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# “Our Zoo News”

and Guide.

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CHESTER ZOO.

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An attractive photograph taken from the terrace of the Polar Bear Enclosure, showing Raccoon Wood in the background, the mixed Bear Enclosures on the right, the Sea-lion Pool on the left and corner of the Polar Bears Enclosure in the foreground.

# The North of England Zoological Society,

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER.

Tel. Chester 21898.

June/July, 1951.

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## Zoo News.

After a very trying winter we had hoped to enjoy a nice spring and summer but up to the time of writing these notes the warm sunny days have been few and far between. Work has also been seriously held up by lack of suitable labour, nevertheless progress has been made and visitors have been rewarded by seeing many new additions to the Gardens.

Although our Giraffes will have completed their period of quarantine in August we have still to build the Giraffe Enclosure. During the last few weeks large quantities of Sand Stone have been carted to the Zoo for this purpose and we hope to make a start on the actual building within the next few days, and given good weather we feel confident the Zoo staff will show a lot of progress in a month.

In addition to the three Reticulated Giraffes now completing their quarantine, we have been informed by our Collector abroad that he now has a very fine Baringo Giraffe for us, so we should be able to make a good display of these animals.

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An interesting addition to the Monkey House is a Hanuman Monkey or Langur as it is usually called. This animal which comes from India is not generally a good "doer" in captivity, but we are hoping that we shall be fortunate enough to keep him alive and healthy for a long time.

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At last we have been able to turn out our Cheetahs or Hunting Leopards into a large open air enclosure after their having been in quarantine for several months.

It was a wonderful sight when they walked out of their hut into the open and realised that they were comparatively free. They played with a freedom that cannot possibly have been felt for a long while, and we feel sure the public will appreciate how much happier the Cheetahs are now they can exercise their great powers of movement.

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Much excitement has taken place in our Sea Lion pool this Summer. Towards the end of May, Sammy the bull Sea Lion, who has grown to an enormous size, for some reason or another took a great dislike to the presence of Susie, his mate in the Sea Lion pool, and every night chased her out. We thought this was only a passing phase and each evening we allowed her into an enclosure, and released her the following morning into the pool. However, on one occasion, about the second week in June, Susie was driven out of the pool, and was obviously in very poor condition after being attacked by Sammy, unhappily she died early the following morning. We could not account for this sudden attack by Sammy, and decided perhaps it might be better to introduce more specimens into the pool. We therefore purchased three more Sea Lions, a bull and two cows from a Zoo in Holland, and these were flown over on the 3rd July. They were at once introduced into the Sea Lion pool, and all four specimens settled down and seemed quite happy together. Everything appeared to be going on alright until the middle of July, when Sammy, reverting to his previous bad behaviour suddenly attacked the young bull. Great efforts were made to remove the bull from the pool and separate them and this has now been achieved. We are hoping that the new domestic arrangements for the Sea Lion family will be more harmonious.

