



*By Courtesy of Eric Kirkland, F.R.P.*

# Chester Zoo News

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON - BY - CHESTER

October, 1962

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**CORRECTIONS:**

Page twelve, paragraph four, line six—“(Dendroaspis viridis)”

Facing page fourteen, paragraph one, line one—“(Pterois volitans)”

” ” ” paragraph two, line one—“(Amphiprion percula)”

” ” ” paragraph three, line one—“(Serrasalmus spilopleura)”

Page sixteen, paragraph two, line one—“(Symphysodon discus)”

## Introduction

"Chester Zoo News" has been revived for the information of our many visitors and interested friends throughout the world. Naturally we would welcome suggestions as to what you would like to see included in future issues. This month, we think the article on page two will be of particular interest to readers.

We wish to express our thanks for permission to use the photographs in this issue, to:—

"Cheshire Life"

E. Kirkland, Esq.

Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby

G. F. Williams, Esq.

*COVER: Our Cover Picture this month shows "Mary," one of the Chimpanzees born at Chester Zoo.*

## CAPTURING SQUARE-LIPPED RHINOCEROS AT UMFOLOZI

*(Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Williams, two members of the Staff of Chester Zoo, went out to South Africa in May of this year, to collect a pair of Square-lipped Rhinos for Chester Zoo and another pair for Whipsnade Park. Here Mrs. Williams recollects some of their experiences for "Chester Zoo News".)*

Great excitement was caused earlier this year by the offer of Square-lipped White Rhinoceros to a number of accredited Zoos throughout the World. The offer was made by the Natal Parks Board of South Africa and was the first time Zoos had been given the opportunity of obtaining these very rare animals from the Umfolozi Game Reserve. Chester Zoo was one of the first Zoos to act upon this offer and immediately ordered a pair of White Rhinos. My husband and I were invited to go out to South Africa and bring the animals back to England.

Square-lipped (or White) Rhinos are found in only two small areas; one in the Sudan—where there are only a small number and this is decreasing; the other in the Umfolozi Game Reserve in Zululand. The Umfolozi is known as the home of the Square-lipped Rhino and from an estimated twenty in 1847, there are now over six hundred. The Natal Parks Board decided that some of these animals should be caught and re-introduced into areas where they once lived and that some should be distributed to various Zoos throughout the World, thus ensuring the survival of the species.

The job of finding a suitable method of capture was given to Mr. Ian Player—Senior Game Ranger at the Umfolozi Reserve. With the use of a drug developed by Dr. Harthoorn of Kabete, Nairobi, Mr. Player and his team of Rangers developed a technique which enables them to capture a fully-grown Rhinoceros and transport it many hundreds of miles, without causing it any distress.

We arrived in Durban on 9th May, 1962 and after making shipping arrangements we continued our journey to the Umfolozi Game Reserve. We were met by Mr. Player and he invited us to go on a Rhino catch the very next day.

Next morning we were up very early—in time to see the Zulu Game Guards going out. Their job was to locate the Rhino and on this occasion we were after two animals—a large female for the Kruger National Park and a small female for the San Diego Zoo.

