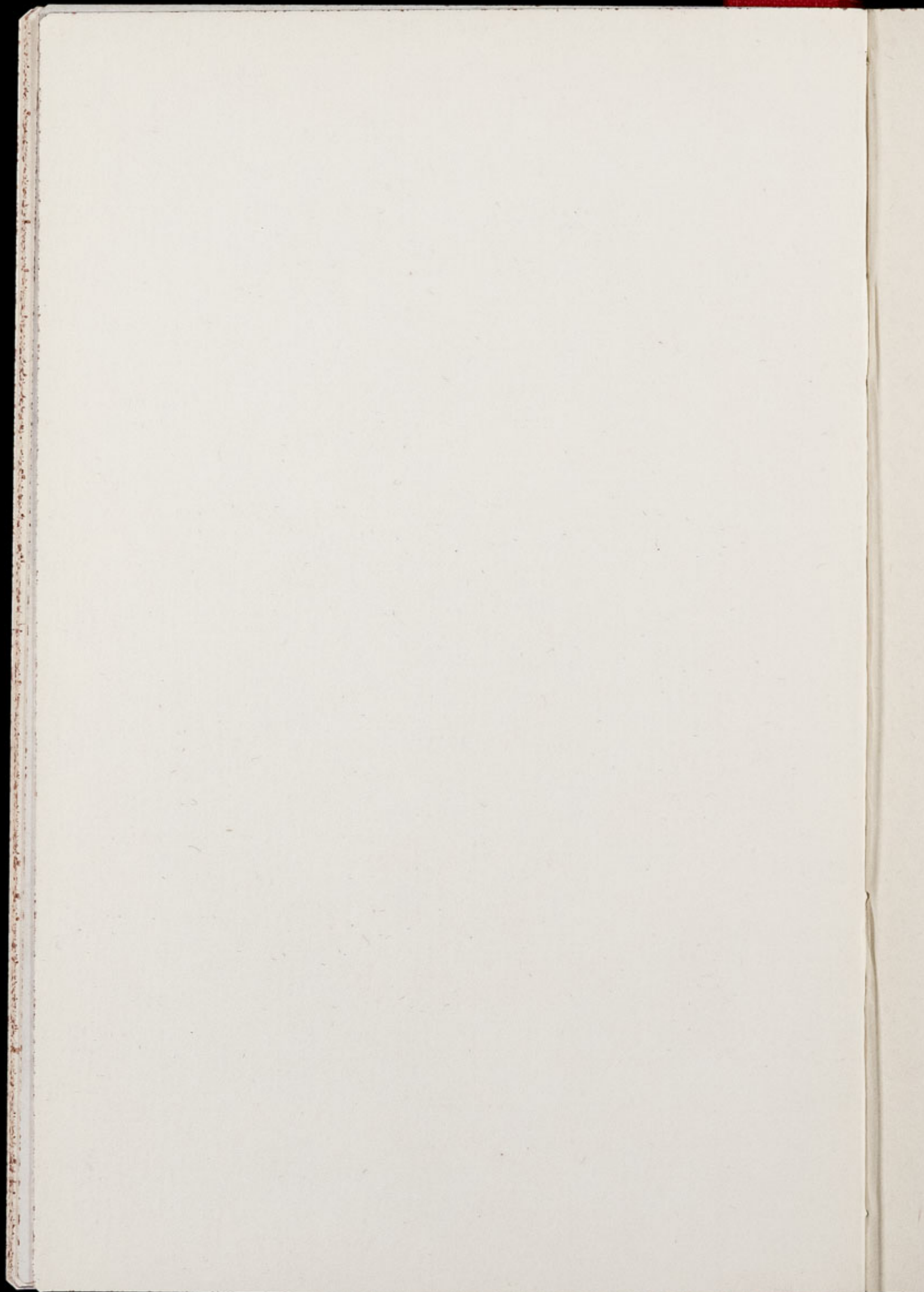




**CHESTER ZOO NEWS**  
**AND GUIDE**

February 1969

Price 1/-



# The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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*COVER: This month's cover photograph shows our Lesser Flamingo preening. For further details see page 10.*

*By Courtesy of J. Gwyn Jones.*

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### ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

Our stock of Arabian Gazelles was increased to ten with the birth of a youngster to Cleo. The Arabian Gazelles are not on show to the public at the moment as they were moved to warmer quarters at our Zoo Farm when the weather became cold. During the Spring these attractive animals will be returned to their open paddocks at the rear of our Monkey House.

