

“OUR ZOO NEWS”

• A monthly chronicle of news of The North of England Zoological Society.

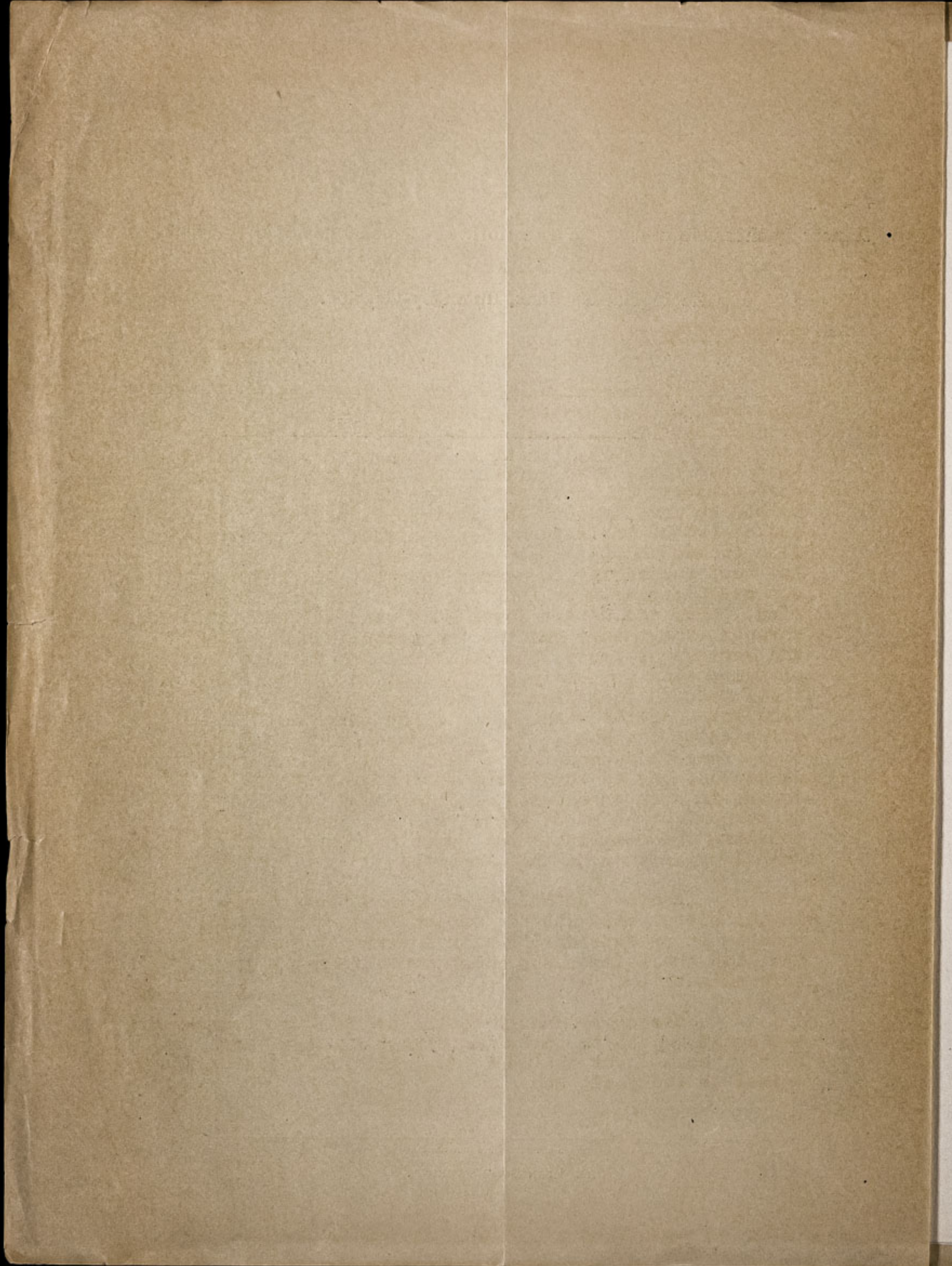
Zoological Gardens, Upton-by-Chester.

