



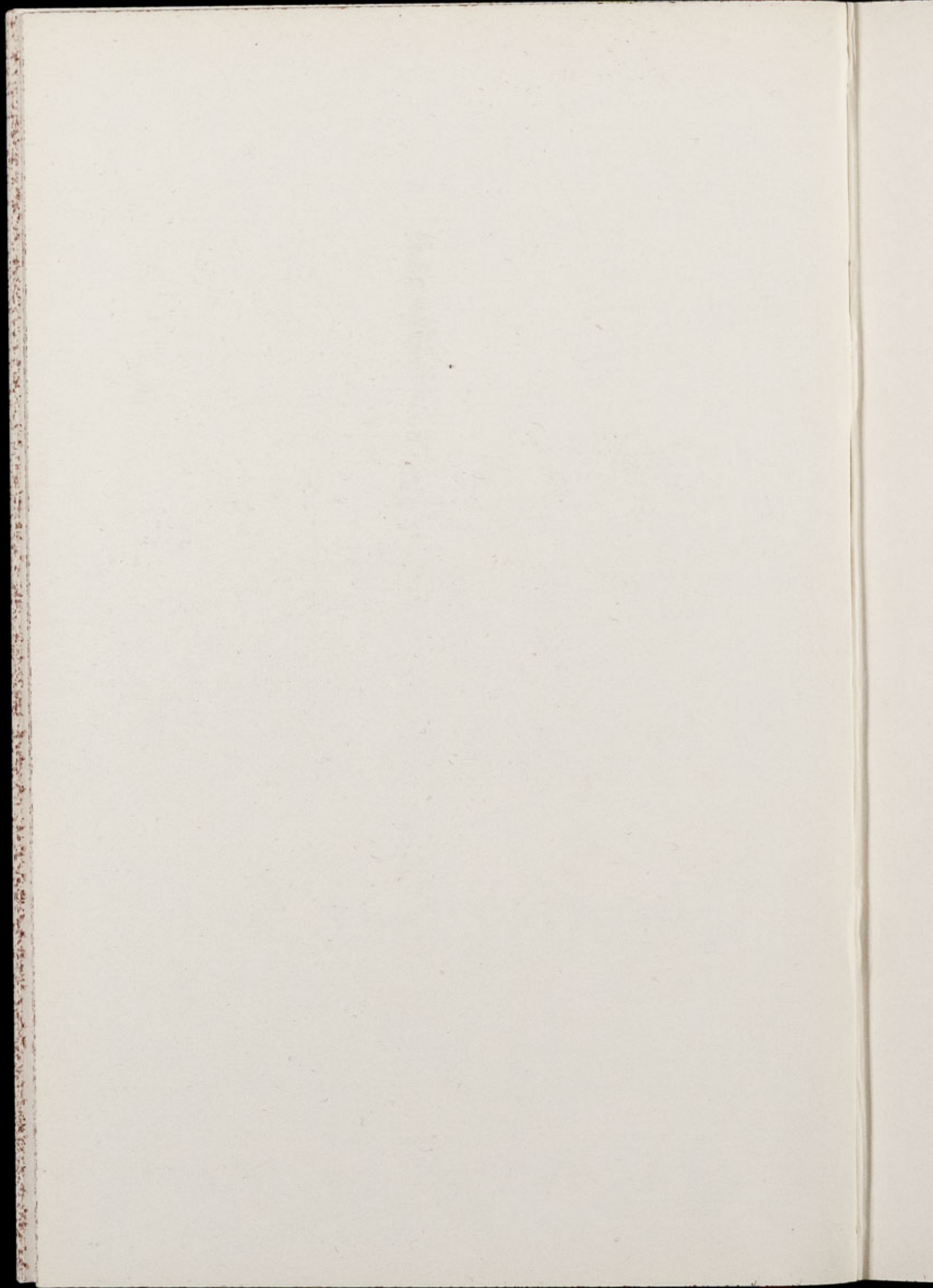
By Courtesy of J. Whitworth, Esq.

