



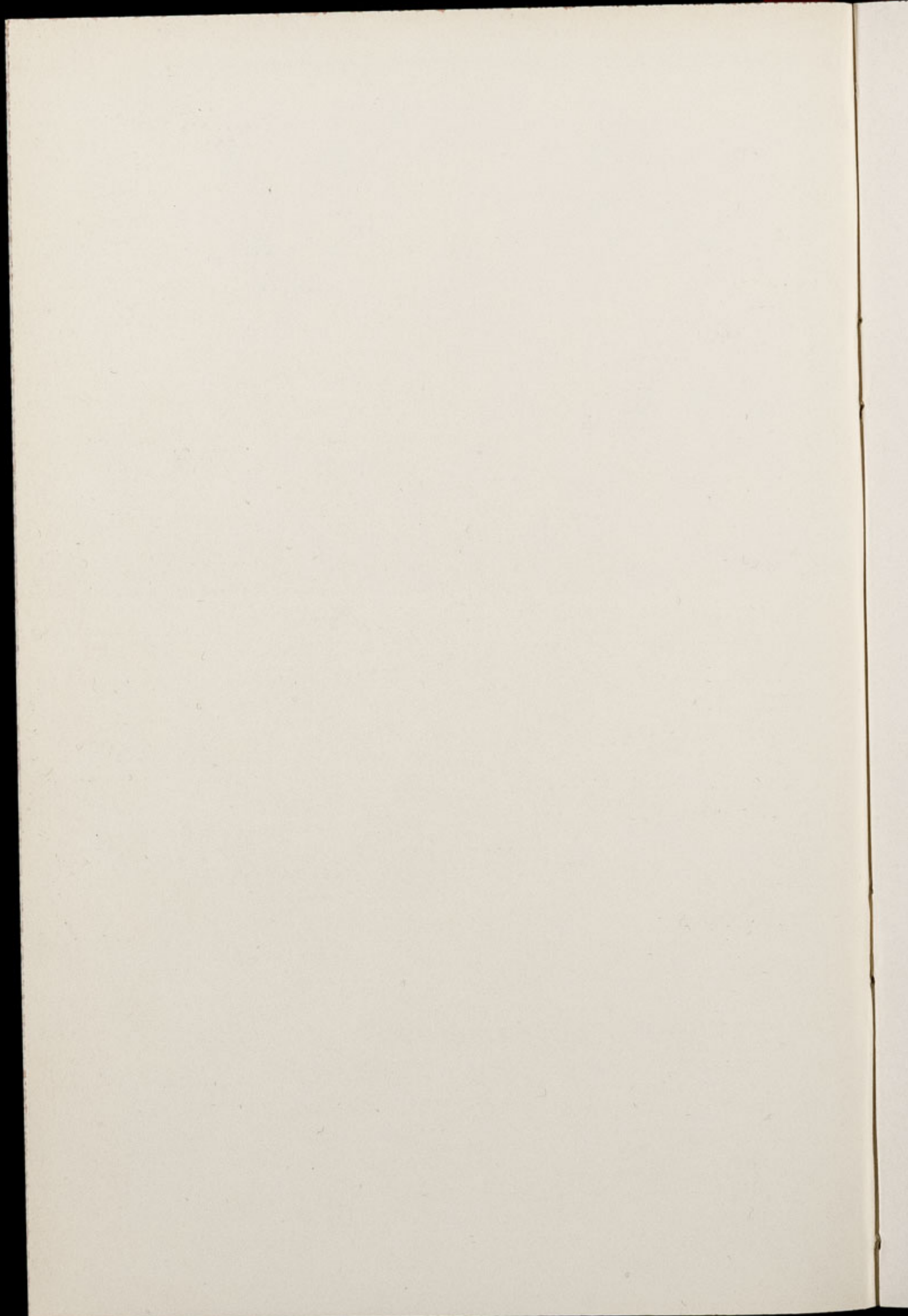
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Chester Zoo News

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

June, 1963

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Editorial

We have welcomed many new babies in recent weeks and many more are expected. Several generous presentations were made to the Collection and new birds and animals have been purchased.

Further landscape work in the Gardening Section has been completed, including the layout of lawns and flower beds in front of the new Monkey House, the lawn extension by the Rainbow Cafe and the new Rockery alongside the Polar Bear enclosure. The Rockery has been foundation planted, annuals will be introduced and the completion of the planting will be a gradual process as new rock plants are added over the next few years.

