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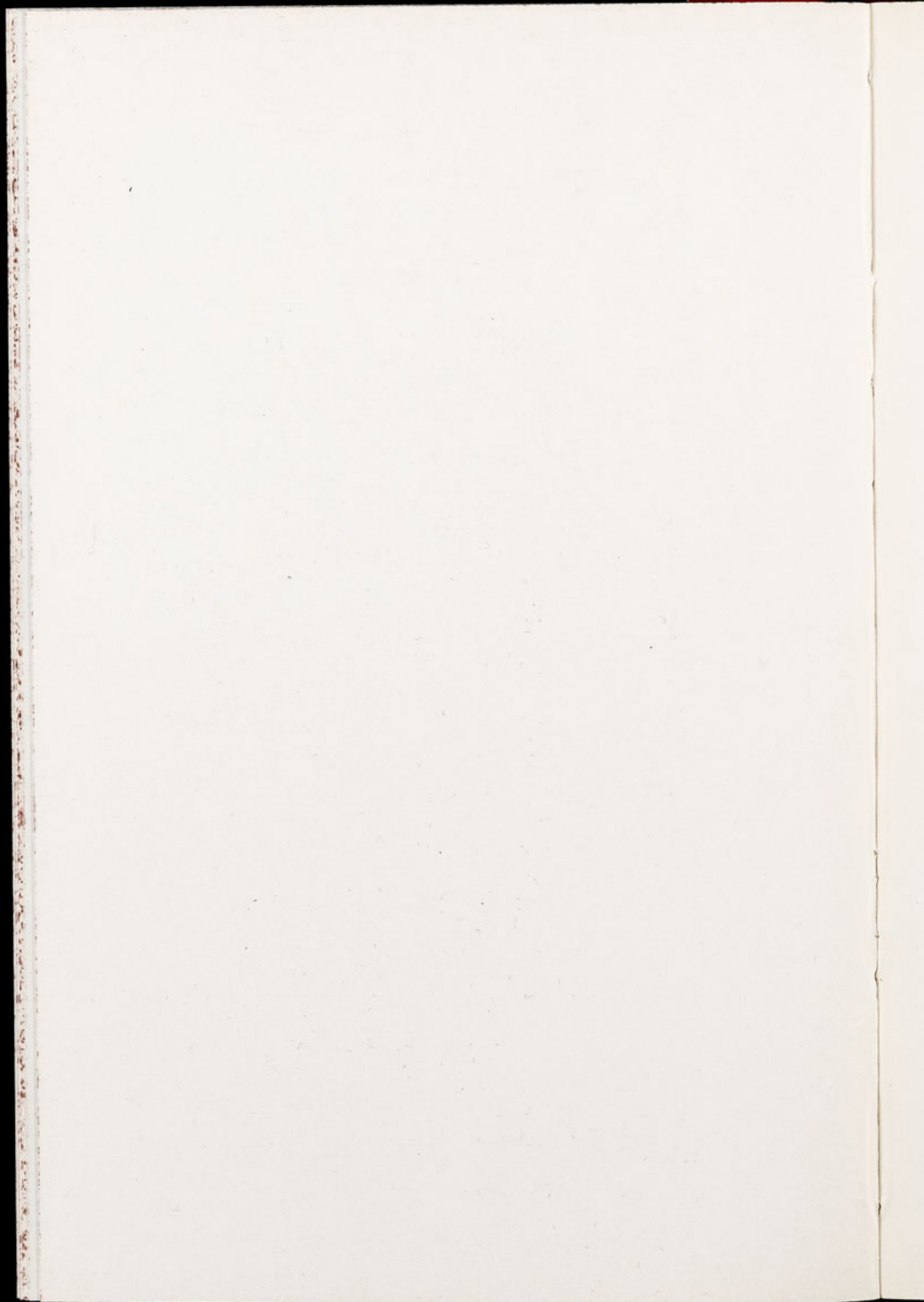
# **Chester Zoo News**

## **AND GUIDE**

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

June 1970

Price 1/-



# The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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*COVER: Ostrich; for further details see page four.*

