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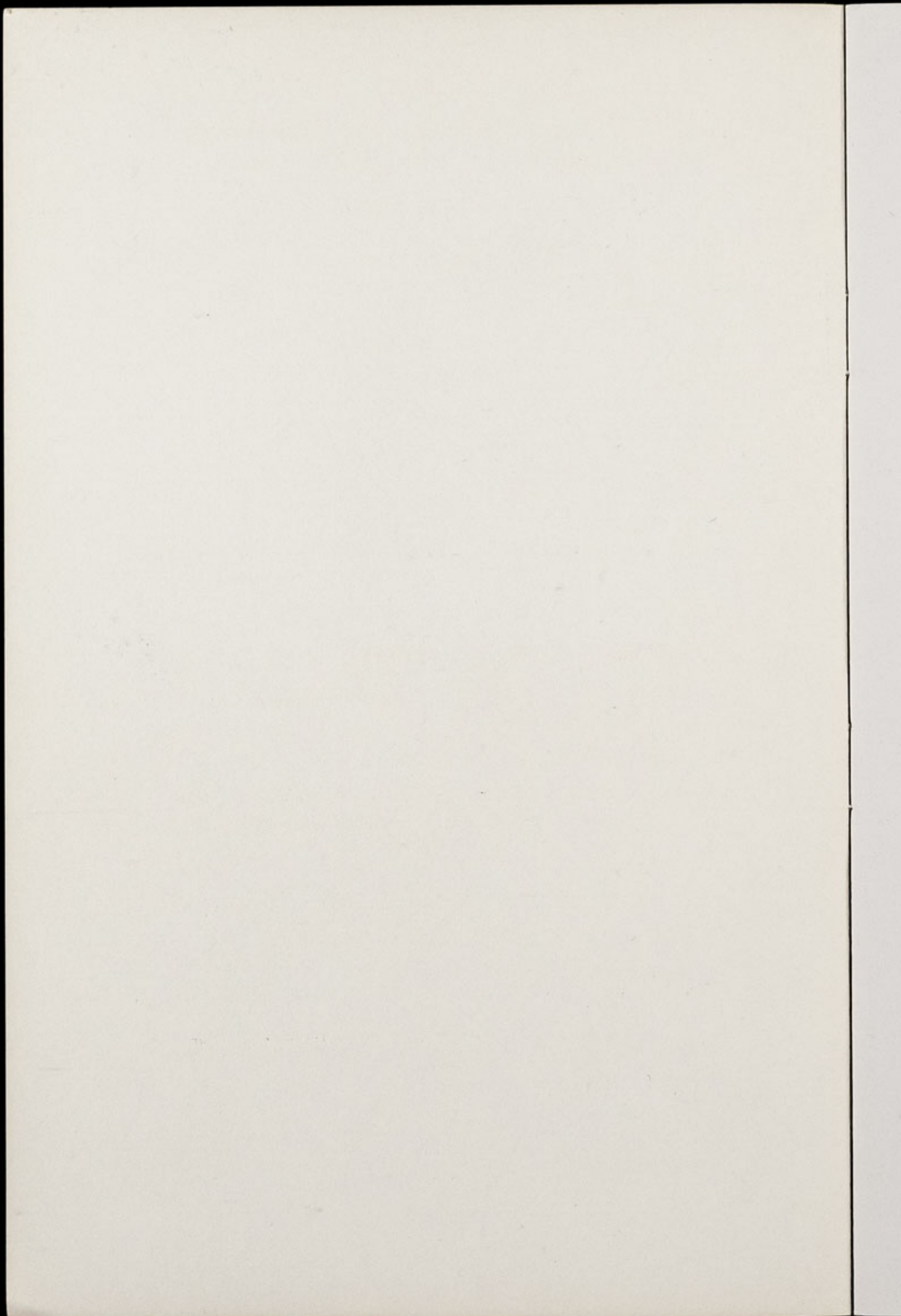
Chester Zoo News

AND GUIDE

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

November 1974

Price 6p



The North of England Zoological Society
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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*COVER: Young male South American Tapir (Tapirus terrestris);
see page six.*

ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

Since our last report the following mammal births have been recorded:

- 3 Grey Squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*)
- 2 Sierra Leone Striped Squirrels (*Fumisciurus pyrrhopus leonis*)
- 1 Plains Viscacha (*Lagostomus maximus*)
- 3 Jaguars (*Panthera onca*)
- 1 Tiger (*Panthera tigris*)
- 1 Red Lechwe (*Kobus leche*)

The Grey Squirrels were born in a small, squarish, wooden nestbox which had been fastened to the wire mesh fencing of their enclosure at a height of approximately five feet from the ground. The parents had chosen this site in preference to another three nestboxes of varying sizes which were also available in their enclosure. Earlier we had offered several Magpie nests to them in the hope that these might prove suitable as nesting sites but the Squirrels ignored them and eventually the nests were removed. All four adult Grey Squirrels, a male and three females, were presented to the collection and they occupy one of the outer runs of the Small Mammal House, No. 84.

The Grey Squirrel is indigenous to North America but during the nineteenth century specimens were released into this country. They multiplied and their descendents spread to most parts of Britain. Today the town dweller would probably be more familiar with the Grey Squirrel than with our own native Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*). The range of the latter species has been diminishing slowly, although this decline is no longer attributed solely to the arrival of the Grey Squirrel. Fortunately pockets of Red Squirrel populations survive in this area, both in the Wirral and deeper into Cheshire.

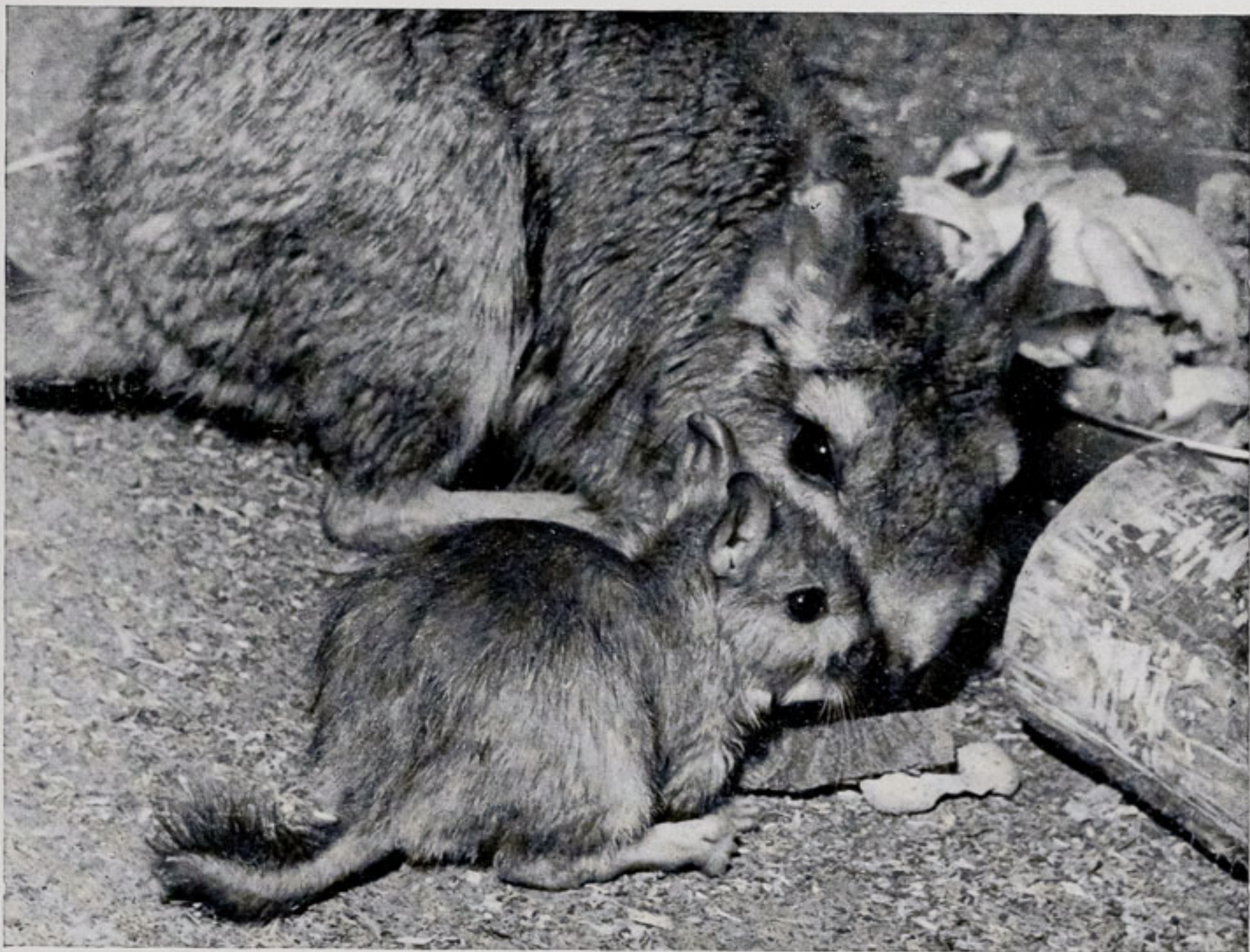
We have one pair of Red Squirrels at Chester Zoo, which can also be seen in the Small Mammal House. They were brought to us as juveniles in May 1972 and had come originally from mid-Wales. Apparently the tree bearing their nest had been felled and the baby Squirrels had been rescued and hand reared. They have proved a most rewarding exhibit because they are rarely still for a moment. Earlier in the year we separated the pair for a short period in an effort to induce them to breed. However on this occasion their reintroduction did not spark off courtship activity.

