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Chester Zoo News

AND GUIDE

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

June 1966

Price 1/-

Editorial

The weather over the Whitsun holiday was very good indeed and a considerable number of visitors came to the Zoo. Although not a record crowd, there were over 25,000 visitors on Whit Sunday and almost 30,000 on the Monday. The newly purchased Car Parking Field was a great asset and everything went according to plan in all departments.

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ILLUSTRATIONS:

COVER: This month's cover shows our young South American Tapir, photographed when one week old.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION SIXTEEN SHILLINGS POST PAID
TELEPHONE· CHESTER 20106/7/8

BIRTHS

In our April edition we mentioned that our Puma had given birth to four youngsters. Although they look docile they are in fact very vicious, and it was difficult to obtain the photographs on page 3. As can be seen the baby Pumas are spotted but they will lose these markings as they become older. These young Pumas are starting to venture into the outside enclosures at the time of writing, but are still rather nervous. Four youngsters might appear to be a large litter but our Pumas have had up to six in the past; however, the normal number is two or three.

Pumas are found in both North and South America and inhabit terrain ranging from thick forests to open grasslands and deserts. Their food in the wild state includes animals up to the size of a deer.

The most interesting birth of the month was a South American Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*) pictured on this month's cover. This is the first time one of these Tapirs has been born in the Zoo and we are very pleased with this beautifully marked youngster. The young Tapir is striped and spotted with white markings at the moment, but these will gradually disappear until he becomes dark brown coloured at about two years old.

This birth was rather unexpected, the female showing very few signs of pregnancy and we calculate the gestation period to be 350 days. The youngster is doing very well and although he has not been weighed we estimate him to be in the region of 7lb.

Visitors entering the Pachyderm House, where the Tapirs are housed, can see this latest arrival in the first enclosure on the left. This enclosure is barless in design, being constructed on the aha

F. Woolham

PUMA CUBS

principle, which is used extensively at Chester Zoo. The animal is restrained by means of a ditch and a low wall on the public side, which is constructed of sandstone blocks. In the case of the indoor enclosure for the Tapirs, the floor and ditch are constructed of ridged concrete but a grassed area has been ditched in the outside enclosure, which is surrounded by a low wall. This type of enclosure has many advantages, especially the fact that members of the public can obtain a completely unimpeded view of the animals.

The Jungle Cats again have youngsters; one has two and the other one; all are thriving.

Four young Bennett's or Red-necked Wallabies can be seen in the spacious enclosure No. 92 on the plan. Although the young Wallabies must be five months old they are still dependant on their Mothers and rush back to her at the first sign of danger. The Wallabies are marsupials or pouched animals and have a comparatively short gestation period, but the young develop gradually in the pouch.

These Wallabies are very hardy being able to withstand cold and damp and are semi-wild in some parks and large estates in this country. The Red-necked Wallaby from Tasmania is a slightly darker colour than those from mainland Australia. At the Zoo we have both varieties and our colony now numbers fourteen, excluding the four youngsters.

CUSCUS

In our April edition of "*Chester Zoo News*" we mentioned the arrival of a Cuscus with the consignment of New Guinea animals.

The Cuscus at first was accommodated in the animal hospital, while a suitable enclosure was prepared for him in the Nocturnal

Gary Talbot

BENNETT'S WALLABY WITH YOUNG IN POUCH

House. The photograph on the opposite page was taken soon after the Cuscus's transfer from the hospital and he was very quick to settle in his new home.

In the wild state, Cuscus spend most of the day sleeping in a tree. At night they venture forth in search of food, which consists mostly of fruit and leaves but the occasional bird or small mammal is eaten.

The Cuscus is an excellent climber, having a prehensile tail as an aid but is generally rather slow moving, described as having the gait of a sloth or a slow loris.

In many parts of the New Guinea area the Cuscus is hunted for its flesh by the natives. They are about the same size as a cat, but of heavier build and said to be very tasty.

As with all marsupials, the gestation period is very short and the young continue their development in the mother's pouch for a considerable time. In the case of the Cuscus the gestation period is about 13 days and two to four young ones are usual.

THE NO FEEDING RULE

With the advent of summer and consequently more people visiting the zoo, the importance of enforcing the No Feeding Rule is greatly increased. The majority of the visitors take notice of our No Feeding signs and polite warnings but a minority disregard all these and still feed the animals.

