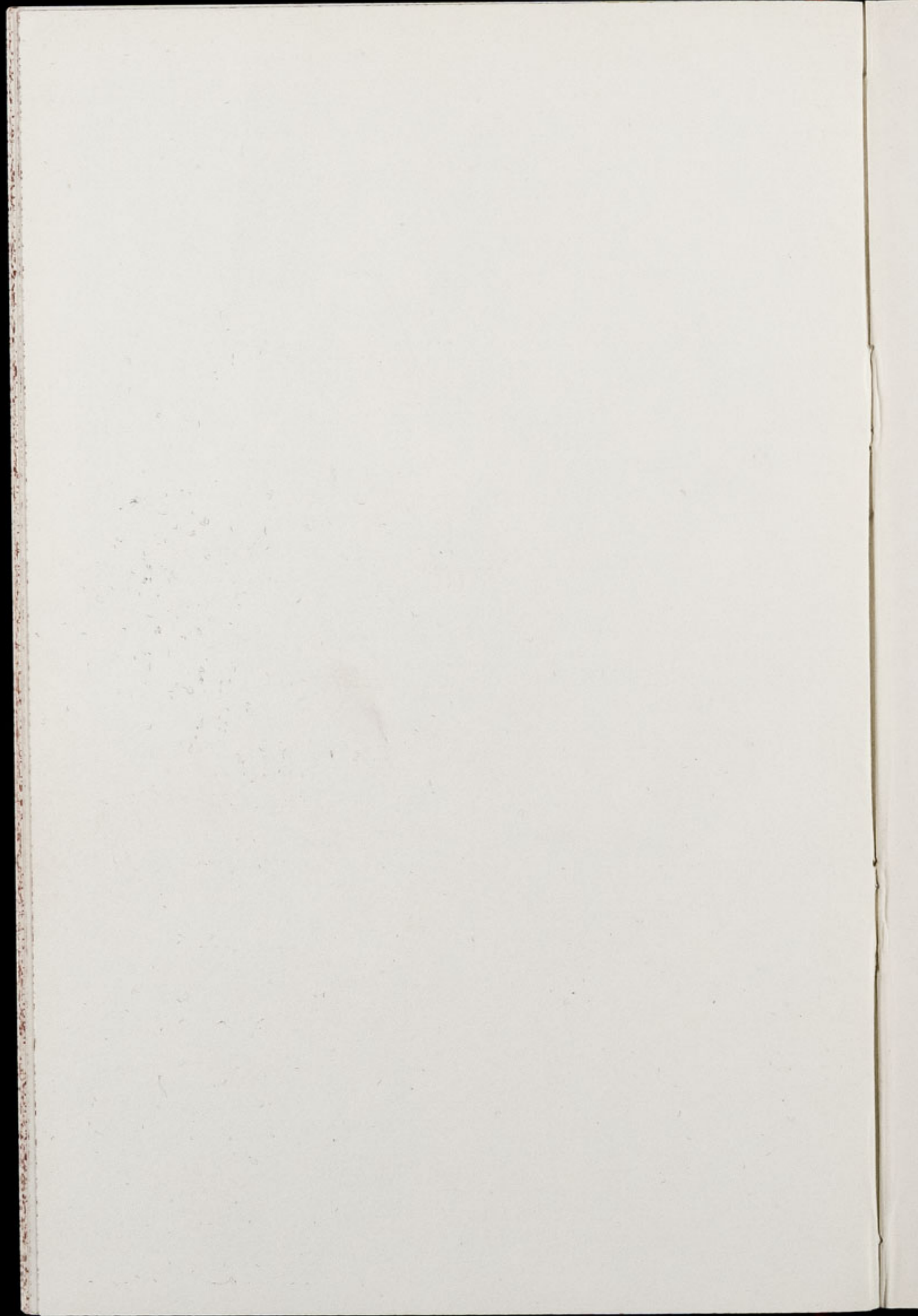


CHESTER ZOO NEWS

AND GUIDE

April 1971

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The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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COVER: Chimpanzee Jane with baby Kate on island; see page two.

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

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION — NINETY FIVE NEW PENCE POSTAGE PAID
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LOOKING FORWARD TO THE 1971 SEASON

At the time of writing, preparations for Easter and the start of our busy season are in full swing. Apart from the many routine tasks, this year the pathways throughout the Zoo are being re-surfaced. Visitors will certainly find plenty of attractions, old and new, and probably one of the most popular will be Jaspa, the Black Rhino calf pictured with his mother Susie on the right. He is now over a month old and the tip of one of his horns is just beginning to show.