The other Squirrels which have been bred recently, the Sierra Leone Striped, occupy an inner enclosure of the Small Mammal House. The original stock of this species, a male and five females, was acquired from Jersey Zoo in 1972. They established themselves very quickly and so far this year the group has reared six young to maturity.

The single Plains Viscacha which emerged from the nestbox is shown in the illustration on page four. We received our first pair of these large South American rodents in November 1970. They did not breed at all last year but in 1972 produced five young. Our present stock of eight Plains Viscachas occupies two enclosures with outside runs in the Small Mammal House.

The birth which has caused the most excitement is that of the Tiger cub. The birth of a captive animal which is becoming increasingly rare in its natural habitat is always an event of special importance but there is another reason for our excitement. This is the first cub which the Tigress has undertaken to rear and so far she is managing her task very well.

This six year old female has produced five cubs since 1972 but all perished within the first few hours. After her first two failures, we resolved to remove the young as soon as possible after



PLAINS VISCACHA (*Lagostomus maximus*) WITH YOUNG

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

birth and hand rear them. Unfortunately this manoeuvre was more difficult than perhaps it sounds. On the first occasion the cub was born during the night and was killed by the mother before we had an opportunity to intervene. The next youngster was removed but succumbed very quickly.

Shortly before the delivery of the latest cub, the Tigress was separated as usual from the male and her den was screened completely. Only those zoo staff with whom she was familiar were able to observe her progress through small holes in the screen. At the same time preparations were made for the speedy rescue and subsequent hand rearing of the cub.

Keepers did not witness the birth but when they saw the cub for the first time they were amazed to discover that it was suckling normally. The Tigress was relaxed and confident, showing no sign of the nervous, agitated behaviour which had followed her previous deliveries. In view of her history, the decision to leave the cub in her care was not taken lightly but happily she has never looked back. The cub is believed to be a male but he and his mother will not be seen by the public for several weeks yet. When they are allowed outside, they will occupy a separate enclosure from the male Tiger, because he would attack the cub without hesitation. Incidentally the names of this magnificent pair of adult Tigers are Pharaoh and Isis and they are accommodated in the group of enclosures marked No. 91 on the zoo plan.

This is not the first time a Tiger has been bred successfully at Chester Zoo. In another part of the grounds is an old Tigress, the survivor of a breeding pair which had been here for many years and had produced several cubs. The old male died last February but both cats had been past breeding age for some time.

