



# Chester Zoo News

## *AND GUIDE*

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

September 1979

Price 15p

Chester Zoo News

AND GUIDE

THE NORTH LANCASHIRE ZOO

AND GARDENS

# The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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## COVER

Young Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) hand-reared by Keeper Nick Manning. *By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.*

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Annual subscription — Two Pounds and Seventy Pence, postage paid  
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### COVER PICTURE

Our cover picture this month shows three young Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) which were recently hand-reared by Keeper Nick Manning. The female had originally laid eight eggs and as she would not have been able to rear all of the chicks three were removed for hand-rearing.

The babies were taken from the nest when they were about 10 days old and kept by Nick for about six weeks. During this time he had the unenviable task of feeding three youngsters five times a day on very small pieces of fresh meat, including feathers and bones for roughage. One can imagine how long this took him to begin with as each chick had to be hand-fed individually! Nick brought the babies to work with him in the morning and then took them home again each evening. All credit must go to him for caring for these birds so meticulously, the final result being three very beautiful owls which visitors can see in the Bird House, numbered 54 on the Zoo Guide.

Readers will be able to see that the youngsters have all been ringed on the left leg. This is a new project which was started earlier in the year which will help in the identification of individual birds in the collection.

### PEDIGREE PETFOODS COMPETITION

"Ranee", the Bengal Tiger cub was one of many new friends which the fifteen members of the 2nd Luddenden Brownie Pack made during a recent VIP tour of Chester Zoo.

The Brownies, from Luddenden near Halifax, had won a trip to the Zoo as first prize in a competition sponsored by Pedigree Petfoods, who invited Brownie Packs from all over the country to create an "Animal Lovers" collage.

Seen here with the Luddenden Brownies is Nick Ellerton, Assistant Curator of Mammals.

### GIANT SPURRED TORTOISES

Roger Ainsley, Curator of Reptiles, was very pleased to hear



*By courtesy of Mark Hibben, N.U.J.*

NICK ELLERTON AND BROWNIES WITH TIGER CUB "RANEE"

from Ronald L. Tremper, Zoo Herpetologist at Roeding Park Zoo, Fresno, California, that our recent hatchings of seven Giant Spurred Tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*) had brought the world population (*Western Hemisphere*) in captivity, up from thirteen to twenty. This number will give readers some comparison so that they can see how important our own group of nine is.

### WHITE-HEADED VULTURE

Gracefully floating higher and higher on warm air currents, the outline against the sky is large and imposing, sweeping in ever-widening circles. Then suddenly, the figure plummets to the earth like a rock and, as if from nowhere, others of this same bird and related species appear. The elegant flowing flight belies the sheer ugliness of the Vulture and yet it is doing an admirable job for which it rightly deserves credit. Without the vultures, the African plains would be a sorry sight of putrid half-eaten carcasses.

Large herds of ungulates including Wildebeeste, Zebra and a wide variety of antelopes, graze on the enormous savannahs and this is where the huge flocks of Vultures congregate; waiting on branches for a wounded or sick animal to take its last breath (they rarely attack live animals) or flying above the plains, keen eyes surveying all that happens beneath them. As soon as one Vulture sees a kill it drops to the ground and is followed within seconds by its companions. Lions, hyaenas and jackals also keep a watch on the circling flight of the Vultures for their presence often indicates a source of food and an easy meal.

The different species of Vultures have a variety of eating habits according to which species of bird it is. They all appear to have a preference for certain parts of a carcass as opposed to others; this ensures that nearly all of the birds are able to feed and all that remains after the feathered scuffles are the bones, picked clean.

The White-headed Vulture (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*) of which we have two, are unique in their feeding habits as, not only do they scavenge and eat carrion, but they also make kills for themselves; a trait not normally associated with vultures! Birds, lizards and possibly small antelopes (probably youngsters) are sometimes taken to supplement the diet. However, vultures can eat a large amount



*By courtesy of J. Whitworth*

WHITE-HEADED VULTURE

at one sitting, fast for about a week, and, if necessary, eat meat which has decayed to the extent that it contains poisonous substances which would be fatal to other would-be diners.

The breeding season usually occurs between October and August and a single brown-spotted egg is laid in the large nest, which is a rough construction of branches built high in an Acacia tree; after about six weeks incubation the youngster hatches. The chick will eventually have a wing-span of nearly seven feet and, together with the down-covered face and neck, downy white collar and scarlet beak, will be quite unmistakable as the White-headed Vulture.

The small amount of plumage around the head and neck is a hygiene measure insofar as the birds plunge their heads into dead bodies, and when bathing, as they often do, it is easier to clean the nearly naked parts which almost invariably get the dirtiest. The collar ruff of feathers also helps to keep the bird reasonably clean.

#### GARDENING NOTES

The Summer bedding has been very good this year and it was hard to realise during the dull and wet August we experienced, that from the time we completed planting in the middle of June, all the flowers beds had to be watered once a week until the end of July. This watering contributes largely towards the success of the quality of our bedding.

Standard Fuchsia need a lot of water to keep the young growth moving which in turn keeps the plant flowering. Among the varieties of our standard Fuchsia which produce a good head of flowers are Melody, Mrs. Lovell Swisher, Lena, Display, President (red leaves), Phyllis, Mrs. G. Pearson, Sunset, Rufus, Flying Cloud and Bon Accorde. Bon Accorde, however, is a little slower at making a standard than the others.

The plants which do not like too much wet on them all the time are the *Verbena*. When they are too wet the flowers close up with the result that there are no flowers showing until the sun shines again. Towards the end of August, and this year it also applies to the *Felicia*, the *Verbena* loses its brilliance if it is kept too moist.

Amongst the *Felicia* we interplant a dwarf African Marigold,

variety Orange Lady, which goes very well with the small blue, daisy-like flowers of *Felicia*.

The French Marigolds are not affected by too much rain, and it is only towards the end of September with the cooler nights and heavy dews, that they start to deteriorate. Among the varieties of our French Marigolds, botanical name *Tagetes patula* (*patula* means spreading) are Goldfinch (golden yellow), Gold Rush (rich crimson), Carmen (deep bronze), Harvest Moon (orange), Panther (crimson gold crested) and Valencia (orange). All these varieties can be seen growing in the narrow border round the lawns in front of the Fountain Cafe and number some 6,000 plants.

The *Begonia semperflorens* enjoy both wet and dry conditions once they are established, i.e. plenty of water for two or three weeks after they have been planted if there is not sufficient rainfall.

One of the newer varieties of plants used in the Summer bedding this year is *Lavatera trimestris*, variety Silver Cup. Although this is a dwarf variety its height is 2-3 feet with a spread of 2-3 feet. The flowers are a shade of glowing pink and 3 inches in diameter and the plants always have plenty of flowers open. It is easily grown from seed sown in the middle of March and then grown on in Jiffy pots. Sixty of these plants are growing in a large bed between the two bridges that lead to the Elephant House (Zoo Guide no. 79). *Lavatera* is named after J. K. Lavater, a Swiss naturalist of the 17th century, and *trimestris* refers to the plants maturing in three months. The common name is Tree Mallow and the species *arborea* has naturalised itself in milder parts of the country, especially on the coast.

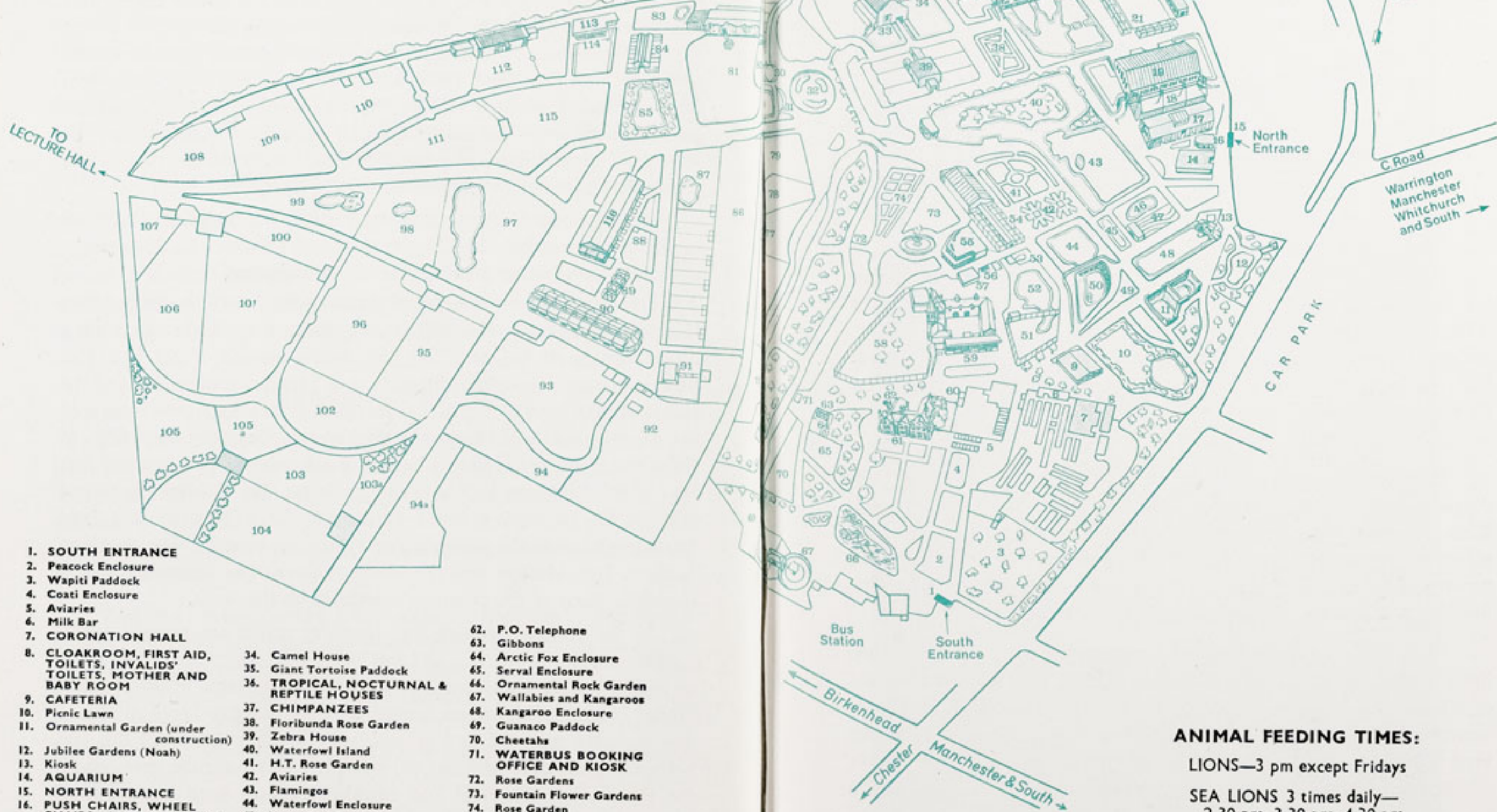
In the Animal Houses the *Abutilons* which are planted permanently are flowering well and this plant belongs to the same family as *Lavatera* which is *Malvaceae*. The Hibiscus planted in the Tropical House is also of the same family. The roof in the Tropical House was recently repaired and is now very much lighter and this has helped a great deal with the various plants and shrubs throughout the House. The Tropical and Monkey Houses both have a good show of *Bougainvillea* flowering and the *Crotons* are showing more colour and growth on various low growing plants which are looking more healthy. On the top walk of the Tropical House, the climber of *Cissus gongylodes* is growing well and the attraction of these plants are the unusual long, rosy coloured aerial roots. The *Frangipani* plant, *Plumeria rubra*, flowered again this Summer.

