
“Our Zoo News”

and Guide.

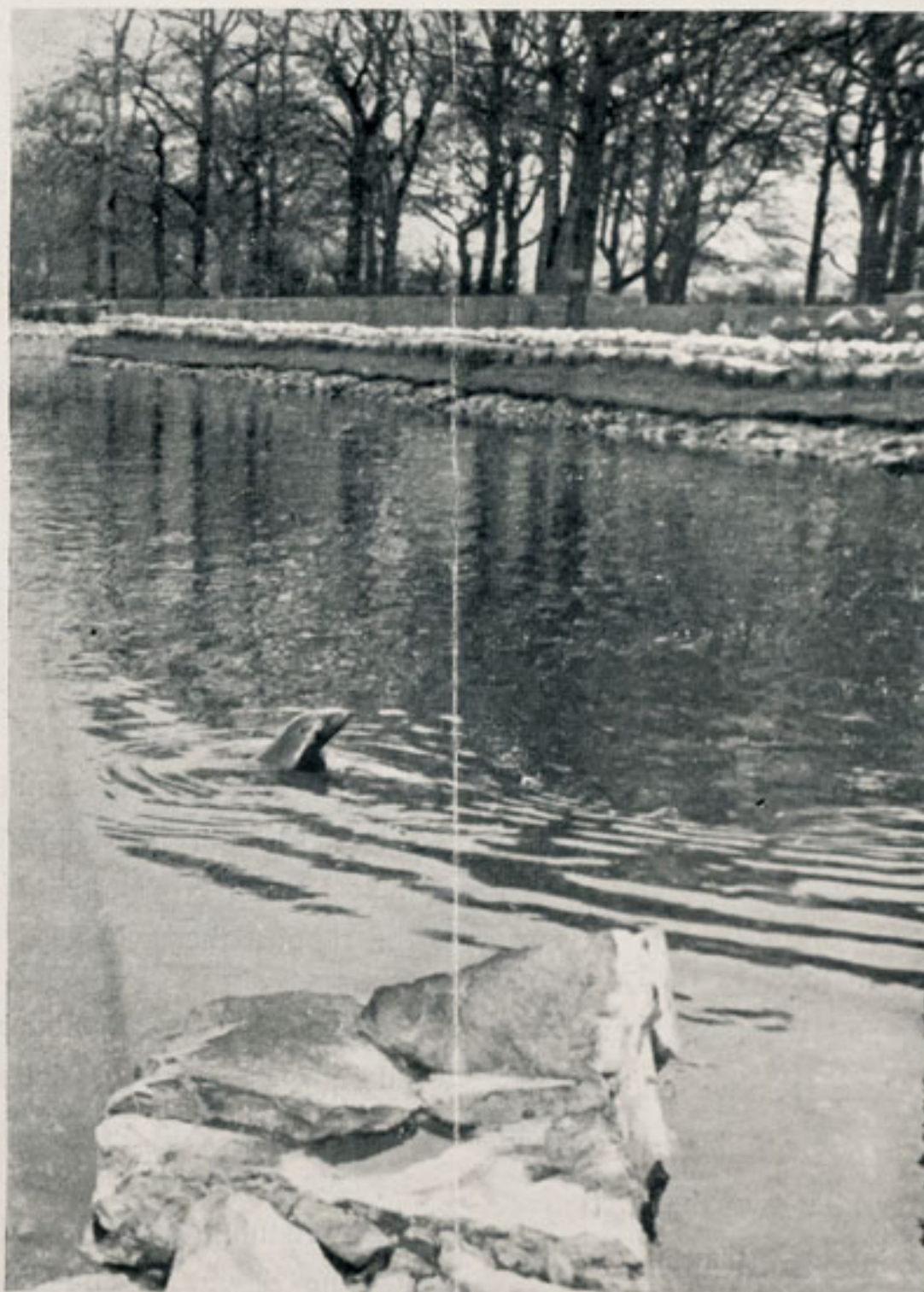
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A Sea-Lion comes to the surface on a bleak morning. During the cold weather these attractive creatures spend most of their time under water, but as weather becomes warmer they give some wonderful displays of water acrobatics, and are one of the greatest attractions in the Zoo.

The North of England Zoological Society,

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER.

Tel. Chester 1898.

June, 1948.

It is many busy months since our last Zoo News was issued, and thereby hangs our apology. Yes! The Zoo News is written by the zoo staff and during the last few months we have had little or no time to turn our attention to journalistic matters, for the zoo has completely changed since the busy months of last year, and that change has meant work and more work, but now we are happy to say we, and the public, can see something for our labours.

