing as early as 1838 a commentator in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* (reproduced in the *New York Herald* October 4, 1838, Vol. IV, Issue 123) wrote:

for the **Llama** is the only creature employed by man that he dares not strike.

If it happens (which is very seldom) that an Indian wishes to obtain, either by force or threats what the **Llama** will not willingly perform, the instant the animal finds itself affronted by word or gesture, he raises his head with dignity, and without attempting to escape ill treatment by flight, (the **Llama** is never tied or fettered) he lies down turning his looks towards heaven. Large tears flow freely from his beautiful eyes, sighs issue from his breast, and in half or three quarters of an hour at most he expires. Happy creatures, who so easily avoid suffering by death! Happy creatures, who appear to have accepted life on condition of its being happy! The respect shown these animals by the Peruvian Indians amounts absolutely to superstitious reverence. When the Indians load them, two approach and caress the animal, hiding his head that he may not see the burthen on his back. If he did he would fall down and die. It is the same in unloading. If the burthen exceeds a certain weight, the animal throws itself down and dies. The Indians of the Cordilleras alone possess enough patience and gentleness to manage the **Llama**. It is doubtless from this extraordinary companion that he has learned to die when overtired.—*Foreign Quarterly Review*.

8Fig. 18

Fortunately, the often zany, eccentric, humorous image of llamas in popular social media that I addressed in an earlier issue of *Llama Link* now appears to be giving way to a more positive one of a gentle, intelligent, sensitive creature. However, as alluded to earlier, their unusual traits can also be their endearing and interesting features. No-one can reasonably deny that their running style at times can appear down right daft and certainly has me bursting into laughter when they ‘pronk’ around the paddock on a summer’s evening. Likewise with some of their expressions. I mention it here only to help identify a changing popular image, I address it as a potentially successful marketing issue in a forthcoming article I have already penned for *Llama Link*..



Fig. 19 -- Hillview Llama Jack proves how gentle llamas can be even with strangers and indoor setting

A measure of gaining public consciousness maybe their appearance on the popular BBC radio soap The Archers when Phil Archer's lambs got attacked by a fox. Recordings of llama noises were taken at Cotswold Llamas and Paul Rose provided several story lines based on true incidents! (Paul Rose Personal communication 4.5.2019)

Llamas, in this new positive guise as animals of interest and intelligence, started to appear usually as guest exhibits at agricultural shows making their first appearance at the Royal Show (Stoneleigh) in 1990 (*The Times*, 23 June 1990) and Henley and District in 1991 (*The Daily Telegraph*, 15 September 1991). A few more shows supported competitions or exhibition of the animals such as the Great Yorkshire (Harrogate), Royal Welsh (Builth Wells), Midland Counties (Shrewsbury), Sailisbury, Kenilworth and District, Moreton in the Marsh, Edenbridge & Oxted, North Somerset, Staffordshire (Stone), Cumberland (Penrith) and Rutland shows but apart from the North Somerset one and the annual British Llamas Show at the Royal Berkshire Show in Newbury have not sustained that interest with very few entries in remaining competitions. I have recently explored the reasons for this and made some comparisons with the North American scene where shows are very popular and well attended and staged throughout the year. It appears largely due to absence of commercial imperative, concerns over bio security, problems associated with transportation and a whole raft of lesser reasons explained more fully in my Report (see: <https://llamas.yolasite.com/resources/BLS%26showing7.pdf>). a serious as well as fun, but not eccentric profile which too many owners in my view play up to. They sometimes present their llamas quirky and mad as a way to attracting attention. Shows and competitions work for the Pony Club, why not llamas? Organised by the right people in the right way I feel shows can work but it needs a younger profile, wider range of activities and events leading up to them such as handling courses and graded competitions at the local level with something for everyone from novice handlers to serious breeders. Above all, it needs a more positive and serious, as opposed to eccentric, quirky image



These, not untypical pictures, are less likely to attract young members than the one below from the US promotion film *Llama Nation*.



Or this one from a Pony club event.