A male youngster was born to our Chimpanzee Jane but unfortunately she would not look after her off-spring. Jane arrived at the Zoo during March 1964 and this is her first baby. We hope that she will care for any babies born to her in the future; very often the first born is deserted as the mother has insufficient experience to look after it. Mr. and Mrs. Timmis, the Curator, and his wife are hand-rearing this baby in their own home. We hope to have more information and photographs of this youngster in the next issue of *Chester Zoo News*.

A young female Blesbok has been born at the Quarantine Station and brings our total of these animals to six. Our Blesbok will be brought to the Zoo when they have finished their quarantine period. These animals have to undertake a full year's quarantine and our first three Blesbok arrived at the quarantine station at Birkenhead from the Frankfurt Zoo on 3rd August, 1967. A fourth animal had only just given birth to a calf so could not be sent and was retained by the Frankfurt Zoo until 13th June, 1968. The introduction of this specimen meant that the whole group had their quarantine period extended. We have bred successfully two young Blesbok at our quarantine station and look forward to exhibiting these animals at the Zoo.



ARABIAN GAZELLE

*K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.*

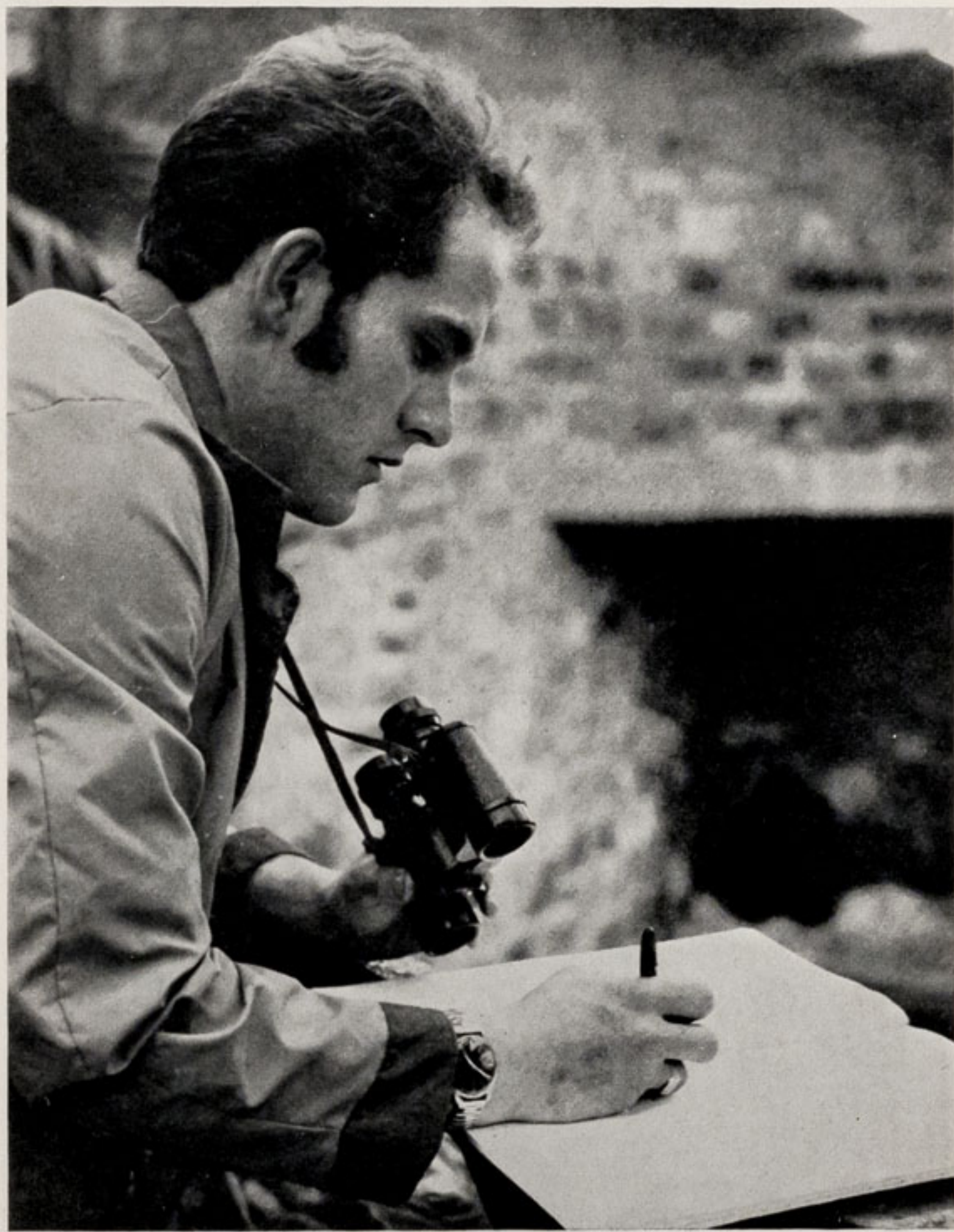
Otter cubs have been born to one of the females which arrived during April 1968. These Otters were transferred from their pool to warmer quarters in our Camel House for the winter and one which looked pregnant was moved subsequently to the Mammal House and housed in an enclosure on her own. She gave birth to the cubs in a little rockwork alcove filled with hay and is given a fresh supply each day. Before the birth she was very tame but has now turned somewhat vicious in defence of her cubs and keepers have to be careful in case she takes a bite at their feet. We will have to wait for some time yet to find out exactly how many cubs there are as they do not venture outside until they are about seven weeks old.

