

The lions sleep tonight

by Chris Macsween

The King of the Beasts is in decline

LionAid, a new Dover based charity, sets its sights on aiding the survival of these big cats

LionAid is a new Dover based charity dedicated to the conservation of lions.

Over the past 50 years Africa's lion populations have plummeted from over 200,000 individuals back in the 1960's, to fewer than 20,000 today.

The main reason for the decline in lions in Africa has to do with conflict arising from expanding human and livestock population, the decrease of habitat, infection with diseases carried by domestic animals and of course, trophy hunting.

There have been many conservation foundations working to improve the lot of the African lion, but sadly, to date, the declines have not abated, in fact the rate of decline in lion numbers is actually accelerating.

A new approach is clearly needed, and LionAid is committed to identifying issues that **WILL** make a difference, and executing meaningful solutions to these issues.

Run by two main trustees, Chris Macsween, who lives and works on the charity from her Dover office and by Dr Pieter Kat, a renowned lion conservationist and geneticist, LionAid seek to do things differently.

How LionAid are saving lions today:

- By educating the general public as to what is actually happening to our top predator, there remains an overall degree of unawareness of the huge decline in lions.
- By convincing the UK Government to effect a ban on the importation of lion trophies into the UK. Already LionAid has achieved a debate on lions in Parliament and is now in dialogue with the Minister and a growing number of MPs, with the plan that the UK Government can, and will strengthen its support for the African Lion.
- By bringing pressure to bear on the hunting organisations to voluntarily stop lion trophy hunting.
- By lobbying the IUCN to change their present status of African lions from "vulnerable" to "endangered" on their Red List.
- By according the lion "World Heritage Species" status with UNESCO.

LionAid has recently been described as "punching way above its weight", receiving praise that such a small Dover charity has already gained the attention of the UK Parliament.

The MP for Dover and Deal, Charlie Elphicke, recently said that LionAid is "a great charity and I am very pleased to see that such a body now exists to help campaign to protect such majestic creatures"

LionAid is now looking to take part in a recently launched, innovative scheme which aims to help Dover's jobless young people into work by offering a work placement to a young person if a suitable candidate can be found.

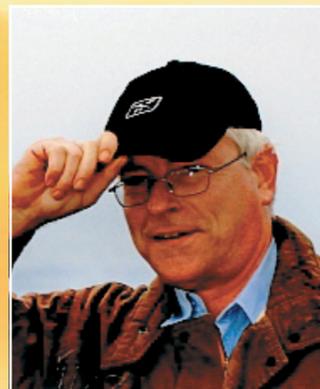
LionAid is a charity and it depends on donations to keep its important work going, and from time to time it holds local events to raise funds and awareness of the plight of lions.

The next two events in the calendar are:

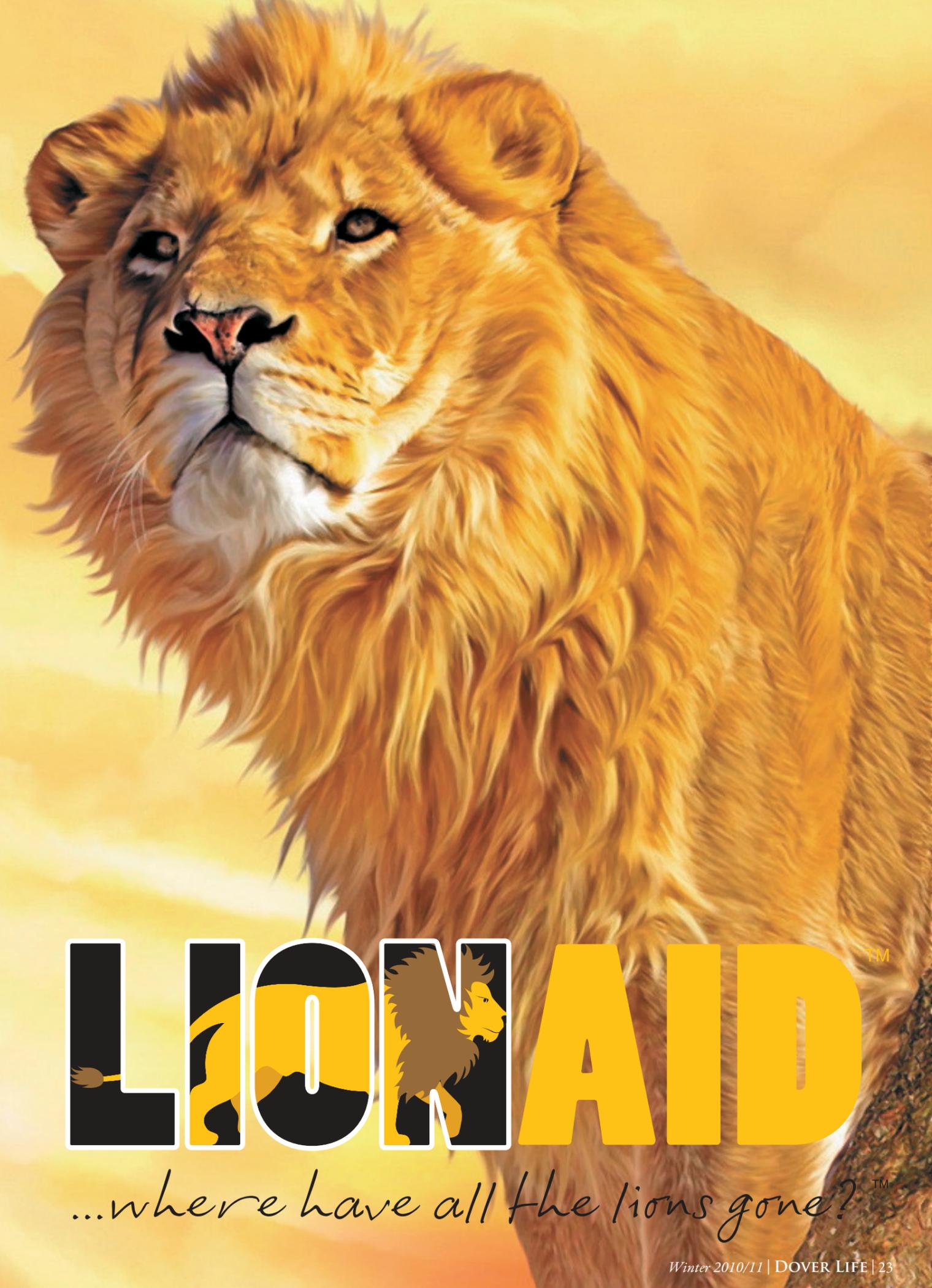
LionAid Art Exhibition and Sale at the Burlington Hotel in Folkestone on the 26th and 27th February 2011.

The LionAid Spring Ball, a Black Tie Dinner and Dance at the Abbots Barton Hotel in Canterbury on the 14th May 2011.

For further information on the work of the charity, to view and book tickets for planned events and to make those important donations to LionAid, please visit their website www.lionaid.org or email them on info@lionaid.org



▲ (Left to right) Chris Macsween and Dr Pieter Kat, the two main trustees of LionAid.



LIONAID

...where have all the lions gone?