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### ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

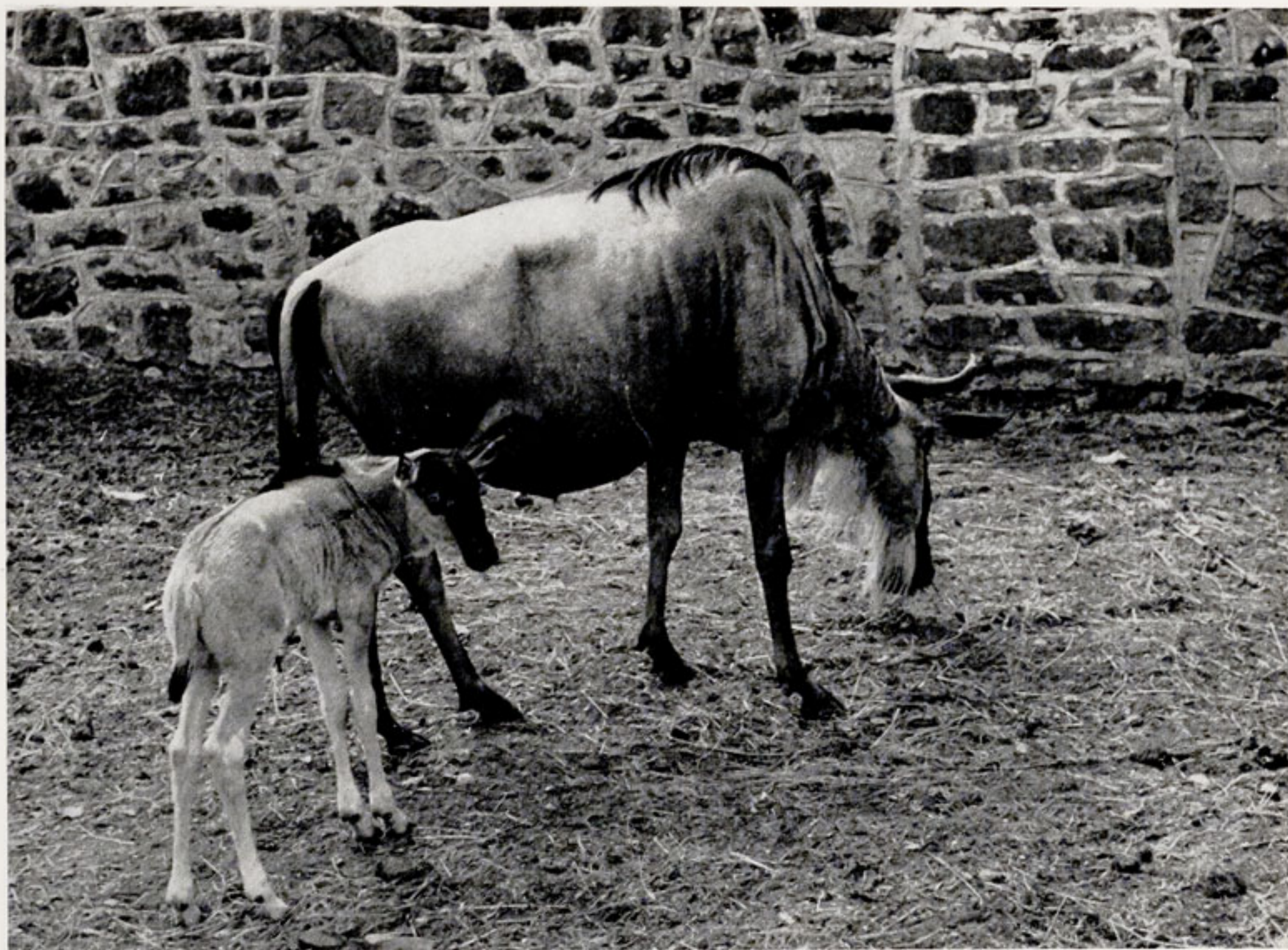
We are pleased to report the birth of a Brindled Gnu (*Connochaetes taurinus albojubatus*) which can be seen in enclosure No. 102 on the Zoo plan. The present male was acquired from Dudley Zoo last year to replace one which died in 1967, so this is the first calf to be born here for almost three years. Gnus are found in Africa where they roam in herds across the grassy plains often in company with Zebras. In order to survive, the calves must be able to follow the herd very soon after birth and this remarkable ability was demonstrated by our calf which within minutes of being born was able to keep up with the adults when they moved suddenly to the opposite end of the paddock. There are two species of Gnu, the White-tailed (*Connochaetes gnou*), which is extinct in the wild and exists only on private farms, and the Brindled Gnu (*Connochaetes taurinus*). Our animals are a race of the latter species.

