

ADDENDUM (No 8)
TO “THROUGH THE EYES OF GARY HODGES” – February 2005

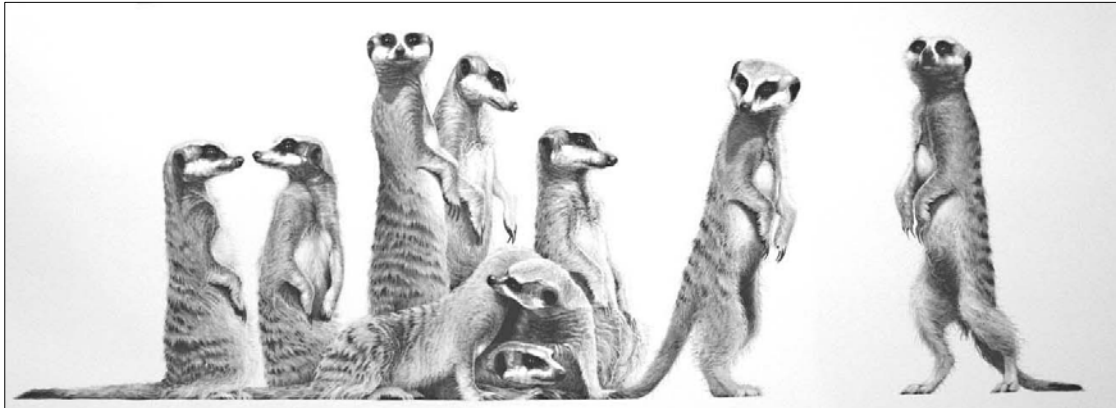
MEERKAT
(*Suricata suricatta*)

The Meerkat, or **Suricate**, is a member of the mongoose family. It is also known as a Sticktail and is found through much of southern Africa, especially in the central and western parts around the Kalahari Desert.

They are sociable little mammals and live in colonies, or gangs, of up to 30/40 individuals, are active during the day and otherwise live in large underground burrow complexes which they dig themselves (although they are happy to occupy the diggings of other animals). They have strong, non-retractable claws which are also used energetically to dig for food. They will often shift many times their own body weight of soil/sand in a day in search of insects, other invertebrates and small mammals; their diet also includes snakes, millipedes, birds, eggs and some plant roots.

Meerkats often stand on their hind legs using their tail for support, rather like a kangaroo. They are frequently seen in this position performing sentry duty, at least one of them on a mound or up a tree acting as lookout while the group forage for food or relax. However, some people now think that this duty might be more a matter of self-interest than being a hero for the group; having sounded the alarm, the sentry is often amongst the first into cover when danger appears.

[It is perhaps more often listed under the name *suricate*. It appears that the name *meerkat* is the Afrikaans derivative of an old Dutch word for monkey i.e. **meercatte**. *Meer* meant sea or lake (monkeys came from overseas) and *catte* meant cat. Literally, this presumably means that a meerkat, or monkey, was a sea/lake cat. Confused?]



- a) **Title:** Family
- b) **Released:** 31 January 2005
- c) **Image size:** 86.5 x 32.5 cm
- d) **Issue size:** 1250

This is Gary’s first print of the endearing Meerkat. It is a lovely and natural study. Each of the ten members of the group is in a different position and he regards it as his best composition in a long time. He wanted to create a lively but relaxed picture and is really *very* pleased with it.

It is one of the largest prints, being the same size as the original drawing, vying with the Nile Crocodile print. Printing it in a large format was a conscious decision to create maximum impact and because Gary was so pleased with the drawing.