

# “Our Zoo News”

A MONTHLY CHRONICLE OF NEWS OF  
CHESTER ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

Price 3d.

Annual Subscription 3/0 post free.

NUMBER FORTY-SIX.



A pleasant scene in pre-war days

The 1943 Season is in full swing, and all our time is being taken up with the thousand and one jobs which have to be attended to in a zoo which caters for the public, and this year more so than ever before, we are finding it extremely difficult to get labour, so this issue of Zoo News will comprise in the main photographs as we have very little time in which to write news items.

“Bambi,” a goat kid, is perhaps the most attractive addition to the Zoo on account of his

playfulness. He has been adopted by Kanadasa, the Mahout, who he follows about like a dog, accompanying him as he works with the Elephant, who is quite indifferent to Bambi's pranks.

It is strange how goats have a fascination for both children and adults alike, and we are hoping to shortly get a herd together to make a special attraction.

The young wolf cubs mentioned in our last issue are progressing very well and have been trans-

ferred to the pen which Mowgli and Peter occupied last year. They are now developing the pack instinct and approach one with courage created by their number, but if one gets separated it is a coward at heart.

We are expecting several litters of Lion Cubs, but whether we shall be successful in rearing them will be another matter, for we shall be unable to separate them as we are short of accommodation for breeding lions, but we have succeeded in the past and hope we shall be able to do so again.

Mowgli and Peter we are pleased to say are still the best of pals although there are still many people who seem to think that one day Peter will end up inside the lion. This view we do not take and like many others who see them regularly we feel sure the friendship will last till such time as we decide to break it, and then we feel sure they will pine unless we give them some other interest.

Not very long ago people passing along the road in the vicinity of the Zoo were startled to hear a voice from above shout "Come 'ere," "Come 'ere," and stared in bewilderment at the sky to see where the voice came from, but they were not long left in doubt for there in a nearby tree was Cocky, the Zoo's famous cockatoo. He had escaped as he was being transferred from one aviary to another and refused to come down from his perch, finding it perhaps more entertaining to invite passers by into the tree than an aviary. However, as night fell and no one had accepted his invitation he came down to be picked up by a young lady and returned to his real home.

The Raccoons caused some little excitement which fortunately ended without any trouble. A neighbour of the Zoo reported that he had been awakened at night by some animal, which at first he thought was a cat, playing with some milk bottles, but when he put in an appearance the animal made for the Zoo. The matter was reported and the raccoons were suspected but upon examination were found to be correct. A few days later a raccoon was seen in the shrubbery, it was easily caught and placed back in its enclosure, but a few days later another was seen out. The enclosure had been examined and no place could be discovered where they could have escaped, so it was decided to catch the one which remained in and then build the wall a little higher. It was while we were endeavouring to cage this one that the mystery of how they got out was solved, for this animal seeing that we were about to catch it, made for a secluded corner and there we discovered a concealed hole which the animals had apparently been using for some time, to explore the outside world, but it is very nice to think that they thought sufficiently of their home to return to it of their own free will.

## Guide to Chester Zoo.

Visitors upon entering the Zoo will have the choice of two ways of proceeding to the Gardens. One via South Drive and the other by the Central Drive, but if the visitor is desirous of seeing all the Zoo, he or she should take the South Drive which will first bring them to the Elephant Stand from which the Elephant gives rides on fine days (Fridays excepted) to both children and adults.

If the visitor turns sharp left he or she will come to a large walled in enclosure containing Malayan Sun Bears, at present there are only two, Sally who has been in the Zoo for nine years, and Teeny who was presented by the late Sir Delves Broughton in 1938.

These bears which are natives of Malay, Sumatra, Java and Borneo, are very amusing animals and wonderful climbers. Their chief food in pre-war days was Sweetened Condensed Milk and Honey, to-day they have to have just what they can get, and it is remarkable how they have survived, only one dying of ill health in the four years of war. Sammy, the largest and most uncertain, escaped when a large drift of snow piled up in their enclosure during the winter of 1939-40 and had to be shot.