Around this same time (1990s on) , llama trekking, popular in North America, took off in a number of locations around the UK. Unfortunately on this small isle there has never been the scope to develop these to those in some of the U.S. National Parks that organise treks lasting up to and occasionally beyond a month. The earliest trekking businesses I found reference to were at Thetford Forest, Norfolk (*The Times*, 25 October, 1995) and one near Scarborough operating in the same decade. I suspect there were several more that were started and short lived or only operated in a low key way/scale, etc. Amongst those achieving wider prominence and recognition were: *Ashdown Forest Llama Park*, *Bluecaps Llamas* (Sussex), *Catanger Llamas* (Northants 1997 to date), *Golden Valley Llamas* (Gloucestershire), *Lakeland Llamas* (Cumbria), *Nidderdale Llamas* (Yorkshire 2009 to date) *Severn Wye* (Gloucestershire 2007 to date), *Surrey Hill Llamas* (Surrey) and *UK Llamas* (Dorset).

Recent years have seen the upshot of many more small scale enterprises (sometimes offering familiarisation programmes, animal assisted therapy, etc. as well as or as alternative to treks) such as: *Balmy Llama Farm* (Lancashire), *Black Rock Llamas* (North Wales), *Briery Hill* (Gloucestershire), *Dartmoor Llamas* (Devon), *Exmoor Llamas* (Devon), *Faster Lente Llamas* (Cambs.), *Hillview Llamas* (Cheshire), *Lakeland Llamas* (Cumbria), *Llama Adventures* (Staffs), *National Forest Llama Treks* (Derbyshire), *Nightingale Llamas* (Warwickshire), *Norfolk Llamas* (Norfolk), *Peak Hill Llamas* (Derbyshire), *Pembrokeshire Llamas* (West Wales), *Two Hoots Llamas* (Mid Wales) and *Watertown Llamas* (Devon). (*BLS Business Directory* 2019).

It has been hard to pin down the cost of a llama at these different periods of history. We know that in October, 1851, Lord Derby's llamas fetched between £33 and £65 and that in 1858 Mr Gee sold some of his imports for a mere £25 each although one entrepreneur was able to more than double the price to £60 on resale. As the novelty value of the llama started to wane so did its value. Mention was made earlier of a llama sold at auction in 1872 for £15. Unfortunately, I have no information of what gender, age or condition this llama was in but clearly their monetary value went in cycles. Some purchasers clearly fell for the idea of llamas making money for them but when the optimism faded so did their monetary value and so it was in the 20th century. More recently, *The Times* (October 13, 1988, p.7) mentions the auction of Pam Walker's *Maplehurst Llamas* at Stoneleigh fetching £87,885 for 27 lots and according to the *Daily Telegraph*, a Cumbrian farmer was paid £5K compensation when one of his llamas was killed by a low flying RAF jet! (*The Daily Telegraph*, November 29, 1989, p.1). Anecdotal evidence I have from a breeder around the same time suggests that at its zenith, £10K was not unknown for a llama and others have claimed that certainly for a period they were around £5-6K each although this fervour was short lived with prices falling with demand towards the end of the 20th century before recovering again for quality stock in very recent years. Perhaps a few early astute entrepreneurs made a good few bob out of llamas through advocating pyramid selling, as in the US, but they were probably very few with the majority getting their fingers burnt. Today, a good stud male can fetch around £2-3K and a young female £1-2K (ex VAT), considerably less than in Europe and parts of North America. Sales in the US reached their zenith

around 15 years ago with \$220K paid for *Newevo* in 2003. These dropped again before also picking up again with a record \$80K for *CTF Renegade's Vigilante* in 2017.

It has proved difficult to get to grips with the extent of llama ownership in the UK over the years. A University of Bristol undergraduate project, based on returns to a questionnaire came up with a figure of 727 llamas and 2778 alpacas (*Camelids Chronicle* 2002). This compared to a figure of around 2000 being banded around in *The Independent*, a few years earlier in 1995). I suspect it has not fluctuated that much in the years since apart from an upturn in very recent times. The *BLS* has since 1992 aimed to keep an up-to-date record via its Registration scheme but as it openly acknowledges, many owners are not members and many keepers fail to report any changes, despiteS various incentives and initiatives to encourage them to do so. Trying to identify breeders may help give a clue. Llama breeders in the UK of recent years I have been informed of include:

1960s - Hazel Ames (Norfolk), Mr Derek Wallis (Cheshire, from 1964-2006), Mr and Mrs Jagger (Shropshire) and Pam and Geralnd Walker *Maplehurst Llamas* (Sussex -1995-2008). **Maggie and Mike Warner (Carlton Llama Farm, Bury St Edmunds)**

1970s- Paul Rose *Roseland Llamas* (Cotswold Llama Farm Gloucestershire -1999, Roseland Llamas Devon to 2009), Ruth Ruck (North Wales 1974-198?), Tim Walker (Owner) Midway Manor and Derek Williams (Farm Manager) (Bradford-on-Avon) 80s-90s.