Chester Zoo News

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

April, 1964

Price 1/-



Editorial

The events of March were overshadowed by the disastrous outbreak of anthrax in mid March, which killed our three African elephants, one Asiatic elephant, five racoons, four grison, one pine marten and an American badger. From 22nd March to the 2nd of April the area around the Pachyderm House and Small Mammal House was closed to visitors, but no other parts of the Zoo were affected.



E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.

AMERICAN BADGER

Editorial continued overleaf.

"Sheila" died on Wednesday, 18th, "Rascal" and

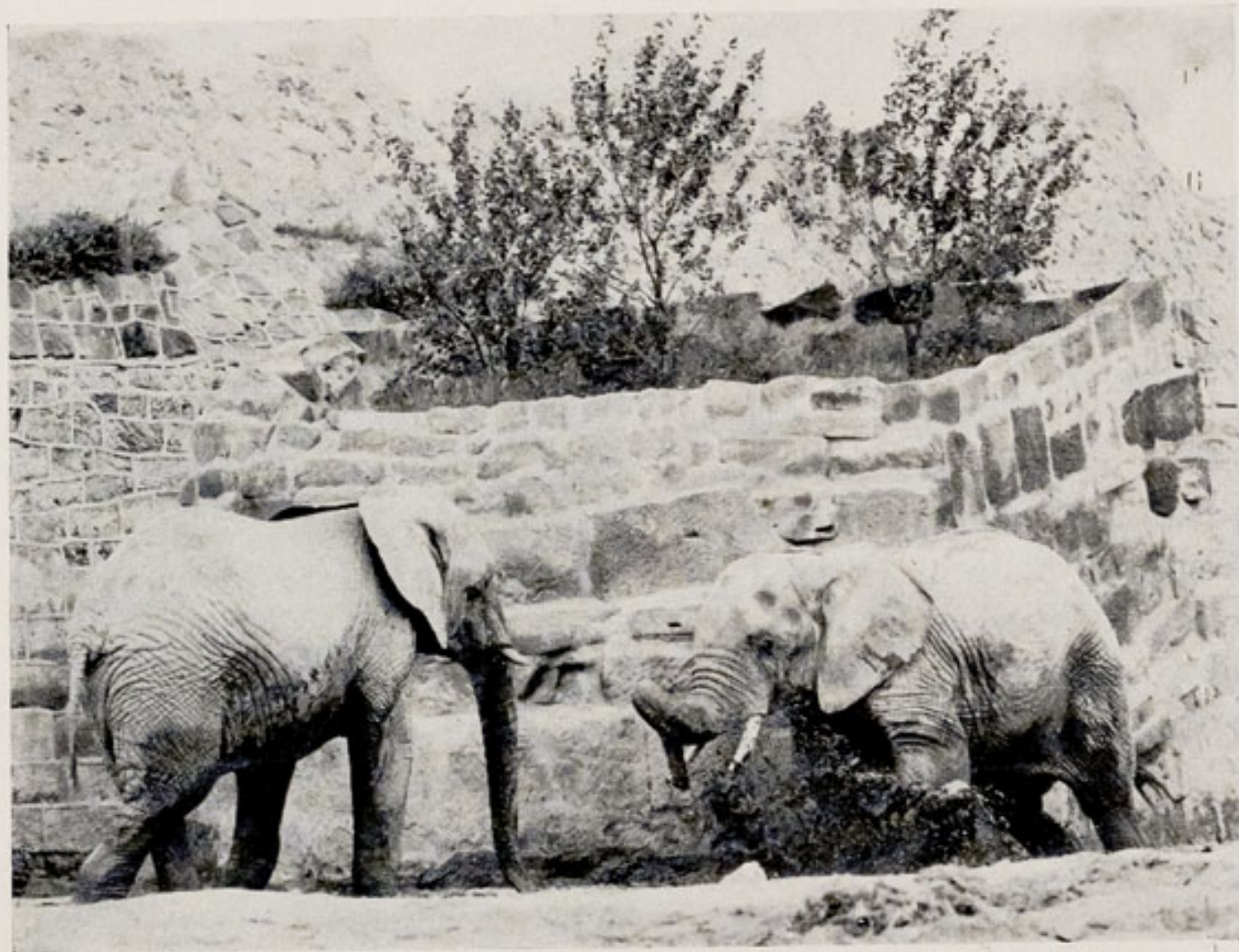
CONTENTS:

<i>Page three</i>	Ufiti
<i>Page four</i>	New Boat, Zoo Babies
<i>Page five</i>	Presentations
<i>Page seven</i>	Other New Arrivals
<i>Page eight</i>	Mynahs
<i>Page nine</i>	Spring in the Gardens
<i>Page ten</i>	Aquarium News
<i>Page twelve</i>	Twosome
<i>Page fourteen</i>	Labelling, Strange Friendship

COVER: Our Cover Picture this month shows "Humphrey", Chester Zoo's male Bactrian Camel (Camelus bactrianus).

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D. J. Tolley

"RASCAL" AND "BOBO", THE AFRICAN BULL ELEPHANTS
PHOTOGRAPHED IN THE SUMMER OF 1963

"Bobo" on Sunday, 22nd, and "Sally", the baby Asiatic elephant, on Saturday, 28th March, after we thought she was making a good recovery. To lose any animal is tragic but to lose so many in such a short space of time was an overwhelming blow. Rascal and Bobo were, of course, the only two African bull elephants in this country and were such characters that perhaps we can be forgiven for being particularly sad at their death.

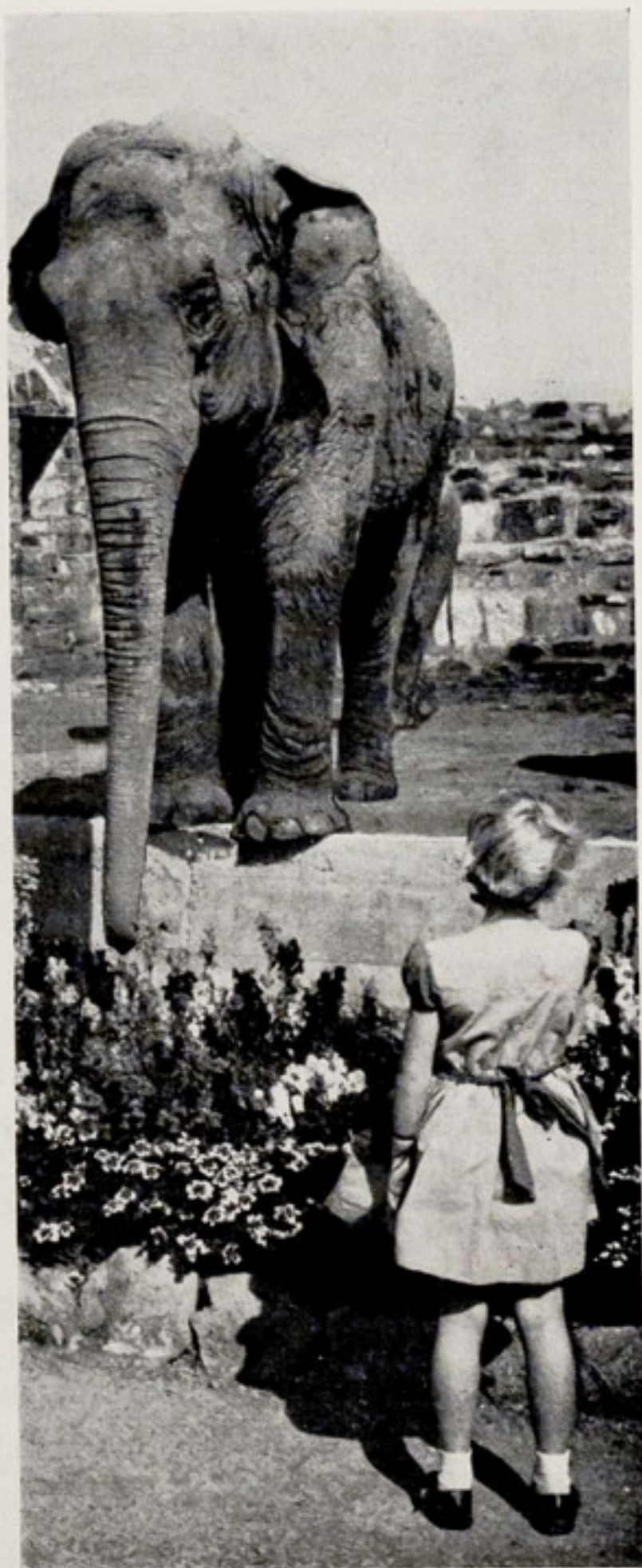
Three of the Grison were the youngsters born here in August, 1963. It is extremely unusual for grison to be bred in captivity, therefore their loss was another hard blow.

