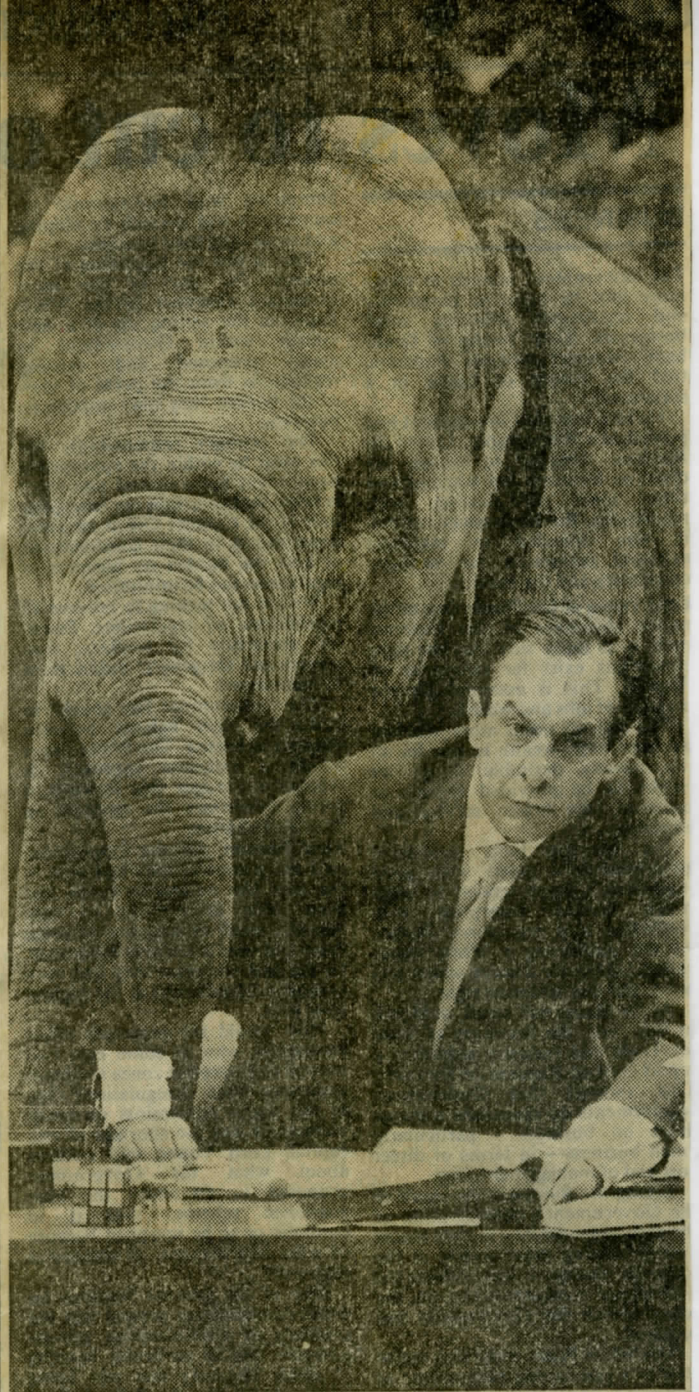


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THE



Alberto Vidal, a specimen of Urban Man, with Dilberta the elephant at London Zoo yesterday (Photograph: Chris Harris)

Urban Man finds his place in the zoo

By Alan Hamilton

Visitors to Regent's Park looked on in puzzled amusement yesterday as London Zoo unveiled its latest exhibit, a specimen of *Homo sapiens urbanus* on loan from Madrid.

The animal will be on display in its own enclosure on Saturday and Sunday; visitors will be able to watch it waking up, shaving, brushing its teeth, dressing in a dark suit and tie, and sitting at a desk shuffling papers.

This particular specimen is otherwise known as Alberto Vidal, a Spanish mime artist who has abandoned the traditional theatre in favour of airports, railway stations, and pavements; he was exhibited recently at a zoo in Miami. His performance at London Zoo forms part of this year's London

International Festival of Theatre.

"In a zoo, you study the animals' behaviour. I ask the public to look at my actions as if they were discovering life all over again," Mr Vidal said.

Passers-by who happened upon yesterday's preview did not really know what to make of it; one woman thought it was "really weird", while a party of schoolchildren giggled.

Watchers were, frankly, much more fascinated by the behaviour patterns of a herd of *Homo neanderthalis journalisticus*, an aggressive animal which constantly fights for top position in the pack, emits low unintelligible grunts and adopts a variety of curious acrobatic semi-crouching positions while stalking its prey.