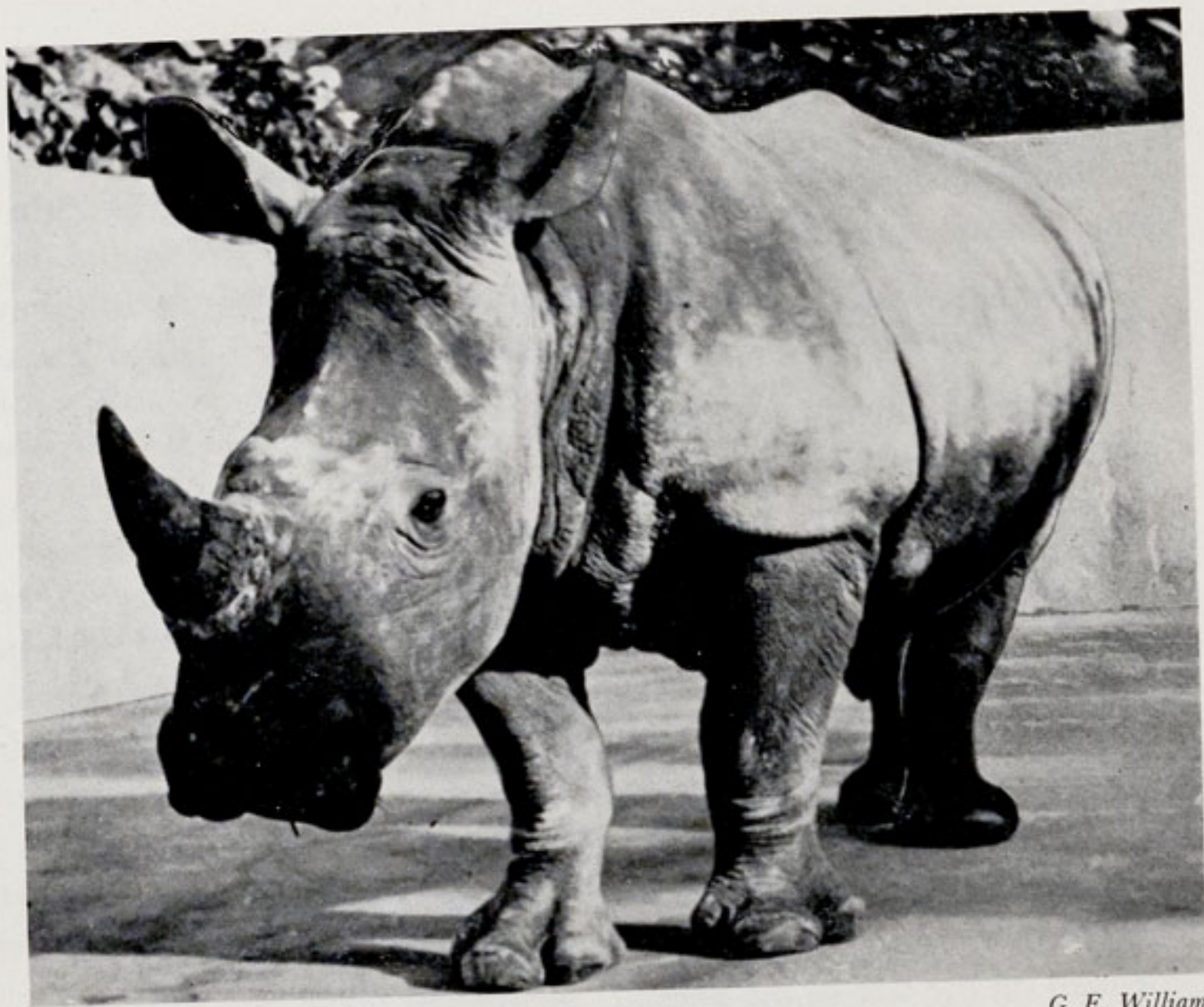
We set off in a Land Rover to a rendezvous with the Game Guards. The first Guard to report told us that he had located three Rhinos—a large male weighing about three and a half tons, a female a little smaller and a female calf—weighing about a ton and a half. He also described the type of country where the animals were grazing. This was very important, as everything depended on the Land Rover being able to follow the animals until it was within twelve to fifteen feet—this being the effective range of the "Cap-Chur" gun in these circumstances.

It was decided that these animals would be suitable and two drugged darts were prepared. The amount of tranquiliser used depended on the size of the animal. Also to be taken into consideration was the fact that the large female would be travelling a distance of about five hundred miles and it would be better for all concerned if she were tranquilised for the whole of this trip.

As soon as everything was ready, we set off, following a trail of broken branches left by the Game Guard. Mr. Player stood on the back of the Land Rover with the Cap-Chur gun and as soon as we sighted the Rhino—he gave the signal and the chase was on.

The Rhinos ran faster than I would have believed possible—with us after them. Overhanging branches of trees scraped along the sides of the Land Rover and small bushes in the way were pushed down by the special grille on the front of the Land Rover. When we were within twelve to fifteen feet of the Rhino, the gun was fired and we saw the dart stick to the rear of the smaller animal.

