
“Our Zoo News”

and Guide.

A MONTHLY CHRONICLE OF NEWS OF
CHESTER ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

Price 3d.

Annual Subscription 4/6d. post free.

NUMBER 86.

SEPTEMBER, 1948.



Nomad nursing “Maya” and “Marga” after he had christened them
on July 28th, 1948

The North of England Zoological Society,

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER.

Tel. Chester 1898.

September, 1948.

NEWS FLASHES.

Several new animals, birds and reptiles have arrived during the past month; amongst the animals were two very rare monkeys, a Red-backed Guenon and a Red-eared Guenon.

Another new arrival is a Ring-tailed Lemur, a very attractive specimen which was kindly presented to us by a Captain Carter of Wallasey. The Ring-tailed Lemur is sometimes known as the Madagascar Cat as it is usually found in Central Madagascar. This little animal is about the size of a small fox. It is an ashy-grey colour, darker on the back, and white on the face, chest and underparts, and as its name suggests, it has a long bushy tail with alternate broad black and white rings.

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The Mynah, which was mentioned in our last "Zoo News", has now been moved from the Reptile House to an aviary outside, and he is very friendly with visitors and is really a very clever mimic.

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A minor tragedy occurred when one of our Egyptian Geese flew into the Polar Bear enclosure. Rack and Ruin did not welcome their visitor and in less than two minutes he was no more! A warning to everyone that these two bears are not as harmless as they look, and given an opportunity would certainly treat a human being in the same manner.

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Molly, the elephant, is very attached to her mahout's small daughter, and will do almost anything for this little girl. One evening recently, we heard Molly trumpeting loudly from her house behind the courtyard, and Mr. Mottershead went to investigate; imagine his surprise when he found that Molly was quite alright but that the Mahout's little girl had fallen down some distance away and was crying, and Molly was trying to get to her to pick her up and comfort her.

The two baby lion cubs are growing rapidly and arouse a great deal of admiration from visitors. They are now on view to the public and have a small home of their own outside the lion enclosure. Every morning very early they are let out on to the lawns in front of the house and thoroughly enjoy themselves playing hide and seek with anyone who likes to play with them.

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Belinda, the baby Himalayan Bear, is a great favourite with everyone and will play with visitors for hours on end. She is a great climber and entertains everyone with her acrobatic tricks.

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Soon we shall have on view the two coyotes which arrived last March, as these animals have nearly finished their period of quarantine.

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Peter, the sealyham terrier, is still quite well and is seen every day by visitors who remember having seen him some years ago living with Mowgli the lion.

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The two Husky puppies which arrived earlier this year have grown quite large, and they are very friendly and like to be made a fuss of by everyone.

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We are just commencing to erect a new series of aviaries for many parrots which we have, but which unfortunately are not at present on show. A tropical bird-house will adjoin these outdoor aviaries.

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The ostrich caused quite a sensation the other day. Normally he is quiet and always seems very friendly, but on this day one of the Zoo staff saw a broken bottle which someone had very dangerously thrown into the enclosure, so he went into the enclosure to

remove the broken glass. Unfortunately the ostrich was not at all grateful and he took a running leap at the man and gave him a terrific kick in the chest. The man was knocked senseless by the force of the kick, and later had to receive hospital treatment for a very bad bruise.

Several of our birds are allowed to wander around the grounds and many visitors come and tell us that there are some big blue birds loose. These are the peacocks and they are far happier wandering where they please than being kept in an enclosure. Neither they, nor we, however, appreciate children and even some adults chasing these birds and trying to pull out their beautiful tail feathers. We do particularly ask all visitors not to allow children to chase the birds, and at the same time we would ask that the animals should not be teased or tormented in any way. It is surprising the number of people who are found prodding the animals and birds, and we are sure that the majority of you will agree that this is not only most unnecessary, but definitely wrong, especially as the animals cannot retaliate—if they could this would be the most effective way of stopping this teasing of animals as the tormentor would undoubtedly suffer most.

MORE ABOUT THE ZOO MONKEYS.

Last month you will remember I told you about the monkeys and their new home. Since then we have had quite a number of interesting additions to our already large family. It is about three weeks now since they first arrived in this country, but to see them playing happily one would think that they had lived at Chester Zoo all their lives.