All the Otters exhibited at the Zoo are Oriental Small-clawed Otters (*Aonyx cinerea*) a species found in South Asia, Borneo, Java, Sumatra and the Philippines.

#### NEWS FROM VARIOUS SECTIONS

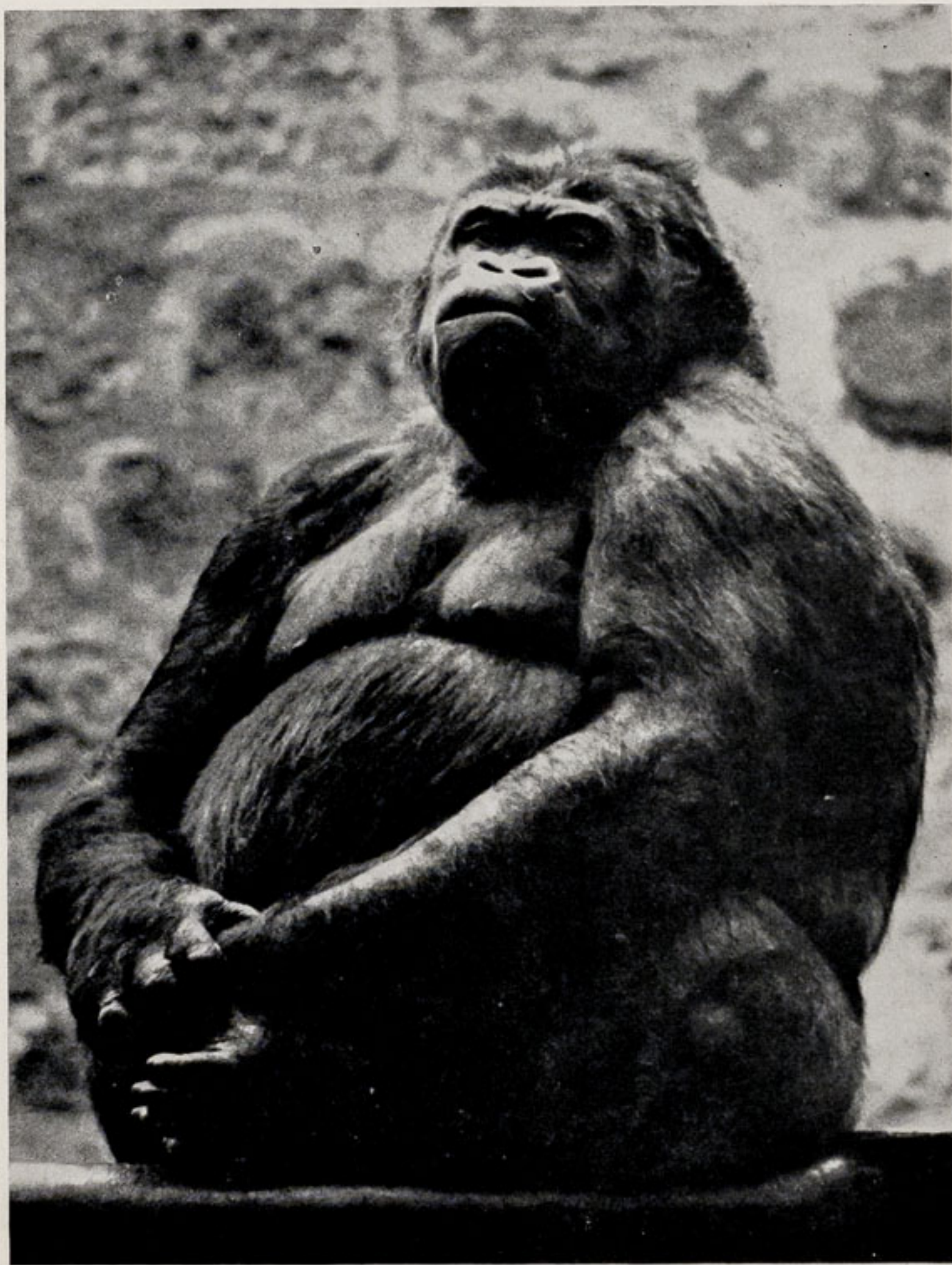
At the time of writing, staff are still awaiting the imminent birth of a youngster to Noelle, our 10 year old Mountain Gorilla. She became so large that she had great difficulty in climbing up and down on to the flat top of the tunnel to her outside enclosure, on which she loves to rest. Maintenance staff solved the problem for her by fixing a stout metal pole from the top of the platform to the bottom of her climbing frame. She now simply slides down and has an extra foothold when climbing up.