Posted Free to Members of the Society, and to Non-Members for 2/- per annum.



By kind permission of the Cheshire Pictorial Press Agency.

THE LIONESS "KATRINA."



"OUR ZOO NEWS"

Number Fifteen

January 1939

The exceptionally mild weather which we have had, ended abruptly on the 17th December. As we mentioned in our last "News" most of our animals and birds were still in their summer pens. We feared that they might have suffered considerably, but the more established stood the sudden change very well. We had to move indoors the African Fish Eagle, and one or two of the more delicate birds, but everything else seemed to stand the weather very well. One of the most surprising instances was that the Malayan Sun Bears appeared so indifferent to the very cold wind. When the bitter North East wind was cutting through everything, and the temperature showed about ten degrees of frost, one could see the Malayan Bears either coiled up asleep or playing, on the top of their tree 40 feet from the ground, receiving the full force of the wind, and seeming in no way affected by the cold. The strangest point is that these Bears had access to a warm sleeping den which is heated, and we wonder why they should select to repose in such an exposed position when they had every comfort at hand, making one consider whether coddling the animals is not sometimes more cruel than leaving them to the elements.

Another animal which seemed quite happy in the bitter cold was the Ocelot, who readers will know is in an outside pen with a non-heated shelter, and like the Malayan Sun Bears comes from a very warm climate.

Strangely enough the Polar Bear who everyone would expect to enjoy the wintry weather, has been without doubt the most miserable and dejected animal in the whole Zoo.

When her water was frozen over she steadfastly refused to even put her foot on the ice, and when a photographer wishing to take her photograph under wintry conditions, threw dainty morsels on to the ice to tempt her, she still refused to put her foot on but reached over and was very careful not to lose her balance. Another interesting point is, that although her den is more sheltered than the Malayan Bears open-air enclosure, she always selected the warmest quarter in which to lie.

In previous years we have always removed our Crowned Cranes indoors, or to a more sheltered position for the Winter, but this year owing to lack of accommodation we decided to leave them as long as possible in the open, and it was with some misgivings we went to inspect them after the first very severe frost, but we found them none the worse. As we have two flocks of these birds, one which has been here for two or three years, and the other only arriving late this Autumn, we decided to remove the latest arrivals into a more sheltered pen, and watch the effect on the more established birds. True they have some shrubs among which they can walk, and these seem to have been sufficient for them, for they appeared very much better than when we have brought them indoors. There is no doubt that had the severe cold which descended upon us been accompanied by fog we would have had a different tale to tell, as it is the fog which seems to get not only humans but animals and birds quicker than anything else.

We have heard one or two remarks recently that the Zoo is always begging. Strangely enough these remarks have been made by people who are generally opposed to Zoos as commercial enterprises, and we feel it will do no harm for us once again to stress how our Society is constituted.

In the first place wild animals have been kept since time immemorial for man's enjoyment, and during this long period a considerable amount of cruelty has taken place, so certain people have expressed themselves against the keeping of animals in captivity for profit, yet very often these people are quite enthusiastic keepers of some animal which has become a domesticated race, forgetting that their animal's ancestors had at some time been wild and free. We do not feel disposed at this moment to go into an argument regarding "are animals happier in the wild than in captivity" as this is a subject requiring considerable knowledge of the individual specimens.

Our Society came into being some years ago with the object of establishing a Zoological Gardens for the benefit of the public and exhibiting its specimens under conditions which give the animals as much freedom and enjoyment as is possible. There are two ways in which we could have done this, and that is the Society could have become a commercial undertaking with a share capital, or incorporated as we are, as a non-profit earning association without a share capital. In the first place if we had had the capital we could have developed the Gardens out of the money subscribed, but we would have been compelled in the interest of share holders to have made as much profit as possible, but our object was not to run a Zoo for commercial reasons. We therefore, selected the latter mode of incorporation, thus obtaining many benefits which otherwise would have been denied us. One of the principal assets being that as all our income had to be used for our objects, and no part of the Society's income was to be used for personal gain, we were exempt from paying entertainment tax, which to an undertaking largely dependent upon its gate is a very great saving.

