
"Our Zoo News"

(and Guide to Chester Zoo).

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Trotsky. Photograph by Miss W. D. Lusk.

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AUTUMN VISITS THE ZOO

(By one of the staff).

One is compelled to appreciate the grandeur of Nature in maturity. No artist could do justice to the picture that came upon my eyes, as I entered the main drive one morning recently.

I stood glorying in the beauty of it; an endless carpet of amber and gold, and an avenue of stately oaks, that once rustled bravely in the fiercest wind, with a strong and firm grace, and now stood gentle and calm as with all passion spent, their arms outstretched, forming a pattern of golden lace, against a pale blue sky.

And from my window, I can see the tops of their branches. Just a wave of golden tints, with green, and rust, and warm shades of brown, resting as it were against the heaven, like a picture in a Fairy Tale Book. But so different now to the warm glow of Summer, yet triumphant in a beauty of its own, and so calm, and as the leaves flutter slowly to the ground, I cannot help but feel a tightness in my throat. Oh! Lovely Spring, come back to us soon.

SOME NOTES

(From one of the staff).

True we have fewer visitors now, which does perhaps make it seem a little lonely at the Zoo this time of the year. With plenty of people around, it gives a sense of well being. The sounds of children's excited voices, and the laughter of doting parents, is very pleasing to the ear, and is sadly missed with the coming of the cold and wet weather.

These last few days have seen quite a number of visitors, and if the weather keeps as mild as it is at the moment, we ought to keep the gate receipts up for awhile yet.

We have had some jolly crowds in at times, and we have had ample opportunity to study people; an occupation of mine, and very interesting too. There are so many different kinds. One appreciates the jolly, friendly type, we come in contact with.

The kind of people who are on a pleasant outing, and mean to enjoy every minute of it.

It amused me the other day to hear of one fond mother, asking the keeper, if he **could** please climb over into the bear-pen for her little girl's glove. I thought that very quaint. Then there was the time, one of our young ladies, employed at the Zoo, who was approached by a couple of "smart young men." After they had made one or two personal remarks, they wanted to know if she were not afraid of working in a Zoo amongst wild animals. "No"! she coldly replied, "I'm not afraid of the animals, but only of 'wolves'"!

Quite often we have some little boy or girl on our hands, especially on Bank-holidays or rush days. Anxious parents go tearing around the Zoo, looking for their missing off-spring. The children usually find their way to the pay-box, and are comforted with a sweet or a piece of cake. It's always wise to try there first, because children seem to have a knack of making their way to the gate, eventually coming under the notice of the ladies in the pay-desk, or some kindly soul passing by, who informs those in the pay-box. Very often Grandad will

invite them to keep him company on his bench near the gate, sitting there they cannot be mislaid for long. I suppose lots of people will wonder who Granddad can be, and lots of folk will know him very well, but for the benefit of those who have not met him; he is a very grand old man belonging to the family living at the Zoo, father of the Curator, and is soon to celebrate his ninetieth birthday next month.

In the Aquarium one can hear the excited squeals of the children, coupled with shouts of "Oh! look at the snakes, and look at the sardines!!!!"

The snakes hold supreme attraction to both young and old alike. It's strange this fascination they have over people. For myself I cannot bear them.

The baby alligators seem just as sleepy as ever, I have stood for ages, waiting to see them move, but they never as much as bat an eye-lid; just stare me out; such laziness is appalling.

Peter is now free to wander at will. He always seems to be popping up in odd places, after disappearing for best part of the days. I believe he trades on his popularity in the district, and takes advantage of his notoriety. It has been mentioned by more than one neighbour, that Peter is not slow in inviting himself for lunch. Christy will have forgotten him by now I guess. I suppose it's just as well, as she will not have much time for him once she is admitted to the other "ladies" and their cubs.

We received a tame Magpie the other evening. He was in the arms of the law. It appears he had taken a fancy to stealing jewellery I believe, and had caused some alarm, until it was discovered who the culprit really was. So he had to be taken into custody. He arrived here accompanied by a constable, looking very impudent, and not in the least bit sorry for himself, or scared. Well he is a very sweet little jewel thief. Now he is being cared for in a kind of semi-free large enclosure, and we hope he is going to be quite happy at the Chester Zoo.