Working round this enclosure in a clockwise fashion, we come to a smaller enclosure containing Raccoons. These come from North America and are much in demand for their skins.

Proceeding round the Bear enclosure we next come to two open pens which at present accommodate Dalmatian Dogs. Having now completed a circle we find ourselves at the junction of South Drive and a short drive leading to the Central Drive. At this junction on our left is a Field used for picnics and sports but if we wish to see the Zoo we proceed down the drive and turn left when we reach Central Drive. This drive leads to the zoo proper but first we find the Cafe's where light luncheons, teas, etc., may be obtained. There is also a buffet bar, but on fine days this may be transferred to a site opposite the Cafe entrance, under the trees from which picnic parties can proceed to the field.

Leaving the cafe we move round the building and on our right we find the Aquarium which contains both Fish and Reptiles, English and Foreign, most of the tanks contain Tropical Fish. Of the reptiles the most beautiful is the Rainbow Boa, from South America. This lovely snake flashes all the colours of the rainbow as it moves gracefully under the light. Like all Boas, the Rainbow kills its prey by constriction and then devours its victim whole. Space does not permit us to deal with all the inhabitants of the Aquarium, but these continually change and are always of great interest.



Bison at the Pond



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Malayan Bears  
begging for  
tit-bits

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After leaving the Aquarium we proceed on our way and notice on the left a site which was being developed as a large Open Air Lion Enclosure when the war broke out and work had to be suspended, but it is the desire of all that this work should be proceeded with as soon as circumstances permit.

We have now reached one or two old aviaries containing Herons, Arctic Owl, Jackdaws and other birds and we proceed in between these to what was many years ago the Court Yard, here many alterations have been made since those days and instead of accommodating horses and carriages we find wild beasts. On entering the Court Yard we should turn right and here we find the Russian Bear (Trotsky) and the Himalayan Bear (Won Lung), and then we enter the Monkey House where in addition to several monkeys we find the Chimpanzee (Phyllis).

Alongside the Monkey House is a large cage which used to contain Rhesus Monkeys, but now contains Wolves for security reasons. Six cubs have been born to the pair this year and if the war does not last too long these should help to start a nice pack for the wolf enclosure suggested at the end of Bison Walk.

At the opposite end of this cage is the Elephant Stable, but during the nice weather the Elephant (Molly) will either be giving rides in South Drive or enjoying herself among the trees in East Avenue.

On the opposite side of the court yard to the wolves is a large cage containing Griffon Vultures. In this cage was bred in 1940 the first Griffon Vulture to be reared in captivity, and as far as we are aware is the only case on record. This bird can easily be distinguished from the other Griffons by its rust brown colour which will go lighter as the bird gets older.

On the right of the Vulture Cage is the entrance to the Lion House. Here are two cages constructed in the old stables in which at present is a Striped Hyena from Africa. The Lion House proper is a new building specially built in 1937 and is part of the scheme of the open air enclosure previously mentioned which provides accommodation for all weathers.

Our stock of lions are generally considered one of our outstanding exhibits, and at times we have had as many as between twenty and thirty, but owing to the difficulty of procuring horseflesh our stock of full grown lions is now under the dozen. We are hoping that some of our five lionesses will produce some cubs this year. Through the war we have refrained from breeding, but during 1939 and 1941 upwards of twenty lion cubs were born in Chester Zoo.

Leaving the Lion House, we proceed to the right round the Vulture Cage and make our way to where we entered the Court Yard, but before leaving we find on our right a door which takes us into the Leopard House. Here we have a very fine pair of Leopards, the male being an exceptionally fine specimen. The female it will be noticed limps rather badly, this is as the result of a fight something like three years ago, in which a tendon became damaged, but we can assure visitors that the animal suffers no pain and in fact can use the leg quite well.

By far the most outstanding exhibit in the Leopard House, or one might go so far as to say, the Zoo, is Mowgli and Peter, a young male lion born in June 1941 and a dog born in January of the same year. This friendship is one which the animals themselves have made, both refuse to be parted and are just as friendly after being a year and seven months together as they were at the beginning.