Gradually the Zoo is becoming more colourful with profusions of Daffodils on most of the canal banks and islands. The Crocuses are almost finished but some early shrubs, such as Forsythia, are coming into flower, as are the Hyacinths near the new Sea Lion Pool.

Worth special mention are the Camellias on the wall at the back of the small Alpine Garden, No. 49 on the Zoo Plan. These are full of buds and flowers which will continue into May. This is an ideal situation for Camellias because, although they are quite hardy, the flowers can be spoiled by frost and the wall which faces south affords considerable protection. Several varieties of Camellia are also exhibited in the new rock garden near to the South Entrance. Other plants in the Alpine Garden coming into flower are Alpine Daffodils, *Iris reticulata*, Scillas and some Saxifragas.

For lovers of Orchids there are three groups still on display in the Tropical House, where some very fine baskets of *Columnnea* can also be seen.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH

On warm days the three Chimpanzees with babies are being allowed outside onto the islands and the cover photograph shows !! year old Jane with Kate, the youngest of the babies, born in December. Jane, having abandoned the first baby she produced in 1968, learned to nurse Kate by watching Meg, another of the mothers. Meg with baby Sue, now seven months old, was on the



Jack Smith

BLACK RHINO CALF "JASPA" WITH MOTHER "SUSIE" (*Diceros bicornis*)

same island at the time the picture was taken but to the photographer's despair, under no circumstances would she sit next to Jane for a "family portrait". Saul, the third young Chimp, is almost a year old and may be seen with mother, Judy, in another Chimpanzee enclosure.

BIRTHS

With the recent birth of a male Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*), which has been named Gilbert, there are now two young calves on exhibition in the Giraffe House. Gilbert was born on 19th March. His mother is Margaret and his father Henry, the same Giraffe which sired Linda, the female born last September.

Thirteen Bennett's Wallabies (*Wallabia rufogrisea*) and one Rufous-bellied Wallaby (*Thylogale billardierii*) have been observed with young in their pouches.

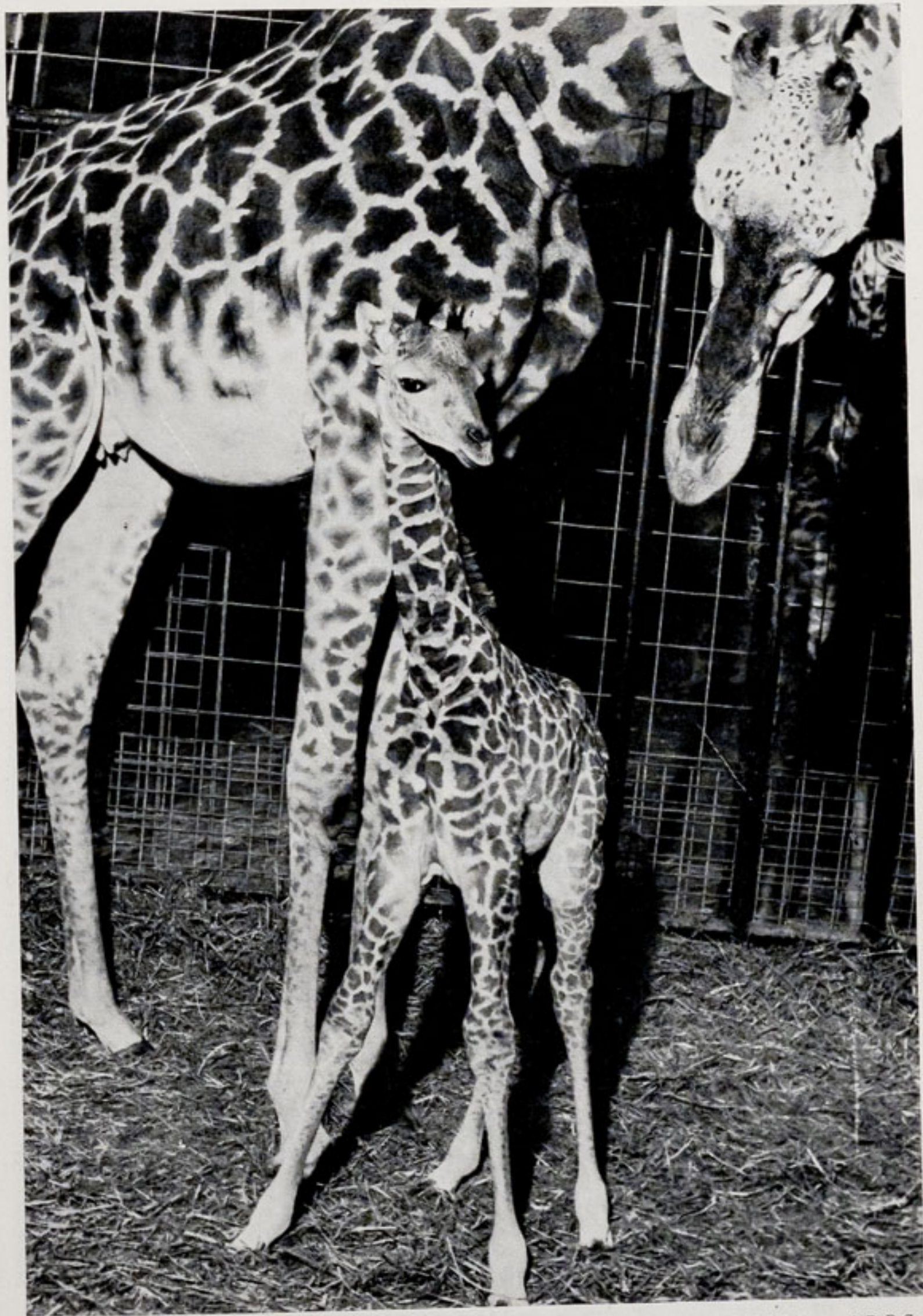
In the Monkey House a Sooty Mangabey (*Cercocebus torquatus*) has been born to a female named Sooty. The young Mona Monkey (*Cercopithecus mona*) photographed on page seven is also on exhibition in this building.