1980s – Pat Bentley (Cumbria and Scotland), Peter Bourne *Bremia Llamas* (Mid Wales from 1988 – to date), Gwyneth Hogger (Fynn Valley Llamas, Suffolk), Peter Isaacs (Scotland), Paul and Rachel Jaye *Llamas Llimited* (London), Linda Johnson (Ashdown Forest Llama Park, Sussex), Peter and Ann Knowles-Brown (*Lowther Llamas*, Scotland), Jane Methuen (Derbyshire from 1989 to date), Robin Pratt (West Wales), Ordell Safran *Ordellllamas* (Berkshire from 1984 to date),

1990s, new breeders included, Brenda Birmingham (*Llamaraty*), *Border Llamas* (Scotland to date), Jane and Allen Brown (**Brown Boy Llamas**, Shipston-on-Stour), Guy Davies-Bateman (Dorset), Elaine Hillson *Bryngwyn Llamas*, Richard (Dick) Chandler and Norma Chandler Paterson (*Winterbourne Llamas*), Tina O'Donnell *Bluecaps Llamas* (Sussex to date), Amanda Huntley and Robert Dewar *Golden Valley Llamas* (Gloucestershire, 2000-), Richard Cox *Hillview Llamas* (Cheshire 2009 to date), Anthea Hughes (*Llamarama* , Cheshire), Vivienne Ives (*Rushcliffe Llamas*, Notts., 1998-), Mary Walker *Lakeland Llamas* (Cumbria), Tom Tripp *Llama Land* (Cornwall, 2006?-2015), *Lowther Llamas* (Scotland 1990 to date), Sue Marrow (Cheshire), Julian and Candia Midworth (Surrey), Suzanne Benson *Nidderdale Llamas* (Yorkshire 2009 to date), Yvonne Parfitt *Yvonne Llamas* (Shropshire), Matthew Parris (Derbyshire 2000-), Caroline Pembro (also called *Llamarama*), David and Mary Pryce *Catanger Llamas* (Northants, 1994 to date), Pam Roe (North Wales), Jean Ruck, 2000-2009 - *Ashwood Forest Llamas* (Devon), *Berwyn Mountain Llamas* (North Wales), Alistair Fraser *SevernWye Llamas* (Gloucestershire), Annie Austen *Watertown Llamas* (Devon 2003 to date).

2010 onwards – Tina Gambell, *Faster Lente Llamas* (Cambs.), Neil Payne *West Wight Llamas* (Isle of Wight 2017 to date), Simon Hill, *Quinta Da Llama* (Isle of Wight 2017 to date).

Contributions to llama life were made in other ways of course such as Terry Crowfoot who pioneered operant conditioning techniques with training llamas to teach simple tasks like retrieving to more complex ones such as carting. Similarly, Julie Taylor-Browne (*Carthvean Alpacas*) practicing *Camelid Dynamic* techniques to build confidence, improve communication and establish cooperative

behaviours amongst llamas and humans. Phil and Fiona Davis for re homing unwanted and berserk male llamas, Jane Brown, Linda Johnson, Rodney Newth, David James and Vivienne Ives administration (secretary, Chair, Treasurers, Registrations respectively).

Spinning llama wool has only ever been carried out on a very small scale in the UK with several of the above named companies producing hand crafted products Fiona Davis, Amanda Huntley and Caroline Pembro.

It is perhaps worth mentioning some of the studs of note of this recent era. Mention has already been made of *Crackerjack*. *BlackJack*, *Esprit*, *Primo* and *Maximus* were other prolific and popular *Roseland* bred studs, as were *Preacher*, *Winston*, *Silverado* and *DJ* (*Ordell Llamas* bred studs) and in more recent times (*Watertown's Talisman*, *Benito*, *Rossi*, *Nauhl*),

Apologies to any I have accidentally left out in all of these listings.