After we have left the Leopard House we should proceed out of the Court Yard, and visit the Parrot Aviaries on the left. Here are to be found many interesting birds of the parrot family, the most interesting and by far the most talkative is Cocky the Slender-billed Cockatoo. Visitors will have no difficulty in recognising him as he will have greeted them more likely than not long before they have reached his cage, by shouting "Come 'ere." If Cocky is in the mood he may sing you a song, or invite you to kiss him, or shake hands, but BEWARE for nothing makes him laugh more than catching an unwary visitor, and believe us nothing can be more painful.

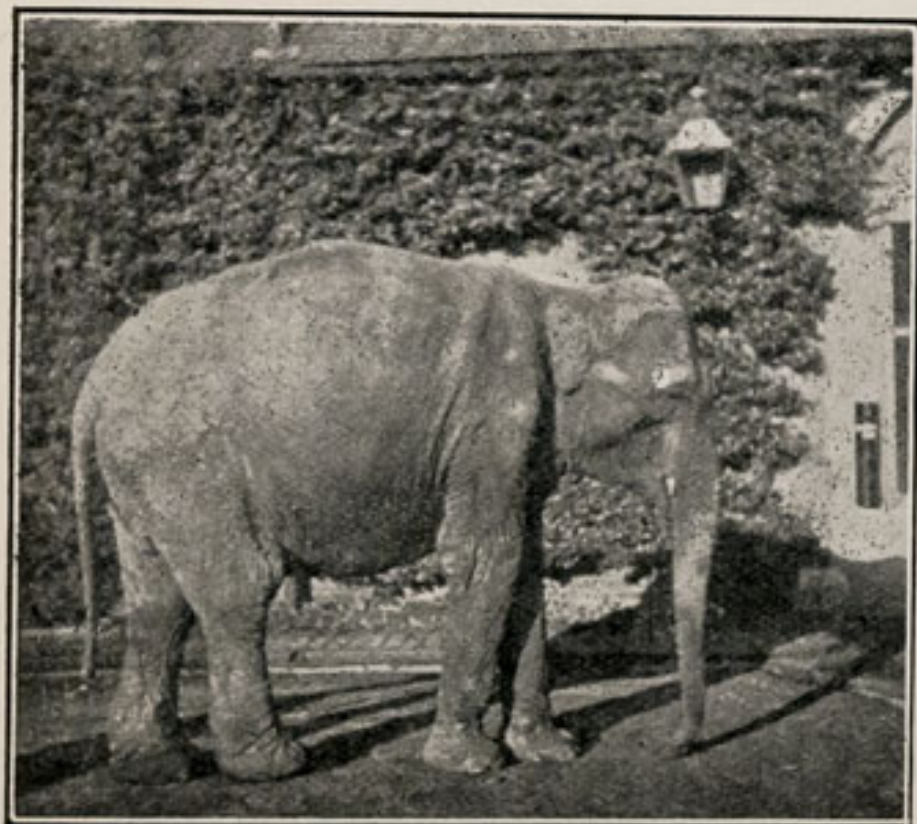
Leaving the Parrot Aviaries, we turn left and after a few yards we find ourselves facing East Avenue. This avenue leads at present to an undeveloped part of the zoo. The orchard on the right is reserved as a wild bird sanctuary and visitors are asked not to trespass.

Running at an angle to East Avenue is Bison Walk, and along this we find American Bison, Thar, Bahreian White Donkey, etc.

This roadway will one day lead to many interesting developments of the zoo, but at present the visitor must retrace his or her steps and cross East Avenue to mount the Polar Bear Terrace. On the right we have two fine Polar Bears, "Punch and Judy." Punch is the oldest animal in the zoo but is still very active, while Judy must be many years his junior. We are hoping when the war is over, to build a much larger enclosure with a large swimming pool for the polars, as they love to swim and dive and will play for hours in the water.