The Land Rover stopped and the two horsemen, who had been following us all this time, took over the job of following the Rhinos. They did not attempt to chase the animals in any way, merely keeping them in sight. Very soon the animals stopped and began to graze. Within about fifteen minutes the animal which had been darted began to show signs of slowing and eventually lay down. One of the horsemen stayed with it—the other returning to tell us



*G. F. Williams*

“MADAGIWE”



*G. F. Williams*

THE SQUARE-LIPPED RHINOS INSPECTING THEIR NEW PADDOCK

where it lay. He also told us that the male and female had not left the calf and that we should be prepared for them. Mr. Player kept his Cap-Chur Gun ready with the second dart and again we set off. The procedure was very much the same as the first time, except that the large female did not run far, as she wanted to stay with her calf.

A crate had been sent for and this arrived and was placed in front of the female calf. A small amount of antidote was injected into the animal and within seconds she was on her feet and staggering into the crate. The door was secured behind her and the crate was winched onto the back of a large five-ton lorry.

In the meantime, the horsemen had been keeping an eye on the large female—who was now quite overcome by the drug. The large male had been chased off and everything was set for the loading of the Kruger National Park's crate. Again, only a small amount of antidote was given—as we did not want to wake her up too much. We had quite a struggle, as she was just able to get onto her feet and had to be pushed the rest of the way into the crate. Once this was done and the door had been secured, the crate was loaded onto the second lorry and off she went for the Kruger National Park. We heard the next day that she had arrived safely and was living quite contentedly in her enclosure—before being released into the Park itself.

Chester Zoo's young male Square-lipped Rhino—Madagiwe—was caught in similar circumstances. He was with his Mother and it was decided to capture both animals. Two darts had been prepared—but he got the dart intended for his Mother! When he was brought back to the Bomas (or holding pens), the Zulu Game Guards opened the crate, expecting the small animal to start running around in his pen—only to see him stagger out of the crate like a drunken man. The Guards immediately began laughing and crying out—"Madagiwe!" "Madagiwe!"—which means of course, the drunken one in Zulu—and that is how he got his name.

We went on many of these Rhino captures while we were at the Umfolozi Game Reserve and though some did not go quite according to plan, we at no time saw Rhinos being ill-treated in any way.

## ZOO CHARACTERS

MYNAH:— On 19th August we were presented with a Mynah. This bird has quite the loudest "wolf whistle" we have ever heard and has caused the Bird Keepers many embarrassing moments. Not content with whistling at visitors, the Mynah then chuckles wickedly at his own audacity.

SAMMY:— Another Zoo character with a loud "voice" is Sammy, one of our family of Californian Sea Lions. Sammy came to the Zoo in 1946 and very soon became notorious as a wife killer. For some unaccountable reason he took a dislike to one of his wives and she eventually died from injuries received during a particularly brutal attack by Sammy. Now, whenever a Sea Lion dies, Sammy is accused of killing it. In actual fact he has been proved to be directly responsible for only one death, and is now too large and lazy to bother with family quarrels.

JIMMY:— Jimmy, the Orang-Utang, arrived at Chester Zoo in 1957, when he was estimated to be between four and five years old. If, out of our large collection of animals, we were asked to choose the most intelligent, then Jimmy would be the obvious choice. A permanent watch has to be kept on him whenever he is in his outside enclosure, otherwise he would spend his day touring the Zoo like an ordinary visitor. Unlike the other Orangs, Jimmy prefers to walk upright. He is easily recognizable by the slightly lopsided, boxer-style salute he gives to visitors.

Various methods of confining Jimmy have been tried—all with only temporary success. As with the Chimpanzees enclosure, our Orang outdoor enclosure is surrounded by a water ditch, wide and deep enough to confine the animals—all except Jimmy who wades through quite unconcernedly. A single strand electric fence was placed in the ditch—this he stepped over. Another strand was added and Jimmy pulled out the underwater supports and walked out again. A more complicated fence was installed, but even this did not daunt him for long. He discovered that if a piece of weed or string were led from the wire to the water, then the fence would not give him an electric shock. It is impossible to keep one step ahead of Jimmy for long and for that reason a permanent watch must be kept on him.



*Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby*

"JIMMY"



*Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby*

COMMON ZEBRA

### NEWS FROM THE ZEBRA HOUSE

Our Zebra House last year achieved a wonderful record in that all its animals bred successfully. We have three breeding, Common Zebra mares; "Maureen" and "Mary"—who arrived in 1950 and a younger one, "Lucy", who came in 1954. There are two stallions—"Charlie" who was not fully grown when he arrived in 1948 and "Gilbert" who came to the Zoo as an adult animal in 1956.