Almost overnight the Gardens seem to have blazed into colour. At the time of writing tulips, polyanthus, pansies and flowering cherries, to mention but a few, are in full bloom. It is difficult to believe that only a few short weeks ago we were in the grip of an incredibly severe winter.

M.D.

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COVER: King Penguins are the subject of this month's cover.

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ZOO BABIES

Several babies arrived towards the end of April, too late to be reported in the May issue of the magazine. These were a pair of Bagot Goats, three Soay Sheep, one Ankole Calf and seven fat little Husky puppies.



J. Walker, Daily Mirror.

A MEMBER OF CHESTER ZOO'S OFFICE STAFF WITH HER
ARMS FULL OF HUSKY PUPPIES

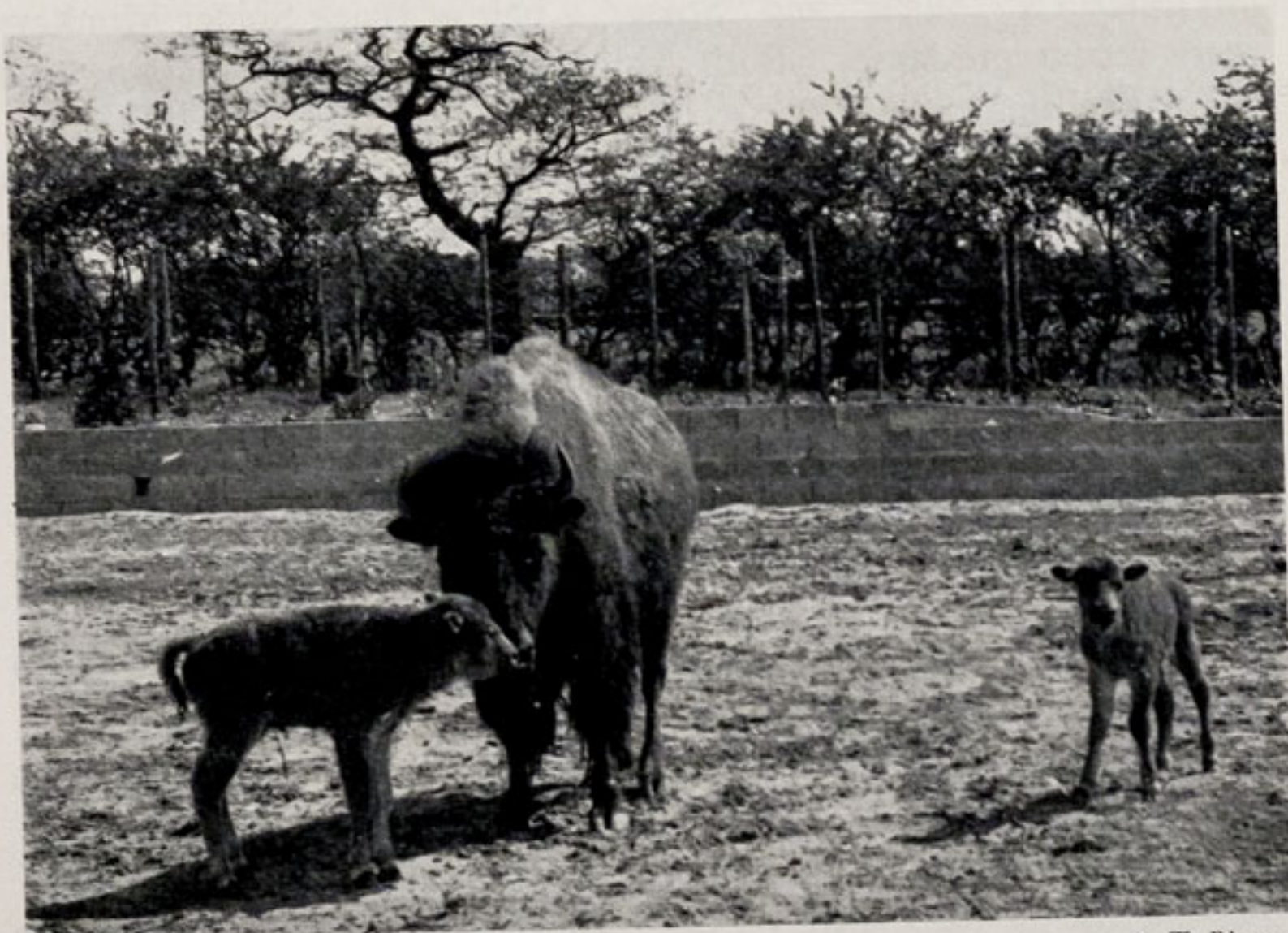
"Winkie," the oldest member of our Leopard family also had a baby during the last week in April. It is interesting to note that Winkie has been in the Zoo since 1950, when she arrived from Africa as a two-year-old. The photograph shows a member of one of her earlier litters.



E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.

LEOPARD CUB

Friday, 10th May, was quite a day for new babies at Chester Zoo. Eight babies in all put in an appearance. In the Cat Section there were four Puma Cubs and two Leopards. This was also the birthday of Chester Zoo's first female Eland calf. Last year we had three Eland calves, all males, so we were particularly pleased at the arrival of "Cathie." Baby number eight was a delightful little female American Bison, named "Liz."



R. T. Bloom,

"LIZ" WITH MOTHER AND "JENNY"

Another female American Bison — "Jenny" — was born on Monday, 13th May, and a second Eland calf on Thursday, 16th May. The latter baby is still waiting for a name.

Six silver Pheasants have hatched.

NEW ARRIVALS

PENGUINS: Four King Penguins joined the Penguin colony at the end of April and we now have eight King Penguins and five Humboldt's. One of the new Kings is proving to be an expert escaper. None of the others ever attempt to leave their enclosure, but this particular bird obviously suffers from wanderlust. Already he has been caught strolling around the Gardens on numerous occasions.

MYNAH: A very talkative Hill Mynah was presented to the Zoo recently. He answers to the name "Jim Crow" and is on show in the Parrot House.

REPTILES: Newcomers to the Reptile House are four Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes, two Boa Constrictors and an African Python. You can read more about the Rattlesnakes on page thirteen.

MONKEYS: "Sugar" and "Spice," a pair of Black Spider Monkeys were recent purchases. Both Monkeys are delightfully tame and very affectionate.

ANTEATER: Another charming addition to the Collection is a baby Giant Anteater. "Winifred" is approximately six months old and pokes her long nose into absolutely everything. We hope to have this baby on show very soon.

NESTING ACTIVITIES

A Humboldt's Penguin has taken possession of one of the Penguin caves and is being supplied with nesting material by her mate.

The Sarus Cranes are still dithering. Obviously they are not taking the decision lightly, whether or not to raise a family.

Occipital Blue Pies, Lesser Snow Geese and Little Owls are all sitting on eggs.

A pair of Mute Swans have again taken over their regular nesting site in the centre of the Chimpanzee islands. Woe betide any Keeper or Chimp who ventures too near.



Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby.

"SCOTCH" AND "SODA"

TAPIRS

Tapirs are one of the oldest forms of Mammal living today, and Chester Zoo has representatives of two species. Fossilised remains of the Tapir found all over Europe, Asia and North America indicate that it was originally a northern animal and only penetrated into South America quite late in time. Strangely enough, there is no evidence of the Tapir ever having been found in Africa. Existing Tapirs have a remarkable geographical distribution — one species, the Malayan or Saddle-back, being found in Malaya and Sumatra, whilst all the others come from Central and South America. Still more remarkable is the fact that, instead of all the South American species being closely allied, two of them prove to be more closely related to the Malayan species.

The South American Tapirs are usually a uniform brown or greyish brown. Our two — "Alice" and "Carol" — are not the typical Brazilian form usually seen in Zoos, but come from Peru and resemble the mountain species (*Tapirus moulini*), although the latter are more slender in build, have longer legs, no crest and a longer trunk.

Malayan Tapirs are far more striking in appearance, being black with a broad white 'saddle.' Our female — Soda — has always had a large white patch on either side of her neck and this makes her easily distinguishable from her mate — Scotch.

When our Malayan Tapirs first arrived they had to be content with accommodation in the old Elephant House — soon to be converted into an animal food preparation centre. Whilst there an amusing, although at the time alarming, incident occurred. As their Keeper was leaving their enclosure after cleaning out duties one morning, a glimpse of the great outdoors must have tempted Scotch to explore. He knocked over his Keeper and departed at top speed. Zoo officials were led quite a dance before he took refuge in an evil-smelling pond some miles away. His Keeper succeeded in getting a rope around his neck and was about to haul out the truant when Scotch jerked back his head and the Keeper took a nose dive into the pond. Fortunately he hung onto the rope and the now highly-scented pair returned to the Zoo without further incident.