A Leopard in Edinburgh Zoo



Molly, the Elephant



Coypu, the South American Rat

On the opposite side of the terrace to the polar bears we find the Dingo or Australian Wild Dog. These dogs are very friendly but cannot be trusted with sheep or poultry.

Proceeding from the terrace we find on our right the Coypu, a large water rat from South America, and after these we come to some of the Aviaries which unfortunately have suffered greatly through the war. One, a large aviary, contains several brightly coloured Parrakeets, and when we reach this we should turn left till we come to a large enclosure containing various Pheasants, Guinea Fowl, Crowned Cranes, Peafowl, etc., etc., and then we will find we have reached the junction of South and Central Drive, the point from which we started.

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## NEWS FROM OTHER ZOOS.

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### Dublin Zoo.

Contributed by C. L. Flood, Esq.

Since December ten Lion cubs have been born, this brings our grand total of Lion cubs born in these Gardens up to 401, a record of which we are very proud.

Other births this year include 2 Himalayan Bear cubs, 5 baby Rhesus Monkeys, 4 Dingo pups, 3 Wolf cubs, 7 Husky pups and 3 Raccoons.

Our pair of Corncrakes which we have had for 2 years now, nested this year, laying 5 eggs, but while hatching the hen was attacked by a rat and left the nest.

### Bristol Zoo.

We are very pleased to hear that "Alfred" is still very fit, and hope he will continue to thrive.

A Mandrill is running a close second to Alfred in popularity, but the Monkey House contains a wonderful collection with many rivals for the public favour.

Three young Rhesus Monkey's have been born in the Temple, bringing the total number of young to ten.

The Spoonbill, which escaped with an Ibis several weeks ago has been recaptured, but the Ibis is still at liberty and we hope will soon be recaptured.

## Dudley Zoo.

Contributed by E. Wilsdon, Esq.

I am continually asked "Do you get many to your Zoo these days?" "Are Zoos as popular as ever?" The answer to the first question is that judging by our figures for the year we do get a very large number of visitors, especially in War time with curtailment of transport. To the second the answer is certainly "Yes." Reports from all Zoos seem to indicate this as their returns are good even in these difficult days. As for ourselves we find the workers take advantage of spending their staggered holidays in the Zoo and find great pleasure with their families in visiting the various Animals, and picnicking in the Grounds. Happy days are spent in the Zoos where for the time being they forget their work and the War and the children have a few enjoyable hours with their parents which is often denied under other conditions when the twenty-four hours of each day is spent in work and sleep.

Yes, Zoos are popular, and when the War is over will be more so given more leisure hours, and there should be a good time coming for proprietors of Zoos who have kept going under restrictions and difficult conditions so long.

## The Maidstone Zoo Park.

Contributed by Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake.

With the Summer Season now in full swing we are all able to form an opinion on what 1943 will do for us.

Personally, in spite of no motors and a depleted Bus Service, attendance is up 45 per cent. on last year, and if things continue in the same proportion I hope the total for the year will be at least 66 per cent. of a good pre-War year.

Of course staff and feeding difficulties do not decrease or get any easier.

Mr. Stork has paid this Zoo Park several visits lately. A litter of lion cubs (I think only one or two in number) arrived six days ago, another (from all appearances of a larger number) is expected within a few days. Several Mouflon lambs have arrived on the sheep rock, and two Llama calves are playing and chasing each other in their paddock.

New arrivals include a crab-eating Monkey, three Wolf cubs and some Parrots. One, an Amazon, has had an exciting time. Caught in a blitz, he was buried for five days, dug out he announced himself as "Freddie," and is now quite well and none the worse for his experience.