How, or where, to begin to explain our new developments is a little difficult, because these are so widespread, but we will begin with Bison Walk which has been considerably widened on account of the very severe congestion which was experienced many times last year. On the left we used to find the American Bison but these animals have been transferred to new pastures on the North-west of their old ground, which is now being made into additional Bear Enclosures. It will be some time before this work is completed, but when it has been finished we will have greatly increased our exhibition of these popular animals.

Further along Bison Walk on the left, really drastic alterations have been made, and what last year was an open field containing Deer is now one of the most popular sections of the Zoo. A large Pool has been constructed something like two hundred feet long and twelve feet deep in most places, and this contains the Sea Lions. An announcement that the sea-lions had been moved to this enclosure was made in our last issue, but we are now pleased to say that this accommodation has now been completed, and is proving extremely popular.

On the North-west side of the Sea-Lion Pool a very outstanding development has taken place and should shortly be opened to the public. This is a Reptile House, eighty feet long, with a public passage all the way round. All the reptile cases being in the centre and are self contained and easily operated. One outstanding experiment is the extensive use which has been made of Perspex, all the cases are roofed with this material thus admitting the maximum of daylight, and each case is fitted with Daylight "Fluorescent" light for use on dull winter days. Another feature is that all reptiles are viewed through heavy "Armour-plated Glass", while the attendants observation windows are of strong "Perspex".

We feel sure that this new addition to the Zoo will be a very popular feature, for already it contains a varied collection of Snakes, Monitors, Alligators, Crocodiles, Terrapins, Tortoise, etc., and we have endeavoured to give all these reptiles not only plenty of room but conditions similar to those they would have in their natural haunts. Perhaps in our next issue we will be able to say something about the reptiles themselves.

Behind the Reptile House is an extremely interesting addition to the Zoo. These are the "Beaver" which were kindly sent to us from the Toronto Zoo Park, Canada. We have given these animals a large pool with running water, and they were not long in settling down and building for themselves a Lodge. Dams they construct continually and the public spend much time watching these industrious animals at work. We are fondly hoping they will in due time breed. In front of the Reptile House is a pool containing Flamingos, which are another recent addition

to the collection. These beautiful birds form a pretty sight, and when their pool (which is newly constructed) is matured with vegetation which has been planted around it, the picture should be very pleasing.

While on the subject of pools, we will continue with the other water attractions which have been added this last spring. Truly our water schemes ran riot, when we started to utilise the surplus water from the sea-lion pool. The flamingo pool receives its water from the sea-lion pool and the beaver pool, and from there it flows to another large pool in the ostrich enclosure, then falling over a weir into a lake which we have also made.

In the centre of this lake is a large island and on this many trees and shrubs have been planted, and we shall spare no effort to make this island dense with vegetation so as to provide a perfect sanctuary for all kind of wild bird life.

Already we have many kinds of duck and geese on the lake together with some graceful swans, and when we have supplied a larger number of seats which we intend to do, we feel sure the Lake side will provide a place of tranquility which tired parents will much appreciate.

On the west side of the lake is the new enclosure for the Bison, and on a triangular piece of ground between the Bison and the Lake is a piece of land containing a pool of running water. This has been adapted for the accommodation of the Coypu, the large rat like animal from South America. There is only one pair in at the moment but here again we are hoping they will breed.

The Fallow Deer have been provided with new large enclosure on the east side of the lake, and two very interesting animals have joined them. These are the Wapiti, and like the Beaver were sent to us from the Toronto Zoo on an exchange basis. They are very tame and just one year old. We do not intend to keep these large deer with the Fallow Deer, but

for the time being it is a great help to our hard pressed works department that they are agreeing together.

Another very attractive addition recently received are two Chapman's Zebra, it is rather unfortunate that both these animals are geldings, therefore our breeding hopes have gone. Some day we hope to be fortunate enough to obtain a true pair, in the meantime the public will just have the pleasure of seeing two specimens of this beautiful animal.

A very nice specimen of the African Porcupine arrived at the same time as the Zebra. Unfortunately only one was available therefore we will have to wait a little longer before we can set up a colony of these interesting animals.

Our Raccoon Enclosure has also been substantially replenished and we are hoping to see young there this summer.

Now that we have once again settled down to writing "Our Zoo News" we hope to be able to collect many zoo stories which will interest readers, for there is always something happening at the Zoo, but as we explained we have been so busy during the last six months we had no time to record on paper the events which were passing.

