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## British seek return of beaver

After 700 years without them, the British are going to make an attempt at re-introducing beavers to their country, and they are depending on an Ottawa trapper to show them how, reports Jane Taber in *The Citizen*, September 27.

Ed Narraway, of Ottawa, spent three days teaching a British environmental consultant the technique of "live-trapping" beavers.

Bryan Sage, the consultant who represents Friends of the Beaver, the charitable foundation in England which is funding the project, left for home recently armed with Mr. Narraway's expertise in the beaver field.

Two years ago, a British wildlife magazine decided to re-introduce the beaver to the country. The European beaver used to be common in England but for unexplained reasons, said Mr. Sage, became extinct around the thirteenth century.

"There's a tremendous interest in wildlife in England and many people are extremely interested in bringing the beaver back," he said.

Mr. Sage said about 11 other European countries had been successful in re-introducing the beaver. However, the beaver now living in those countries differs from beavers in Canada.

The distinction is in the way the nasal bones of the skull are formed. There is also a chromosome difference, said Mr. Sage, and therefore Canadian beavers and European beavers cannot mate.

So, the British beavers will be coming from Poland. For the past 20 years, said Mr. Sage, the Polish people had been breeding beavers in captivity and releasing them into the environment.

"They (the Poles) actually have a beaver farm and it's worked out quite well," said Mr. Sage. "We have to get them from Poland because we want to use the European beaver which is native to Britain."

But before the beavers arrive (probably a pair of them), Mr. Sage has to learn how the beavers can be caught, in case they become pests.

"If anything goes wrong with them when they've been re-introduced or if they start causing problems, we've got to know how to catch them," said Mr. Sage.

That is done with the use of a trap, Mr. Narraway describes as "an overgrown

mouse trap". And instead of cheese, tree branches are used for bait.

Mr. Narraway, 60, a retired civil servant, has been trapping beaver for the past 15 years. Since his retirement, he has worked on a contract basis with the National Capital Commission doing nuisance trapping for them.

He also live-traps beavers for a firm in Montreal, which in turn ships them to zoos all over the world. Consequently, Ottawa Valley beavers are now living in Japan, China, Germany, France and Italy. Mr. Narraway was so interested in the beavers, that on a vacation to Hawaii, he and his wife, Bunty, checked the zoo to see if they could recognize them.

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## Handicapped shine at international sports meet

Canadian athletes placed first at the international games for the physically disabled held in Stoke-Mandeville, England, recently.

Canada finished with 119 medals including 56 gold, followed by Poland with 51 medals and West Germany with 44. Canadian athletes established 35 world records that are still to be ratified by the governing body.

Yvette Michell of Vancouver registered the outstanding swimming performance at the games when she won all her five events — the maximum she could enter — in world record times for Class A blind swimmers.

The championships attracted about 400 handicapped athletes from 30 countries; the athletes are amputees, blind or suffer from cerebral palsy.

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## Canadian discovers another comet

Canada's one and only comet discoverer has done it again, reports Margaret Munro in *The Citizen*, September 21, 1979.

Rolf Meier, 26, of Ottawa was searching the skies recently near Almonte, Ontario, when he spotted a fiery comet heading into view from deep space.

The find was confirmed by Smithsonian Astrophysics Observatory, which sent a professional astronomer in Arizona hunting for what will become Meier's second heavenly namesake.

In April 1978, Meier became the first Canadian ever to discover a comet when he spotted Comet Meier 1978 F with a

telescope he built in company with the many prize-winning amateurs at the Indian River Observatory, located in a farmer's field in Almonte, just south of Ottawa.

"It took about 30 hours of sweeping the sky over 18 months to find this one," Meier said. "They come and go all the time and you just have to keep looking."

It is too early to tell which direction Comet Meier 1979 I is heading, as it must be spotted on three different nights to calculate its orbit and distance from earth.

Last year's discovery is still visible, Meier said, but it was heading back out into the universe after coming as close as it will to Earth last November.

Comets are considered the tail ends of the universe-creating process and are thought to resemble huge, dirty snowballs that are slowly melting away.

Meier, an electrical engineer, spends three or four evenings a week at the observatory.

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## Scottish world festival



North America's largest Parade of the Pipers marched through downtown Toronto August 15 as 2,000 pipers and drummers proceeded to the grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition.

The parade preceded the 1979 Scottish World Festival Tattoo, held August 16-19 at Toronto's Exhibition Stadium. The tattoo, a two-and-a-half-hour spectacle, featured the military bands and bagpipe bands from Scotland, Australia, Northern Ireland, England and Canada.