# CHESTER ZOO

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND  
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

FOR A COMPLETE TOUR OF THE ZOO — Follow Nos 1-14 to South Entrance  
or Nos 16-116 from North Entrance then return to Nos 1-14

**Chester Zoo is Open Daily  
from 9.00 a.m. until dusk.**



**1. SOUTH ENTRANCE**

- 2. Peacock Enclosure
- 3. Wapiti Paddock
- 4. Coati Enclosure
- 5. Aviaries
- 6. Milk Bar
- 7. CORONATION HALL
- 8. CLOAKROOM, FIRST AID, TOILETS, INVALIDS' TOILETS, MOTHER AND BABY ROOM
- 9. CAFETERIA
- 10. Picnic Lawn
- 11. Ornamental Garden (under construction)
- 12. Jubilee Gardens (Noah)
- 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. Shop and Kiosk
- 21. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn
- 22. CLASSROOM
- 23. TOILETS
- 24. TUATARA EXHIBIT
- 25. Peccaries
- 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. Giant Tortoise Paddock
- 36. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL & REPTILE HOUSES
- 37. CHIMPANZEES
- 38. Floribunda Rose Garden
- 39. Zebra House
- 40. Waterfowl Island
- 41. H.T. Rose Garden
- 42. Aviaries
- 43. Flamingos
- 44. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 45. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 46. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 47. Penguins
- 48. Sealions
- 49. Rock Garden
- 50. Polar Bears
- 51. Big Cat Enclosure
- 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 & G. S. Mottershead Memorial Gds

- 62. P.O. Telephone
- 63. Gibbons
- 64. Arctic Fox Enclosure
- 65. Serval Enclosure
- 66. Ornamental Rock Garden
- 67. Wallabies and Kangaroos
- 68. Kangaroo Enclosure
- 69. Guanaco Paddock
- 70. Cheetahs
- 71. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE AND KIOSK
- 72. Rose Gardens
- 73. Fountain Flower Gardens
- 74. Rose Garden
- 75. Red Lechwe
- 76. Red Lechwe
- 77. Deer or Antelope Enclosure
- 78. Zebra and Deer Enclosure
- 79. Zebra and Deer Enclosure
- 80. Brown Bears
- 81. ELEPHANTS
- 82. Hippos
- 83. Tapirs
- 84. Small Mammal House
- 85. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 86. Ankole Cattle
- 87. Emus, Cranes and Flamingos
- 88. Outside Monkey Enclosures
- 89. Baboon Pens
- 90. Cat House
- 91. Tiger Enclosures

- 92. Antelope
- 93. Antelope
- 94. Reindeer
- 94a. Llamas
- 95. Antelope
- 96. Antelope
- 97. Waterfowl
- 98. Waterfowl
- 99. Waterfowl
- 100. Blackbird
- 101. Wallabies
- 102. Ostrich
- 103. Wallabies
- 103a. Animal

- 104. Pere David's Deer Paddock
- 105. Przewalski's Horses
- 105a. Onager
- 106. Arabian Gazelles
- 107. Musk Oxen
- 108. Bison
- 109. Pere David's Deer Paddock
- 110. Prairie Marmots, Alpacas
- 111. Antelope Enclosure
- 112. RHINOS
- 113. TOILETS
- 114. Mpila Snack Bar
- 115. Antelope Enclosure
- 116. MONKEY HOUSE

**ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES:**

LIONS—3 pm except Fridays

SEA LIONS 3 times daily—  
2-30 pm, 3-30 pm, 4-30 pm

**ANIMALS MAY BE MOVED  
FROM TIME TO TIME**

Cuttings for next year include Geranium, Fuchsia, Verbena, Heliotrope, Calceolaria, Felicia and silver foliage plants such as Centurea. Other plant cuttings will include Violas, Gazania and rockery plants such as Dianthus; the total number of these cuttings will be at least 10,000.

### AFRICAN SAFARI

Dave Marsden, who works in the Breeding Unit at Chester Zoo, went to Africa earlier this year with his wife and has kindly prepared an account of their trip for inclusion in the Chester Zoo News. He will be telling us more about his journey in the October and November issues.