Needless to say to start a society it must have some money, and there are only limited ways of receiving this, by subscriptions, gate receipts, and donations. The first two are more or less dependent on what the Society can offer, therefore the third, (donations) by way of gifts is essential to put the Society on its feet. When one considers that the Society has had to acquire over twentyfive acres of valuable land, and house and equip as it has done a very valuable collection, we have indeed begged very little. The main point to remember is this that when we beg it is not for any individual gain but to provide the ideal home for the animals, and show the public how the animals ought to be kept, by so doing we are bound to influence public opinion against many cruelties which have been caused by keeping animals in small unsuitable conditions. Anyone who reads our Annual Report will see that the Zoo is run on most economical lines, the cost of upkeep being considerably less in proportion to other Zoos.

Zoo Characters.

For our Zoo characters this month we give a very fine pair of Griffin Vultures. These birds are really a very nice pair indeed, and arrived at the Zoo along with the Polar Bear. Since then they have nested every year, but with the exception of 1936 they have always failed to hatch their young one, and on this one solitary occasion immediately the young bird hatched they devoured it.

These Vultures look very formidable creatures and cause no little consternation to the public when cats go into the Vultures aviary at feeding time. Everyone expects the cat to be pounced upon by these immense birds but on many occasions they have witnessed quite a small cat go up to the Vulture and take its meat away from it.

It certainly does seem strange that such a large bird should surrender its meat to a cat when it has weapons that, should he decide to use them, could instantly tear the animal to pieces, but this happens continually and during the summer months one often sees quite a crowd of people watching with awe-struck expressions the quite casual way in which pussy leisurely walks through the cage looking for any stray meat.

On one occasion, one of the Vultures saw the cat coming while it was feeding, and flew up on to the high perch in the aviary out of the way of the cat, but this animal simply scaled the trunk of the tree, grabbed the meat which was immediately released, and the Vulture then flew on to its platform nest, leaving the cat in sole possession. This episode was witnessed by several people who could hardly believe what they had seen.

We would remind annual members that their subscriptions fall due on the 1st of January, and if they have not already made out a Bankers Order or paid their subscription for 1939, we should be very pleased to receive it as soon as possible as it helps the Society considerably at this time of the year when our gate receipts are so small. Once again we would also ask members to do their best to influence their friends to join the Society. A year or two ago we made this appeal to members for each one to get at least one new member, and this special effort resulted in nearly fifty new members being enrolled, which proved a very great help to the Society. Let us see if we can beat this number this year.

We publish below a further list of our Appeal donations. As was to be expected with the advent of Christmas the response to this fell somewhat, but we are looking forward to a sharp rise in the New Year. One very interesting donation appears in the form of proceeds of a Whist Drive. This gentleman organised this at his own house and apart from benefiting the Zoo to the extent of £5. 17. 0. we understand they had a most enjoyable evening. We are very grateful indeed to this gentleman, and commend his efforts to others. For we must, if the Zoo is to make any progress, raise a sum large enough to put the Zoo on its feet. PLEASE HELP.

Previously acknowledged	£236. 14. 0.
Anonymous	10. 0. 0.
Proceeds of Whist Drive per P.H.Bennett.	5. 17. 0.
P.H.Bennett,	5. 5. 0.
Miss D.E.Russell Allon	5. 0. 0.
W.Walkden	5. 0. 0.
Miss A.C.M.Cooper	3. 3. 0.
G.B.Grounsell	2. 2. 0.
Jay Gee	2. 2. 0.
J.L.Hicks.	2. 2. 0.
E.Peter Jones	2. 2. 0.
Mrs. Brookfield	1. 1. 0.
Miss Vernon	1. 1. 0.
H. Dean Adams	1. 1. 0.
Miss E. Muskett	1. 1. 0.
Mrs. E. Summers	1. 1. 0.
W.F.Youde	1. 1. 0.
C. H. Gowland	1. 0. 0.
Mrs. R.G.Moseley	1. 0. 0.
G.C.Spence	10. 0.
Xmas gift per Miss Allen	10. 0.
J. Povey	7. 0.
	<hr/>
	£ 289. 0. 0.

To all our readers

A BRIGHT & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR