



*By Courtesy of Gary Talbot*

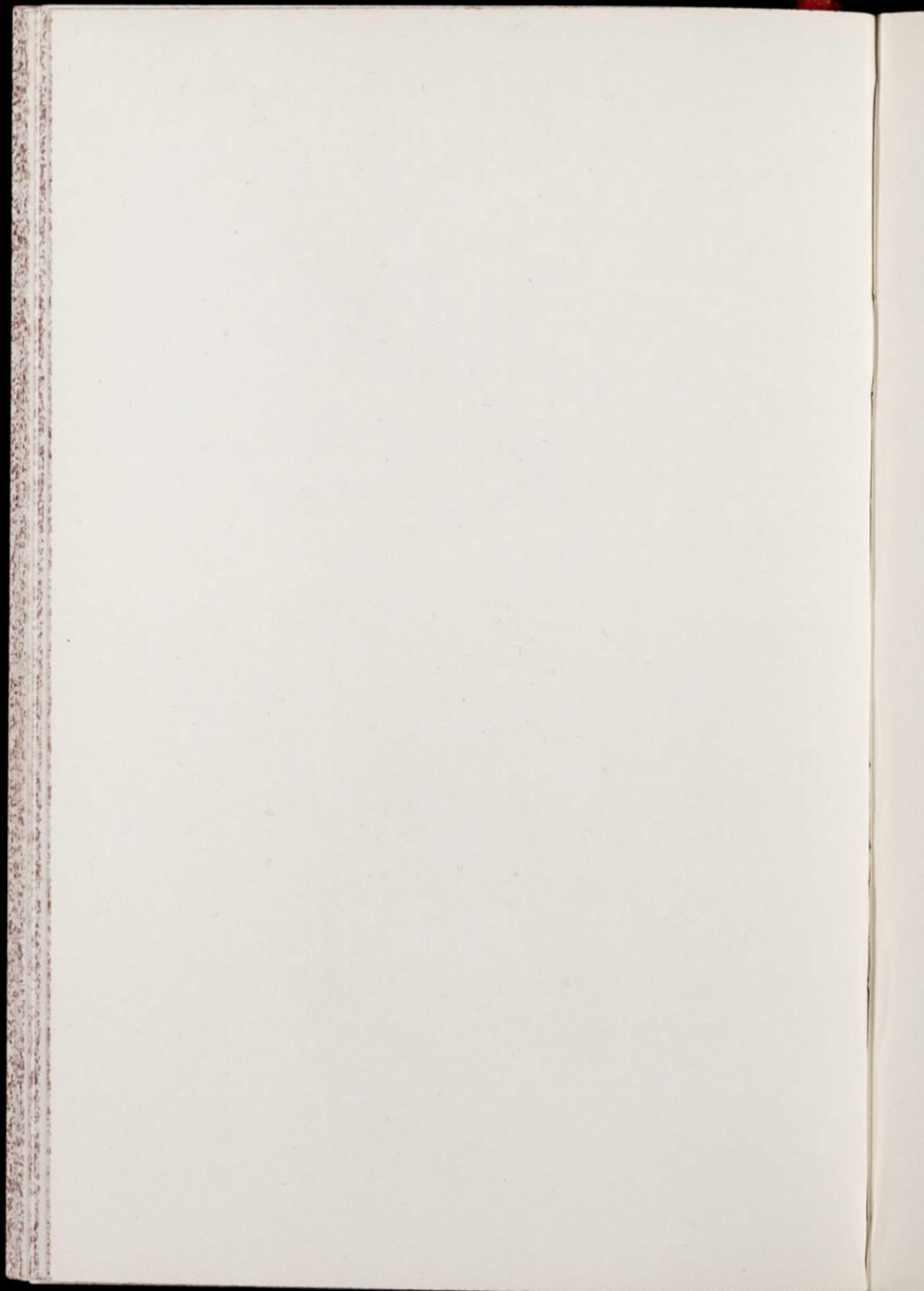
# **Chester Zoo News**

## **AND GUIDE**

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

June 1973

Price 6p



**The North of England Zoological Society**  
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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*COVER: Lion cubs: see page two.*

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**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION — NINETY-FIVE PENCE POSTAGE PAID**

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### COVER PHOTOGRAPH

The subjects of this month's cover photograph are certain to be firm favourites with our summer visitors. They are the four Lion cubs born towards the end of March and they can be seen with their mother, Ingrid, and the rest of the pride in enclosure No. 91.

### ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

During the past month the following mammal births have been recorded:

- 2 Chinchilla (*Chinchilla laniger*)
- 1 Asiatic Wild Ass (*Equus hemionus onager* x *Equus hemionus kulan*)
- 4 Soay Sheep (*Ovis aries*)
- 1 American Bison (*Bos bison*)
- 1 White-bearded Gnu (*Connochaetes taurinus albojubatus*)
- 1 Arabian Gazelle (*Gazella arabica*)
- 1 Red Lechwe (*Kobus leche*)
- 2 Wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*)

Amongst these, the birth of the Asiatic Wild Ass is particularly noteworthy. The foal is a male and is an extremely lively youngster. It is the third Asiatic Wild Ass which has been born here but only the second which can be regarded as a breeding success for Chester Zoo, the reason being that the mare was already pregnant on her arrival in the collection in 1968. Our first true breeding of the Asiatic Wild Ass was achieved in May 1971 with the birth of her second foal, also a male. This animal is still in the collection and is approaching maturity. The gestation period of the Wild Asses is between eleven and twelve months.

The latest foal and its mother may be seen in the house marked No. 39 on the zoo plan. Actually the parents belong to different races of Wild Ass. The male is an Onager which in the natural state



YOUNG ASIATIC WILD ASS (*Equus hemionus onager* x *Equus hemionus kulan*)

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

is found in southern Persia, while the female is a Kulan which originates from Turkmenistan. The differences between them are slight and both races are endangered in the wild.

Regular readers may recall that in June 1971 a pure white Red Lechwe calf was born at the Zoo. It was the first white specimen of this species ever recorded and at the time it caused quite a stir. A second white calf has now been born which, it is believed, has been produced by the same female. Like the first calf, it is not a true albino since it has normally-coloured eyes. The first calf grew to maturity and eventually was acquired by another zoo, and this latest animal also appears in excellent condition. However as we explained when reporting the birth of the original white calf, these animals would not survive in the natural state as they would be conspicuous against their surroundings and therefore easy targets for predators.

We were very pleased to receive a pair of Pig-tailed Macaques (*Macaca nemestrina*) which were presented by Mr. E. E. Taylor of Colwyn Bay. Both animals came originally from Borneo and each was acquired by Mr. Taylor when it was less than a year old. In his care they have grown into very handsome specimens and it is only through pressure of business commitments that he has been forced most reluctantly to relinquish them. The male, named George, is now six and a half years old, while the female, Simone, is five and a half. Simone can be handled quite readily but we are told that the male, which is twice the size of the female, would be quick to show his displeasure if any such attempts were made in his direction. In any event, at Chester the handling of the animals is kept to an absolute minimum and the houses are designed with this policy in mind. Mr. Taylor informs us that the Macaques' diet has included all manner of fresh vegetables and fruit, mealworms and vitamin supplements. The two Pig-tailed Macaques have been accommodated in the Monkey House.

This is one of the larger species of Macaques, the male Pig-tailed being not unlike a baboon in appearance. The name is derived from the short tail which invariably is carried in a "curled over" position. There are several subspecies of Pig-tailed Macaque, whose composite range covers the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Borneo and Java.

A female Indian Mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsi*) was also presented recently to the Society.

### HORNBILL ESCAPE

A few weeks ago visitors near the Flamingo enclosure were startled to encounter an Indian Hornbill sitting in the top of one of the willow trees. The bird, a female, had escaped from the Temperate Bird House and the only hope of recapturing her was to entice her into a shed. For several days the Hornbill was content to remain in the zoo grounds, enjoying the sunny weather and peering down from her willow perch at the groups of fascinated people who gathered beneath. However, though she ate the food which was put out for her, she eluded all attempts to lure her into the Flamingo shed and eventually flew away from the grounds. During the following week reports of sightings were received from districts all around Chester and then we learned that the Hornbill was in a bathroom at Peckforton Castle in Tarporley!

Mark Barratt was the first to discover the Hornbill sitting on a stone staircase at the castle, when he and his family returned from holiday. At first his parents did not believe him—which is hardly surprising. When they realised that they did in fact have a Hornbill, the bird was deposited in a bathroom where she remained quite happily until zoo staff collected her three days later. In the meantime Mark and his family were feeding the Hornbill on fruit and beef-burgers and soon she was taking the food from their hands. In fact they were all very sorry when the bird was collected.

The Hornbill seemed in a healthy condition after her adventures, except that she had lost half an inch from her top bill. During her stay with the Barratts, they had cleaned her beak and discovered traces of fur. From this we can only surmise that either she had caught a small animal such as a young rabbit, or, more probably, found a dead one. The Hornbill has now been restored to her mate and both have been transferred to an enclosure in the Parrot House.

### REPTILE NOTES

Since the last report there have been some interesting new arrivals in this section. Six Solomon Island Skinks (*Corucia zebrata*) may now be seen in the large vivarium which accommodates the tortoises and terrapins. One of the new specimens is shown on the right.

The distribution of these skinks is confined to the Solomon Islands of the Pacific and available data about them is scanty. With no previous experience on which to draw, formulation of a diet for them has relied considerably on observations of their eating habits. The vivarium is furnished with a liberal growth of rubber plants in which the skinks are living. In their natural range the skinks are tree dwellers, most probably utilising tree holes as their refuges. The Reptile Curator noticed that they were eating the leaves of the rubber plants and thus deduced that their natural diet included green food. Accordingly he provided them with lettuce and cabbage. Fruits, meat, hard boiled egg and locusts have also been offered and accepted to a greater or lesser degree. Furthermore, the skinks are acquiring tastes for certain foods. For example, when grapes were first presented to them, the skinks ignored them. A few days later all the grapes were being eaten.

The Solomon Island Skink has a prehensile tail, a feature which is a great asset in an arboreal habitat. The total body length of most of the specimens we have acquired is almost two feet, which is



SOLOMON ISLAND SKINK (*Corucia zebrata*)

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

# CHESTER ZOO

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND  
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

TO LECTURE HALL  
(PRIVATE)

1. SOUTH ENTRANCE
2. Peacock Enclosure
3. Wapiti Paddock
4. Lesser Pandas
5. Aviaries
6. Milk Bar
7. CORONATION HALL
8. CLOAKROOM, FIRST AID, TOILETS, MOTHER AND BABY ROOM
9. CAFETERIA
10. Picnic Lawn
11. Bears
12. Animal Enclosure
13. Kiosk
14. AQUARIUM
15. NORTH ENTRANCE
16. PUSH CHAIRS, WHEEL CHAIRS, LOST CHILDREN
17. Parrot House
18. Free Flight Aviary
19. APE HOUSE
20. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP
21. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn
22. TOILETS
23. Tuatara Exhibit
24. Peccaries
25. Waterbus Halt
26. Birds of Prey Aviaries
27. Condor Aviary
28. Jackal and Hyaena Enclosures
29. Animal Enclosure
30. Porcupine Enclosure
31. Coypus
32. Beavers
33. Giraffe House
34. Camel House
35. Waterbus Halt
36. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND REPTILE HOUSES
37. CHIMPANZEEES
38. Floribunda Rose Garden
39. Mammal House
40. Gibbon Island

41. H.T. Rose Garden
42. Aviaries
43. Flamingoes
44. Waterfowl Enclosure
45. Waterfowl Enclosure
46. Capybara and Waterfowl
47. Penguins
48. Sealions
49. Rock Garden
50. Polar Bears
51. Tigers
52. Waterfowl Enclosure
53. Anteaters
54. BIRD HOUSE
55. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT
56. Ape Nursery
57. TOILETS
58. Lions
59. SOUVENIR SHOP
60. TOILETS
61. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT
62. G.P.O. Telephone
63. Gibbon Pen
64. Animal Enclosure
65. Cheetahs
66. Ornamental Rock Garden
67. Malayan Bears
68. Animal Enclosure
69. Aviary
70. Wallabies
71. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE AND KIOSK
72. Waterbus Halt

73. Fountain Flower Gardens
74. Rose Garden
75. Red Lechwe
76. Red Lechwe
77. Deer or Antelope Enclosure
78. Waterbus Halt
79. Zebra and Deer Enclosure
80. Kamchatka Bears
81. ELEPHANTS
82. Hippos
83. Tapirs
84. Small Mammal House
85. Waterfowl Enclosure
86. Ankole Cattle
87. Gazelle Paddocks
88. Storks and Ostriches
89. Baboon Pens
90. Cat House
91. Lions and Tigers
92. Antelope Enclosure
93. Antelope Enclosure
94. Antelope Enclosure
95. Zebra Enclosure
96. MONKEY HOUSE
97. Waterfowl Enclosure
98. Wallabies and Waterfowl
99. Cranes and Waterfowl
100. Llamas and Alpacas

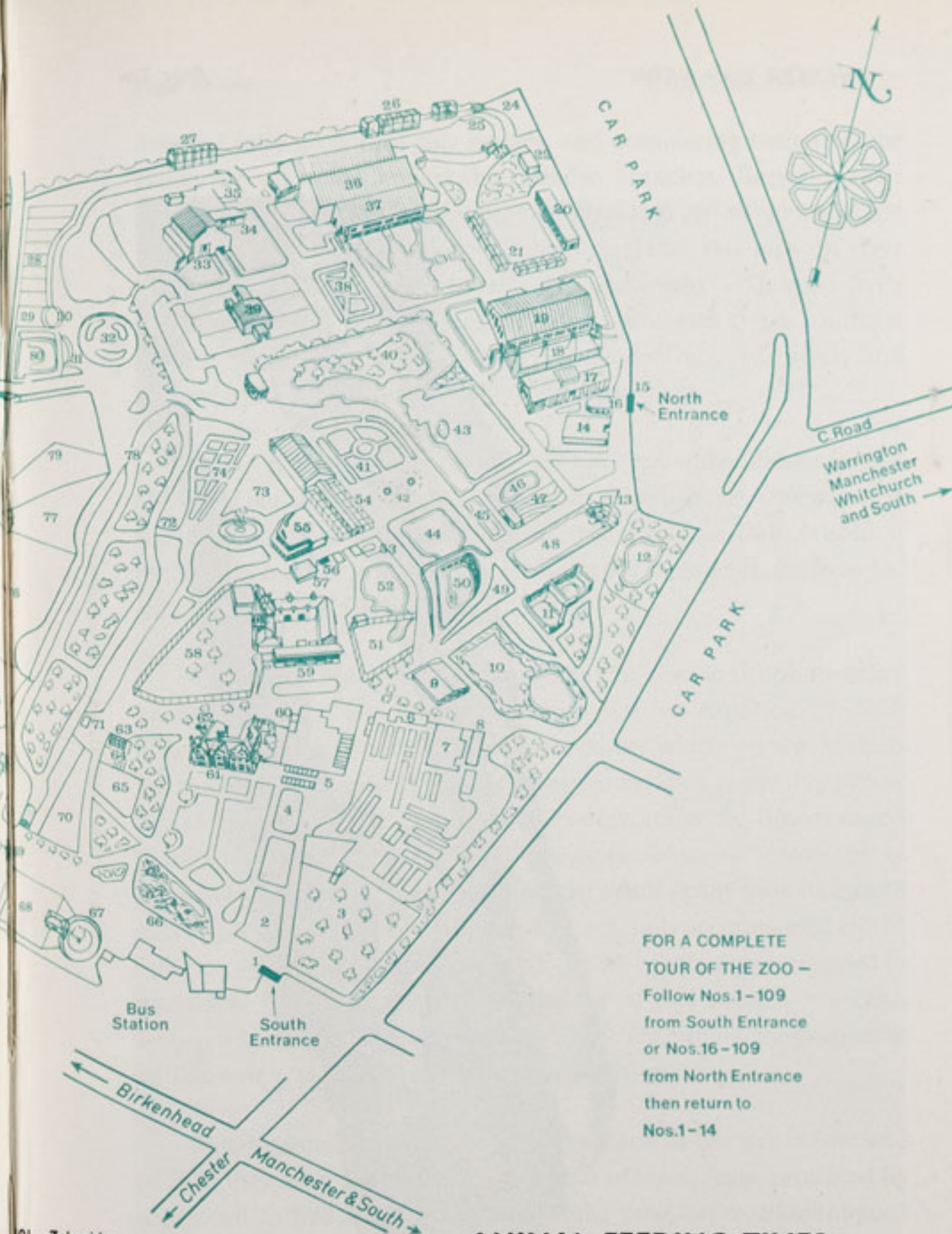
01. Zebroids
02. Bison Paddock
03. Pere David's Deer Paddock
04. Eland and Marmots
05. RHINO HOUSE
06. TOILETS
07. Mpila Snack Bar and Kiosk
08. Antelope Enclosure
09. Antelope Enclosure

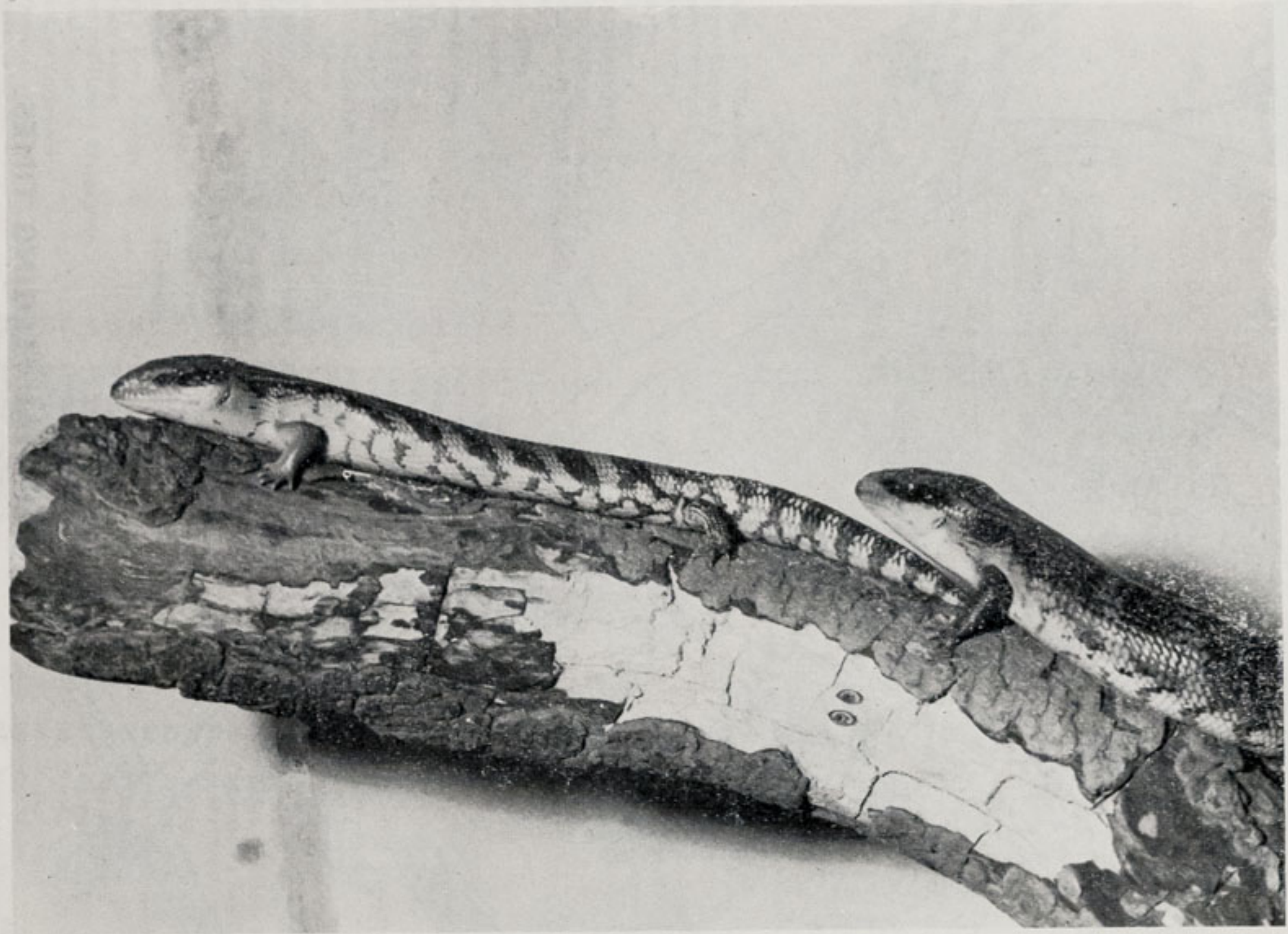
Animals may be moved from time to time

## ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES:

LIONS—3 pm except Fridays  
BEARS—3-15 pm  
POLAR BEARS—4 pm  
SEA LIONS 3 times daily—  
2-40 pm, 3-40 pm, 4-40 pm

FOR A COMPLETE  
TOUR OF THE ZOO —  
Follow Nos.1-109  
from South Entrance  
or Nos.16-109  
from North Entrance  
then return to  
Nos.1-14





BLUE-TONGUED SKINKS (*Tiliqua scincoides*)

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

believed fully grown for this species, and considering their size, the skinks lie on some remarkably slender branches. Basically their colouration is greenish with broken markings of a lighter shade covering the body. The colours of these markings and also on their undersurfaces differ even in the six specimens acquired, from yellowish green to greyish green and also a brownish green. Amongst the leaves and branches they are camouflaged most effectively and visitors will have to look closely to spot them.

Other new additions to this section were three Blue-tongued Skinks (*Tiliqua scincoides*). This species is native to Australia and the three skinks have been introduced into a vivarium which accommodates two other lizard species found in that continent, the Bearded Lizards and the Eastern Water Dragons.

Two of the Blue-tongued Skinks may be seen in the photograph on the left. They are young specimens but are expected to reach lengths of almost two feet. This species occurs widely on the Australian mainland and also is found in Tasmania. Its legs are disproportionately short for the long body but nevertheless the Blue-tongued Skink can travel fairly rapidly over short distances. However its main defence is bluff. When alarmed, the skink opens wide its mouth and displays its bright blue tongue. The action is accompanied by the inflation of its body and a hissing sound, all of which are designed to intimidate its foe. The basic body colour of this skink is a greyish brown with crossbands of a darker shade. The young are born alive and as many as twenty can be produced at one time.

Blue-tongued Skinks have been exhibited at Chester before and in 1956 they were bred here. From a litter of nine young, produced by a pair which had been resident for some time, seven Blue-tongued Skinks were reared.

The Carpet Python (*Morelia spilotes variegata*) is a colourful snake found in Australia and New Guinea. With the recent arrival of a young specimen, we are now exhibiting three Carpet Pythons.

### BIRD NOTES

The first of this year's breedings in the Bird Section are:

- 1 Snow Goose (*Anser coerulescens*)
- 1 Yellow-breasted Bunting (*Emberiza aureola*)
- 2 Red-billed Weavers (*Quelea quelea*)
- 2 Jerdon's Starlings (*Sturnus burmanicus*)
- 1 Rothschild's Mynah (*Leucopsar rothschildi*)

The two young Jerdon's Starlings may be seen in the Tropical House, where this species is in free flight. These birds were bred here for the first time last year when five were reared and this former breeding proved also to be only the second of the Jerdon's Starling in Great Britain.

The Yellow-breasted Buntings are also at liberty in the Tropical House, where the young bird has now become independent. Our first breeding of the Yellow-breasted Bunting was achieved in 1971 when two were recorded.

The parents of the Rothschild's Mynah chick arrived in the collection last year and since then they have been accommodated in one of the outer breeding aviaries, No. 54. The recent chick has already left the nestbox and become independent of its parents. It has been transferred to another aviary to join the single Rothschild's Mynah which this pair reared last year. The parent birds went to nest again and at the time of writing they are feeding another chick in the nestbox, though this will not be regarded as an official breeding until the youngster has emerged.

Amongst new additions to this section were the following:

- 8 Red-whiskered Bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocusus peguensis*)
- 5 Indian White Eyes (*Zosterops palpebrosa*)
- 2 White-crested Laughing Thrushes (*Garrulax leucolophus*)
- 2 Slaty-legged Banded Rails (*Rallina eurizonoides nigrolineata*)
- 2 Black-headed Orioles (*Oriolus xanthornus*)

The Red-whiskered Bulbuls have been released into the Tropical House. Found in mainland South East Asia and in Java and Sumatra, these birds are common throughout their range. Normally they inhabit wooded areas but many are now evident near human habitations. Growing to seven or eight inches long, the Red-whiskered Bulbul is brown above and white below, with a long black crest and black cap to the head. Its face is white and there is a red patch under each eye and below the tail. These birds travel in small parties and will eat insects, berries and fruits. In some areas their fondness for the latter brings them into conflict with the fruit farmers.

The Slaty-legged Banded Rails have been accommodated in one of the outer breeding aviaries, No. 54. As they are shy birds, an aviary was selected in which there was plenty of low cover available for them should they become nervous. The home of this rail is Burma and their haunts are in thickly wooded areas. They hunt chiefly around dawn and in the evening for insects, worms, shoots, seeds and molluscs. The Slaty-legged Banded Rail is dark reddish brown on the back and wings, light brown on the head and breast and white on the chin and throat. Its underparts are striped black and white and its legs are slaty grey. The maximum length of these birds is about ten inches.