The most interesting of our new acquaintances is a very beautiful creature whose home is in West Africa, the Red-backed Guenon. Guenons by the way are a species of monkeys who have received their French name because, as you will notice when you next visit the Zoo, of their habit of showing their teeth and pulling the most ridiculous faces, to be more precise grimacing. These monkeys are normally exceedingly shy, and very suspicious and easily alarmed if they scent human beings, so they are rather hard to obtain, and though there are many species of the Guenon type, the Red-backed is one of the most unusual and is rarely imported, so we are very proud of our specimen. He seems to know this, and is always ready to show himself off, and like a mannequin will sit and slowly turn round to let everyone admire him.

To look at he is quite large, about two to three feet tall, like Adolf (who incidentally does not think much of the new arrival, being jealous). He has a fine muscular body, a large round head, long limbs and a very long tail. He is covered with a thick blackish grey hair which has a very fine sheen and always looks as if it has just been brushed; his back is a brownish red, and surrounding his rather wise looking face he has a greyish fringe beard. Sometimes I imagine he looks like an Old Wizard out of the Arabian Nights, for unlike most Guenons he does not pull faces but just sits and stares round with a very knowing rather masterful air, and nods now and again as if to say, silently of course, "what fools these mortals be, standing behind that glass staring at me." If you watch him for long enough he will be almost sure to pivot slowly round, and show you his famous red back.

The Red-backed Guenon is arboreal in habit and lives in the tree tops, travelling at great speeds leaping from branch to branch in small bands like most of the Guenon tribe. His diet is fruit, young shoots with an occasional insect, wild honey, eggs and sometimes a young bird.

In the next compartment to the Red-backed Guenon you will find a pair of Patas Monkeys. These are also Guenons and certainly live up to their name. You should see them grimace, they must have elastic faces! I believe they are known as Soldier Monkeys and they certainly seem to go through a strict regimental drill, the only thing missing is the Sergeant Major. You will often find the Patas pair dancing the jitterbug, and jive fiends please note that they can "cut a rug" better than most of you, without the strange weird accompanying noisy Dance Band, and they know a few steps that a lot of you would give your eyes to be able to repeat. You should have no trouble in finding them. In colour they are a sandy-red, their faces and ears are pinkish with black bands across the nose and forehead. The outer surfaces of their arms are black, and the hands a dark brown. There are also peculiar tufts of grey hair behind the ears. In Senegambia and the Cameroons, their native home, Patas Guenons live in small bands, and here again soldierly instinct comes out as there is always a leader whom the others obey, and they keep to their own strip of territory, and according to authorities who study them, they defend themselves against other tribes and have been known to pelt human intruders with every available missile.

If you look at the newly constructed cage in the service passage of the Monkey House, you will see two of the prettiest creatures you are likely to see belonging to the Monkey family. One is a dainty little Putty-nose Guenon. This fascinating little monkey is very slenderly built, not more than a foot high, reddish-brown in colour, and as it chatters and plays with the Red-eared Guenon it reminds me of "Little Babet" from the beautiful French Fairy Tale by Mme. d'Aulnoy. "Babet" as most children know was a lovely princess who was for a time transformed into a monkey by the Fairy "Grimcrack." The Putty-nosed Guenon's companion is a Red-eared Guenon, a much smaller specimen than the Red-backed Guenon, with red ears. These two small monkeys are the best of friends, always full of mischief, quite tame and learning quite easily to understand their keeper.

Stepping outside the Monkey House, we find three more of the Monkey tribe. Between the Vultures and Belinda, the young Himalayan Bear, are a pair of Drills.

Drills live in West Africa from Senegambia to the Congo, and they are found in large companies and when fully grown are savage and ferocious. Ours are now only babies, and are quite tame and very attached to one another, and at the slightest cause of alarm they cuddle up together like the Babes in the woods. They are a light brown in colour, the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet being copper coloured; they have no hair on their faces which are black. These monkeys are closely related to the Mandrill, whose savagery and size make them a terror to the natives, but so far our little drills have shown none of the aggressive nature of their cousins. Their sole companion and dearest friend and protector is a young Guinea Baboon called "Jacko", the cheekiest monkey we have, but nevertheless a great favourite with the visitors, as he will perform all sorts of tricks for the children, and delights in reaching out to take a tasty tit-bit. He often tries to persuade his shyer friends to come with him, but although they imitate his antics, they keep a safe distance from the visitors, and if someone

alarms them in any way, "Jacko" is not slow to show his disapproval.