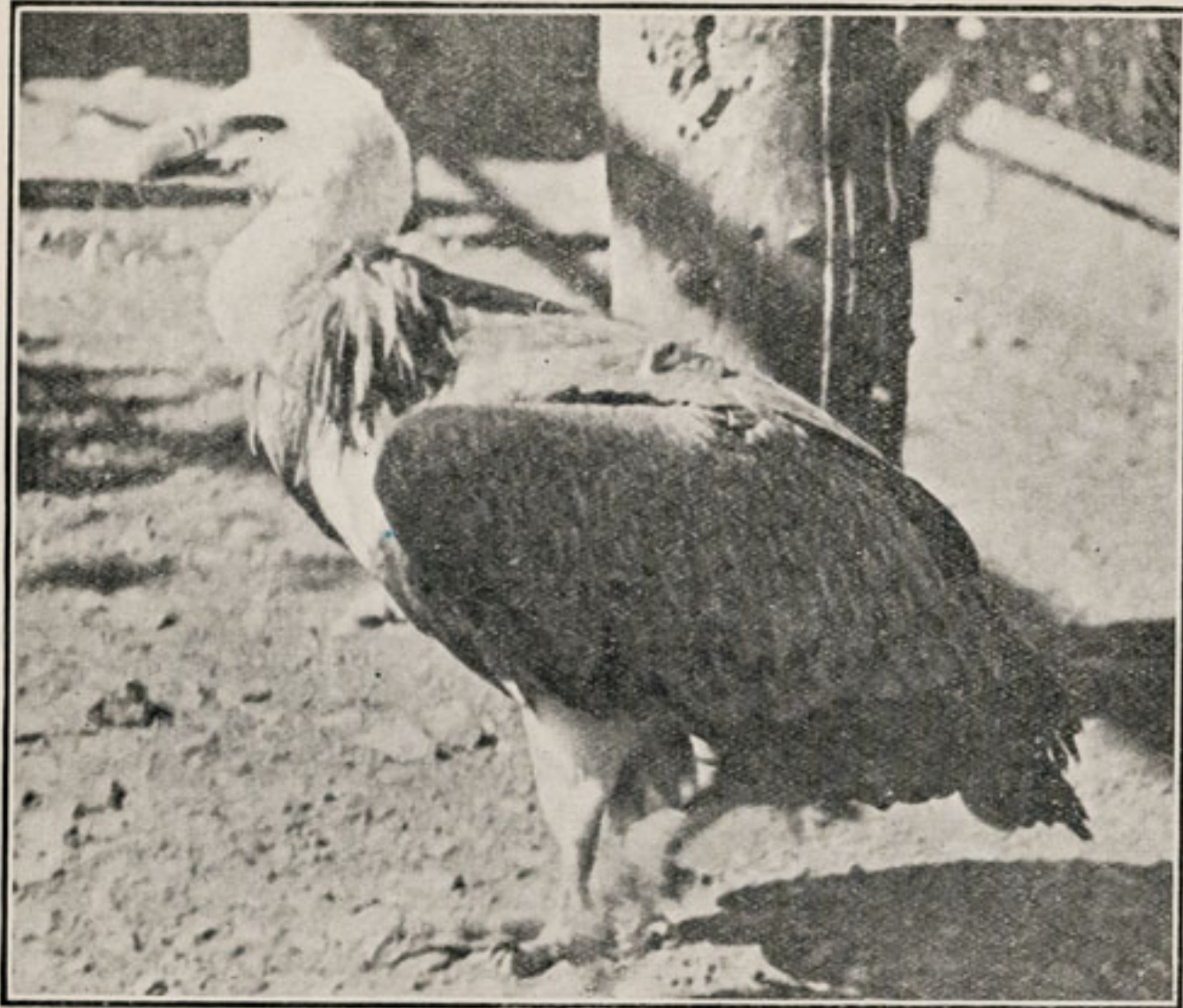
Group of Chester Zoo's Lionesses



Trotsky, the Russian Bear, soon after he arrived as a baby at Chester Zoo. Now fully grown



Young Lion Cubs born in the Zoo



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The only Griffon  
Vulture hatched and  
reared in captivity.

Hatched in  
Chester Zoo, 1940.

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Punch, the Polar Bear,  
and oldest animal  
in the Zoo

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