All baby Tapirs are heavily striped and spotted and lose this colouration after the first year. On arrival at eight to nine months of age, the spots on our Malayan Tapirs were clearly visible. By the time they had been here three months, the spots and stripes had gone completely and their black and white coats shone with health.

They consumed over a gallon of milk a day, cooked rice and fruit of most kinds — their favourite being bananas. We tried them with many types of freshly cut branches, but the only ones they would eat were from apple trees. Because they had no outside enclosure in the old Elephant House, we carted tons of turf and soil into their pen and this they tackled with relish. Now that they are housed in the Pachyderm House with a large outside paddock, they show a distinct preference for red clay and never seem to tire of eating it!

Soon after being transferred to the Pachyderm House the Malayan Tapirs had a long spell of tummy trouble. We treated them with well-known anti-biotics and a final cure was effected by introducing Yogurt into their diet. This they liked so much that they consumed as much as a gallon and a half per day.

The two South American Tapirs arrived in this country during last winter and it has taken a long time and enormous patience to



Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby.

"ALICE" AND "CAROL"

get them really fit. In fact Alice is still receiving treatment. In contrast, Scotch and Soda revelled in short periods out of doors in the cold weather and, on occasions, even broke the ice on their pond to have a swim. They loved the snow and romped about like enormous puppies.

GIRAFFE DANGER SIGNAL

There does not seem to be any authenticated record of the sound made by a Giraffe — in fact so many people believe Giraffes to be mute that we think the following incident is worthy of note.

Recently Gerry, our baby Giraffe, was running around his enclosure with the other Giraffes. He became so frisky that he alarmed George and in trying to get out of Gerry's way, George accidentally knocked Goofy off balance. The sight of Goofy struggling to regain her feet terrified the others and both George and Margaret (Gerry's mother), emitted what can only be described as a bellow. The noise made was rather like a cross between a Camel's bellow and a Lion's roar. Some Africans believe that Giraffes broadcast this peculiar danger signal when one of their number is pulled down by a Lion. It is quite possible that even trained observers could confuse the sound made with that of a Lion's roar, hence the lack of information on the subject. Perhaps our Giraffes associated the sight of Goofy struggling on the ground with the attack of a Lion and the bellow was an instinctive warning. Gerry reacted by running to shelter behind his mother.

OUR NURSERY GARDENS

The nurseries are the centre of all activities in the Gardens, the hub of the wheel as it were, from which all our plants, shrubs, trees, etc., originate.

The glasshouse section consists of eleven greenhouses, covering an area of twelve thousand seven hundred sq. ft., with additional span pits and frames, all erected during the past ten years.

At the time of writing the Greenhouses are bursting at the seams. Fitting in all the plants is a problem at this time of year, when all the summer bedding plants are in the houses. Some eighty thousand plants are required for the summer bedding display, this number includes ten thousand Begonias in variety, five thousand Geraniums and two thousand five hundred Heliotrope. These are

all grown in various types of pot and use a considerable area of greenhouse space. Large numbers of Antirrhinum, Verbena, Lobelia, Ageratum, etc., are grown in boxes and, therefore, more plants can be accommodated in each greenhouse or frame. Some of the greenhouses are filled with tropical and sub-tropical plants, of which we have a large and varied collection. These are being grown for planting in the new Monkey and Tropical Houses, now under construction. A reserve of these plants must always be at hand to replace losses which occur in our plantings in the existing animal houses.

We also have an Orchid House measuring eighty feet by twelve feet, which contains a varied collection of Orchids, including Cymbidiums, Cattleyas, Odontoglossums, Cypripediums, etc. These will be on show to visitors when the new Tropical House is completed.

No space is ever wasted in our greenhouses. As soon as the bedding plants are planted out in the Gardens, all available greenhouses are filled with tomatoes and cucumbers, the fruit being used in our restaurants and any surplus is fed to the animals.

We have two outside nurseries, in all approximately three acres. One is used for the raising of trees and shrubs. Cuttings and seeds are propagated in the greenhouses and frames and then planted in the nursery. After two or three years they are lifted and planted in the Zoo grounds. We had heavy losses of shrubs and conifers, etc., last winter, caused by the very severe frosts and we have had to use all our reserves and even small shrubs from this nursery to fill the places of those we lost. We also had heavy losses of standard roses, but the blank spaces here will have to remain for this summer, as replacements cannot be planted until next winter.