This young Guinea Baboon will probably like most of his species get quite ferocious when he gets older, but up to now he has only shown his dislike for one person—Belinda's keeper. Jacko used to live by himself next to Belinda and they were firm friends. Belinda liked to have a game with her keeper, and Jacko was jealous and used to fly into an awful rage while the romp was in progress. However, he seems to have forgotten all about it now that he has his shyer young friends to look after, and he now seems quite unperturbed when Belinda's keeper goes into her cage for their daily romp.

J. Moffatt.

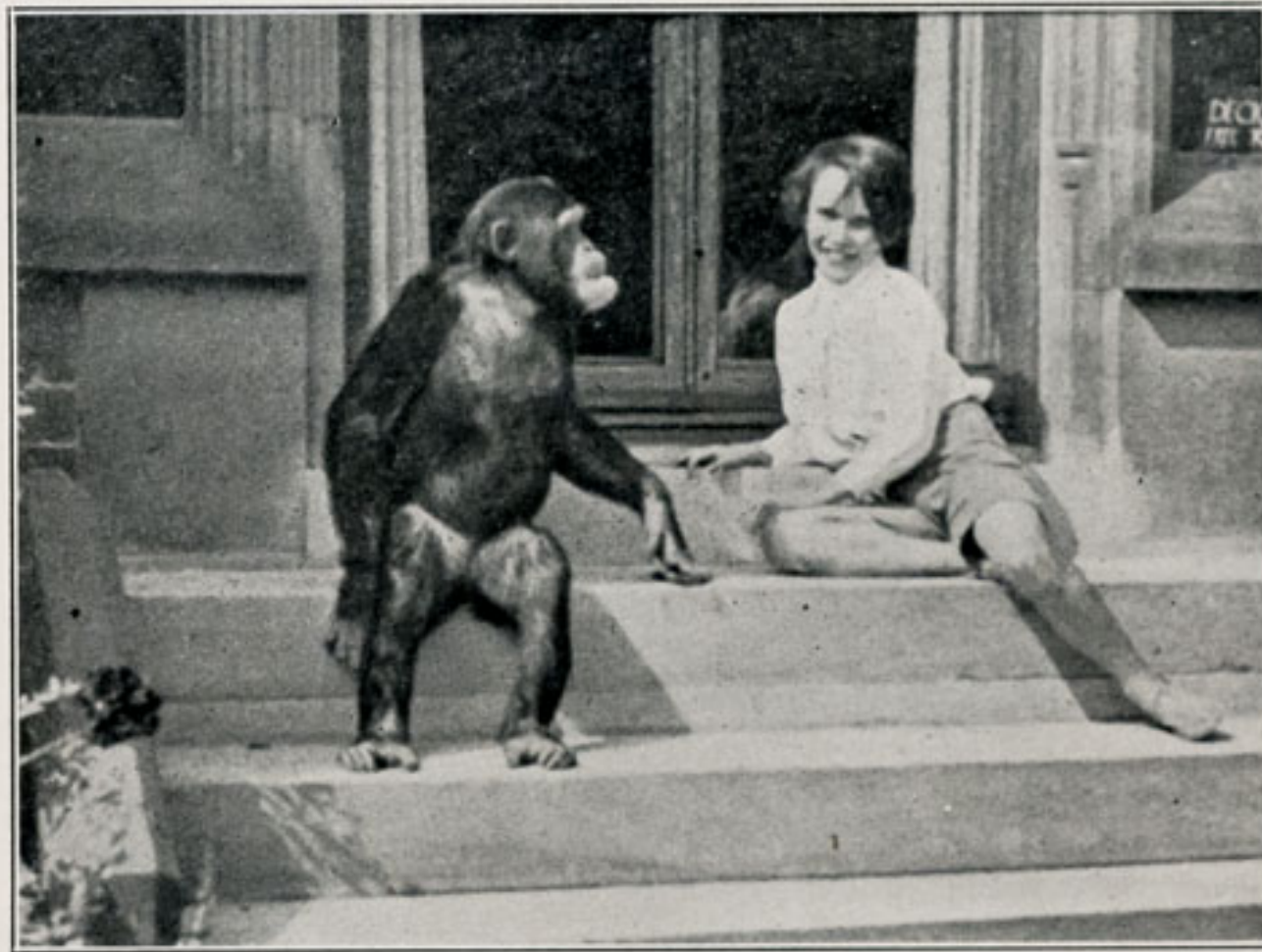
NOMAD'S VISIT.