A Blesbok calf, the second born this year, is on exhibition in enclosure No. 101.

This year's litters of Prairie Marmots (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) can be seen on the Eland Paddock playing at the entrances to the burrows. The gestation period for this species is about thirty days and the young, up to ten in number, are weaned at seven weeks. About this age they leave the nest and start to explore.

A Vervet Monkey (*Cercopithecus pygerythrus*) and a De Brazza Monkey (*Cercopithecus neglectus*) have been born in the Monkey House.

Our Vervet Monkeys have a particularly good breeding record of which we are very proud. They come from the savannah areas of East and South Africa where they live in troops varying in size from a dozen to sometimes a hundred individuals, though the latter would probably be the combination of several smaller troops. Most



BRINDLED GNU AND CALF

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

of their day is spent on the ground foraging for food which consists of various roots, seeds, flowers and shoots, etc., with some insects, eggs and young birds. They climb into the trees when danger threatens and at night to sleep.

De Brazza Monkeys live in Africa also but they lead a more arboreal existence and only occasionally descend to hunt at ground level. After a lapse of several years a De Brazza Monkey was bred at the Zoo in 1969 but unfortunately the baby was not reared. We are therefore especially pleased that this latest baby is in very good health.

The Wapiti (*Cervis canadensis*) also have a good breeding record and we have sold several of the offspring to other zoos. At present there are three calves, two of which are male. The sex of the third is not yet known.

A recent presentation to the Society was a male Ground Squirrel which has been accommodated in the Nocturnal House.

We have sent a male Beisa Oryx (*Oryx gazella beisa*) and a Mississippi Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) to Bristol Zoo and received animals of the same species in return. Both Bristol and we had Oryx which were brother and sister and so in order to introduce new blood into each group the ideal solution was to make an exchange. The male we have acquired is 2 years old and will be introduced to our female.

The Alligator which was sent to Bristol was a male which had become rather aggressive towards the other male in the pool. The female received in the exchange has been put with the male we retained and they have settled down very well.

#### BIRD NOTES

The Ostriches (*Struthio camelus*) have been transferred from winter quarters to the enclosure next to the Sitatunga, No. 86 on



VERVET MONKEY AND BABY

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

the plan. They have grown considerably since their arrival in September last year and are now about 5½ feet high. However, it will be several months before they are fully grown, at which time we hope to be able to sex them.

The Red-Masked Conures (*Aratinga erythrogenys*) have two chicks in the nest. We bred this species at the Zoo for the first time last year when they produced and reared two young successfully. We think that this achievement merits special mention as the last record of breeding Red-Masked Conures was by Shore-Bailey in 1926. The species is of South American origin with a distribution in Western Ecuador and Peru.

The Flamingoes have been transferred to their new enclosure, No. 45 on the plan. Of the six species of Flamingo, we have on exhibition the Greater, Lesser, Rosy and Chilean. The other two species, the Andean and the James, are quite rare and not often seen in captivity, though last year The Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge in Gloucestershire was successful in breeding the Andean for the first time in the world. The Greater, Rosy and Chilean Flamingoes have been bred more frequently but the hatching of a Flamingo chick is still a newspaper item. In the past our group have built nests and laid eggs but have made no attempt to incubate. The new enclosure covers four times the area of the previous position and provides as near natural conditions as possible. It includes larger and deeper ponds, the banks of one having been specially stepped to facilitate mating. We will construct artificial nests to encourage the birds to build their own and hope that next year they will lay.