The mother of the three Jaguar cubs is Sheba, a female which has been at the zoo since May 1965. This is Sheba's fifth litter but

it is the first occasion her cubs have been sired by a young male Jaguar named Tego. At the moment Tego is accommodated with the only other female Jaguar in the collection, Josephine, a four year old daughter of Sheba.

Sheba and her family will be off show for at least another month but the Lion and Puma cubs mentioned in the October issue should soon be making their public debuts. In a month or two, with a Tiger, three Lion, three Jaguar and four Puma cubs, there will be quite an array of young animals on view in our cat section.

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The subject of this month's cover photograph is a young male South American Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*) which was acquired recently. This fine specimen was born only last March and, as readers will see from the photograph, he has not yet lost all his juvenile body stripes.

The Tapir was obtained as a mate for a young female already living in the Pachyderm House, although at the time the photograph was taken the male had not been introduced into her enclosure. All new specimens arriving in the collection are first screened for parasites and checked for disease before being placed in close contact with the resident exhibits. In this way we keep the spread of parasites and disease to a minimum. As soon as the Tapir had been cleared by our laboratory, he was introduced to his new female companion and the two animals appear compatible.

BIRD NOTES

Since our last report the following chicks have been recorded:

- 1 Scaly-breasted Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*)
- 1 Grand Eclectus Parrot (*Lorius roratus*)
- 1 Orange Weaver (*Euplectes orix*)
- 2 Red-billed Weavers (*Quelea quelea*)
- 2 Zebra Finches (*Taeniopygia castanotis*)

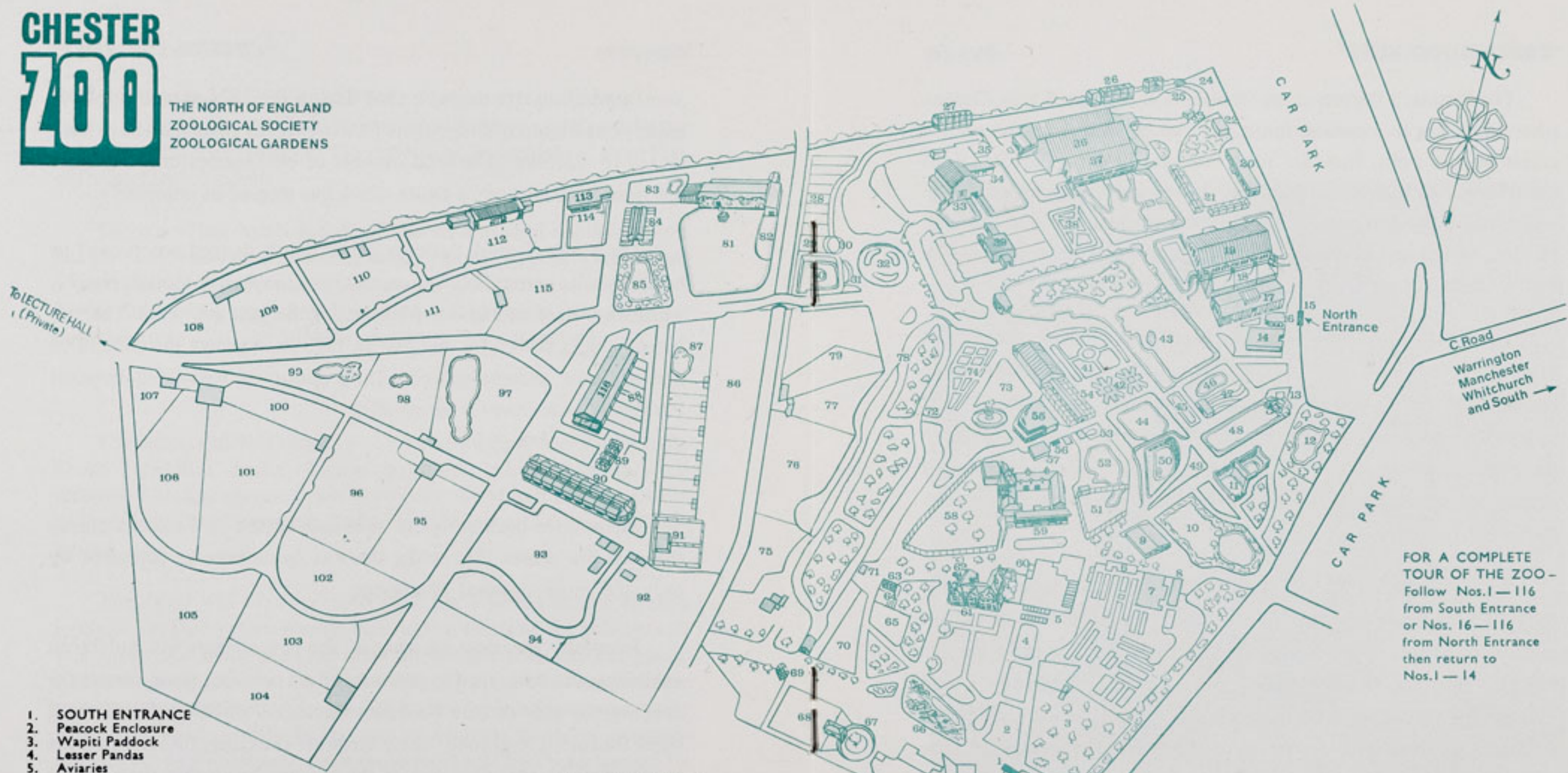
In addition, we estimate that during the 1974 season approximately one hundred Budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) have been reared to maturity. The total number of bird species bred this year has risen to sixty-three, a figure which has pleased us immensely.