It was jolly to see so many of you at the naming ceremony of the Polar Bears on July 28th. We seem to be lucky at Chester Zoo with our outside shows, and once again we had a fine sunny day. As I stood on the roof of the bears' sleeping quarters and looked down at you, I thought how fresh and cool you all looked; it was very warm up there in the blazing sun, and I envied Rack and Ruin their deep pool. They were on their very best behaviour; they posed for the press photographers, dived and splashed for the spectators and thoroughly enjoyed the herrings with which they were rewarded. They have already established themselves as prime favourites.

Young Anthony Wright of Kelsall, winner of the competition with his entry "Rack and Ruin", was beside me as I spoke to you through the microphone, and you probably noticed Mr. Gerald Iles of the Belle Vue Zoo and Mr. Mottershead of the Chester Zoo, there as well.

The two lioness cubs were a real handful and it was some job trying to keep one tucked under each arm. They would wriggle, and now that their claws have become long and sharp, there were times when I had fears for my flannel "bags". Miss Mottershead chose the two rather unusual but graceful names—"Maya" and "Marga" which I bestowed upon them. Long may they live to grace the Zoo in which they were born.

Nomad.



Mary was very fond of children. Here she is with one of her playmates

CHIMPANZEES.

In considering the Chimpanzee and its position among the Primates, we have to consider its physical structure with other man-like apes, and in so doing we find that it is certainly the nearest to man, not only in structure, but in mental or brain power.

There is a decided difference between Man and the Chimpanzee, but the fact remains there is a considerable amount of evidence to lead one to the theory that both Man and Chimpanzee millions of years ago evolved from one common stock.

The origin of life is so lost in antiquity that we shall never be able to say for certain whether life began in one form alone or not, but we can safely say that the Chimpanzee is our nearest relative in the animal world.

In physical structure the main points of difference are, the arms of a Chimpanzee are longer, and the large toe of Man is replaced by a thumb with similar action to that of the thumb on a Man's hand. There are also several minor differences which it is not my intention to mention here, but before leaving the structure of the Chimpanzee and its likeness to Man I would like to point out one or two features about the head.

In shape it resembles that of Man in many ways, but it is quite different if carefully studied. There are bony prominences over the eyes of the Chimpanzee which are not apparent in Man, these are much more developed in the Gorilla. The ears of a Chimpanzee are much larger than those of a Man, and not nearly so beautifully made, its nose is flat, and its lips much longer. The number of teeth are exactly the same, consisting of eight incisors, four canine, eight premolars and twelve molars.

The forehead falls back suddenly leaving considerably less room for the brain, but nevertheless had the Chimpanzee a longer neck it would find many counterparts among men of the lower type.

Personally I think it is in its mentality that the Chimpanzee exhibits strongest claim to be our relative, most of its physical differences can have been developed by its mode of life, but its faculty for reasoning gives it by far the greatest claim for our respect.

Very many people will at once differ from me over this last statement, as they will persist in saying that the Chimpanzee does not reason, but imitates. I am convinced it does both, and I am quite prepared to say that among men, there are some who can only copy what they have seen, and have no idea how to reason anything out for themselves, and as the margin of mentality in Man varies considerably, so does it vary among the Chimpanzees.