PARRAKEET DEATH

A male Barraband Parrakeet, one of the birds which was stolen in February, has died since its return to the Zoo. The cause of death was enteritis incurred as a result of stress. Of the nine birds that were stolen, six are now dead, the others which were lost being rare Birds of Paradise and a Crimson-winged Parrakeet.

BIRD NOTES

Three female Bobwhite Quail (*Colinus virginianus*) have been obtained in exchange for three males as there was a surplus of the latter in the collection.



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

MALE GIRAFFE CALF "GILBERT" (*Giraffa camelopardalis*)

Other new arrivals include a Barn Owl, which was presented, and a pair each of:

Orange-headed Ground Thrushes (*Geokichla citrina*)

Giant Blue Pittas (*Pitta c. caerulea*)

Blue-winged Pittas (*Pitta moluccensis*)

Gurney's Pittas (*Pitta gurneyi*)

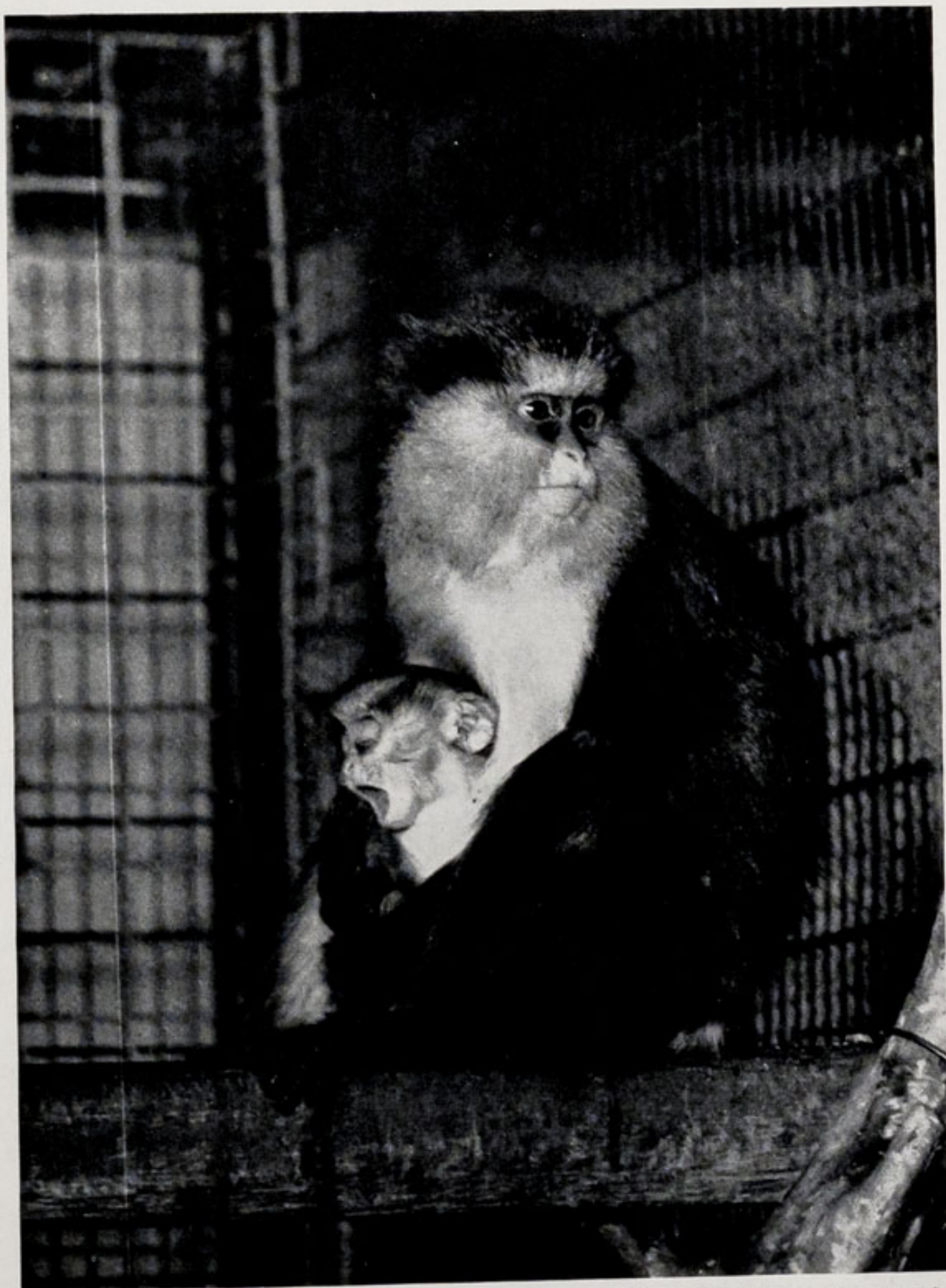
Orange-headed Ground Thrushes are found in forested areas of northern India, Burma and Siam. The male is about 8 - 8½ inches long with a yellowish-orange head, breast and underparts and grey back, wings and tail. The female is slightly duller and has olive-grey plumage along her back. These birds spend most of their lives at ground level, searching through the undergrowth on the forest floor for the insects, snails, earthworms and fallen fruit which comprise their diet. The nests are cup-shaped and constructed in bushes or low trees.

The Orange-headed Ground Thrushes are on exhibition in the Tropical House, where visitors can also see the three species of Pitta. The photograph on page eleven shows a Giant Blue Pitta which originates from S.E. Asia. It is the largest member of the family, measuring about 10½ inches in length. The Blue-winged and Gurney's Pittas are also found in S.E. Asia, the latter species being probably the most colourful of all the Pittas.

PITTAS

The Pittas form a family of some twenty-three species widely spread over Southern and South-Eastern Asia, New Guinea, Borneo, China, Japan, Australia, the Polynesian Islands and, in the case of two species, Central and Eastern Africa.

Pittas are plump forest birds with long legs and short tails. Most of their time is spent on the ground or amongst the tangled undergrowth in humid, warm conditions. They obtain their food by scratching about among the leaves and hunting for worms, lizards, ants, small beetles and insects of all kinds. Though they can fly



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

MONA MONKEY AND BABY (*Cercopithecus mona*)