All the animals at Chester Zoo have properly balanced diets and of course if they are fed by members of the public their controlled diet is useless. So often people feed such unsuitable foods which can prove very harmful.

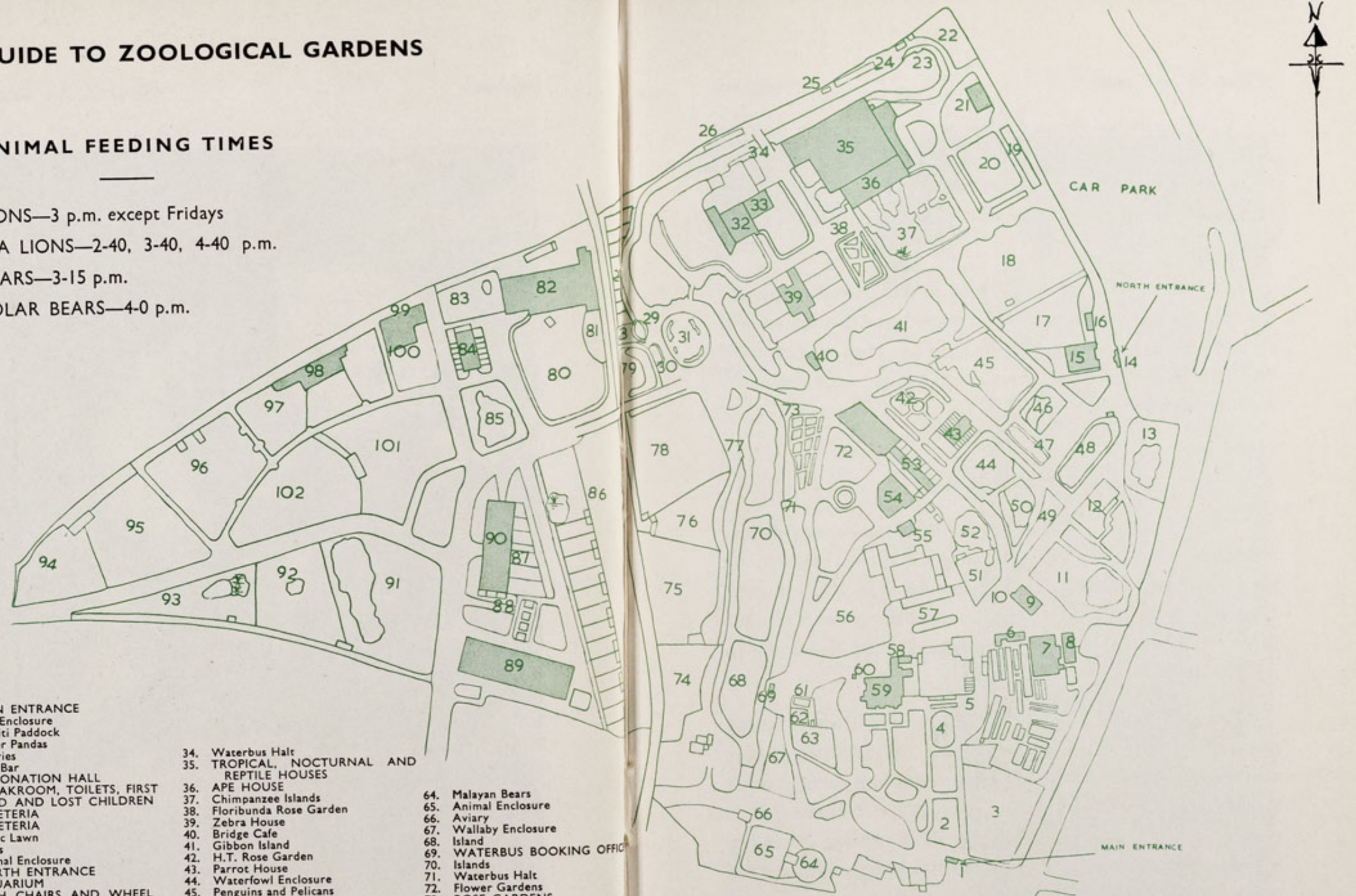
Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby

CUSCUS

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.



