

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
COLCHESTER ZOO
EST. 1963

COLCHESTER ZOO
BY LYNSEY BESENT

From childhood visits,
Enjoying feeding the Elephants with currant buns.
To visiting to see the baby Elephants,
Jambo and Kito, as an adult.

A beautiful White Tiger, so majestic to see,
Lions and Tigers and Bears oh my.
To cheeky Squirrel Monkeys,
And Chimps (who remind me of my relatives).

Rajang the Orangutan, with his sad but loving face,
Always seeming to long for a hug, putting his hands to the glass to say hello.
Penguins waddling round slowly,
Then swimming fast like an arrow through the water.

The Spirit of Africa and the Kingdom of the Wild,
With its Zebra, Ostrich, Camels, Rhino, Giraffes and Pygmy Hippo.
My favourite Red pandas, always snoozing and
hiding from me,
And the Sea Lion tunnel to walk through and view.

From running around with excitement as a child,
To a more sedate pace now I'm on crutches.
But still loving each visit,
Seeing my animal friends.

Taking photos to enjoy long after I've left,
Following the Zoo's online news.
Delighted with each new birth,
Sad at each loss or animal moved on.

Worrying how the animals would cope,
Without all the visitors when COVID-19 hit.
Meeting each new addition,
From Sloths to baby Aardvarks.

From Wolves to Rainbow Lorikeets,
The Sun Bears you rescued and freed from their crates,
The beautiful Golden Lion Tamarins,
To the Zeedonks of my childhood.

To the Donkeys and Llamas now,
And not forgetting the cheeky Meerkats.
Or the huddles of sleepy Lemurs,
With their stripy tails curled over their backs.

So many animals to come and see,
So many years of joy you've given to me.
Now my cousin's children love to visit,
A new generation in love with your Zoo.

I will never forget the experiences,
Of getting close to the animals.
Of seeing the ones I would never have seen,
And learning their names and about their lives.

I love that the Zoo helps conservation,
And endangered animal breeding programmes.
Trying to ensure a future for these animals and for generations to come,
So they might see the beauty of these animals and learn and care too.

Happy 60th birthday Colchester Zoo and cheers to many more.