Noelle's keeper, Michael Colbourne, has been keeping an accurate record of all the Gorilla's habits prior to the birth and even on his half days off can be seen in the Tropical House observing her and making notes. The photograph shows Michael with a pair of binoculars; this is so that he can see any kicking movements made by the baby inside the mother's body.



*Mel Grundy, Deva Press Agency, Chester*

KEEPER MICHAEL COLBOURNE OBSERVING GORILLA



NOELLE, MOUNTAIN GORILLA

*Jack Smith*

Visitors to our Tropical House have remarked on the pale blue strip lighting over the aviaries occupied by our Birds of Paradise, which will provide these birds with ultra-violet rays to compensate for their lack of sunshine. The use of these lamps is an experiment but we hope they will prove successful during the winter months. Next spring our Birds of Paradise will be transferred to outside aviaries with heated indoor quarters.

We have been most successful in breeding our Wapiti and one female and four male youngsters have been born. For non-zoologists, a Wapiti is a North American Deer — a species closely related to our own Red Deer but a good deal larger. Wapiti is the Indian name for this species and is now widely used but early settlers misnamed it the Elk.

The young Wapiti are growing rapidly and the males are already developing their antlers. Our adult male Wapiti is about to drop his antlers and is becoming less aggressive towards his keepers.

### BIRD NOTES

A number of Birds arrived during the past month, including a collection which has been housed in our long Oakfield flight aviary. Included were Red-billed Weavers, Cordon Bleu, Sundervall's Waxbill, Tri-coloured Nun, Red-crested Cardinals, Fire Finches and Java Sparrows. This attractive aviary has proved ideal for our smaller birds of which we have a large variety; many of the species have an excellent breeding record.

A new arrival to be accommodated in an aviary at our Temperate Bird House was a Toco Toucan (*Rhamphastos toco toco*). This species is the largest of the toucans and is found in the Guianas and North and East Brazil in South America, where they are to be