Charlie is a particularly dangerous animal and, although he has become much quieter in recent years, his Keeper still cannot go into his enclosure with him. In contrast Gilbert is the most gentle and reliable of animals. He seems completely devoid of any form of vice and is one of the most beautiful animals in the Zoo. He possesses a strong, straight back, with an extra-broad black stripe down the centre.

All our Common Zebra originated in Kenya and are a subspecies of Burchell's Zebra, known as Grant's and possessing no shadow stripes. They range over the grassy plains of Africa in vast herds, sometimes intermingling with Gnus and Hartebeests. Since Zebras are the main source of food of Lions, they are naturally of a highly nervous disposition. Even in captivity they can be easily startled by sudden movements.

The Grevy's Zebra, of which we have four at present, are by far the more handsome. They carry their large heads well up and their big, bell-shaped ears are always alert. Grevy's Zebras have a deep compact body and their stripes, although well defined, are much finer and closer together than those of the Common Zebra. The first Grevy's Zebras to be bred at Chester were born in 1961 and three have been born to date.

In the wild, Grevy's Zebra are found in small herds all over the Northern Frontier District of Kenya and as far north as Somalia and Abyssinia. They frequent dry semi-desert country—together with Reticulated Giraffe, Gerenuks and Beisa Oryx. The latter can also be found in our Zebra House.

### NEWS FROM THE BEAR SECTION

Chester Zoo has a total of twenty-five Bears—four Himalayan, two Sloth, four European, four Polar, two Syrian, two Malayan, four Kamchatka, two Russian and one American Black. In such a large Bear family there are, of course, some outstanding characters.

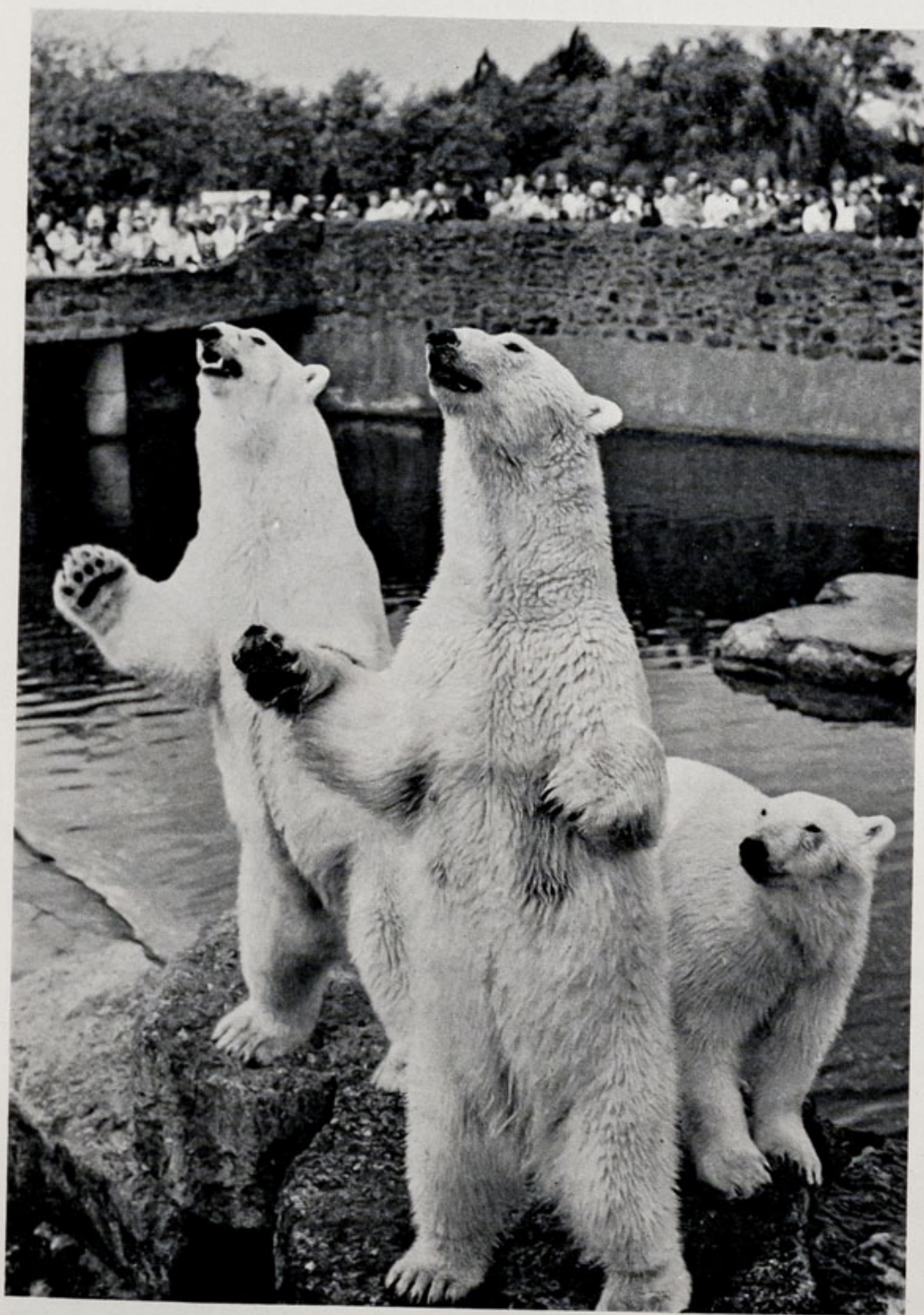
"Topsy" and "Turvy," the two Malayans, have been with the Zoo since 1953 and their favourite trick is to close the sliding door of their den when they retire each night. When their Keeper calls out to them, the door is immediately opened—two heads peer out and, if no food is forthcoming, the door is firmly closed again.