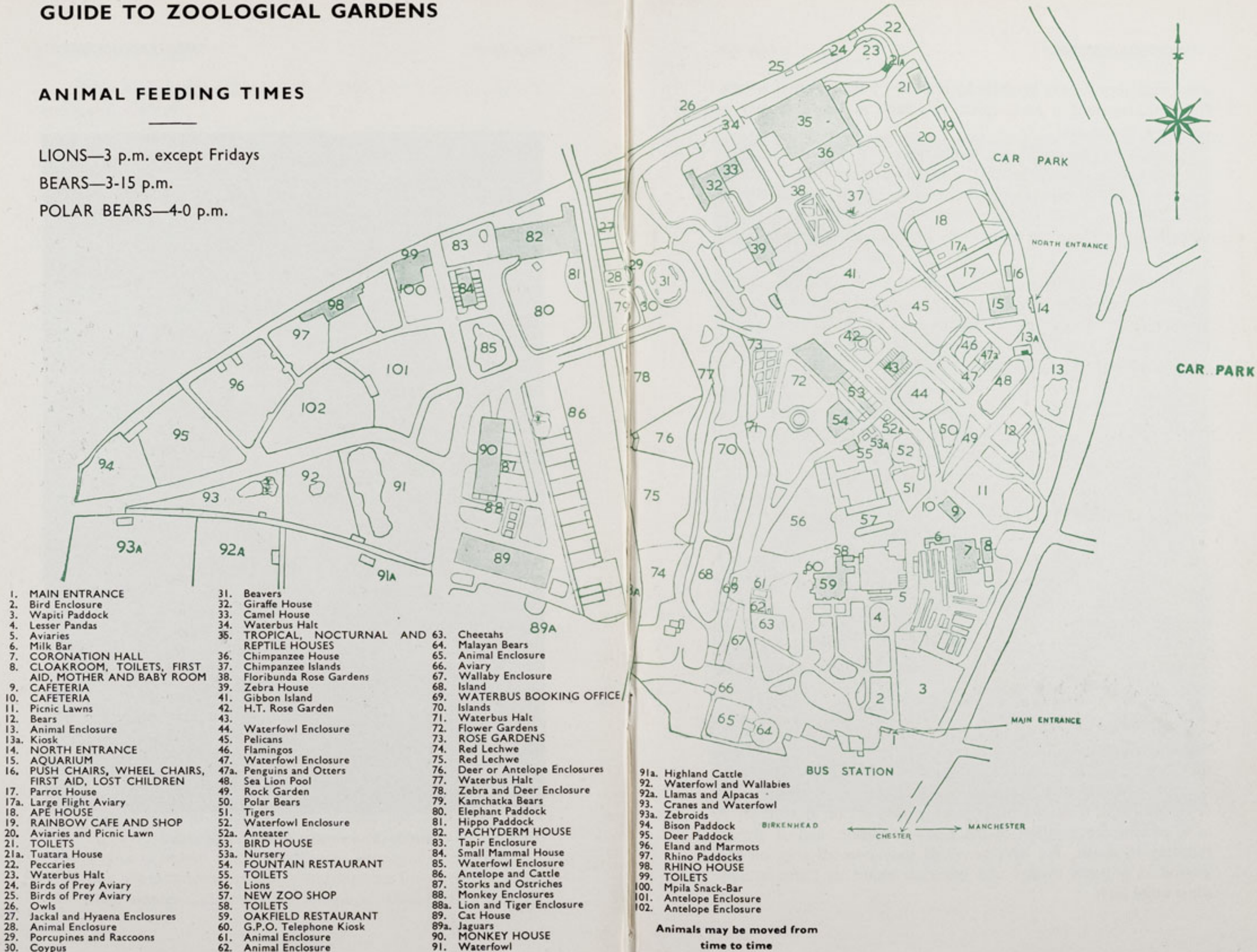
GUIDE TO ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES

LIONS—3 p.m. except Fridays

BEARS—3-15 p.m.

POLAR BEARS—4-0 p.m.



- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. MAIN ENTRANCE | 31. Beavers | 63. Cheetahs |
| 2. Bird Enclosure | 32. Giraffe House | 64. Malayan Bears |
| 3. Wapiti Paddock | 33. Camel House | 65. Animal Enclosure |
| 4. Lesser Pandas | 34. Waterbus Halt | 66. Aviary |
| 5. Aviaries | 35. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND REPTILE HOUSES | 67. Wallaby Enclosure |
| 6. Milk Bar | 36. Chimpanzee House | 68. Island |
| 7. CORONATION HALL | 37. Chimpanzee Islands | 69. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE |
| 8. CLOAKROOM, TOILETS, FIRST AID, MOTHER AND BABY ROOM | 38. Floribunda Rose Gardens | 70. Islands |
| 9. CAFETERIA | 39. Zebra House | 71. Waterbus Halt |
| 10. CAFETERIA | 41. Gibbon Island | 72. Flower Gardens |
| 11. Picnic Lawns | 42. H.T. Rose Garden | 73. ROSE GARDENS |
| 12. Bears | 43. | 74. Red Lechwe |
| 13. Animal Enclosure | 44. Waterfowl Enclosure | 75. Red Lechwe |
| 13a. Kiosk | 45. Pelicans | 76. Deer or Antelope Enclosures |
| 14. NORTH ENTRANCE | 46. Flamingos | 77. Waterbus Halt |
| 15. AQUARIUM | 47. Waterfowl Enclosure | 78. Zebra and Deer Enclosure |
| 16. PUSH CHAIRS, WHEEL CHAIRS, FIRST AID, LOST CHILDREN | 47a. Penguins and Otters | 79. Kamchatka Bears |
| 17. Parrot House | 48. Sea Lion Pool | 80. Elephant Paddock |
| 17a. Large Flight Aviary | 49. Rock Garden | 81. Hippo Paddock |
| 18. APE HOUSE | 50. Polar Bears | 82. PACHYDERM HOUSE |
| 19. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP | 51. Tigers | 83. Tapir Enclosure |
| 20. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn | 52. Waterfowl Enclosure | 84. Small Mammal House |
| 21. TOILETS | 52a. Anteater | 85. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 21a. Tuatara House | 53. BIRD HOUSE | 86. Antelope and Cattle |
| 22. Peccaries | 53a. Nursery | 87. Storks and Ostriches |
| 23. Waterbus Halt | 54. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT | 88. Monkey Enclosures |
| 24. Birds of Prey Aviary | 55. TOILETS | 88a. Lion and Tiger Enclosure |
| 25. Birds of Prey Aviary | 56. Lions | 89. Cat House |
| 26. Owls | 57. NEW ZOO SHOP | 89a. Jaguars |
| 27. Jackal and Hyaena Enclosures | 58. TOILETS | 90. MONKEY HOUSE |
| 28. Animal Enclosure | 59. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT | 91. Waterfowl |
| 29. Porcupines and Raccoons | 60. G.P.O. Telephone Kiosk | |
| 30. Coypus | 61. Animal Enclosure | |
| | 62. Animal Enclosure | |

- | |
|-----------------------------|
| 91a. Highland Cattle |
| 92. Waterfowl and Wallabies |
| 92a. Llamas and Alpacas |
| 93. Cranes and Waterfowl |
| 93a. Zebroids |
| 94. Bison Paddock |
| 95. Deer Paddock |
| 96. Eland and Marmots |
| 97. Rhino Paddocks |
| 98. RHINO HOUSE |
| 99. TOILETS |
| 100. Mpila Snack-Bar |
| 101. Antelope Enclosure |
| 102. Antelope Enclosure |
- Animals may be moved from time to time

quite well, they usually progress by immense bounds, often several feet long, repeated at great speed; this habit makes them easy to recognise in the field.

Most species live entirely in the densest evergreen forests, whereas other species are also found in bamboo jungle. In this cover they are easily overlooked but their loud, double whistles often betray them. It is possible to lure a Pitta near if you imitate its notes.

The Rainbow Pitta of Queensland might be named the 'Anvil Bird' for it breaks the shells of snails on stones or stumps. A favourite 'anvil' will have thousands of broken, empty shells scattered around it. A naturalist found the shells of snails new to science at a Pitta's anvil-stone, but the bird did not get credit for its 'discovery'.

The nest is a large ball-like structure, often elongated like a Rugby football, placed on or near the ground with the entrance at the side. It is constructed of bamboo leaves, grass and roots, carelessly and untidily assembled and may have a lining of fibres and rootlets. The eggs are white to pale cream in ground-colour and speckled and streaked with various shades of red and purple.

In Africa the presence of Pittas, which are essentially Oriental types of birds and likewise of a number of mammals of Indian or Malayan affinities, suggests that there must have been a connection between the primitive African continental forests and the woods of Southern Asia. The drying up of Eastern Africa with the resulting disappearance of the forests there accounts for the fact that these forms are now so widely isolated.

Our Pittas in Chester Zoo have been given large planted aviaries with floors of moist, dead leaves, moss and damp peat. It is essential that they are not kept on clay or any soil which will clog when wet, or bake hard when dry, because the feet are the most sensitive part of the bird and, if not watched carefully, they are the starting point of a general degeneration in the bird's condition, almost always resulting in death. We have provided moss-covered logs on the ground as a perch by day and branches above as Pittas usually roost quite high.