In one of the upper aviaries of the Tropical House visitors can see the pair of Black-headed Orioles. The male is a particularly beautiful bird and like most species of Oriole, he is mainly black and yellow. The brilliant yellow is present on his back and upper wings while his head, nape and throat and lower wings are black. His tail is also black but has a yellow tip. His underside is white streaked with black. By comparison, the female is a much duller bird with an olive greenish head, back and tail. Her underside is similar to that

of the male. The Black-headed Oriole grows to eight inches long and is not unlike a starling in shape, with a strong, slightly curved bill.

The range of this species is India and Burma, where it lives in dense lowland forest. Pairs or solitary birds are seen usually in the tops of the trees. Its diet includes fruit and insects. In common with other Orioles, the song of the Black-headed species is reported to be clear and melodious.

### GARDENING NEWS

In the photograph on the right is a spectacular plant known as *Medinella magnifica* which currently is on exhibition in the Tropical House. It is a native of the Philippine Islands and a member of the Melstromaceae family. Each of the many panicles is pink and a feature of this shrub is that it flowers from the hard old wood as well as from the new.

Work on the summer bedding displays begins in the winter, long before any of the plants which will be used have started growing. At that time the designs, colours and varieties of plants for the many beds and borders are plotted out on graph paper. Once the bedding is planned, the plants necessary for the forthcoming season can be grown. We endeavour to show as many as we can of the annuals, biennials and perennials which are suitable as summer bedding plants.

The actual bedding out involves considerable work for the Gardens staff and for at least three weeks a team of eighteen or more men is assigned to clearing the spring bedding and planting the summer displays. In all this year some 80,000 plants have been used in the beds and borders, with over 300 standards, made up of Fuchsias, Lantana and Heliotropes. There are 12,500 Begonias,



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*Medinella magnifica* IN THE TROPICAL HOUSE

comprising doubles, multifloras and fibrous rooted, and 3,000 Heliotropes in two varieties—Mrs. Lowther and Princess Marina. In addition there are 8,000 Verbenas in named varieties, 5,000 Geraniums, 1,000 Calceolarias in variety, 200 Abutilons and 500 Cannas.

Gardening enthusiasts should not miss our Fuchsia border which this year contains 110 varieties. The border is situated near the H. T. Rose Garden, No. 41. A border of Bush Lantana is another regular feature of the summer displays and this can be seen at the entrance to the Elephant House.

A considerable number of grey foliaged plants have been employed throughout the displays, as it is felt that these always enhance the colours of the flowering plants. The varieties used include *Cinerea alicia*, *Cinerea maritima*, *Centauria gymnocarpa*, *Chrysanthemum poterifolia*, *Helychrysum petioloris* and *Luecaphyta brownii*. Numerous other plants included in the bedding schemes are Antirrhinums, Dahlias, Marigolds, etc.

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### SUBSCRIPTION FORMS

New readers of the CHESTER ZOO NEWS who would like to receive the magazine regularly may be interested to know that subscription forms can be obtained from the souvenir shops. An annual subscription (12 issues) costs 95p, postage paid, which can either be handed over the counter at the shop or posted with the completed form to the Director-Secretary, Chester Zoo, Chester.

The following notice is displayed on several boards in the grounds

Please comply with it at all times.

### FEEDING OF ANIMALS AND BIRDS

**IT IS AN OFFENCE** for any member of the public to offer food of any description to any Animal or Bird in Chester Zoo.

This regulation is made for the sake of the health of the Animals and Birds. Since the NO FEEDING rule was introduced, the number of deaths has dropped appreciably and sickness, due to wrong feeding has been virtually eliminated.

What you may be offering to an animal may only be a sweet or an inoffensive piece of bread, but it can mean a death sentence for the animal. For example, a cough drop, which may relieve your cough, can cause instant death to many Animals and Birds in the Zoo.

You must not lose sight of the fact that you are only one of over a million visitors who visit the Zoo annually. If for instance an elephant had one bun from only one tenth of a day's visitors during the summer, it would eat between three and four thousand. You can guess the result.

We realise what a temptation it is for visitors, particularly children, to feed our Animals and Birds and this is why we invite members of the public to be present at the official feeding times.

This is a polite warning to you, asking you not to feed the animals. If you ignore it, the Keepers are authorised to ask you to leave the Gardens.

**If you really love Animals and Birds, you will appreciate the wisdom of the ruling—No Feeding by members of the public.**

**PLEASE HELP US TO KEEP OUR COLLECTION OF ANIMALS NOT ONLY ALIVE BUT IN FIRST CLASS CONDITION.**

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