For hundreds of years the Chimpanzee has been confined to Tropical West and Central Africa, and it is to this damp tropical heat that it has adapted itself. In these Tropical Forests, the only demand made upon it has been self preservation like all other animals, and there must be very many tribes of natives with only the same demands upon them, very little removed intellectually from the Chimpanzee.

If we could gather together a hundred Chimpanzees and breed from them selectively throwing out all the duds, or perhaps I should say all the backward ones, and carry on the selective breeding for a thousand years, what would we get? I am afraid the result would startle a good many people.

I feel that if its whole environment was linked with our modern method of living, we would not only have a Chimpanzee highly intelligent at the end of a thousand years, but its whole physical structure would have changed beyond recognition of the present day animal.

We have only to look at ourselves to see how our physical bodies change with the type of work we do, and how our minds develop with the various problems of our civilised life, to see that evolution must be taken seriously.

For a great many years Chimpanzees have been brought to Europe by travellers and others from the West Coast of Africa; most of these have been young ones, but not so young as one was led to believe. It is quite common for a Chimpanzee to be sold as being one year old; this has not been wilfully misrepresented, the point is, we are only just realising how slowly a Chimpanzee develops.

The period of Gestation in the Chimpanzee is similar to a human. Some authorities fix the period at exactly the same number of days, namely two hundred and seventy-one, with the same amount of latitude that is frequently met with among humans.

The development during the first few years of a Chimpanzee's life is very similar to that of a child of the same age, some specimens, like children, vary considerably in the amount of intelligence they show. It is after three years that we begin to see the wideness of the gap between Man and the Chimpanzee.

This gap is more marked in the physical development. At first the general expression of a young Chimpanzee under three years of age resembles a

human far more than it does as it grows older. There is a slackening off in its ability to learn things as it grows older, but like humans the period of learning varies considerably.

A young Chimpanzee kept in a cage and treated simply as a caged animal very soon reaches the climax of its mental development, whereas one that has been made a friend of and given something to occupy its mind will go on learning for many years, and will in some cases reach a very high state of development.

I proved this in the case of "Mary", a Chimpanzee I had some years ago. This animal mastered the art of tying a knot after she had passed the age of seven years. A Chimpanzee tying a knot is a feat I have never heard of except in the case of Mary.

Some years ago Dr. S. Zuckerman in a letter to me over animal intelligence, stated that all experimental observers so far as he knew had failed to teach a Chimpanzee to tie a knot.

Mary's efforts were persistent and she would watch how a knot was tied over and over again, and when left, you would see her persistently trying to perform the feat herself till she mastered it.

Strangely enough although tying a knot took her so long to learn, she could manipulate a screwdriver almost at the first attempt, and in the case where the screw had a nut on it, she very soon learnt how to fix a spanner over it while she turned the screw.

Of course these feats have been copied, and one might say are the result of imitation, but there were many things that Mary did which proved that she reasoned also.

Mary enjoyed a smoke, and on one occasion she succeeded in concealing the bowl of a pipe in her cage, and if she were given a cigarette she would smoke it until the stump was too short, and then she would bring out the pipe and carefully pull the cigarette to pieces and place it in the bowl of the pipe, and would ask in a far plainer manner than a dumb man, for a light. There is no doubt whatever that Mary had reasoned the whole of her actions out for herself, but Mary is not the only Chimpanzee I have known who reasoned things out.



Mary at eight years of age

Both Kiki and Tarzana, two other Chimpanzees, were exceedingly cunning in their efforts to get out of their cage; they would adapt anything they could to assist them in their efforts, and what is more surprising than anything else, they worked together in perfect harmony, conversing in their own language, and apparently fully understanding one another.

This brings me to the point. Why can't a Chimpanzee talk? Have you ever heard the guttural sounds and jibbering of natives? Definitely their vocal powers are more developed than the Chimpanzee, but how much so?

The Chimpanzees have a language of their own which they understand. I have listened and watched them many times, and I have no doubt about it whatever. Once I went into the Chimpanzee House and Kiki and Tarzana were both engaged in trying

to undo some screws with a piece of metal they had obtained from somewhere. As soon as they saw me, Kiki who had the metal in her hand when I entered, at once put it out of sight, and began poking the screws with her fingers. I could see her looking at me sideways, suddenly she started to make several sounds to Tarzana, who answered her, and then went and brought a sack which she had on the top of their sleeping den. Tarzana brought this to me and at once tried to take my attention by playing with me. I sensed that they had arranged something between them so I started to play with her, but kept my eye on Kiki without their noticing me.

