

# Zoo benefits from Actis Insulation Treatment

A zoo which featured in a blockbuster film starring Scarlett Johansson and Matt Damon is keeping its animals and school visitors warm and reducing its fuel bills with help from insulation company Actis.



Benjamin Mee

Family owned Dartmoor Zoo, which is set in 33 acres of woodland and featured on BBC TV and has been the subject of an internationally bestselling book, called on Actis to help it reduce its vast running costs.

It currently costs nearly £31,000 a year to heat and power the entire zoo – of which approximately half is spent on heating the reptile and monkey houses and the education centre. The reptile house alone costs over £11,000 to heat, with the monkey house costing around another £2,500 and the education centre close to a relatively modest £1,500.

Benjamin Mee's family bought the zoo in 2006, from the proceeds of the sale of his mother's five

bedroom house in Surrey, as an adventure and as a real life outlet for Benjamin to use his MSc in Science Communication.

As the zoo is shortly to become a registered charity, Actis wanted to help it to make a considerable dent in its running costs – and the donation of 240 sq m of its new dual tested dual performance HControl Hybrid vapour control layer with built in insulation in the walls and roof should help reduce bills in the monkey, reptile house and education centre considerably.

The 9 sq metre monkey house is home to two Vervet monkeys, and the 90 sq m reptile house needs to be kept at a constant 24°C to replicate the natural habitat of its residents, consisting of reptiles, invertebrates and small mammals. The education centre plays host to more than 10,000 school children a year, with the aim of inspiring young visitors to take an interest in ecology and engage with the environment into their adult lives.

As well as saving the zoo money, there are clearly environmental benefits to reducing the amount of heating required, something close to Ben's heart as an ecologist and a man keen to minimise the impact of his zoo on the beautiful woodland environment.

H Control Hybrid combines both insulation and air tightness properties, is accepted by the NHBC and addresses the new Part L requirement for continuity of



insulation and avoidance of thermal bridges.

Benjamin Mee added: "A number of years ago I lived in France where Actis is based and used their products – to great effect – to insulate my house. So when we took on the zoo project I wanted to see similar costs efficiencies here as those I'd enjoyed in my home.

"In some ways we're kindred spirits when it comes to doing what

we believe in even if others think we're crazy. I stuck my neck out and risked everything to buy a zoo and Actis has been shown to be right in its approach and, so far, thanks to a lot of hard work and determination, the same seems to be true for our zoo."

The Hybrid range is complemented by a free online simulator, found at <http://hybrid.insulation-ACTIS.com>, which enables users to estimate the U-value of a project in seconds.



The reptile house will benefit from lower heating bills thanks to the installation of Actis' H Control Hybrid