In January of 1979, my wife, Jo, and I left the coldest Winter for forty-seven years and embarked upon a six-week expedition to Africa to see and photograph wildlife there. Starting from Nairobi, we spent the first three weeks touring the National Parks of Kenya; the remaining three weeks were spent travelling the 600 miles West to Rwanda and Zaire in order to visit the Virunga Volcanoes and see the last few remaining Mountain Gorillas.

Even before our plane had taxied to a standstill at Nairobi Airport, we were excitedly watching the antics of a pair of Black Kites as they performed an aerobatic display over the runways, whilst our coach trip from the Airport into the city itself rewarded us with glimpses of more Kites, Buzzards, Pallid Harriers and Superb Starlings. We knew we were going to enjoy ourselves.

Nairobi itself is an exceptionally attractive city; the streets are lined with tropical palms and yellow-barked Acacia trees, many of which were alive with industrious little Weaver Birds and festooned with their hanging nests. We watched Black Kites and African Pied Crows vie with each other for tit-bits in the city centre parks, whilst a varied miscellany of lizards sunned themselves on the walls surrounding the flower beds. However, we were anxious to press on into the bush, so, after collecting our hired car and assembling a small mountain of provisions, we set out Southwards towards our first goal—the Amboseli National Park.

The Park lies on the border between Kenya and Tanzania and is dominated by the beautiful snow-capped peak of Mount Kiliman-



*By courtesy of D. Marsden*

WHITE STORKS IN FLIGHT—AMBOSELI NATIONAL PARK

jaro, (5963 metres) the highest mountain in Africa. Our campsite in the Amboseli was shaded by luxuriant palms and shared only by a troop of Vervet Monkeys. Our routine during our stay here was to rise early and drive around the park in search of game before returning for lunch and a siesta in the shade. Then, later in the afternoon we would tour the park a second time before returning for supper. This pattern reflects that followed by the animals, which are generally most active during the cooler morning and evening periods than around midday.

During our tours we soon started "clocking up" the species; Giraffes, Wildebeeste, a variety of Gazelles, Ostrich, Zebra and Jackals were amongst the common species which we had expected to see, but what made our excursions extra interesting were the smaller and unexpected animals. I had never expected to see tortoises for example, or the squirrels which frequently dashed across the road in front of the car. I was unprepared too, for the variety of butterflies, whilst the enormous Mining Bees which bore inch diameter holes into any available woodwork, and the Potter Wasps which construct mud cells in which to rear their young took me quite by surprise. However, I think the greatest pleasure of all, was the tremendous wealth of birdlife there.

There were rather dim-witted Francolins and Guinea Fowl which would run along the road for two or three hundred yards before taking flight only to land on the road again a few hundred yards further along and repeat the whole procedure. There were tiny but incredibly beautiful Sunbirds which hovered like giant iridescent hover flies whilst they sipped the nectar from some brightly coloured exotic flower, and grotesque Marabou storks which hovered, in a different sort of way, around the rubbish tips by the Safari Lodges. There were ungainly Hornbills and a rich variety of raptors, Woodpeckers, Rollers, Hoopoes, Shrikes and many others.

Our evenings in the campsite were equally exciting. The sun sets very quickly in the Tropics, and as it does so, the choral cacophony of cicadas begins. Their chirping continues throughout the night, augmented by the croaking of Tree Frogs and punctuated by the roaring of a nearby pride of lions or the unearthly howling of Hyaenas. High above, we occasionally spotted a bushbaby nonchalantly leaping from branch to branch.

Much as we enjoyed the Amboseli, we decided to press on and visit the Tsavo National Park. This is Kenya's main conservation area and covers an area roughly seven times that of Cheshire! The Park is particularly famous for its Elephants; indeed, the first animals we saw there were Elephants, a herd of about ten peacefully browsing by the roadside. We also saw herds of Buffalo, Oryx, Baboons and numerous others.

Mzima Springs is one of the major attractions of the Tsavo where it is possible to watch hippos swimming underwater from a special submarine viewing chamber. In addition to the Hippos, we also saw Crocodiles and Terrapins as well as the usual variety of birds, wild flowers and insects.