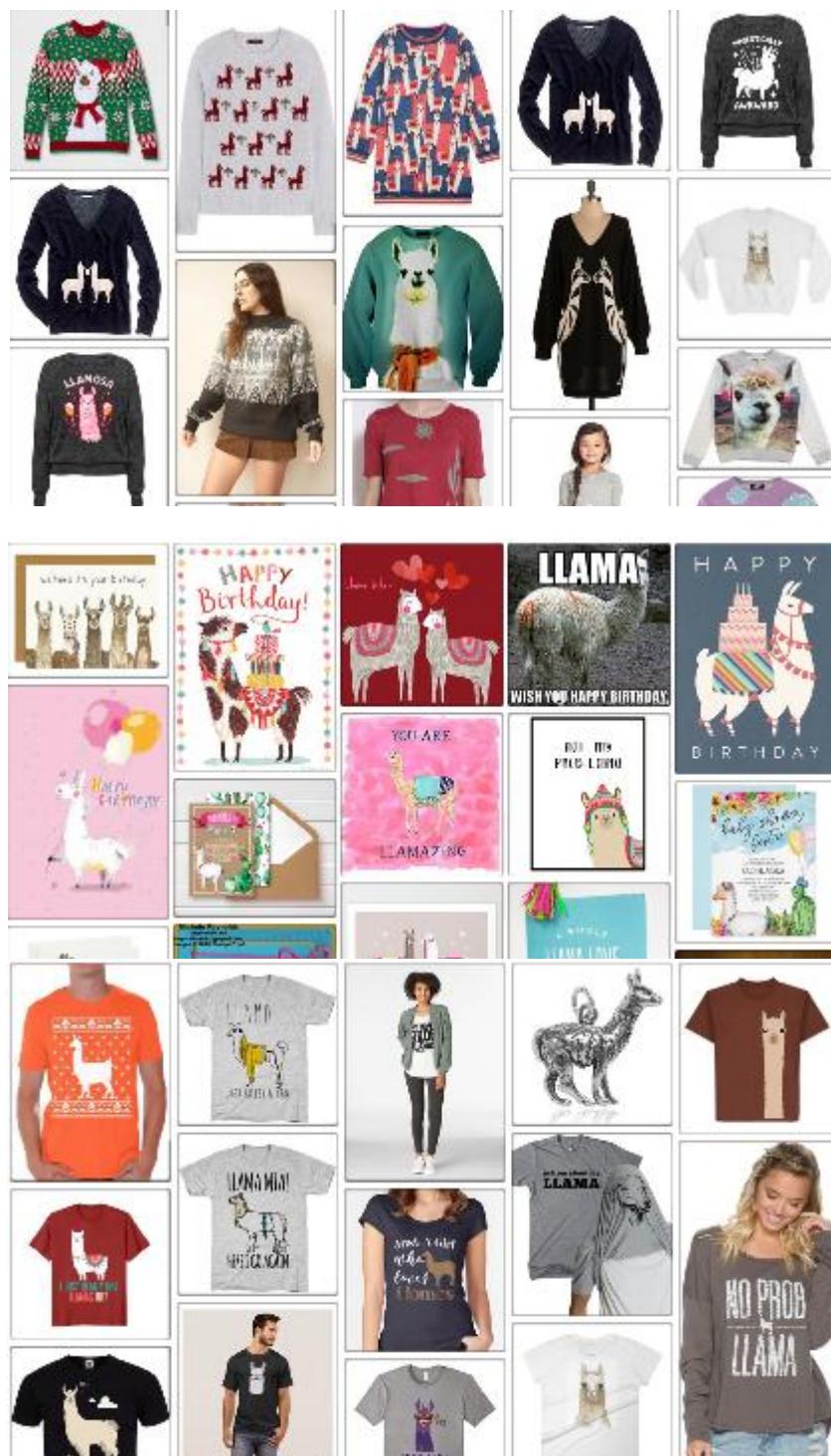
Bringing us right up to date, 2015-2019 has been an unprecedented era for the popularity of llamas in one form or another. Not just in the UK but globally numerous enterprises have set up trekking llamas, making appearances at weddings and other functions, animal assisted therapy in both the UK, Australasia, North America and continental Europe. Today, you can find over 1000 'llama related' websites and 100 *Facebook* sites (see: <https://llamas.hillviewllamas.co.uk/Websites-and-Pages.php>).