As soon as I seemed engrossed with Tarzana, Kiki at once produced the piece of metal and proceeded with her task, however, quite unconsciously I let my eyes rest on Kiki; Tarzana at once made a sound,

and Kiki immediately hid the piece of metal until I was giving my whole attention to Tarzana and her sack again.

I am convinced that those two Chimpanzees actually spoke to each other in their own tongue, and arranged that Tarzana should keep me engaged while Kiki proceeded with her task.

I am not saying that with a little practice a Chimpanzee could learn to sound the vowels of our English language, far from it, but I do believe that by persistent practising and necessity, the Chimpanzee's vocal organs could develop in a few thousand years to such an extent that they would be able to use their tongue as we use ours.

The main thing is this, if there is no necessity for them to speak like we do they have no incentive to make more use of their vocal powers, and these organs remain only partly developed.

Up to now I have more or less drawn a comparison between Man and the Chimpanzee, so I will now proceed to deal with the animal as a member of the Zoo family. As a source of interest I think that the Chimpanzee is one of the chief attractions at a Zoo. This is owing mainly to its great intelligence and claim to distant relationship with man.

It is the Chimpanzee that realises perhaps more than any other animal the spirit with which visitors come to the Zoo, and acts accordingly.

There is one point I would like to stress, and it is this, a Chimpanzee loves company, and I am convinced that half the ailments of Chimpanzees are contracted when that animal is shut away on its own.

My own experience has been that the more companionship a Chimpanzee has, be it either man or animal, the better is its bill of health.

Chimpanzees are very susceptible to all human complaints, particularly chest affections, therefore great care is needed to keep them from contact with infected persons, otherwise the more company a

Chimpanzee has the better is its bill of health, also the more a Chimpanzee can associate with intelligent persons, the greater is its mental development.

The food of a Chimpanzee is varied, and I have known Chimpanzees thrive on diets entirely opposite. As a general rule Chimpanzees thrive on fruits, and this with the addition of vegetables appears to be the main food. They will however thrive well on a diet like our own, that is if they have been brought up to it.

There is one thing I have always found a Chimpanzee will relish, and that is a drink of Scotch Whisky. I have known them refuse Irish, but take it away and replace it with Scotch and you will be amazed how soon they will get rid of it.

Whisky is by no means the only intoxicating liquor that Chimpanzees as a general rule appear to enjoy. Where they got the inclination for it I am unable to say, but I have known Chimpanzees who have been brought up with people who are staunch teetotallers, but once offered an intoxicating liquor have taken a passionate liking for it, and would do anything to obtain a further drink.

There is one strange thing I have also noticed, and that is, they can stand an enormous quantity before feeling any effect, but I do not advise the general taking of intoxicating liquor by Chimpanzees.

There is one word of warning I would like to impress, and that is, don't give a Chimpanzee anything which is likely to prove harmful, remember that they are of such an inquisitive turn of mind that they will sometimes employ it to quite the opposite use for what it is intended.

I have in my mind for one thing, indelible pencils; it is very strange how Chimpanzees if they write always put the pencil to their mouth first, and the result when it is indelible has in many cases caused endless trouble.

Some people run away with the idea that a Chimpanzee would make an ideal pet for the house.

Till it reaches the age of five or six years, I have no doubt it could make the best pet anyone could have, providing it was properly trained and obedient, but don't forget that at the age of six years it begins to mature, and its passions begin to develop. That is not all, by the time it reaches the age of six years, if healthy, its strength is far greater than a full grown man.

It begins about this time to have a will of its own, and then begins a battle between you and your pet for mastery, the result being always the same, either the Chimpanzee who has been your best pal for years, and perhaps more affectionate than a child, has to be caged in a Zoo or destroyed.

I have known many cases where people have tried to make the adult Chimpanzee do as he was told, but the Chimpanzee by means of its great strength always wins.