Another attraction at Tsavo, is a series of caves in which roost thousands of bats; so numerous were they in fact that several of them flew into me as I fumbled to set up my camera equipment in the pitch darkness.

All too soon, our stay at the Tsavo came to an end, however, and we had to press on again; this time westwards to Lake Nakuru and beyond.

### **CHIMPANZEE NEWS**

In last month's issue, we told readers of a new chimp that had arrived in the Collection. London Zoo have loaned to us a young female who has been housed with another female of similar age. This, however, presented us with a small problem as both youngsters shared the same name—Mandy. This was eventually resolved by calling them Mandy C (for Chester) and Mandy L (for London) and makes identification clearer for Stud Book Record purposes.

The youngsters have been released on Chimp Island (Zoo Guide No. 37) where they appear to have settled down very well.

### **CHIMPANZEE BIRTH**

On 14th August Meg, one of our oldest female chimps at thirty-two years of age, gave birth to her fifteenth baby, a female which has been called Gemma. Meg, however, rejected the youngster,



*By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.*

"GEMMA"

and she was taken in for hand-rearing by Mr. Wait, Curator of Mammals, and Mrs. Wait.

Gemma weighed 3lb. 6ozs. at birth and is doing very well on bottle feeds every three hours. As apes are very susceptible to human ailments, such as colds and influenza, we have tried to keep her reasonably isolated from too many human visitors from whom she could catch such things.

Gemma's hands and feet look enormous and she grips things tightly like any baby. A wild chimpanzee baby would cling tightly to the mother's coat and Gemma clings to her little "nightdress" partly for security; as soon as she realises that her hands are empty she lets out an ear-piercing scream until she finds something she can cling to. Even at such a tender age and despite her small size, she is very strong and extricating one's finger from her tight, vice-like grip is no mean feat! At the moment, Gemma has very little body hair so she has to be kept warm and wrapped up.



By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

"GEMMA"

The hand-rearing of a Chimpanzee is by no means easy and during the coming months we hope to give readers details of her progress. On pages 14 and 15 readers can see pictures of Gemma at only a few days old.

Meg's last baby was Mandy C who was born in September, 1977.

## ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

### MAMMALS

- 1 Guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*) Birth
- 1 Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) Birth
- 1 Brazilian Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*) Birth
- 3 Black Leopards (*Panthera pardus*) Births
- 1 Red Lechwe (*Kobus leche*) Birth
- 1 Llama (*Lama glama*) Birth
- 1 Kinkajou (*Potos flavus*) Exchange

ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS (continued)

BIRDS

- 5 Rhea (*Rhea americana*) Hatched
- 1 Derbian Parrakeet (*Psittacula derbiana*) Hatched
- 3 Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) Hatched
- 7 Peach-faced Lovebirds (*Agapornis roseicollis*) Hatched
- 2 Golden-mantled x Stanley Parakeets (*Platycercus eximius x icterotis*) Hatched.
- 2 Splendid x Turquoise Parakeets (*Neophema splendida s. x pulchella*) Hatched
- 1 Japanese Quail (*Coturnix coturnix japonica*) Hatched
- 1 Fischer's Lovebird (*Agapornis fischeri*) Hatched
- 3 Patagonian Conures (*Cyanoliseus patagonus*) Hatched
- 2 Red Lories (*Eos bornea*) Exchange
- 2 Dusky Lories (*Pseudeos fuscata*) Exchange

AQUARIUM

- Croaking Gouramis (*Trichopsis vittatus*) Bred
- Paleatus Catfish (*Corydoras paleatus*) Bred
- Half Beaks (*Dermogenys pusillus*) Bred
- 2 Common Clownfish (*Amphrion percula*) Exchange
- 1 Copperband Butterfly (*Chelmon rostratus*) Exchange
- 1 Blue Trigger Fish (*Odonus niger*) Exchange
- 2 Hermit Crabs Exchange
- 1 Decorator Crab Exchange
- 1 Large Anemone Exchange
- 1 Large Starfish Exchange
- 1 Small Starfish Exchange
- 1 Clam Exchange

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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