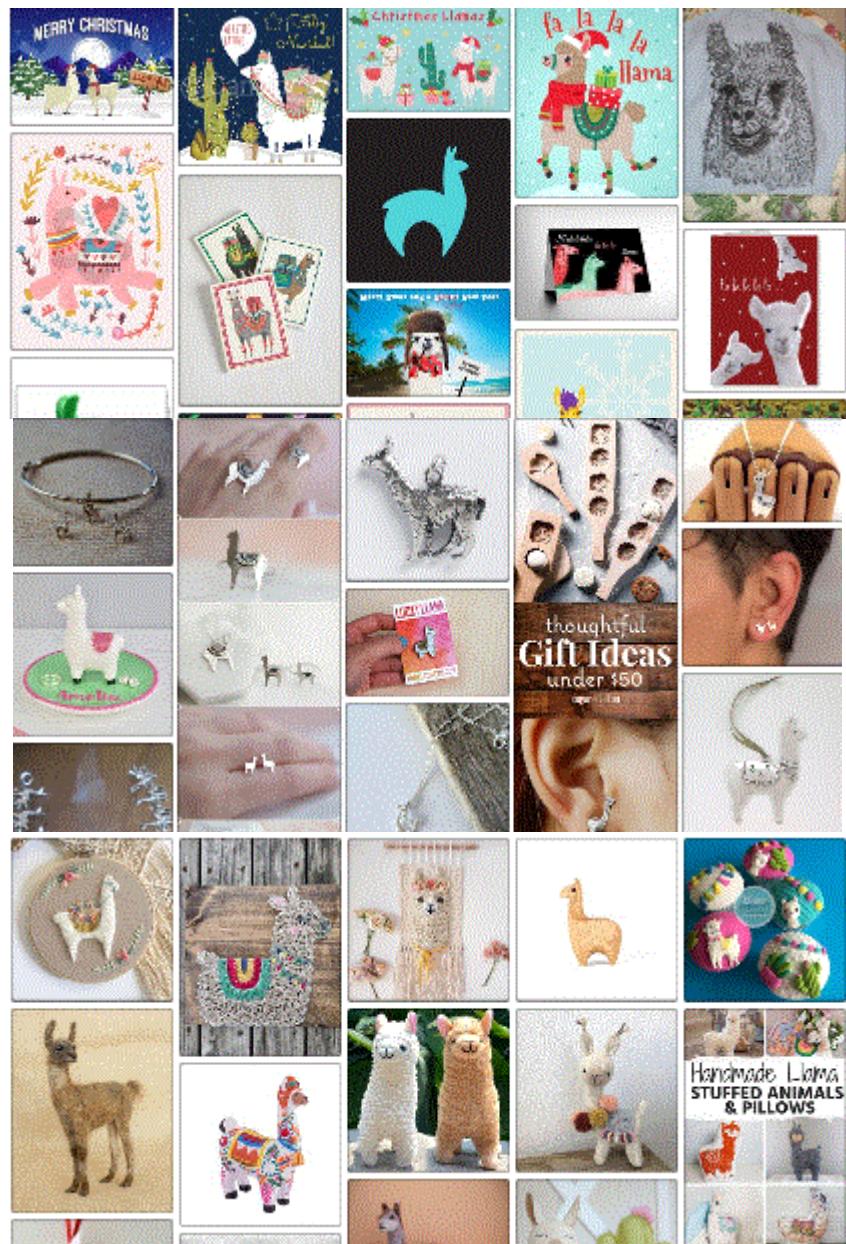


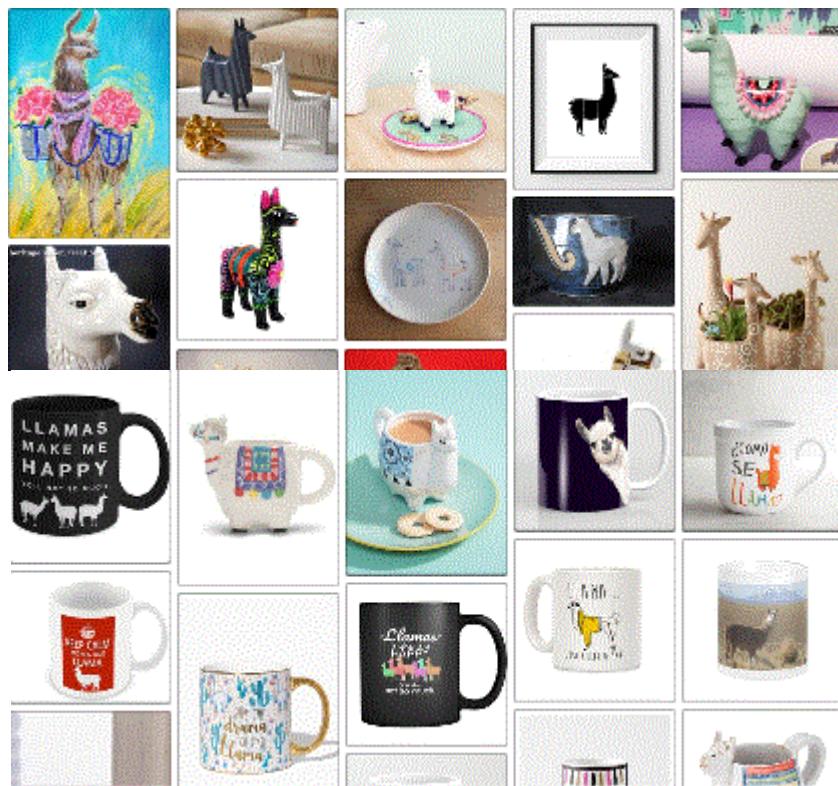
Fig. 20 - Llama organisations logos from <https://www.hillviewllamas.co.uk/Websites-and-Pages.php>

Recently, I wrote on the BLS *Facebook* site, ‘you would have to reside in darkest Africa or deepest Amazon jungle not to know that llamas are currently ‘trending’. Data taken from my llama merchandise database (accessible via <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/richardcox0905/>) you can find: 517 drawings/prints/paintings, 22 sculptures/figurines of llamas, 35 other craft products (inc. Christmas tree decorations, embroidery, feltings, etc.), 35 items of bedding (bed sheets, pillow cases, duvet covers), 64 children’s fiction books, 17 children’s wear (onesies, bibs, suits, etc.), 35 cardigans, 125 drinking mugs, 92 T-shirts, 23 items of footwear (socks, slippers, etc.), 35 of headwear (scarves, hats), 9 dresses and skirts, 4 blouses, 4 items of underwear (knickers and underpants), 5 items of swimwear, 26 items of nightwear (pyjamas, night dresses, etc.) 27 food products (chocolate llamas, cookies, cup cakes, etc.), 62 llama themed greetings cards, 62 items of jewellery, 84 children’s toys, 40 signs, 20 valentine products and 313 items I didn’t know where to place. Therefore under miscellaneous are included baking tins, bath mats and shower curtains, calendars, cool boxes, gift vouchers (to trek, therapy session etc.), lamp shades, oven gloves, pastry cutters, plant holders, videos, water bottles, and even tea pot covers. There are also 3 different baby shower party packages, 10 children’s llama themed birthday llama kits (table cloth, balloons, hats, bun cases, crackers, napkins, etc.). One has to wonder how far the imagination will stretch and how long the interest will last but at least it has put to the forefront of public consciousness, just how wonderful these animals are.