# GUIDE TO ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

## ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES

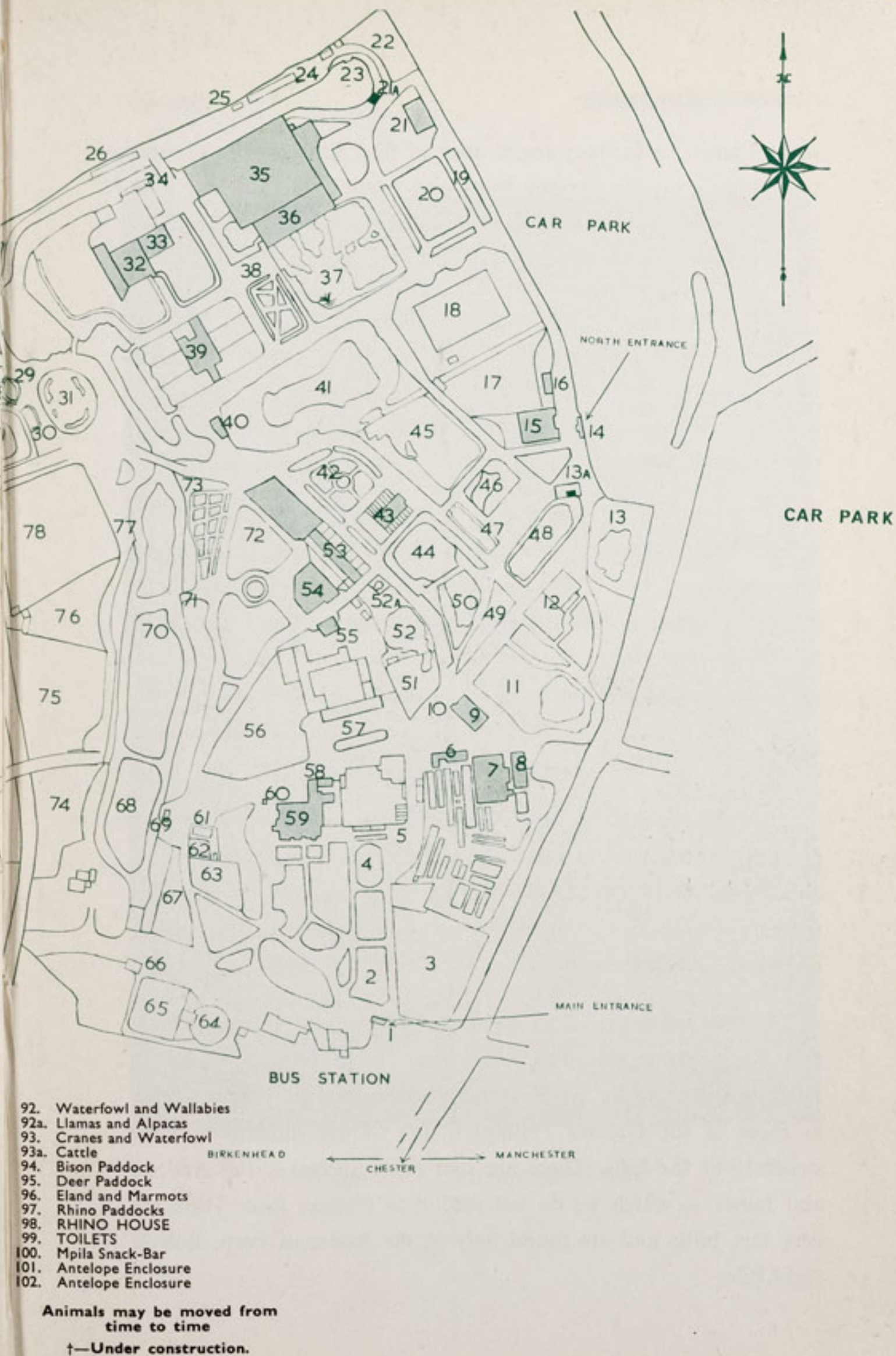
LIONS—3 p.m. except Fridays

SEA LIONS—2-40, 3-40, 4-40 p.m

BEARS—3-15 p.m.

POLAR BEARS—4-0 p.m.

- |  |  |                                 |
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| 1. MAIN ENTRANCE                                   | 33. Camel House                            | 64. Malayan Bears               |
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| 25. Birds of Prey Aviary                           | 57. NEW ZOO SHOP                           | 89a. Jaguars                    |
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| 27. Jackal and Hyaena Enclosures                   | 59. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT                    | 91. Cranes and Waterfowl        |
| 28. Wolverines                                     | 60. G.P.O. Telephone Kiosk                 | 91a. Highland Cattle            |
| 29. Porcupines and Raccoons                        | 61. Animal Enclosure                       |                                 |
| 30. Coypus   | 62. Animal Enclosure                       |                                 |
| 31. Beavers  | 63. Cheetahs                               |                                 |
| 32. Giraffe House                                  |  |                                 |



seen in large flocks; they spend most of their time high in the tree tops feeding on the various fruits and berries. All Toucans look rather top heavy with such an enormous beak but in fact the beak is of a honey-comb structure, so is not very heavy.

Toucans soon adapt to captivity and thrive on a diet of diced fruit and a little insectivorous food; they also enjoy a little meat or a mouse from time to time. Some Toucans become quite aggressive towards their keepers and can inflict a nasty bite with their powerful beaks.