Some years ago a man I knew said he would soon make a certain Chimpanzee do what he wanted. He produced a dog whip and shouted a command to the Chimpanzee, who quietly surveyed him from its seat in a drawing room where it happened to be, but made no attempt to do what he was commanded, so the man struck it with the whip.

What happened within the next second or so I cannot say, for the Chimpanzee and the man were struggling for mastery, and before anyone could interfere the man was on the floor while the Chimpanzee stood by with the whip in its hand. Fortunately the man was not badly hurt, he had received a nasty bite, but what struck me most was the look of fear on his face; he had in those few seconds realised for the first time in his life the strength of the animal.

Chimpanzees are on the whole harmless animals even when grown up, it is only when you cross their path that you are likely to meet trouble, therefore the wise person always tries persuasion. There are cases on record where a Chimpanzee has turned on its attendant and killed him before help could come. These cases are few, but it must be remembered that the really adult Chimpanzee, and I mean by this the Chimpanzee of twenty years of age and over are very rare in captivity.

I have just mentioned the great strength of the Chimpanzee, but I must out of my respect for them, say on the other hand how gentle they can be, and if you really do make a friend of them they will show you great affection, even after they have hurt you. It is quite common for them to show you how sorry they are that they have let their temper get the better of them.

I have sat up for many nights with different Chimpanzees that have been sick, several have had pneumonia, and this takes the same course as it does with humans.

Sometimes during delirium you have some very rough times, others make excellent patients, and allow you to poultice and do anything for them, and in nine cases out of ten the sick animal welcomes your presence.

Often they will lie on their bed and be quite content if you hold their hand, and I say this in conclusion, anyone who has been present when an intelligent Chimpanzee dies, will not doubt for one moment that somewhere in the distant past, millions of years ago, the Chimpanzee and Man came from one common stock.

G. S. Mottershead.

PUMAS.

Opposite the Hyaena enclosure at Chester Zoo there is a spacious outer cage with indoor compartments. In the centre of the den a large tree trunk has been placed quite some height from the ground, and lying full length with her forepaws sometimes dangling over the sides absolutely motionless is an animal which in appearance resembles a giant cat. It is a half-grown female Puma. Although visitors very seldom see her move, except to swish her tail occasionally or open her large golden eyes to stare for a moment or two, when she is in her indoor quarters this creature behaves like an overgrown kitten, and gambols around playing hide and seek with herself, but sometimes although extremely playful when she has been lying outside she looks at everyone with rather a wistful expression, as if she is sad and lonely. You see when she arrived at the Zoo in April 1947 from Canada, she had a companion, and they made the sweetest pair of cubs anyone could wish to see. Unfortunately, however, the male died soon after their arrival, but we have ordered another mate for our Cougar and hope that he won't be long in arriving to keep her company.

For all her playfulness and docile expressions, maybe because she is lonely, or maybe it comes naturally, once in a while our Puma gives vent to a violent outburst of temper; from a quiet overgrown kitten she is transformed into a tense, lithe, beautiful but terrifying creature; the hair seems to bristle on her neck, the beautiful amber eyes become balls of fire and she can spit and snarl in the most unladylike manner. The Puma then seems a very interesting creature. Here then is a little more about this family in general.

After the Jaguar, the Puma is the largest of the American Cats, and these animals hold the same position in the New World, as the Lion holds in Africa, and the Tiger in India. The name Cougar was given by a French Naturalist from the native Brazilian name, but in the Peruvian dialect this animal is known as a Puma, and this is how we usually hear it called to-day.

The Puma ranges from British Columbia to New England in North America, and to the extreme tip of Patagonia in South America, and because of its extensive geographical range it is regarded as the most characteristic of the American Mammals.

It is a large animal and reaches anything up to six feet when full grown. In colouring it is usually a sandy brown with a dark streak running down the centre of the back; the tip of the tail is a dusky brown, the ears black, and unlike most of the cat family who have black nostrils, the Puma has flesh coloured ones. This general description fits our young specimen, but it has been observed that in the wilds the Cougar's coat varies with the season and natural vegetation. In the hot summer months in the wooded country, the coat is a reddish-brown, in the winter it has a greyish tinge, while in the hot desert scrub lands it is quite yellowish, and in the high snow-tipped mountains of Mexico and South America it is almost white. The Puma can prove its relationship with the large cat family of the old world through its young. The cubs (there are usually three or four in the wilds, but generally only two when in captivity) when born have large blackish brown rings and spots on their sandy coats and the tail is decidedly ringed; these marks gradually disappear as the cub grows up, but if you look closely at our Puma you will see them very faintly.