The single Grand Eclectus chick which fledged has proved to be a male. Its parents occupy an aviary in the Parrot House, No. 17, where they have nested every season for the past five years. The two female chicks reared by this pair in 1973 have grown into fine birds and are now accommodated with a group of Red-sided Eclectus Parrots (*Lorius roratus pectoralis*).

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There have been so many additions to the bird section during the past few weeks that really there is space here to comment on only the more unusual specimens.

Ironically the most exciting of the new arrivals will not be on exhibition until the spring. However there is a very good reason for keeping our pair of rare Pesquet's Parrots (*Psittichas fulgidus*) off show for such a long time. These birds are extremely difficult subjects to maintain in captivity, one of the reasons being that they do not like change and in fact some have died as a result of being moved. On arrival, the Pesquet's Parrots were taken to the bird hospital, which is situated away from the exhibition area and is relatively quiet. This particular pair had been in Britain for two years already and therefore we were not confronted with the additional problem of acclimatising them. They settled down in the hospital within a few days and displayed none of the reluctance to feed which often follows the transportation of a Pesquet's Parrot. As readers will appreciate, in order to give the birds every opportunity to accustom themselves to their new home, we will not risk moving them again for several months at least.



1. SOUTH ENTRANCE
2. Peacock Enclosure
3. Wapiti Paddock
4. Lesser Pandas
5. Aviaries
6. Milk Bar
7. CORONATION HALL
8. CLOAKROOM, FIRST AID, TOILETS, MOTHER AND BABY ROOM
9. CAFETERIA
10. Picnic Lawn
11. Bears
12. Sunken Garden
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. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP
21. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn
22. TOILETS
23. Tuatara Exhibit
24. Peccaries
25. Waterbus Halt
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. Waterbus Halt
36. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND REPTILE HOUSES
37. CHIMPANZEES
38. Floribunda Rose Garden
39. Mammal House
40. Gibbon Island
41. H.T. Rose Garden
42. Aviaries
43. Flamingos
44. Waterfowl Enclosure
45. Waterfowl Enclosure
46. Gazelles
47. Penguins
48. Sealions
49. Rock Garden
50. Polar Bears
51. Tigers
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

62. P.O. Telephone
63. Gibbon Pen
64. Animal Enclosure
65. Cheetahs
66. Ornamental Rock Garden
67. Malayan Bears
68. Animal Enclosure
69. Aviary
70. Wallabies
71. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE AND KIOSK
72. Waterbus Halt
73. Fountain Flower Gardens
74. Rose Garden
75. Red Lechwe
76. Red Lechwe
77. Deer or Antelope Enclosure
78. Waterbus Halt
79. Zebra and Deer Enclosure
80. Kamchatka Bears
81. ELEPHANTS
82. Hippos
83. Tapirs
84. Small Mammal House
85. Waterfowl Enclosure
86. Ankole Cattle
87. Emus and Cranes
88. Stork Enclosures
89. Baboon Pens
90. Cat House
91. Lions and Tigers