Other arrivals include a pair of attractive Cockatiels — a species from Australia. As its name implies this species resembles the Cockatoos, but is far smaller. Cockatiels are predominately dove grey in colour with some yellow and red markings; they have a crest on their heads which is always held in the same position, unlike the Cockatoos which are able to raise and lower their crests.

### FLAMINGOS

On this month's cover is a picture of our Lesser Flamingo preening. This species is found in huge flocks in Africa, Madagascar and North West India. At the Zoo our Flamingos can be seen in a spacious enclosure with a shallow pond and weeping willow trees, the whole area being surrounded by a high wire mesh fence.

In addition to the Lesser Flamingos we exhibit Greater, Chilean and Rosy Flamingos. The latter three have been classified as separate species in the past but many authorities now regard them as races of the Greater Flamingo, due to the similarity of the structure of the bills. There are two other species — the Andean and James' — which we do not exhibit at Chester Zoo. These are very rare birds and are found only in the Andes of Peru, Bolivia and Chile.



FLAMINGOS ISLAND DURING SUMMER *K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.*

Flamingos' beaks act as a very good sieve, especially in the case of the Lesser and the two Andean species. These birds feed almost exclusively on algae and diatoms, having stiff excluder hairs in the beak to prevent the passage of larger food particles. The other Flamingos are less specialised, feeding on small molluscs, crustacea and organic particles in the mud as well as algae and diatoms. All Flamingos feed with their heads upside down; our Lesser Flamingos feed with a side to side movement of the head and neck but also eat from the food bowl provided, which is filled with a porridge-like mixture. Our other Flamingos also find some natural food in the pond but feed at a lower level than the Lesser, which barely skim the surface. Perhaps this is the reason why Greater and Lesser Flamingos are found living together in huge flocks; obviously they do not compete with each other for the available food supply.

Flamingos build a mud nest in shallow water and the remains of nests can be seen at the Zoo; they laid eggs some time ago which unfortunately did not hatch. The mud nest is in the shape of a truncated cone with a shallow depression scooped out on the top. In the wild state Flamingos nest in very large colonies numbering as many as 900,000 pairs. Normally only one egg is laid which takes 28-32 days to hatch. When first hatched, young Flamingos are a greyish colour and stay in the nest for the first two days but are able to swim when ten days old. Until 65-70 days old the young Flamingos are dependent on their parents for food as their filtering apparatus is not developed properly. The youngsters form into huge groups watched over by a few adult birds and are fed on regurgitated food by their parents.

Many visitors to the Zoo remark on the beautiful pink plumage of our Flamingos. Not all Flamingos are pink; the Rosy Flamingos have the brightest colouration. However, as in captivity



PÈRE DAVID'S DEER AND FAWN  
Bred during 1968

*K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.*

this bright colour tends to fade, our birds receive a food supplement which helps them to retain the pink hues on their feathers.