When the Flamingoes were first put into the new enclosure they congregated in the canal which runs around the perimeter. This canal had not been disturbed by any birds for several weeks and must have been rich in the minute pond life on which the Flamingoes feed. The keepers gradually moved their feeding dishes near to the central pond and the birds followed. Apart from the better breeding conditions provided in this enclosure, it has the advantage of a low fence which

allows visitors an uninterrupted view of the Flamingoes in really superb surroundings.

Birds released recently in the new flight aviary were Black Kite, Brahminy Kite, Kestrel, Snowy Egret, White Stork and Night Heron. The reason for the inclusion of the Kites and the Kestrel is twofold. Firstly, as they perch in the branches they make an excellent show at a higher level and secondly they chase away the large number of Starlings which have invaded the Zoo and this aviary in particular during the last few months.

The Vermiculated Fishing Owl (*Scotopelia bouvieri*) has completed its period of acclimatisation in the bird hospital and has been transferred to an aviary in the group marked No. 5 on the plan.

### NEW PADDOCKS

In the large area at the rear of the Jaguar enclosure work is well advanced on the construction of new paddocks to accommodate our ever increasing stock of ungulates. The ha-ha method of confining animals is again being used. This entails a low wall with a ditch sunk on the animals' side which prevents them from jumping out but provides the public with an unimpeded view of the enclosure. It is a most satisfactory method as it eliminates fencing and this is something we are always trying to avoid.

In addition the ha-has will provide excellent shelter from the winds which sometimes sweep across this area of the Zoo. We propose to plant a number of trees in each paddock and these will give protection against both wind and sun. Many animals become distressed if they cannot retreat into the shade on a very hot day. In each of the paddocks spacious indoor quarters are under construction into which the animals can retire in exceptionally bad weather.

One of the paddocks will accommodate two Greater Kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) which will complete a twelve months'

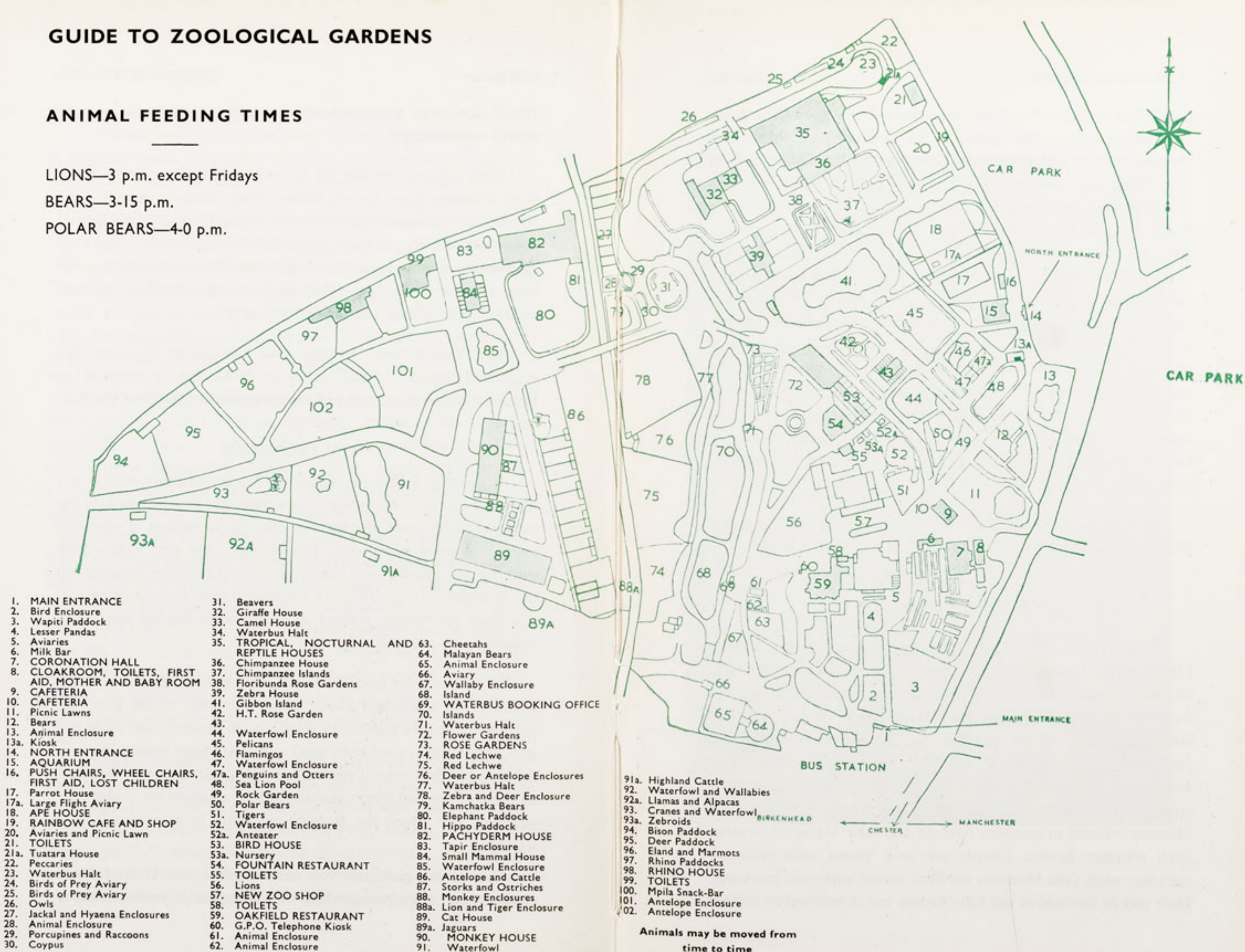
# GUIDE TO ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

## ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES

LIONS—3 p.m. except Fridays

BEARS—3-15 p.m.

POLAR BEARS—4-0 p.m.



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

- |                             |
|-----------------------------|
| 91a. Highland Cattle        |
| 92. Waterfowl and Wallabies |
| 92a. Llamas and Alpacas     |
| 93. Cranes and Waterfowl    |
| 93a. Zebroids               |
| 94. Bison Paddock           |
| 95. Deer Paddock            |
| 96. Eland and Marmots       |
| 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

quarantine period at our Birkenhead Station in August. The Beisa Oryx will occupy another paddock. We have not been able to put these animals on show to the public during the last few months as all the Deer and Antelope enclosures have been occupied. We plan also to transfer the Grevy Zebras (*Equus grevyi*) to the new enclosures thus leaving the present Zebra House free to accommodate surplus specimens of Antelope, Deer, etc. These surplus specimens are usually males which have been bred at the Zoo and have reached maturity. At this point they come into conflict with the dominant male in the herd and have to be removed to avoid fighting and injury. A number of surplus males are sold but frequently it is desirable to keep some in reserve for breeding purposes. In the past it has not always been practicable to keep such specimens on show but the Zebra House with its individual stalls and connecting outside enclosures will make an excellent building for reserve stock. Our Grants or Common Zebras (*Equus burchelli granti*) already have a large paddock, No. 78 on the plan.

In due course the enclosures for the Highland Cattle, Llamas Alpacas and Zebroids will be converted to the ha-ha principle.

### REPTILE SECTION

New arrivals in the Reptile Section are two Mexican Beaded Lizards (*Heloderma horridum*). These and the related Gila Monsters (*Heloderma suspectum*), which we also have in the collection, are the only species of poisonous Lizard in the world. At first there was some uncertainty as to whether the Gila Monster really was poisonous hence the Latin name *Heloderma suspectum*. The distribution of the Mexican Beaded Lizard is confined to the western areas of that country and northern Central America. The Gila Monster is found in southern Arizona and New Mexico. In colour adult Mexican Beaded Lizards are dark brown with yellowish markings while Gila Monsters are dark brown with pink markings. Their diet in the wild is not fully known but is believed to include



GILA MONSTER

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

insects and the eggs of birds and reptiles. Both species can exist for long periods without food by using up fat stored in the tail during times when food is plentiful.