The Puma is remarkable for the way it adapts itself to different climatic conditions; it is equally at home in the snow or the desert's burning sun, and alters its diet accordingly. In North America, deer, grouse, rabbit, fish (the Puma is an excellent swimmer and a very clever fisherman) form its chief food, but as civilization marches on so the Puma with the other wild beasts retreats before its ever swelling tide, and in some of the more thickly populated states, the large cat is no longer found. In South America however, the case is quite different, for here man has not yet caught up with Nature to such an extent, and the Puma abounds. Its diet here is the Rhea, the counterpart of the African Ostrich, Huanacos and Tapir Deer. Like most of us the Puma has a

favourite dish, one which he will go to no end of trouble to obtain, and man will stop at nothing to prevent him getting it. When you know what it is you will realize why he is such a terror to the South American farmers. The Puma's great delicacy is horse-flesh and failing this mutton. So persistent is he to obtain this luxury that in some parts of South America it is almost impossible to rear young horses, and it isn't only the young colts which are taken, for the Puma will not hesitate to attack the strongest horse, if there is nothing smaller in sight. The Pumas will raid the same corrals night after night, but if there is no horse-flesh, then the cattle and sheep farmers suffer.

For many years in South America, the Puma was regarded by the Guachos, who are the South American cowboys, as a coward because it made no attempt to defend itself against man. This, however, is not so; this animal is one of the boldest, savagest and most skilful hunters of the wild, and will tackle anything however large and strong, but it has one very peculiar trait, it will never attack, threaten or harm, man, woman or child, even if it happened to come upon them asleep as is often the case when a traveller is crossing the pampus plains. It not only ignores the human race, but cases have been recorded time and time again, where the Puma picks up the scent of man and follows the traveller for miles, and when he has been set upon by less courteous beasts of the Jungle, for example the Jaguar, the Puma has been the first to defend his human friend, and has often fought the foe bitterly and driven him off or killed him, and then quietly trotted off. It seems strange that this savage beast should take it upon himself to defend the human race, and according to the natives even the smallest child can walk with perfect safety through Puma invest Pampas. When hunted by man because he destroys horses and cattle, the Puma offers no resistance, makes no effort whatsoever to defend himself, and seems sadly resigned to whatever fate there

may be in store for him, except when the hunter uses dogs. Pumas seem allergic to dogs, and in this case will fight to the end. In North America the same holds true, the Puma will not attack man, but when hunted himself is not so docile and will fight to defend himself if necessary.

The Jaguar is the most dreaded and powerful of the four-footed killers in America, and resembles the leopard in appearance, and is the Puma's most deadly enemy; they are always at war but strangely enough the Puma always wins, and seems to spend his time hounding down his stronger and larger foe; not even the Grizzly Bear can scare the Puma who will attack one on sight without the slightest hesitation. Both Jaguar and Puma are excellent climbers and are capable of leaping great heights. Because of his marvellous courage and daring, the Puma has been rightly named one of the boldest and fiercest of the cat family.

Pumas who are caught when young, or born in captivity, become very tame and affectionate, and obedient to their masters, and behave rather like our household cats, except of course they are giant editions, and at times they have fits of temper just like our own pets, but of course are far more dangerous. So if you do happen to see one of our keepers in the Puma enclosure while the Puma is lying quite contentedly on her tree, don't get alarmed, he is not trying to commit suicide, he knows her moods, and would not be in there if she were feeling ruffled.

What kind of a noise do they make? Well they purr like cats only of course it sounds much louder, but as a rule they are never heard to cry or howl, they seem to remain silent even when hurt, though very occasionally they have been known to scream in the most unearthly tone when wounded by a hunter.

J. Moffatt.

Map of The Zoological Gardens, Chester