92. Antelope and Ostrich
 93. Antelope Enclosure
 94. Antelope Enclosure
 95. Zebras
 96. Llamas
 97. Waterfowl Enclosure
 98. Wallabies and Waterfowl
 99. Waterfowl Enclosure
 100. Blackbuck
 101. Wallabies
 102. Animal Paddock
 103. Animal Paddock
 104. Animal Paddock
- } under construction

105. Proposed New Bear Enclosures
106. Arabian Gazelles
107. Animal Paddock
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

BEARS—3-15 pm

POLAR BEARS—4 pm

SEA LIONS 3 times daily—
2-40 pm, 3-40 pm, 4-40 pm

Animals may be moved from time to time.

The Pesquet's Parrots come from central regions of New Guinea where they live in montane forest. As can be seen from the photograph on the right, they are most unusual looking Parrots. Both sexes have black and red plumage, a long curved upper mandible and area on the forepart of the head where there are few feathers. In view of the last characteristic, the species is known also as the Vulturine Parrot.

The Pesquet's Parrot is mainly black but its neck, throat and forepart of its head are greyish black with scattered bristle-like feathers. On the breast and abdomen the feathers are brownish black tipped with grey and the area on the wing, which appears lighter in the photograph, is scarlet. The male bird only displays a red spot behind the eye. Adult Pesquet's Parrots reach approximately twenty inches in length.

Very little is known about these birds, neither their nests nor their eggs having been described, and there are no records of captive breedings. The natives of New Guinea hunt the Pesquet's Parrots for their feathers. Both the black and red plumes are sought, and usually are placed in the centre of the native head-dresses. Wild Pesquet's Parrots feed on soft fruits, flowers and nectar. At the zoo their diet consists of Lorikeet mixture, Farex, baby rusks, long grained boiled rice, grapes, pears, apples and ripe melon. In addition they are given whole bananas, which they strip themselves. Starting at the top of the fruit, the birds pull away the skin and then eat the pulp inside.

Some years ago, when the Curator was travelling on the Sepik River in western New Guinea, he saw a small party of Pesquet's Parrots flying overhead. This particular area was heavily forested. The outline of the bird in flight comprised a short tail, broad wings and a long, slender, outstretched head and neck. The pattern of flight was short quick wing beats, interrupted occasionally with



PESQUET'S PARROT (*Psittichas fulgidus*)

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

brief glides. He also heard the Pesquet's Parrots uttering their very harsh cry which he describes as "aaar-caar".

Later the Curator saw another two specimens which were feeding in the topmost branches of a large forest tree. The objects of their interest were large red flowers. The same two Pesquet's Parrots moved off into a giant fig tree and were observed feeding on ripe figs. Through binoculars the Curator was able to see them quite clearly and discerned that the beaks and foreparts of the heads of both birds were caked with fruit pulp. Vultures have evolved bare heads in order to limit extensive soiling of their plumage when they feed on messy carcasses. It seems likely that the same principle applies to the sparsely feathered heads of the Pesquet's Parrots, although in this case the birds are feeding on soft, pulpy fruits instead of carcasses.

Amongst the other arrivals in this section was a large collection of birds donated very generously by one of our Council Members. The Society was extremely grateful to receive this collection which comprised twenty-two species. These included several different kinds of Starling - Lesser Blue-eared Glossy, Purple Glossy, Long-tailed Glossy and Spreo Starlings - all of which were liberated in the Tropical House. The Long-tailed Glossy Starlings (*Lamprotornis caudatus*) in particular look magnificent flying about in this building. Furthermore the species is a totally new exhibit for Chester Zoo. It has a distribution in central Africa from Senegal eastwards to the Sudan. Like all the Glossy Starlings, this species displays beautiful metallic green, blue and violet plumage, but its most striking feature is its long, graduated tail.