Built into the Polar Bear enclosure is a pump-operated waterfall. The basin at the top of the waterfall is filled by a water inlet pipe and this affords the Bears endless amusement. "Rubble", (the male Polar Bear) in particular, loves to cover the mouth of the inlet pipe with his paws, causing the water pressure to build up until it forces his paws away and water shoots into the air.

"Frankie", the young American Black Bear, is incurably inquisitive and spends a great deal of his time peering over the wall into the neighbouring enclosure—that of the Russian Bears. He is a particularly peace-loving Bear and whenever an "argument" breaks out, "Frankie" retires to a corner of the ditch surrounding his enclosure.

Originally the Kamchatka Bear Cubs were christened "Martha" and "Minnie." However, "Martha" turned out to be a little male and has now been re-named "Arthur." Like children, the Kamchatka babies often try the patience of their Mother. Whenever possible at feeding times, Arthur lies on one loaf and tucks into another. If Mother attempts to claim her share he keeps her at bay with threatening growls until he has devoured both loaves.

The Bears thrive on Wholemeal bread, T.T. milk, carrots, apples, green vegetables and a daily ration of raw meat. Their coats are kept healthy by the addition to their diet of generous doses of cod-liver oil, malt and yeast.



*“Cheshire Life”*

“RACK,” “RUBBLE” AND “MOTTIE”

## THE REPTILE HOUSE

Our present Reptile House was one of the first buildings to be erected after the war and was built almost entirely of scrap. It has held together remarkably well and has attracted many thousands of visitors to the Zoo. A new Reptile House is being incorporated into the Tropical House, now under construction. It will be considerably larger than the existing House and will allow us to make a number of additions to the present collection of Reptiles.

Snakes are not at all the slimy creatures people believe them to be, but are rather dry and smooth to the touch. Our favourite is an eleven foot long, light phase, Indian Python, weighing over 80 lbs. After several months of careful handling this snake has now become quite tame and will even wait by the door of its enclosure to be lifted out and fondled.

An interesting point of difference between Pythons and Boa Constrictors is that, whereas the Python lays eggs, the Boa bears live young.

We have fourteen specimens of poisonous snake in our collection, including three species of Cobra. The Black and White Cobra has been at Chester Zoo for sixteen years. Other interesting poisonous snakes are the handsome Copperhead and the unusual little back-fanged Malayan tree snake; not forgetting the Mambas (*Dendroaspis Viridis*) two of which have been in our collection for eleven years.

Copperheads were bred for the first time at Chester Zoo on June 25th, 1961. Six young were successfully reared and have since found homes in other Zoos.

The most spectacular member of our Lizard family is the Dragon-like Iguana from South America. Characteristic features of this Lizard are its peculiar hanging dewlap, spiny back and spider-like feet.



*Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby*

#### INDIAN PYTHON

At one end of the Reptile House is the Crocodile and Alligator enclosure. When basking in their pool the Crocodiles look more like dead logs than the ferocious creatures they can be. We have five young Nile Crocodiles—measuring approximately four feet—which will eventually grow to between ten and fifteen feet long. The three Alligators are nearer eight feet in length at present. They are of a much more docile temperament than their cousins the Crocodiles and, with patience, can be tamed.

All our Reptiles are exhibited in surroundings as near as possible to those of their natural habitat. This enables visitors to see exactly why a particular Reptile has certain markings or colouration. A good example of Reptile camouflage is shown by the beautiful but deadly Gaboon Viper, whose highly-coloured body resembles dead leaves and grasses.

## THE AQUARIUM

Construction of the Chester Zoo Aquarium was completed on the 1st October, 1952, Since then it has remained open to the public throughout the summer and winter seasons and has, in recent years, become very popular. At the time of construction, the Aquarium was the most modern in England. Incorporated in its design were many new devices, which have helped tremendously in maintaining the Aquarium in perfect running order for the past ten years.

In more recent years, the number of fish has increased and the collection is now one of the best in Britain. There are approximately one hundred and forty distinct species—constituting some eleven hundred fish. These represent the following six large families:—

CHARACIDÆ or CHARACINS—this family includes the tetras, hatchet fish, leporinus, pencil fish, etc.

CYPRINIDÆ or CARPS or MINNOWS—including the barbs, fresh water sharks, rasboras, etc.

ANABANTIDÆ—including the gouramies.

SILUROIDS or CATFISH—including the Corydoras, Siluroideæ, Loricariidae, etc.

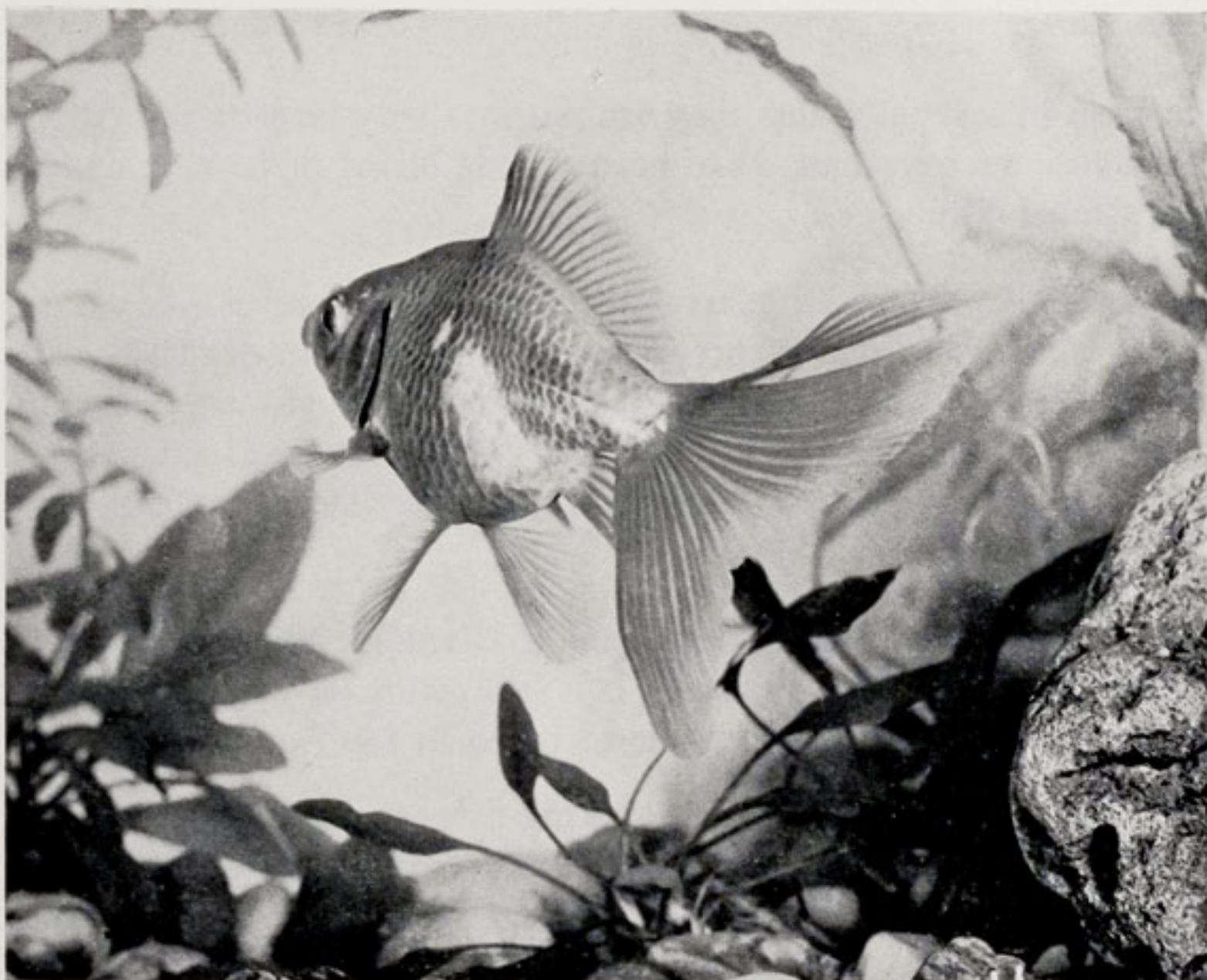
CICHLIDÆ or CICHLIDS—including Aequidens, Astronotus, Pterophyllum and Symphysodon, etc.