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

GIANT BLUE PITTA (*Pitta c. caerulea*)

In captivity Pittas need a good insectivorous food supplemented with worms, snails, centipedes, mealworms, locusts and newborn mice. A barrow-load of dead leaves, preferably moist and well-decayed, containing many types of garden insects is well appreciated by the Pittas. As with all other birds in the collection, clean water is essential at all times.

When examining anything in the aviary the Pittas appear to be slim, upright birds with every feather flat, but on the slightest sign of danger the feathers are puffed out and the body sinks low, covering the legs. At other times they may be seen listening intently in the manner of a Song Thrush. They have a habit of bobbing the head and flirting the tail.

A final note on these most interesting birds is their odd habit of constructing a 'doormat' of moist animal dung on the platform entrance to the nest, which is gradually carried into the nest chamber on the birds' feet.

NEW BREEDING AVIARIES

Two blocks of new breeding aviaries are now under construction on the site of the old Parrot House, No. 43 on the Zoo Plan. Each block is roughly circular, having eight rectangular aviaries radiating from a central closed building. The lengths of the aviaries vary from 16 to 24 feet but all are 8 feet wide and 8 feet high. When completed they will house the Parrakeets and related species now on exhibition in the older aviaries. As these birds are hardy, there are no separate indoor quarters in the new blocks but the inner ends of the aviaries are covered to give shelter in bad weather. The central buildings are designed as service rooms.

Parasites are a constant problem in all Zoos and one of the main objects in moving the Parrakeets to the new site is to provide them with fresh ground. The birds destined for the older breeding aviaries are soft-bills which are not susceptible to the parasites now present in the soil there.

Landscaping will commence as soon as the building work is completed. Eventually the triangular areas between each aviary will be planted with shrubs but this year, as it is too late in the season to introduce shrubs, decorative Dahlias will be planted instead. In the encircling borders we propose putting Penstemons and mixed Antirrhinums with an edging of Dwarf Marigolds.

SUBSCRIPTION FORMS

New readers of the Chester Zoo News who would like to receive the magazine regularly may like to know that subscription forms are on display in the souvenir shops. An annual subscription (12 issues) costs 95 pence, postage paid, which can be either handed over the counter or posted with the completed form to The Director-Secretary, Chester Zoo, Chester.

ANTHRAX OUTBREAK

During the first weekend in March a number of animals died suddenly and the cause was confirmed as anthrax. The dead animals were two Coatis, a male Polecat, a female Blotched Genet and a female Binturong, all of which had been accommodated in the Small Mammal House. The strict precautions required by law for cases of anthrax were taken immediately, including the burning of the carcasses and all materials which had been in contact with them and the closing of the area to the public. In addition the remaining exhibits in the house were injected with penicillin.

There seems little doubt that the infection was brought into the Zoo in one of the regular deliveries of meat for the animals, although as yet this has not been confirmed officially. At first, as we had no idea how much of the meat had been contaminated and consequently the number of animals which might be affected, it was hoped that the outbreak would be confined to the Mammal House. However, by Monday evening one of the residents of the Cat House, a rare Amur Leopard, was very sick. A large dose of long acting penicillin was prescribed and when the Curator looked in at mid-



KIM AND TONY, TWO
YOUNG SEA LIONS,
ARRIVE AT THE NEW SEA
LION POOL, COMPLETED
LAST MONTH

THE KEEPER
RELEASES THE FIRST
SEA LION OUT OF
HIS CRATE WITH
A SPRAT



D
V SEA
ATED



THE FIRST DIP

*Photographs by
K. W. Green, A.R.P.S*



BOTH IN AND
FEEDING TIME
AS USUAL

night it seemed a little better. The following morning a male Puma named Whisky collapsed and died shortly afterwards. Futhermore, although the Leopard was much improved, another Puma and a Lioness were showing symptoms of the disease. The Cat House had been cordoned off already and penicillin was now administered to all the cats in the building and the surrounding enclosures.

Fortunately the worst was over and the affected animals in both houses made good recoveries. Last to die was a Palm Civet which had been housed temporarily in the animal hospital. Since then there have been no more cases. The final death toll was seven but at least this outbreak has been less severe than the previous one in 1964 which claimed four Elephants as well as a number of animals in the Small Mammal House.

In answer to the many enquiries, we are pleased to confirm that the outbreak is over completely and the areas which were restricted are open to the public once again.



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.

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