Letters of sympathy have poured in from all corners of the British Isles and even abroad and it was some measure of comfort to realise just how many people shared our grief. Our thanks go to all those friends of Chester Zoo who have written to us and sent donations. We appreciate your help and kind thoughts.

We would like to offer a special thank you to all the children and young people who have written to us. We were deeply touched that our animals mean so much to you that you should send your entire pocket money to help replace those which were lost. In the face of such generosity we feel very humble.

Easter was very early this year and although attendances were not high we were quite satisfied with the figures. Good Friday was cold but bright and we had over eleven thousand visitors. The weather during the remainder of the holiday was cheerless enough to keep many people at home.

At last we can forecast the possible opening date for the new tropical House. June 13th, 1964, is the thirtieth anniversary of the date on which Chester Zoo was taken over by the North of England Zoological Society and we hope to mark the occasion by holding the official opening of the new House.



G. F. Williams

"BARBAR", ONE OF THE TWO SURVIVING ASIATIC ELEPHANTS

UFITI

Among the many new arrivals during March was "Ufiti," an adult female Chimpanzee. Ufiti — which means "spirit" or "evil one" — is unusual in that, although she is a Gambian Chimpanzee, she turned up in northern Nyasaland some four years ago.

It was thought that Ufiti had escaped from captivity and at first she appeared to be very lonely and sought human company. Being the only Chimpanzee at liberty in Nyasaland she was quite a tourist attraction, until she began to turn savage. Following certain incidents about a year ago, it was decided to capture Ufiti and send her to a Zoo.

His Excellency the Governor of Nyasaland, Sir Glyn Jones, visited Chester Zoo in April, 1963, and the Chimpanzee was offered to us, by the Director of Forestry and Game for Nyasaland, in November of last year. We were happy to accept and Ufiti made the long journey to England, arriving at Gatwick Airport on Wednesday, 18th March. The R.S.P.C.A. very kindly accommodated her overnight and Ufiti was brought to Chester by heated van on Thursday, 19th March.

She has settled down well and has shown no signs of the savage nature she is reputed to have. In fact she usually greets her Keepers each morning by licking their fingers. Eventually Ufiti will be introduced to our other large Chimpanzees, although at the present time she is showing very little interest in them. Until the weather improves Ufiti is being accommodated in one of the sleeping cages at the rear of the Ape House.

NEW BOAT

Wednesday, 25th March, saw the launching of the latest addition to our Waterbus fleet. We now have three open and three closed boats operating on the Zoo's canal system. The new boat has been named "Joy", after little Miss Williams, grand-daughter of our Director-Secretary.

ZOO BABIES

GIRAFFE: We are happy to report that "Maxie", the baby Giraffe, has been successfully introduced to the other Giraffes. His half-brother, "Gerry", born in April of last year, was slightly jealous of Maxie at first but now they are the best of friends and obviously enjoy playing together. Maxie has always been completely fearless and is quite undaunted by Gerry's superior height.



J. Whitworth

ANKOLE FAMILY GROUP

ANKOLE CATTLE: The Ankole Cattle herd continues to grow and another female calf was born on the 8th of March.

AGOUTI: The first of this year's baby Agoutis was born in the Small Mammal House on 15th March.

WALLABY: Last month we reported the first sighting of a baby Bennett's Wallaby — now two more adult Wallabies have been seen to be carrying babies in their pouches. Bennett's Wallabies are natives of Tasmania and are the most commonly seen members of the Kangaroo family. They are extremely hardy and breed readily in captivity. Not many people realise that there are actually a few Wallabies living wild in this country. The ancestors of these animals escaped from a country estate on the Staffordshire/Derbyshire border.

PRESENTATIONS

A large number of birds have been presented to the Zoo in recent weeks. In the collection of Parrots received on 29th February

were two African Greys, one Senegal, one Blue-crowned Conure, one Blue-fronted Amazon, one Yellow-fronted Amazon and one Cuban Amazon.

Two White European Storks were presented by a Spanish Zoo on 5th March and the following day, new arrivals included a White-crested Laughing Jay Thrush, a Brahminy Mynah, a Rufous-backed Whydah and a Rufous-headed Mannikin.

GREATER CRESTED GREBE

Yet another presentation during March was a Greater Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*). This bird was found lying exhausted on a main road late on the evening of March 25th and was brought to us by the R.S.P.C.A.

At one time Greater Crested Grebes were in danger of disappearing from this country, because they were killed in such large numbers for their feathers, which were used to ornament ladies' hats. However, they are now relatively numerous once again.

The Grebe has been placed on the pond at the rear of the Polar Bear enclosure. This pond abounds with fish and the bird is eating well. It is approximately the size of a domestic duck — with a longer neck and a long tapering beak which is a particularly efficient fish catcher.

OTHER NEW ARRIVALS

A pair of young Chimpanzees arrived on Saturday, 14th March, and a female Pig-tailed Macaque (from Bristol Zoo) on Monday, 23rd March. The Macaque is to be a mate for one of our two male Pig-tailed Macaques.

NILE CROCODILE

On the morning of Saturday, 4th April, we had a telephone call from B.O.A.C. to say that another newcomer was waiting for collection at Manchester Airport. This was a five and a half foot long Nile Crocodile (*Crocodilus niloticus*), presented to us by the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The new Crocodile will eventually be exhibited in the Tropical House.



Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby

BABY BENNETT'S WALLABY AND MOTHER

MYNAHS

Mynahs are found in India and the Far East and are closely related to Starlings, which they resemble in their habits. All Mynahs are extremely hardy and are able to survive a British winter without artificial heat, provided they have a draught free shelter. In the wild state they nest in hollows and crevices and will breed in captivity if provided with nest boxes.

Mynahs should be offered a mixture of fifty per cent soft bill food and fifty per cent fruit, sliced and cut into small pieces. A large variety of fruits should be provided, also regular supplies of live food such as meal worms.

In the Bird House and Parrot House we have seven Hill Mynahs (*Eulabes religiosa*). These are the largest of the Mynahs and make the best talkers if they are hand-reared. In fact, many authorities think that hand-reared Hill Mynahs have a larger vocabulary than the best talking Parrots. Wild caught specimens seldom learn

to talk. The Mynah's speech is particularly clear and the bird even imitates the dialect of its owner. Again Mynahs are quite happy to talk in front of an audience, whereas Parrots are often shy with strangers and produce nothing more than raucous screams.

Recently a representative of the B.B.C. called at the Zoo to record animal and bird sounds. Encouraged by their Head Keeper, our Hill Mynahs were only too willing to demonstrate their talking ability for the benefit of the microphone.

The Hill Mynah cannot be described as a beautiful bird, although his glossy black plumage, yellow beak and legs and small, pale yellow patches of skin at either side of the head, give him a most immaculate appearance.

Our other species of Mynah is a Brahminy Mynah (*Temenuchus pagodarum*), which is exhibited in the Bird House. This bird is often referred to as the Pagoda Mynah and is somewhat smaller than a starling in size. The plumage of the Brahminy Mynah is grey above and pinkish brown below and on the head is a long black crest which can be raised and lowered at will. Eventually we hope to obtain a mate for our specimen, although identification of the sexes is difficult, as they resemble each other so closely.

Another Mynah which is often seen in captivity is the Common Mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*). These birds are slightly larger than starlings and have dark grey plumage, with a yellow beak and legs.

All Mynahs make excellent pets, especially if they are hand-reared. However, they are untidy feeders and their cages and perches need frequent cleaning if they are to be kept in good condition. Sawdust is the best cage floor covering as it absorbs the moisture and is easy to replace. Large cages are essential also a large water dish, as the Mynah should be able to bathe at least once each day.

SPRING IN THE GARDENS

Once more the year has turned full cycle and the busy months of spring are with us again. In the greenhouses there is so much to be done and everything seems to require attention at the same



Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby

CLIVIAS AT PRESENT IN BLOOM IN THE PACHYDERM HOUSE

time. With the preparation of summer bedding, the different plants have to be handled and given their special requirements almost to a timetable. Even a few days delay in pricking out or potting can affect the plants all through the summer.

Large numbers of plants are already on the way. Antirrhinums, Penstemons, Verbena, bedding Dahlias, etc., which were sown in February, have been pricked out in boxes and occupy considerable space in the greenhouses.

Tuberous Begonias are set out in boxes of peat and are just making a start in growth. Begonia semperflorens are still in seed boxes and are almost ready for potting off. Canna lilies will be potted next week. Standard Fuchsias, Heliotrope, Lantana, etc., have been either potted or top dressed and are beginning to make growth. Seeds of a large number of plants have yet to be sown.

The potting of Orchids is almost completed. We have been very pleased with the way they have flowered this time. We have a good percentage of Cymbidium spikes and these will be on show to our visitors in the Pachyderm House.

The winter has been very kind to us this year and in marked contrast to last year we have had no plant losses in the gardens.

At the time of writing the show of spring bedding plants is fulfilling the promise of the past few weeks. Our crocus have finished flowering but the daffodils are at their best and the canal banks and islands are a mass of yellow. Tulips are coming on to follow the daffodils; polyanthus and pansies are giving a good show of colour and wallflowers are still to come.

Our roses have been pruned and the beds forked over, as have all the shrubberies. We have made considerable plantings of shrubs this year, which will add to the interest of the gardens.

We shall be starting to prepare the new Tropical House for planting with tropical and sub-tropical plants next week. We are hoping to complete this at an early date, as the plants are occupying so much of our greenhouse space that we just cannot fit in everything.

Altogether it is a very busy and interesting time in the gardens.

AQUARIUM NEWS

Once again we are pleased to inform readers of yet another rare addition to our collection which, incidentally, now numbers over two thousand individuals. The new arrivals are the Siamese Tiger Fish — *Datnoides*. Their specific name — *microlepis* — we are not altogether sure of, as all the available literature we have consulted gives only a very sketchy description of the family in general and makes no mention of individual species.

We do know that members of the family *Lobotidae*, to which *Datnoides* belong, are found in both fresh water and the brackish water areas around river estuaries in Malaya, Thailand, New Guinea and Borneo. We also know that these *Datnoides* are among the most striking and voracious fish we have received for some time. Within a few hours of their arrival they had swallowed some

two dozen mixed Platies and Guppies and since then have eaten phenomenal numbers of small fish. Anything the correct size is snapped up in a split second and is seemingly digested with almost equal rapidity. In fact, they have insatiable appetites and are constantly on the lookout for food.

To give a brief description of these fish — there is a superficial resemblance to some members of the family *Nandidae*, notably *Nandus nandus*, although the body is slightly shorter and more thick-set in *Datnoides*. The mouth region is very similar, although the gill structure and soft floor of the mouth project beyond the line of the jaw, giving the observer the impression that the fish has just fed and still has its mouth full of food. The first two rays of the pectoral fins are produced slightly further than those following and curve gently backwards: the second ray of the ventral fin is broad and heavy.

Colour patterns vary quite a lot in our specimens, depending on their mood. When at peace with the world they assume a very striking pattern of broad yellow and brown bars, which run vertically from the back to the belly, with very little variance in colour. If the fish are frightened the yellow bars fade very rapidly and, within a few minutes, blend almost perfectly with the brown bars. When this occurs the fish usually backs head downwards into a corner where it remains until danger has passed,

It is whilst stalking their next meal that these fish perform the most peculiar antics. They swim in circles round their prey in a most inquisitive manner and will, in order to scrutinise the hapless creature even more closely, turn completely upside down and swim across the length of the tank with complete control, before engulfing the unsuspecting morsel. Afterwards they regain their balance, eject an offending scale through their gills and return to their headstanding position to digest their victim, under a convenient bunch of willow roots.

We have just received our first consignment of Marine fish for this year which included specimens of the ever-popular Sea Horse and other salt water fish. As readers of last months *Aquarium News* will know, we are expanding our tropical marine section and are pleased to report that we now have six large tanks ready for any marine fish which become available.

TWOSOME

Two of Chester's most delightful and amusing "Zoo Babies" share a compartment at one end of the Monkey House. These are "Squeaker", a baby Barbary Ape and "Matilda", a young Olive Babcon.

Matilda was born on Whit Sunday, 1963, and had to be hand-reared when it was discovered that she was not getting enough to eat. Her mother was poking all the food out of her cheek pouches and also plucking the baby's hair, until poor Matilda was in danger of going bald.



E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.

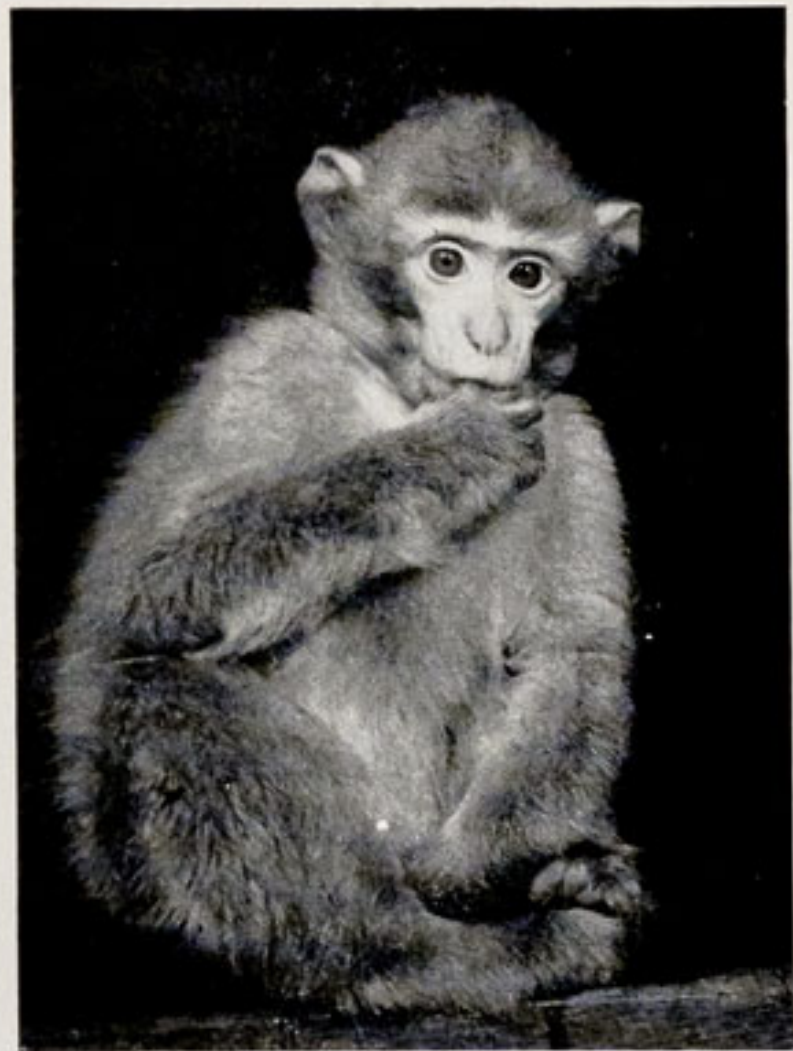
"MATILDA"

The little Baboon is very timid, except when her cage is being scrubbed, then she climbs up her Keeper's overall out of the way of the water and sits on her Keeper's shoulder pulling her hair. However, any friendly advance sends her scampering to the farthest corner of her cage. Although Matilda and her mother have been separated for a number of months, the baby still calls down the Monkey House to her mother and occasionally gets a reply.

The baby Barbary Ape was born on the 3rd June, 1963, and is much more friendly than her companion. Squeaker is the third offspring of "Trixie", (born in the Gardens in June, 1955) and "Sailor", (so named because he was born on the voyage to Chester in May, 1955). When spoken to by her Keeper, Squeaker responds by shaking her head, gnashing her teeth at the same time.