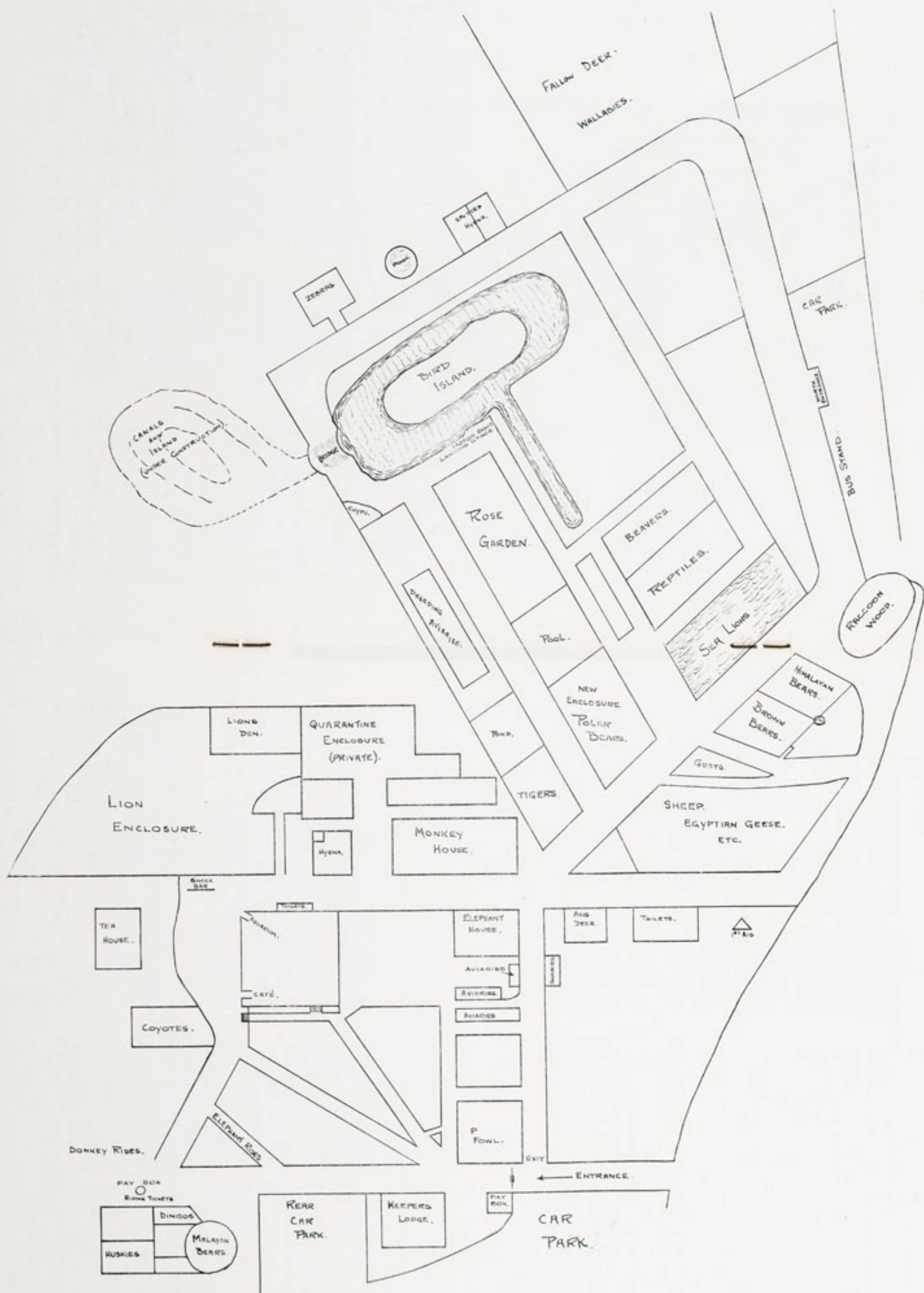


A view of our Sea Lion Pool that gives some idea of the length and breadth of water in which these animals are able to swim and play.

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We hope we are not being a little premature, but this year our Axis Deer have so far succeeded in rearing their young Fawn. Ever since these animals arrived here, six years ago, they have produced a Fawn annually, but they have not in the past succeeded in rearing it beyond the first day or two. On one or two occasions however, we are sure it has been the over enthusiasm of the keeper which has caused the trouble. On another occasion the Fawn, soon after it was born, became a victim of a very severe thunderstorm and cloudburst. However, this year the Fawn had apparently been born a day or two before it was actually dis-

covered and, at the time of writing, it is doing very well indeed. There have been a few Fallow Deer born this year, but we are sorry to say that all the young ones have been of the dark variety. It appears that one of our bucks has a black strain in his blood, as the does who have produced the black fawns this year, also produced the light variety last. Early in the year we disposed of quite a number of our Fallow Deer as our stock was getting too large for the enclosure, but we have now increased their area considerably and, at the present rate of reproduction, this enclosure will soon be full also. We have quite a few young



Plan of Chester Zoological Gardens

Wallabies this year and, as was to be expected, these have proved a big attraction. There is one particular specimen who discovered how he could get out of his enclosure and who makes a regular tour of the North End of the Zoo every evening. If he is suddenly disturbed, he makes one wild dash to the enclosure, and how he gets in and out we have never been able to discover, but we presume there is a hole he is just able to squeeze through.