At least we hope to cure him of his weakness for jewellery. S.S.

THE JEWEL THIEF.

Going out through the Zoo gates the other night, I noticed a stationary police-car from which a policeman had just stepped. He approached me and asked if I was in charge of the Zoo, and on being told that I was he next asked if he could leave his prisoner in my custody. In some consternation, I enquired of him as to the nature of the prisoner's crime, and received the reply "theft—of jewellery." I glanced around for a suspicious-looking character and, seeing no one, was still more surprised when the policeman, producing a sack, remarked that the culprit was inside. He added that the criminal could scarcely be held in a cell and the police authorities hoped that we might be able to cope with him at the Zoo.

On opening the sack we found—a **Magpie!** very tame and quite at ease in the company of humans. Perhaps it was merely an ambition to associate with the higher fraternity that led him to raid their houses and steal their jewellery, and resulted in his arrest.

However, we understand on good authority that no charge is to be preferred against the thief and, provided that he keeps within the precincts of the Zoo, he will be allowed to spend his life in semi-freedom. Despite his impudent appearance and obvious lack of repentance for his crimes, as a first offender, he is being given another chance.

RORY INTRODUCED TO HIS WIVES.

We are very happy to say that Rory has now settled down with two Lionesses and, as far as the Lions are concerned, everything is now ready for the completion of the Open-air Enclosure.

Whether Rory and his wives will be first to enter this new domain or whether the cubs will have that honour, we cannot as yet say, but all our efforts will be directed towards giving all the Lions this new freedom at the earliest possible date.

"CHRISTY."

By G. S. Mottershead.

Christy has, in the course of the last few weeks, grown out of cubhood, and now, at the age of ten months, is much further advanced than the average Lioness of her age. Looking at her now, one sees an unmistakable likeness to her mother and her grandmother—both handsome Lionesses and perfect specimens.

She is still very attached to us, and I doubt whether she will ever forget the family with whom she spent the first months of her life; whenever we approach her cage, she comes bounding up to meet and greet us.

We hope soon to introduce her to Faith's cubs, who are younger sisters to the late Cassandra (Christy's mother). What Christy's reactions will be I cannot say, but her young aunts are sure to have many things to teach her.

These younger Lionesses have lived since birth with adult Lions and, consequently, know a thing or two when it comes to a fight.

Perhaps, next month, I shall be in a position to write some details about the introduction.

ZOO CHARACTERS.

"Trotsky."

Trotsky is a large Russian Brown Bear and has been in the collection since September 1938. He was presented to the Society by Messrs. Lewis's Ltd., of Liverpool, who had him as a young cub in the "Pets' Corner" at their Store. However, Trotsky grew and became rather large for a Pets' Corner in a City Store although, when he arrived at Chester Zoo, he was still just a cub (as shown by the accompanying photograph).

He continued to grow rapidly, at the same time developing a character all his own. His bright, beady, eyes occasionally give one an insight into his said character with a very shifty look; at other times, his expression gives nothing away, and we are left guessing as to what is actually going on in his Bear's mind.

Prior to construction of the new Bear Enclosures, Trotsky whiled away his time in the fairly roomy cages situate in the old Court-yard. When these started to show signs of wear, he was not slow to discover the weakness and to take full advantage of it. More than one battle ensued with the escaped Bear, and on no occasion could it be said that he

"came quietly." We were truly thankful when the new enclosures were completed and Trotsky safely lodged therein, where he now whiles away his time begging for tit-bits from visitors when he is not quarrelling with Paddy the male Himalayan Bear with whom he condescends to share his spacious home.

News from other Zoos.

MAIDSTONE ZOO PARK.

By Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt Drake.

In the regular course of events this Zoo closed for the Winter on November 3rd, after a good Season, the total number of visitors paying being 133,928. I had hoped for a total of 150,000, but the weather was against records!

Now the Staff have much useful work in the way of repairs and renovations to keep them busy till the end of March, when we re-open.

November 12th was a Red Letter Day. H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth paid a private visit and took the greatest interest in all sections, afterwards lunching at Cobtree Manor.

New arrivals include 7 Husky puppies born in the Zoo, and a gift of three Golden Hamsters.