Our other nursery is used for the raising of spring bedding plants, such as Wallflowers, Polyanthus, Pansies, Forget-me-nots, etc., and a rotation of Lettuce is grown to give a constant supply to our Restaurants.

OWLS

Owls range in size from the tiny Elf Owl, only a few inches high to the more impressive height of the Greater Eagle Owl. The family is found all over the world except in Antarctica and all members live on animal food, the smaller species on large beetles, small rodents and birds, the larger on rats, rabbits and even hares.



Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby.

TAWNY OWLS

At Chester Zoo we have six species of Owl in a group of four aviaries. In the left hand aviary are a group of British Owls, six Tawny and one Barn Owl. They agree together very well, though there is some mild squabbling at meal times. One of the Tawny Owls, which was handreared, is extremely tame and likes nothing better than to sit on its Keeper's shoulder, gently nibbling his ear. Little is seen of the Barn Owl, because of all our Owls, this is the only one which really dislikes daylight. It spends most of the day in a box, only venturing out in the evening.

The outstanding characteristics of the Owl are its cat-like face (with the eyes looking forward,) the typical hooked beak and talons of the bird of prey and very soft feathering — which makes the flight soundless and assists in hunting prey. Although there are many similarities to other birds of prey, Owls are not in fact closely related to Eagles, Vultures or Hawks. Their closest allies are actually the Nightjar family.



E. Kirkland.

BARN OWL

The next aviary houses a breeding pair of Spotted Eagle Owls. These are tropical birds from Central and South Africa. Last year they laid four eggs in a scrape on the ground and hatched and reared four owlets successfully. Only one owlet has hatched this year and is now on view.

The most attractive Owls in the collection are two Snowy Owls. These are large birds and as their name implies, snow white in colour, with black, barred markings. Not the least attractive feature of the Snowy Owls are their enormous yellow eyes. The birds inhabit arctic regions and are seen occasionally in Scotland. Unfortunately our Snowy Owls are not thought to be a pair.

Next are a breeding pair of the largest owl of all — the Greater Eagle Owl. The appearance of these spectacular birds is enhanced by two large, ear-like tufts of feathers on the head. Like their African cousins, they also reared four youngsters successfully last year and have hatched four more this year. Greater Eagle Owls inhabit Europe and North Asia and are also found occasionally in Scotland.



E. Kirkland.
SNOWY OWLS

By way of contrast, a small aviary adjoining that of the Greater Eagle Owls, houses four Little Owls. Though not the smallest owl of all, this is a very tiny species, no bigger than a thrush. Our birds were all hand-reared but have not remained tame like the Tawny Owl, mentioned earlier. It is interesting to note that although the Little Owl is now classified as a British bird, it was introduced into this country from America only some fifty years ago by Lord Lilford and others. Since then it has spread rapidly throughout Great Britain. As far as gamekeepers and poultry farmers are concerned, it is about as popular as the introduced rabbit in Australia — the Little Owl has a great liking for game and poultry chicks.



E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.

GREATER EAGLE OWL

Apart from chicks, it lives on large beetles and other insects, as well as voles and mice.

Owls as a family do well in captivity and are hardy and long lived. They are, therefore, ideal inmates for a Zoo and always arouse interest, particularly in young children.

RATTLESNAKES

Exhibited in our Reptile House at the present time are five Western Diamond-back Rattlesnakes (*Crotalus atrox*) and one particularly striking Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*). The latter variety is found almost all over North America, the general colouration varying from area to area. Our specimen is a rich sandy brown with deep chocolate markings. Although the scales of all rattlesnakes are heavily keeled, this particular snake seems to have a rich velvety texture, instead of the usual rough appearance.

Western Diamond-back Rattlesnakes are lighter in colour and although their colouration is not without variation, their whole appearance is more suggestive of dry, arid country, where they could blend with sandy, stony backgrounds. The lozenge, or diamond-shaped markings are responsible for their name.

Rattlesnakes are found only in America, where they are much feared. As a family they have a pretty deadly reputation, their bite frequently proving fatal, if speedy medical attention is not available. One thing to be said in the rattlesnakes favour is that it rarely attacks without warning. Usually the rattle on the end of the tail emits a clearly distinguishable sound. Eyesight is comparatively poor and the rattle is used whenever the snake is alarmed and, possibly, to warn off would be intruders as well as a signal of impending attack.