A study of these species was made in 1956 to determine the toxicity of their poison. This established that there were only eight recorded fatalities from bites and that in most of these cases the victim had either been in ill health or bitten several times. A point to mention is that these Lizards cannot strike as Snakes do, but have to clamp their victims tightly in their jaws and chew to allow the poison to seep into the bite. The venom sacs are situated in the lower jaw, as opposed to the upper jaw in Snakes, and the poison is injected into the victim through grooved teeth. However, though a bite would not usually be fatal provided that adequate medical care was available, it could have some very unpleasant effects including paralysis.

The life span of these Lizards is difficult to gauge but a Gila Monster was once kept in captivity for 19 years and 4 months.

The Giant Tortoise (*Testudo gigantea*) which normally lives in the Tropical House has been put outside for the summer in an enclosure next to the Arabian Gazelles.

### BREEDING CHIMPANZEES

It is widely believed by the public that the breeding of Chimpanzees is quite difficult. We have always believed at Chester that successful breeding depends on the environment in which the animals live. It was with this principle in mind that in the early 1950's we built our large Chimpanzee House. This has six spacious indoor enclosures with adjoining sleeping dens. All the enclosures are connected to large outdoor islands surrounded by water and the Chimps are free to stay inside or go outside as they choose. In this environment nineteen Chimpanzees have been bred since 1956. At



GIANT TORTOISE IN THE TROPICAL HOUSE

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

the present time there is one baby Chimp which was born in April and two young ones which have been hand reared and now live in the Ape Nursery. Three more of our females are pregnant and we are waiting hopefully for successful births.

The latest baby, Saul, has been out on the island with his mother, Judy, He is two months old and just about able to crawl. This is Judy's second baby at the Zoo and once again she is proving herself to be a very devoted and careful mother.

The other young Chimpanzees and Orang-utan, Rajang, born in the Tropical House during June 1968, are also making good progress. At the moment Rajang shares an enclosure in the Monkey House with Chimpanzee Freddie, but soon he will be old enough to join the other young Orang-utans in the new Ape House. Freddie will then be moved to the Chimpanzee House to join a group of four to six year olds. Eventually Wilson and Nicky will be transferred from the Nursery to the vacated enclosure in the Monkey House thus leaving the Nursery free to accommodate this year's baby Chimps if necessary.

The Ape Nursery is undoubtedly one of the most popular attractions at the Zoo. It is equipped with ropes and the Chimps are provided with different objects such as boxes, balls and toys with which they can play. Young Chimps are most inquisitive and the investigation of new objects is an important part of their growth. Wilson and Nicky approach each new object with instinctive caution examining it carefully with their fingers and mouths.

As Chimpanzees mature they become rather vicious and unapproachable and although Wilson is only a year older than Nicky they are at noticeably different stages of development. Nicky is still a baby and though he can be quite rough at times his intentions are playful. On the other hand, at 2½ years of age Wilson is developing adult characteristics and some of his actions are clearly aggressive. The Nursery is his territory and here he asserts



CHIMPANZEE ISLAND IN 1956

*Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby*

his authority over Nicky. However, he shows an interesting reversal of behaviour when taken outside. On fine afternoons the two Chimps spend a few hours in an enclosure opposite to the group of aviaries marked No. 5. Removed from the Nursery, Wilson loses his confidence and though he plays and runs about with Nicky he is very wary and frequently wants to be picked up by his keepers. Nicky's temperament hardly alters either inside or out of doors.

Apart from this development factor the Chimps have quite different characters. Wilson has always been boisterous and loves rough treatment especially hard tickling. Nicky is more docile and needs to be treated with a certain amount of gentleness. Both have phases for liking different foods — at the moment Wilson loves bananas and Nicky small juicy pears.

### SCHOOL PARTIES

A large number of school parties have again visited the Zoo this year, some of these travelling from as far afield as Scotland and the south of England. The number of requests for literature and photographs has been greater than ever this year and we are pleased to report that new sheets of photographs are now available. These and the educational leaflets can be obtained from the Zoo by sending 10d. in stamps to cover postage.







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