Owing to the many changes which are constantly taking place it is very difficult to write a Guide which could be looked upon as correct. We have therefore decided to print a Map showing roughly the position of the principal exhibits and we trust readers will be able to follow this guide when visiting the Zoo.



Two of the Beavers which are such an attraction to the visitors. Usually the beavers do not become very active till late afternoon or evening, so visitors must not be disappointed if visiting the Beaver Pool at mid-day they only see a sheet of water.

“AND NOW WE ARE THREE”

I am a Beaver, you must have heard of us, even if you only associate us with your mother's fur coat, grandfather's silk hat or tales of Indians and Trappers of long ago in the lawless North West.

Early this year four of us arrived at Chester Zoo from Canada. One of our party unfortunately found the journey across the Atlantic a little too much and died soon after our arrival.

For the sake of those of you to whom we are only a name, I should like to tell you a little about us, so that next time you visit Chester Zoo, I hope that you will pay us a call.

To begin with our appearance—Beavers belong to the Rodent Family. To look at we are rather like large rats, roughly about 30 to 40 inches in length, 10 inches of which is taken up by a large flat trowel-

like tail; we are very proud of our tails, and use them as rudders when swimming, and to beat the water with as an alarm signal when danger is near. Our coats are fur, soft thick and silky, reddish brown in colour, we have a large round head, and tiny ears, and we can close both our ears and nostrils when in the water.

Once upon a time we lived in Europe, but our coats proved too valuable attraction to man, and we are now almost extinct, except in North America. We live in large colonies in the North West Territories of Canada. Many years ago members of our family were to be found as far down south as the Mississippi, but now we are seldom seen south of the St. Lawrence River—the reason—once again our fur coats; we were hunted down to such an extent by Indian and White men alike that it has now been found necessary to try and breed us, and many of us are born and reared in large Beaver Ranches protected by the Government.



The trees are bare of leaves, and the cold January winds sweep across the Lion Enclosure, but these hardened lionesses are quite happy and contented and what is more are in perfect health.

"Christy", who many readers will remember was hand reared and had her freedom for many months gave birth to three cubs on the 14th of May. Unfortunately the first died before we realised she was not feeding them; however the remaining two are being hand reared and are doing well.

Naturally, we like to live in a well-timbered district, near a running stream. By felling trees, which is done by gnawing the trunk with our sharp teeth, an even distance all round, a short way up from the ground we block or dam the stream in many places and form several pools. We spend most of our time in the water, and so of course our homes are constructed under water. We live in Beaver Lodges, for which I believe we are quite famous, and building them and keeping them in repair takes up a lot of our time.

On a shallow side of a stream bank, we make what you would perhaps call a number of elaborate burrows, which we make water tight by patting and piling mud into place with our fore-paws, not as some people think with our tails, then we set this with wood chippings, and finally pile the entrance up with logs and branches, the "rooms" in our lodge are lined with grass and moss, and when there is a large colony of us our Beaver lodges may stretch for many acres under ground.

Chester Zoo is not Canada, but we are very pleased with our new home. We found a large pool with running water behind the reptile house, and a very fine bank of earth. The Keeper very kindly put a large quantity of willow branches and boughs at our disposal, and we lost no time in setting about to construct a new Beaver Lodge.

Our diet, as you have probably guessed by now we are vegetarians, and our food consists of willow twigs, and boughs and bark of all descriptions, roots of water lillies and other plants, and very occasionally fruit and berries.

So next time you visit Chester Zoo, please drop in and pay us a call, no doubt we shall be busy at the Lodge, but visitors will be welcome, and I am sure one of us will oblige with a swimming display. We may even manage to have a few youngsters on show towards the end of the year, it all depends on the housing situation. Incidentally one of the ladies is very fond of making the best of our appearances, so to speak, and if you look carefully in the Enclosure, you will be almost sure to see her sitting at the edge of the pool, washing her face, smoothing her coat, or stroking her whiskers.

J.M.



Won-Lung, the Himalayan Bear, with her baby "Belinda", who was born on 21st December, 1947, and named by "Nan" during the broadcast from Chester Zoo on 12th May.

Himalayan Bears are quite small at birth, about the size of a small rat and have no hair on their body. Two were born to Won-Lung, which is the usual number, but unfortunately one must have died soon after birth.



Long-eared Owl from North America. One of a consignment which arrived in the Spring from the Toronto Zoo Park. We have now several varieties of Owls which are temporarily accommodated near the "Jaw-bones of the Blue Whale".

Map of The Zoological Gardens, Chester