Another two specimens from the presentation, a Pagoda Mynah (*Temenuchus pagodarum*) and a Grey-headed Mynah (*Sturnia malabarica*), were released into the Tropical House. Neither species was represented in the collection.

Three different species of Toucan, the Toco, Sulphur-breasted and Swainson's, were introduced into upper aviaries of the Tropical House. In a nearby aviary a single Emerald Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*) was joined by another two members of this species which had been received as part of the presentation. We are pleased to report that one of the new Emerald Toucanets appears to have formed a pair bond with the resident specimen and hopefully this may result in a nesting attempt next year.

Of the other birds donated, several different species of Ibis and a Gallinule were released in the large flight aviary, No. 18, and various Tanagers, a Red-breasted Marsh Bird (*Leistes militaris*) and a Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler (*Pomatorhinus erythrogenys*) were accommodated in the planted aviary which is situated at one end of the Parrot House, No. 17. Lastly, a pair of Indian Pied Hornbills (*Anthracoceros malabaricus*) have been installed in one of the Temperate Bird House aviaries.

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A few weeks ago the group of Arabian Gazelles which has been occupying enclosure No. 46 during the summer months was moved to more sheltered accommodation for the winter. The enclosure vacated by the Gazelles contains a large, fairly shallow pool and therefore it was decided that this would be an ideal location for two recently acquired Giant Coots (*Fulica gigantea*).

The arrival of these uncommon South American birds was reported in the September issue of the "Zoo News" and in the same edition we published a photograph of one of the Coots. The species lives in a comparatively small area of the Andes at altitudes of 16,000 feet and over, and climatic conditions in this remote region are frequently severe. Apart from the local Indian population, few people have seen the Giant Coots in their natural habitat and, not surprisingly, information on the biology of this species is scanty.

As soon as the Curator learned we were to acquire two Giant Coots, he wrote immediately to Mr. Alfred W. Johnson of Santiago,

Chile. Mr Johnson had studied the Giant Coots over a number of years and was kind enough to furnish us with valuable information about the birds' natural breeding environment. At the same time the Curator wrote to one or two zoological establishments which are already exhibiting Giant Coots. There are few of these birds in captivity and the helpful advice we received from our zoo colleagues was very much appreciated.

One important factor to emerge from our enquiries was that the Giant Coots prosper out of doors and, although our birds had been in an outside aviary, their transfer to a spacious enclosure with a large pool was clearly of benefit to them. As yet we have been unable to determine whether these birds are a pair but, a few days after the Coots' release into enclosure No. 46, zoo staff were excited to observe one of them absorbed in what appeared to be nest gathering activity. The wild Giant Coots inhabit several fresh-water lakes within their range and on the surfaces of these they construct large nesting rafts of weed. The bird at the zoo was seen to swim about collecting in its bill considerable quantities of weed and willow leaves which had fallen into the pond. It then attempted to pile one beakful on top of another, thus forming a crude floating platform of vegetation. The raft would certainly not have withstood the weight of the Coot - those which Mr Johnson examined in South America would support the weight of a man - but perhaps it is a sign of better things to come.

GENERAL NEWS

Jamie is a young Chimpanzee which was abandoned at birth and has been hand reared by the Curator. Two months ago he was taken into the zoo for the first time to spend a few hours with another young Chimpanzee in the Ape Nursery, No. 56. Gradually the duration of his visits was increased until he was staying all day in the nursery. The next major hurdle was to leave Jamie in the zoo at night and happily this step was accomplished without any apparent distress to the young Chimpanzee. The following morning the keeper found Jamie and his new companion, Lollipop, curled up together

in their sleeping box. His ties with the family broken, Jamie will now be able to grow up and develop with members of his own species.

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Although hindered continually by adverse weather conditions, work has progressed on two current building projects at the zoo. The immense task of creating new enclosures on sites No. 102 to 105 has been under way since early summer and to date a new block of indoor quarters has been erected and work is well advanced on several of the paddocks.

The second project has involved the reconstruction of a row of aviaries in group No. 5. These particular aviaries have been in existence for many years and several improvements are incorporated in the new design. It is anticipated that when completed they will house soft-bills and small seed-eaters.