LIVE-BEARING TOOTHED CARPS—which includes the Limias, Mollienisia, Lebistes and many others.

Among some of the unusual fish to be seen in the Aquarium are the following:—

## MARINE SECTION

SEA HORSES: These are indigenous to the Indian Ocean, where they are comparatively common. Wild specimens may attain a length of between four and eight inches, but imported specimens are usually four inches long. Sea Horses have long tubular mouths and, because of this, feeding them presents quite a problem. We have found that our Sea Horses do very well on a diet of baby fish, glass worms, fresh water shrimps and large daphnia. All food must be alive or it is not accepted.



*E. Kirkland*

#### FANTAIL GOLDFISH

**SCORPION FISH** (*Pterois Volitans*): These beautiful fish are found in the coral beds of the Indian Ocean and Polynesia. This is the only poisonous fish in the collection; armed with a number of spines capping the rays of the dorsal fin, this fish can inflict a very painful sting—if not treated with the utmost respect. Its brilliant red and cream stripes serve as an excellent danger signal! The Scorpion Fish requires live food in the form of fish up to three inches in length—these are swallowed whole!

**CLOWN FISH** (*Amphiprion Percula*): This is a brilliantly coloured little fish, famed for its apparent immunity to the poisonous tentacles of the sea anemonies, amongst which it lives.

#### TROPICAL FRESH WATER

**PIRANHA** (*Serrasalmus Spilopleura*): This is the famed fresh-water cannibal fish inhabiting the waters of the River Amazon. In nature these fish gather in shoals around a carcass and will strip off the flesh in a very short time. In captivity these fish are difficult

to keep in a shoal unless they are put in a very large tank. All the Piranhas we have had, have been fed on strips of herring and an occasional fish.

**ELECTRIC EEL:** In general shape the electric eel is like a large black snake; capable of producing up to five hundred volts these fish have to be fed with special instruments to prevent accidents. The two specimens in the Aquarium have attained a length of twenty-four inches in seven months. They should eventually grow to six feet long.

**POMPADOUR FISH (Symphysodon Discus):** When seen in full colour this fish is magnificent. It is, unfortunately, one of the few fish we have so far been unable to breed in the Aquarium.

These and many other interesting fish are on public exhibition and there are always new arrivals being added to the collection. The fish are displayed in seventy-eight large tanks, which are filled with many tropical Plants and rocks. These provide a natural setting for a large and varied collection.

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### STOP PRESS

Construction has just begun on a large Crane enclosure in the new area beyond the Pachyderm House.

The Black Rhino have now been transferred to the new Rhino House and the Malayan Tapirs have been returned to the Pachyderm House.

Six hundred and thirty nine rose bushes in seventeen varieties are on order for the Floribunda Rose Garden in front of the Fountain Restaurant.

#### ZOO BABIES:

A third male Eland Calf.

Four Lion Cubs.



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