1. MAIN ENTRANCE
2. Bird Enclosure
3. Wapiti Paddock
4. Lesser Pandas
5. Aviaries
6. Milk Bar
7. CORONATION HALL
8. CLOAKROOM, TOILETS, FIRST AID AND LOST CHILDREN
9. CAFETERIA
10. CAFETERIA
11. Picnic Lawn
12. Bears
13. Animal Enclosure
14. NORTH ENTRANCE
15. AQUARIUM
16. PUSH CHAIRS AND WHEEL CHAIRS
17. Animal Enclosure
18. Animal Enclosure
19. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP
20. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn
21. TOILETS
22. Peccaries
23. Waterbus Halt
24. Birds of Prey Aviary
25. Birds of Prey Aviary
26. Owls
27. Jackal Enclosures
28. Wolverines
29. Porcupines
30. Coypus
31. Beavers
32. Giraffe House
33. Camel House
34. Waterbus Halt
35. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND REPTILE HOUSES
36. APE HOUSE
37. Chimpanzee Islands
38. Floribunda Rose Garden
39. Zebra House
40. Bridge Cafe
41. Gibbon Island
42. H.T. Rose Garden
43. Parrot House
44. Waterfowl Enclosure
45. Penguins and Pelicans
46. Flamingos
47. Waterfowl Enclosure
48. Sea Lion Pool
49. Rock Garden
50. Polar Bears
51. Tigers
52. Waterfowl Enclosure
53. BIRD HOUSE
54. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT
55. TOILETS
56. Lions
57. NEW ZOO SHOP
58. TOILETS
59. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT
60. G.P.O. Telephone Kiosk
61. Animal Enclosure
62. Animal Enclosures
63. Cheetahs
64. Malayan Bears
65. Animal Enclosure
66. Aviary
67. Wallaby Enclosure
68. Island
69. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE
70. Islands
71. Waterbus Halt
72. Flower Gardens
73. ROSE GARDENS
74. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
75. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
76. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
77. Waterbus Halt
78. Zebra and Deer Enclosure
79. Kamchatka Bears
80. Elephant Paddock
81. Hippo Paddock
82. PACHYDERM HOUSE
83. Tapir Paddock
84. Small Mammal House
85. Waterfowl Enclosure
86. Ankole Cattle
87. Stork Enclosures
88. Monkey Enclosures
89. Cat House
90. MONKEY HOUSE
91. Cranes and Waterfowl
92. Waterfowl and Wallabies
93. Cranes and Waterfowl
94. Bison Paddock
95. Deer Paddock
96. Eland Paddock
97. Rhino Paddocks
98. RHINO HOUSE
99. TOILETS
100. MPILA SNACK BAR
101. Antelope Enclosure
102. Antelope Enclosure

Animals may be moved from time to time.

When questioned by the keeper, many people reply that one piece of bread or sweet could not possibly do any harm. This is far from true as on a busy day over 30,000 people visit the zoo and even if only a small proportion were to feed an animal, the results could prove fatal.