The rattle itself is composed of hollow, horny rings, interlocked but fitting loosely enough to allow considerable freedom of movement. It is not necessarily increased in length every time the snake sloughs its skin but obviously a well fed or particularly old snake will possess a longer rattle than an undernourished or young snake. Part or the whole of the rattle may be cast off occasionally. If the final segment has a button-like tip, then it is a perfect, undamaged rattle, whatever the age of its owner. When in use the rattle is agitated very rapidly to produce a whirring sound.

Although most commonly found in dry stony areas, rattlesnakes are not confined strictly to this type of habitat. They also occur in districts close to water and prove to be excellent swimmers if

the need arises. Being viviparous they produce live babies, the number in a brood varying from perhaps ten to as many as seventy, according to species.

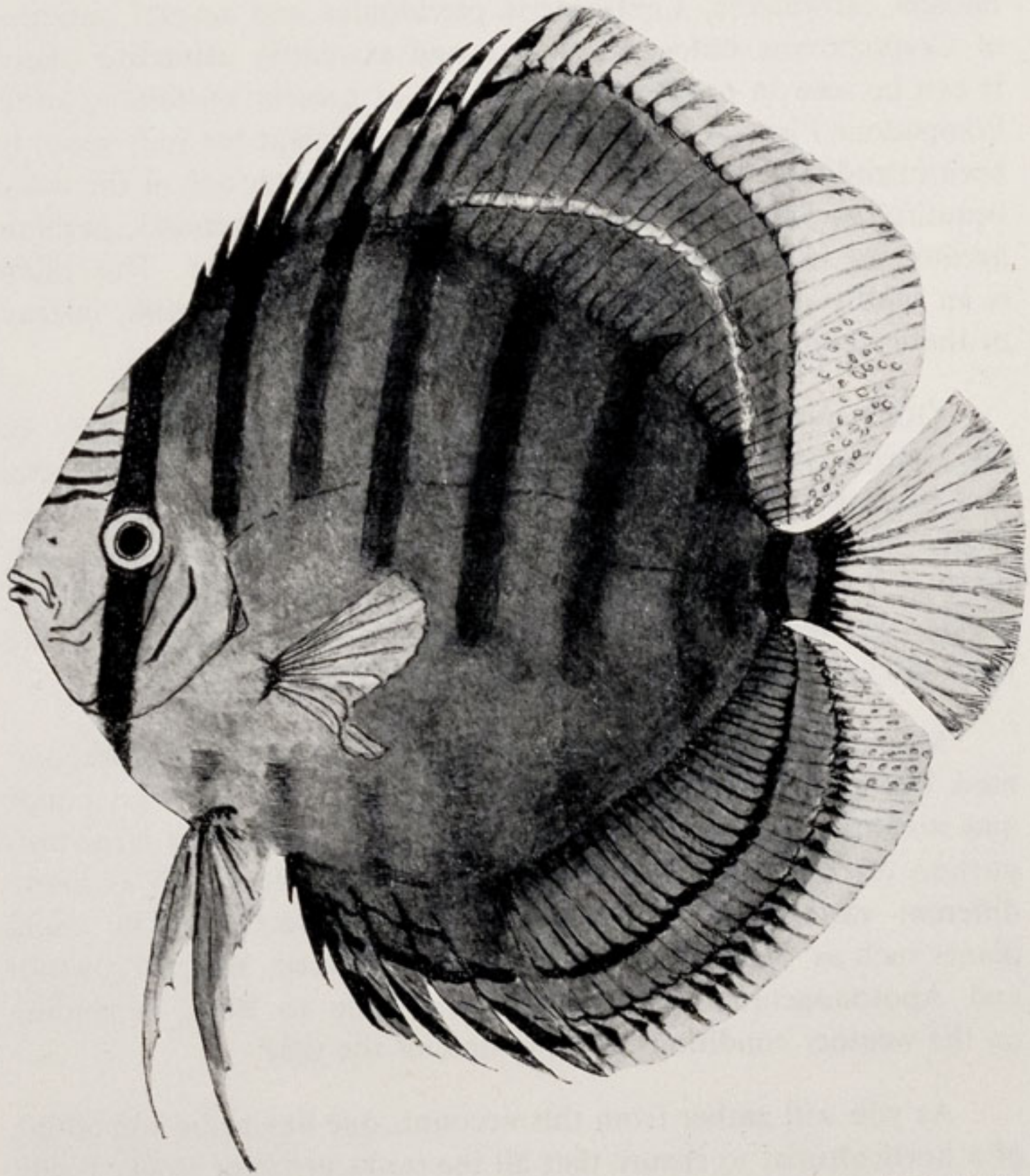
Whereas the Timber Rattlesnake seldom grows to more than four or five feet in length, the Western Diamond-back can reach six feet. The largest rattlesnake of all is the Eastern Diamond-back (*Crotalus adamanteus*). A full-grown specimen can be a formidable creature — over seven foot long and thick in girth.