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The large flight at the end of the Parrot House for the Macaws and Cockatoos has now been completed, and the birds are enjoying it to the full. When the blue and yellow Macaws (who arrived here late last year) were able to fly out into the open cage and subject themselves to the varied weather conditions, their plumage improved wonderfully. We shall have a mixed variety of the larger parrot family in this flight, which is over sixty feet long. One of the birds who looks really beautiful in flight is the Leadbeater Cockatoo. . . . This year the red and blue, and red and yellow Macaws have once again laid but, as in previous years, they will not have a nest. They lay their eggs on the floor and this of course, subjects the eggs to an enormous amount of interference. They have not succeeded in hatching their eggs for a considerable period. A few years ago they hatched and successfully reared a bird for several weeks. This year the hen broke her first egg soon after it was laid. Whether she will succeed in hatching her second egg we will find out in due course. Last year we purchased a pair of Lesser sulphur-Crested Cockatoos in the hope that we would be able to breed from them. During the Spring, they showed no signs of breeding, but early in the Summer they did lay two eggs under the step of their indoor aviary. This, once again, was a most unsatisfactory nesting place and after a little while the eggs were deserted. We broke them and found that they were both fertile, which was one consolation. However, at the time of writing the hen has disappeared into a nest box properly and we have great hopes that she has laid and will be successful in rearing some young ones.

The breeding of the Parrots and Parakeets this year has not been as successful as we had hoped, owing to the extremely cold and late Spring. Several of the birds went down to nest but were soon deterred by a very severe cold spell.

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Another family which has been bred at the Zoo have been some young Huskies. These are most attractive little things and are extremely popular, but they are not as most people would imagine, ideal pets from a domestic point of view. They are definitely not house dogs.

During July we have been concentrating on the completion of the cages north of the Monkey House for the accommodation of the Leopards. For some time now we have had four leopards which we have been unable to show to the public owing to lack of accommodation but we are hoping that this state of affairs will very soon be rectified. During June we purchased a very fine Sumatra Male Tiger. He is a jungle specimen and we hope he will make a suitable mate for Cheetah, the fine female specimen in the Tiger Enclosure. This male tiger will of course have to do six months quarantine, but we have placed him in one of the large cages which have been completed to extend the Quarantine Quarters where he will be on public view through a double barrier. Thus whilst he is undergoing the specified period of detention he can be seen by the public without coming into contact with any other feline or canine through the bars. We have received word from several of our friends abroad informing us that they have more leopards for us and it looks as if we shall soon be fully stocked with this breed of animal. From India we are expecting a pair of black Panthers and are awaiting their arrival with keen anticipation.

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Most children have been delighted this year by the appearance of several baby donkeys. These foals are very popular indeed with the young children and when they are old enough, they will take their place among the riding donkeys, who are such a popular feature of the Zoo.

G. S. MOTTERSHEAD.

## Bird News.

A new aviary for the Macaws and Cockatoos has just been completed, extending along the front of the Parrot House giving them a lengthy flight. It measures sixty-four feet in length, twenty-four feet in width, and twelve feet in height. In it we have seven Blue and Yellow Macaws and five Cockatoos, the latter showing their appreciation by flying from one end of the aviary to the other. Unfortunately we are unable to place all the cockatoos together as they do not agree, and will fight viciously causing untold damage.

The Blue and Yellow Macaws were at first a little bewildered by this extensive addition to their quarters, keeping a respectful distance from their new companions. Now, however, they are exploring the area with interest and curiosity, expressing their opinion in loud cries. When these birds have fully grown their wing feathers which were clipped when they were captured, they will feel the full benefit and luxury of this excellent aviary.

Also, along the far side of the Parrot House, other flights have been built. In these it is proposed to keep the pheasants who will share these flights with other birds. The pheasants will add colour to the new rose gardens and have a very pleasant outlook.

A recruit to the Parrot House is an African Hornbill. This peculiar but amusing bird is of course an attraction with its huge beak, which is brittle and almost as breakable as an egg shell. At the moment it feeds on nothing but bananas, ignoring other food, such as a little boiled rice or young mice, which the Toucan finds very palatable and who incidentally, finds his new neighbour very interesting, and is continually paying his respects.

The blue Indian Roller Jay has settled down amicably, but is more beautiful in flight, displaying the rich royal blue of his wings. This bird feeds on meat, and is very fond of insects and young mice. Unfortunately, they are not apparently friendly disposed to one another in captivity, and it was found that one attacked several others injuring them, and consequently they were lost.

We have two Indian Alexandria Parakeets which arrived last month, surviving the air journey, and the change of climate and food.