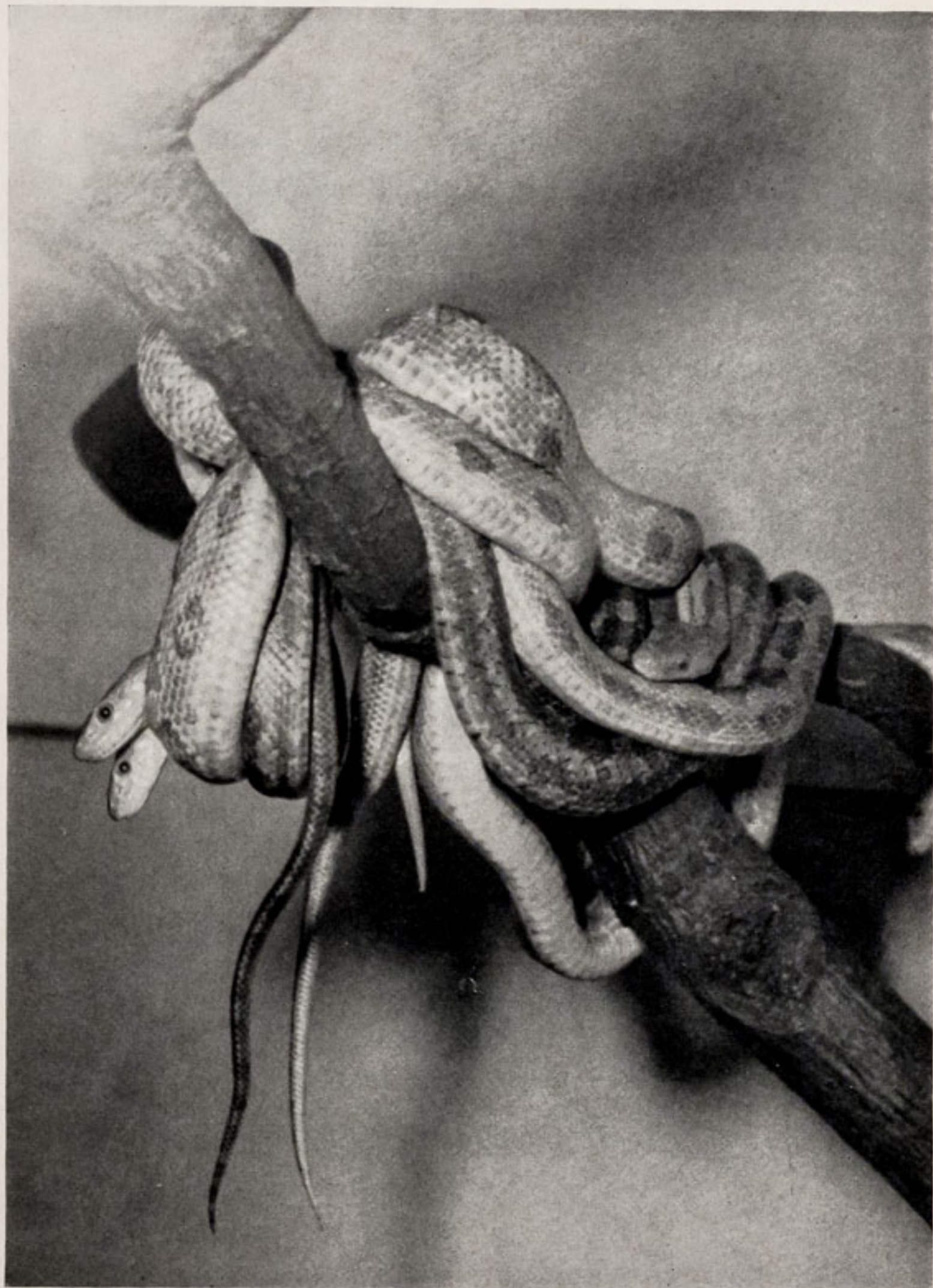
### FACTS AND FIGURES

Our breeding record during the past year has been very good and the following mammals were reared successfully:—

Beaver	Red Lechwe
Bison	Ring-tailed Lemur
Blesbok	Amur Leopard
Ankole Cattle	Llama
Highland Cattle	American Marten
Chimpanzee	Indian Mongoose
Coati	Barbary Ape
Fallow Deer	Talapoin Monkey
Père David's Deer	Vervet Monkey
Wapiti Deer	Orang-Utan
Arabian Gazelle	Prairie Marmot
Indian and Asiatic Gerbil	Soay Sheep
Giraffe	Sugar Glider
Jackal	Red-bellied Wallaby
Jungle Cat	Red-necked Wallaby
Kinkajou	Grevy's Zebra

Although not such a long list, our bird breeding has been well up to standard with the following species bred:—

Sclater's crested Curassow	Superb Bird of Paradise
Muscovy Duck	Silver and Golden Pheasant
Green Singing Finch	Peacock
Indian White-eye	Bob-white Quail
Emperor and Barnacle Geese	Glossy Starling
Canada and Bar-headed Geese	Mute Swan
Kookaburra	Sundervall's and Red-eared Waxbills
Great Eagle Owl	Turquoise and Barraband Parrakeets



CROSS BRED RATSNAKES  
Bred during 1968

*Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby*

Many varieties of birds at liberty in our Tropical House, have nested but it is of course impossible to keep an accurate record of those reared.

In the Reptile House four very rare cross-bred Ratsnakes were reared. These snakes mated in captivity and laid eggs which were artificially incubated. The actual species concerned are: *Elaphe obsoleta quadrivittata* x *Natrix aequifasciata*.

The Aquarium breeding was also very good and the following species were reared:—

Firemouth Cichlids  
Rosy Barbs  
Goldfish varieties  
Zebra Danios  
Blue-eyed Ricefish

Black Mollies  
Velifera Mollies  
Australian Rainbow Fish  
Axolotls

Other species of more common Cichlids and Livebearers were also bred.





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