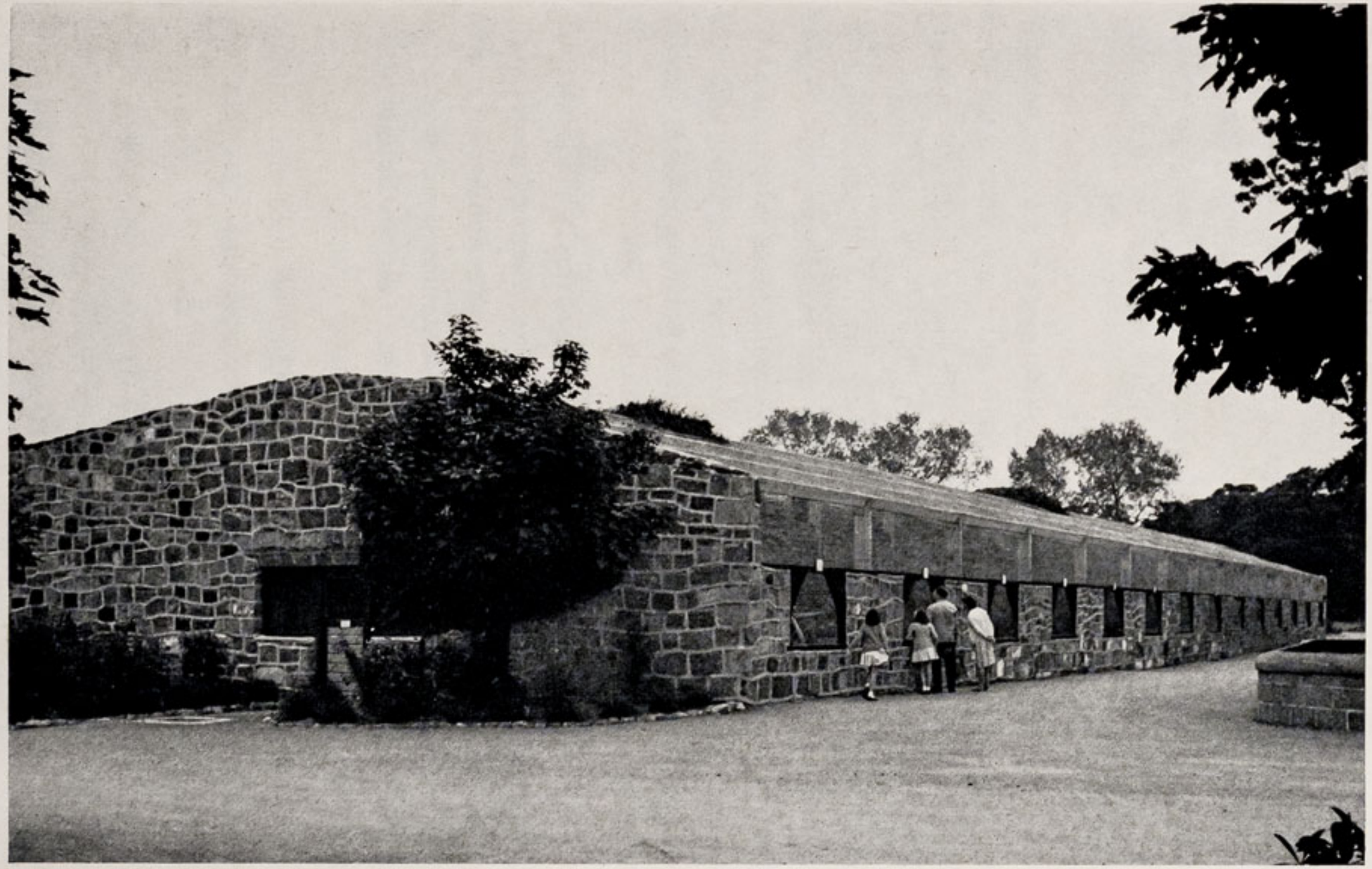
We realise it is a great temptation to feed animals, especially the more appealing ones. It must be remembered that our animals are not kept as pets to be pampered but are often rarities, being bred in captivity to enable future generations to see some of the wonders of nature.

THE CAT HOUSE

The first animals were moved to the Cat House during February and March, 1965, and the actual building was finished some months later. At the time of writing all the enclosures are not fully stocked, but it is always an advantage to have several empty enclosures into which the young animals can be transferred when they no longer rely on their parents.

The building is rectangular in general outline with a service passage running the full length of the house. Off this service passage are the inside sleeping dens, which are provided with sliding doors to the outside enclosures and to the adjoining den, to facilitate transfer of animals. The main supports for the whole building are of pre-stressed concrete, this method of construction being used extensively at Chester Zoo.

At the centre of the service passage is the Heating Plant which is oil fired and thermostatically controlled. A large heating duct runs from the heater in both directions and provides adequate heating for all the inside dens. If extra heating is required for a



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

CAT HOUSE

young or sick animal it is an easy matter to tap the main duct with a length of hose and direct this into the requisite den.

The food preparation kitchen is at the far end of the building and contains cutting tables, a cold storage room and a deep-freeze fridge. The whole of this section is tiled and can easily be washed down after the meat has been apportioned out for the various sizes of animals.