Each of the five new aviaries measures approximately fifteen feet square. The rear wall, which runs the length of the row, is constructed of sandstone. The aviary sides and roof extending for several feet from this wall are built of solid materials also, thus providing a shelter for the birds. The doors are now located at the sides of the flights and not in the rear wall as before. The modification will enable the birds to see members of staff approaching their aviary. This way there will be far less risk of birds panicking and injuring themselves than if a person enters through a blind wall and appears suddenly in their midst.

Another improvement has been the use of smaller mesh wire in covering the aviaries. Whilst not impairing the public's view of the birds, the smaller mesh will prevent both mice and sparrows from raiding the flights. A concrete underfloor has been laid which will be a further deterrent to mice. Holes have been left in the underfloor for the planting of shrubs and eventually all the floors will be covered with several inches of sand. The front of the aviaries consists of a number of large mesh panels, any one of which can be removed whenever staff wish to introduce a log or other sizable object into a flight.

INDIAN ELEPHANT CALF DEATH

Shortly before this issue was ready for dispatch to the printers, we received the news that one of our Indian Elephants (*Elephas maximus*), Sheba, had produced a male calf. Very sadly when the baby was discovered it was dead and at first we believed this had been a stillbirth. We have learned since from a post mortem examination that the calf did live for a short while. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first Elephant ever to be conceived and produced in a British zoo and its failure to survive was a tremendous disappointment. The calf weighed 326 lbs, measured eighty inches in length and stood three feet high at the shoulder. The gestation period for the Elephant is approximately twenty-two months.

The mother, Sheba, is nineteen years old and arrived at Chester Zoo in 1965. The father and the only male Indian Elephant in the collection is Nobby. He also came to the zoo in 1965 but is only twelve and a half years old. Some months ago we suspected that Sheba was pregnant but, in view of the lengthy gestation period, we were unable to predict accurately the date of birth.

SUBSCRIPTION FORMS

New readers of the CHESTER ZOO NEWS who would like to receive the magazine regularly may be interested to know that subscription forms can be obtained from the souvenir shop. An annual subscription (12 issues) costs £1.15, postage paid, which can either be handed over the counter at the shop or posted with the completed form to the Director-Secretary, Chester Zoo, Chester.

DAILY MIRROR PETS CLUB DIARY 1975

The fourth National Pets Club Diary is now available. Written by David Kerr, Manager of the Club, this beautifully bound diary contains more than 40 pages of useful information about pets and other animals, including:—First aid for pets. Calling the vet. Cleaning oiled birds. Useful addresses. The diary is only available direct from the Daily Mirror. To order a copy you should send your remittance of 48p to the Daily Mirror, Diary Offer, Box 206, London NW99 4XA. The diary is sent post free.

The following notice is displayed on several boards in the grounds

Please comply with it at all times.

FEEDING OF ANIMALS AND BIRDS

IT IS AN OFFENCE for any member of the public to offer food of any description to any Animal or Bird in Chester Zoo.

This regulation is made for the sake of the health of the Animals and Birds. Since the NO FEEDING rule was introduced, the number of deaths has dropped appreciably and sickness due to wrong feeding has been virtually eliminated.

What you may be offering to an animal may only be a sweet or an inoffensive piece of bread, but it can mean a death sentence for the animal. For example, a cough drop, which may relieve your cough, can cause instant death to many Animals and Birds in the Zoo.

You must not lose sight of the fact that you are only one of over a million visitors who visit the Zoo annually. If for instance an elephant had one bun from only one tenth of a day's visitors during the summer, it would eat between three and four thousand. You can guess the result.

We realise what a temptation it is for visitors, particularly children, to feed our Animals and Birds and this is why we invite members of the public to be present at the official feeding times.

This is a polite warning to you, asking you not to feed the animals. If you ignore it, the Keepers are authorised to ask you to leave the Gardens.

If you really love Animals and Birds, you will appreciate the wisdom of the ruling — No Feeding by members of the public.

PLEASE HELP US TO KEEP OUR COLLECTION OF ANIMALS NOT ONLY ALIVE BUT IN FIRST CLASS CONDITION.