A festive air has been added to the Parrot House by hanging two flower baskets from the roof.

Other fresh arrivals are two Demoiselle Cranes from Nairobi. These birds have a graceful charm contrasting with the elegance of the Crowned Cranes with whom they live. Unlike the Crowned Cranes, they are not nervous, and come boldly forward when being fed.

In the same enclosure we have a pair of Canadian Geese who have bred one gosling this year out of a clutch of six eggs. Sharing the same pool are two young swans, and many a battle royal is fought, the geese always being the victors.

In the breeding aviaries the Budgerigars have been moved to a new flight, giving the public a closer view of them, these birds always prove most popular.

Next to the Budgerigars we have a flight of male Parrakeets of different varieties, making a colourful, attractive display. The most beautiful of them all is the King Parrakeet, with his light red breast, and dark green wings. This bird is friendly and affectionate, and gives a plaintive cry when he thinks he is being ignored. The most awed admirers of this particular specimen are small schoolboys, commenting on their shape and colour with adult authority.

The yellow Lutino Ring Necked Parrakeets have bred two young ones which are almost ready to come out of the nest. The Lutinos are much admired, and are often mistaken for overgrown canaries. The Rockpeplar Parrakeets have reared a family of three, also the Cockatiels have so far three chicks.

On the whole this year's breeding results are more heartening than last season's efforts, which were jeopardised by a very cold Spring.

G. WOODS.

## Editor's Note.

The Editor wishes to offer apologies to all our readers for the non-appearance of any edition of our Zoo News since May of this year owing to shortage of staff.

As this goes to press we are about to place on show "Satan", our new male tiger, caught recently in the jungles of Sumatra. He is a magnificent specimen.

Expected from India in the near future, a pair of baby Panther Cubs.

## A Tribute to a Rose Garden.

There is little doubt that our Rose Garden should feature as Zoo News in this edition. At the present time roses and rose gardens are in the news, but we venture to suggest that ours is something rather special because it is making its debut this year. One morning very early, I sat for a short while in this lovely tranquil spot. The sun was shining gloriously, and whichever way I turned there were roses. Roses of great perfection, roses in bud giving the merest hint of what they would be like when mature, roses just slowly opening their petals to the warmth of the Summer sun and roses in the splendour of full bloom. The fountain playing gently and the deep green of velvety lawns was a perfect setting for the flower beds.

It occurs to me that most of our readers, particularly those who have not yet had the good fortune to see the Garden, will be interested in some details and so I have obtained from our Gardener a few hints and the correct titles of most of the rose trees.

Let us begin with CRIMSON GLORY. These, as their name suggests, are both crimson and glorious and it is their splash of vivid red that first catches the eye. These beautiful

blooms link up with a show of MCGREDY'S SUNSET, a yellow rose that shades to the shot gold of an English sky at eventide. Linger for a few minutes to pay silent tribute to the loving care that has produced, in so incredibly short a space of time, such beauty, we see beyond and covering the farther corner COMTESSE VANDAL, a rose of exquisite perfume with a heart of palest pink and outer petals shaded gold. The final corner features a rose called MRS. EDWARD LAXTON, a lady clothed in the most delicate shade of salmon pink. A few steps and we are near the fountain, which enhances the central scheme, and here are four more rose beds. In these are THE DOCTOR, a blush pink variety that when fully opened is exceptionally large in diameter. Also BETTY UPRICHARD, a shell pink rose of great delicacy. PICTURE, a rose of pastel pink, and finally EDNA HARKNESS, a rose of blood red with a bud of infinite promise.

Enough of loveliness would seem to have been described to fulfil the highest expectations, but flowers are so sensitive and appreciative of green fingers when they tend them, and repay so abundantly the care they receive that they seem to impart something of peace and beauty to the very atmosphere. Here one can sit and rest awhile relaxed, in surroundings seldom to be found in a Zoo. Seven hundred roses spread their beauty all about us, and if this feast be not great enough, a seat can be found to take in also a gay herbaceous border, a show of Geraniums, and surrounding all a layout of Summer bedding plants including the popular and so sweet smelling Heliotrope.

In a world full of discord and fear, I am grateful for this triumph of order and beauty created by man, and I think many who pass this way of roses everywhere, will share with me a feeling of deep appreciation.

N. J. BRUSHETT.