The outside enclosures vary a great deal in size; on one side they are designed for leopards, jaguars and pumas and on the other side for the smaller species of cats. The largest enclosures measure from 15ft. by 30ft. to 30ft. by 30ft. in size; the smaller enclosures measuring 15ft. by 15ft. In all, there are 26 outside enclosures, the smaller having concrete floors and the larger sand-covered floors. All these outside enclosures are decorated extensively with natural sandstone rockwork, which blends beautifully with the surroundings and has been formed into ledges and caves for the animals.

From the visitors angle the cats are viewed through large armour-plated glass windows, surrounded with natural sandstone rockwork. In between the various outside enclosures, instead of having a solid barrier, there is a low wall and then a double layer of mesh; a number of climbing plants have been set and it is hoped that in time they will obscure the mesh to a large degree.

The animals have all thrived; many have bred and although we have had a few troubles, this is inevitable when starting a completely new animal house.

On page 3 of this month's *Zoo News* is a photograph of the four Puma Cubs bred recently. The Pumas were one of the first species to be moved to the Cat House; the youngsters were bred from a new male and one of the original females.

The Amur Leopards and Black Panthers, both rarities, arrived during April, 1965, and we were pleased to breed two Black Panthers in December. The Amur Leopards are quite tame, at least through bars, but the Panthers are still vicious although they are far quieter than when they first arrived.

Three Leopards were transferred to the Cat House when it was opened and one youngster has been born to the female which is seventeen years old. Another three young female Leopards arrived in an exchange deal during December 1965.

The Jungle Cats and a male Siberian Lynx arrived at the end of February, 1965, and the Jungle Cats have bred many young since then. A mate for the Siberian Lynx was purchased later, but the two have not yet been introduced.

Other animals in the Cat House include Jaguars, (see May *Zoo News*), Caracal Lynx, Ocelot, Kama Foxes and an orphan Jackal. An orphan Caracal Lynx and Jackal are both kept together by the Keeper, who has successfully reared them from birth but they are not yet on show to the public.

It must be remembered that all the Cats arriving from abroad had to be quarantined in the Cat House for six months. However, this House has been so designed that the animals can be viewed by the public during this period.

HATCHINGS

The Great Eagle Owls (*Bubo bubo*) have again hatched three chicks which are quite well developed at the time of writing. They went to nest on the ground at the back of their aviary as in previous years. No actual nest was constructed — just a scrape made in the sand. As soon as the birds showed signs of going to nest, evergreen branches were placed in front of the nesting area to give

them some sense of privacy and these were removed when the young were half grown.

When the young owls are first hatched they are fed by the female bird on small pieces of meat, chicken, etc., which is pulled to pieces by her. The male owl does not normally feed the chicks but takes food to the female, especially when the chicks are very young.

In the adjoining aviary a pair of African Spotted Eagle Owls have reared three youngsters. The Spotted Eagle Owl is far smaller than the Great Eagle Owl but is very similar in its habits.

When these young Great Eagle Owls become fully grown they will be transferred to the large Owl Flight Aviary (No. 26 on the plan). The Spotted Eagle Owls are, however, too small to be mixed with the far larger Great Eagle Owls.