Rattlesnakes sometimes take up residence in the burrows of underground mammals, such as Prairie Marmots, where doubtless they prey upon the young ones. Various small mammals and birds are selected as food also any eggs they come across. After striking its prey the Rattlesnake will release it again and allow time for the injected poison to do its deadly work. Later the snake returns to feed, its sensory organs assisting in the search for the victim's body, enabling the snake to find it even in the dark. Rattlesnakes belong to the group of snakes known as pit vipers and their sensory organs are situated in two pits behind and below the nostrils. The poison glands of rattlesnakes are particularly large when compared with those of other venomous snakes.

For some time we had only one Western Diamond-back Rattlesnake, but recently we were fortunate in being presented with four more by the Fort Worth Zoological Park, Texas. It is interesting to record that our original Western Diamond-back has changed his habits since the introduction of the newcomers to his cage. Previously he was never particularly interested in his food, but now he feeds with amazing regularity. Either community life agrees with him or he has decided that if it is to be a case of the survival of the fittest, he is not going to be found wanting.

STOP PRESS

The Black Swans have hatched five cygnets. The fluffy, grey cygnets, always shadowed by both parents, make a delightful exhibit.



POMPADOUR OR DISCUS FISH

M. D. Murphy.

AQUARIUM NEWS

Due to the poor weather and lack of sunlight during the past few months, the tropical plants in the Aquarium have taken rather longer than usual to commence their summer growth. All the tanks were cleaned out and most of them were given a basic dressing of peat; gravel being placed over this to prevent it being washed away and also to improve the appearance of the tanks. In this mixture many of the usual varieties of tropical aquatic plants do very well, particularly *Hygrophila stricta*, *Bacopa amplexicaulis*,

Bacopa caroliniana, *Ceratopteris pteridoides* and several varieties of *Cryptocoryne bulosus* — a rare and extremely attractive plant. It can be seen in profusion in the tank at present containing adult Pompadour Fish. A native of Thailand, this plant has only recently been introduced to British Aquarists and although one of the more beautiful varieties, it has not become particularly popular, perhaps because of its slow rate of growth and reproduction. This plant is an oddity of its family, in that it prefers a well-lit tank, instead of the usual darkly lit tank, in which its relatives thrive.

Other plants in the Aquarium include many specimens of the Amazon Sword Plant — *Echinodorus intermedius* — and several very healthy and prolific wild varieties of *Echinodorus*, which have settled down even better than their cultivated cousins. One rather unusual, round leaved member of the *Echinodorus* family regularly grows right out of the water and is such a strong grower that we have difficulty in keeping the polythene cover on the tank.

Moving into the cold water section we come across the more common European varieties of plants to be found in most local ponds and streams. Because of the plant-eating tendencies of a large proportion of cold water fish, their tanks are not filled with as many different varieties of plants as the tropical section. The usual plants such as Willow Moss, Canadian Pondweed, Water Crowfoot and *Apotonogetum* are all used from time to time, depending on the weather conditions and the time of the year.

As you will gather from this account, one has to be something of a horticulturist to ensure that all the tanks are kept stocked with plants.

The Fish this month have done very well; with the advent of warmer weather many new varieties of live food become available in the ponds and we are able to give the fish a larger and more varied diet. This results in faster growth, enhanced colouring and, occasionally, successful spawnings. The Cichlids are perhaps the best varieties to breed, because of their well-known tendency to look after their young. We have at the moment a family of Firemouth Cichlids (*Cichlasoma emeeeki*). The eggs were laid on the 25th March and hatched two days later. Since then the young fish have grown considerably.