Collage of llama products







The Future

Hopefully, the future remains bright but will not be without its challenges. Diseases, as always, will pose threats and challenges regarding bio security. As we have already seen in earlier periods, political unrest and the general state of the economy will effect popularity and extent of exotics. Continued social and economic polarisation of the population will result in greater leisure and disposable spending power of the ‘haves’ to engage in llama ownership and activities such as trekking whilst the ‘have not’s will be increasingly be marginalised from these activities as land becomes more scarce and expensive to access, maintain, etc. New Government legislation regarding animal welfare whilst welcomed in principle by all responsible keepers may well make small llama enterprises hosting visitors uneconomical. And, of course, who knows what’s round the corner?

- (1) This article has been abridged from an introductory chapter on ‘Llamas: Past and Present’ in a forthcoming book on llamas written by the author. The chapter covers a much longer time frame and includes sections on the natural history of the llama and its forbears, the process of domestication, the llama in early Inca and Spanish civilisations. A time line has been produced to accompanying this article indicating detailed sources of evidence and in some cases reproduced images at : <http://www.hillviewllamas.co.uk/chronology-of-dates.php>. Sadly, I have struggled to get much information from many long-standing llama owners I wrote to but wish to acknowledge the input on recent years from Peter Bourne, Mary Pryse, Norma Chandler, Paul Rose and Annie Austen. In order to achieve a fair and

balanced account of events, I welcome comments (additions, corrections, etc.) before finalising the book chapter. I can be contacted at richard.cox@zen.co.uk or by phone on 07985854393.