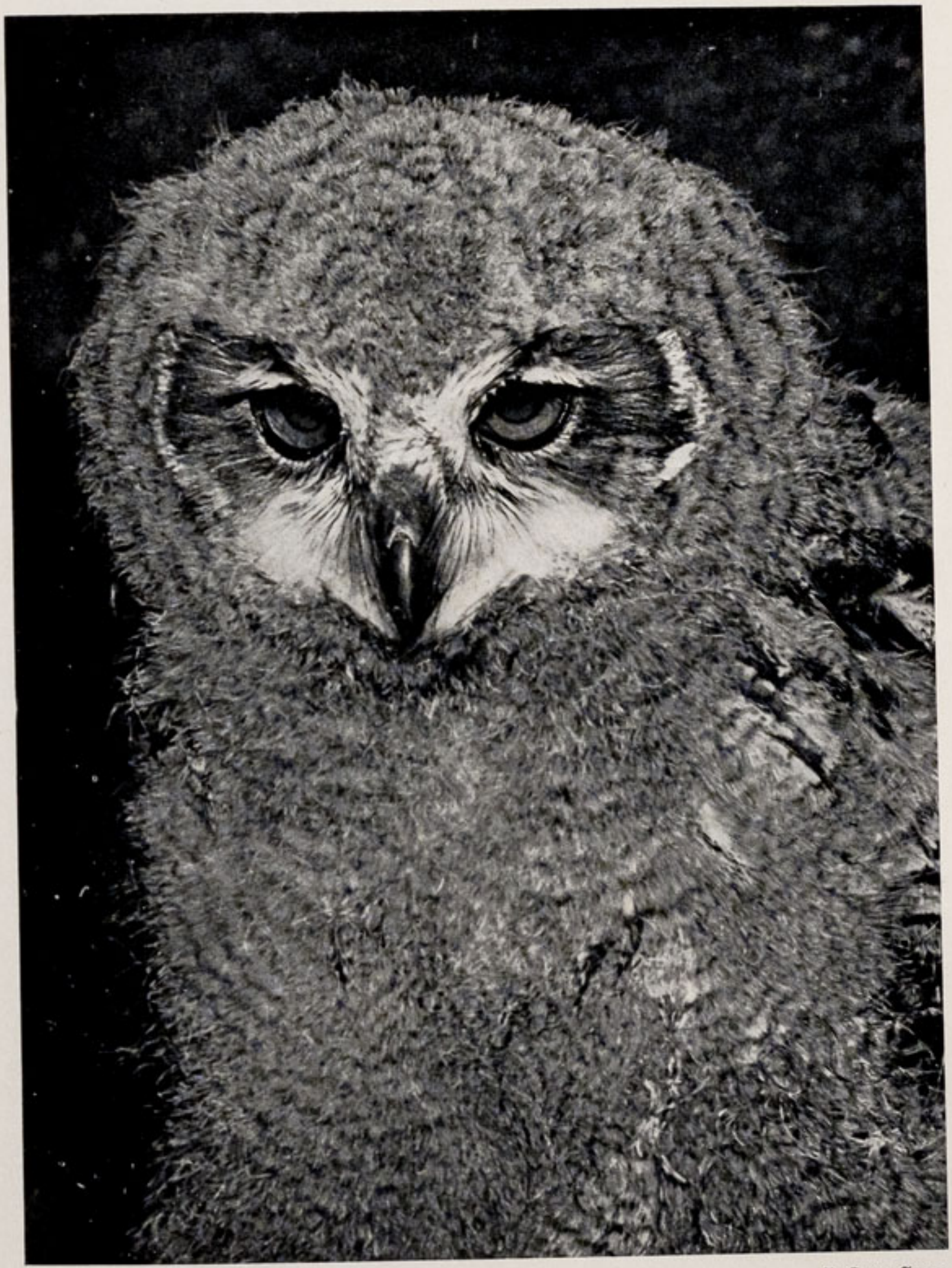
Three Red-rumped Parrakeets (*Psephotus haematonotus*) were hatched in the Bird House and left the nest box at the end of May.

The Red-rumped Parrakeet is a small species found in south-eastern Australia and spends a great deal of its time on the ground. Both sexes are nicely marked and coloured but the hen is a duller green in general colouration.

In our April edition of "*Chester Zoo News*", we mentioned that our pair of swans were nesting in the reeds near the Chimpanzee Island and also included a photograph of the pen sitting on the nest.

We are pleased to be able to record that they hatched four cygnets on May 25th and all are thriving.

Keepers in the Temperate Bird House were surprised to see a cock Pagoda Mynah (*Temenuchus pagodarium*) and a hen Grey-



J. Gwyn Jones

YOUNG GREAT EAGLE OWL

headed Mynah (*Sturnia malabarica*) carrying nesting material to a hole in the circular pole supporting the roof, at a height of about nine feet.

The pole is hollow right down to the ground so it is assumed that the birds must have wedged the material cross ways. Nothing at all can be seen from the outside due to the smallness of the hole and the fact that the edges stand out about an inch. This looks as if a smaller pipe had been attached to the main one at some previous time.

Two young left the nesting hole on June 4th and were fed by the parents for several days. They resemble both in colouration and size the hen Grey-headed Mynah, but have a dark coloured cap marking on their heads.

At the time of writing they are going to nest again but not in the roof pole. This time they have chosen a wooden nesting box, which gives far better access than the original site. The cock Pagoda Mynah being larger than his mate had a struggle to enter the opening in their first nesting site and obviously required more comfort on the second occasion.

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