Squeaker was stolen from her mother by "Ginger", another of the female Barbary Apes, when only a few weeks old. Obviously

Ginger could not hope to feed the baby and escaped when an attempt was made to return Squeaker to her mother. Ginger spent two nights on a rooftop in the village of Upton before being coaxed down (with Squeaker's help) and recaptured. Eventually the baby Barbary Ape also had to be handreared and was brought up on a diet of baby food.



E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.

"SQUEAKER"

She has much more character than Matilda and more often than not can be seen sitting on her perch, solemnly sucking her right thumb. Squeaker has some idea of time, because if her usual four o'clock drink of milk is at all late, she soon reminds her Keeper of the fact.

Matilda is slightly jealous if too much attention is paid to the little Ape but, apart from that, they are close friends as can be seen from the photograph on page fifteen. A favourite toy was a rubber cat but after several weeks as the subject of a tug-of-war, it was eventually chewed to pieces. Their latest toy is a large plastic ball, which shows signs of having a longer life than the rubber cat.

THE NEW CAT HOUSE

In the February issue of the magazine we reported our intention of building a new Cat House in the near future. Laying of the foundations was completed at the end of March and at the time of writing the first pre-cast concrete pillars are being hauled into place.

RESURFACING OF THE ELEPHANT PADDOCK

Work is now well under way on the resurfacing of the one acre elephant paddock. About one quarter of the area will be concreted and a bathing pool similar to that indoors will be provided.

MOVEMENT OF ANIMALS

The White tailed Mongoose and the African Palm Civet, previously housed in temporary quarters in the Nocturnal House, have been moved to the Small Mammal House.

Pairs of Stanley Rosella, Crimson-wing and Pennant Parrakeets from the Oakfield Aviaries are now accommodated in three breeding aviaries in the Bird House.

LABELLING

Visitors will be familiar with the system of labelling at Chester Zoo. Each exhibit is provided with a plastic card, illustrated with a map of the world indicating the distribution of each particular animal or bird, and giving its common and Latin name. The labels require renewing every six months and since January of this year over nine hundred new labels have been prepared in our own printing department.

To simplify the identification of each species, where two or more birds are exhibited in one enclosure, we are in the process of providing painted illustrations. We trust these will add to the enjoyment of the exhibits.

STRANGE FRIENDSHIP

A strange friendship has developed in the Crane and Waterfowl enclosure opposite the American Bison paddock. The two birds involved are a Demoiselle Crane and an Ashy-headed Goose.

Previously the goose lived in the adjoining enclosure but somehow contrived to join his friend and now they are inseparable. Should any of the other cranes wander too near the goose drives them off immediately. Many of our visitors have been amused to see the dignified Demoiselle Cranes scattering in confusion before the charge of the determined little goose. What he lacks in size he makes up for in aggressiveness.



E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.

FRIENDS

BLACK SWANS

Our pair of Black Swans, which reared five youngsters last year, were just about to start incubating this year's clutch of eggs when the cob died. Normally both male and female incubate the eggs in turn and we did not expect the hen to carry on alone. However, she stayed on the nest and hatched two chicks at the beginning of April, one of which survived.

The little cygnet appears to be thriving and spends most of its time on the water with mother. Sometimes the cygnet swims alongside the hen and at other times rides happily on her back. We hope that the Black Swan will be successful in rearing her lone youngster to maturity and feel it will be quite an achievement if she does.

STOP PRESS

We are happy to report that Ufiti has now lost her disinterest in other Chimpanzees. "Bimbo" is the leader of the adult Chimpanzee group and it was decided to introduce him to the newcomer first. Once she was accepted by Bimbo we felt that the others would follow his lead. The introduction was unbelievably successful and the two Chimpanzees became firm friends immediately. Bimbo has even enticed Ufiti out of the sleeping quarters and into her indoor enclosure. Of course it will be some time before Ufiti is allowed out of doors, but we feel sure that, with Bimbo as her protector, she will be accepted by the other Chimpanzees without incident. Bimbo was presented to Chester Zoo in November 1956, when he was estimated to be two and a half years old. He became leader of the adult Chimpanzee colony on the death of "Elmer" in November 1963.



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