
"Our Zoo News"

and Guide.

A MONTHLY CHRONICLE OF NEWS OF
CHESTER ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.



Price 3d.

Annual Subscription 4/6d. post free.

NUMBER 100.

NOVEMBER, 1949.

DONORS
STILL
ENTIRELY
NEEDED

As this is the centenary of "Our Zoo News" we are including in this issue an article by Mr. Mottershead giving a review of the events at Chester Zoo since this magazine was first introduced.

Two more new arrivals are a pair of Spotted Hyaenas. These hyaenas are found in Africa and they are the largest and most powerful of the three living species, and are far more fierce and aggressive than the Striped Hyaena which is found in Africa and India. These are the first Spotted Hyaenas to arrive at Chester Zoo.

News Flashes.

We have had a considerable number of new arrivals during the past few weeks including the White-Handed Gibbon. This animal has proved a very great attraction. Gibbons are man-like apes and are easily distinguished by their exceptionally long arms. Their arms are so long that very often these animals can walk upright and touch the ground with their fingers at the same time. Gibbons have a rather peculiar walk. They stand erect and walk quickly with an unsteady gait, but they are extremely clever acrobats and can leap and climb most gracefully. They have a very powerful voice and this is already well-known here at the Zoo for our Gibbon is very noisy. He utters very loud cries which sound as though he is in agony. His cry consists of the constant repetition of two syllables and can become most monotonous.

Perhaps the most attractive newcomer is a very fine male leopard. Unfortunately this has to remain in quarantine for six months so it will not be on show to the public until next year. It is, however, a really magnificent specimen about six and a half feet in length and transferring it from its travelling crate into the Quarantine House was quite a problem as the crate was too large to go through the door of the house and the leopard had to be transferred first of all to a smaller crate. It spit and snarled and everyone was very wary of the newcomer as leopards can be extremely unpleasant customers. However, it was very soon safely housed in its new home and everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

A pair of Crested Porcupines and a pair of Brush-Tailed Porcupines are also among the new arrivals.

The Crested Porcupine is one of the largest rodents to be found.—Its brown and white banded quills are well-known as they are so often used for pens and fishing floats. It is said that the porcupine can shoot its quills in self-defence but whether this is true is not known. Our pair came from Kenya. The Brush-tailed Porcupines are much smaller. They have sharp flattened spines and a short stiff tail with a tuft of white bristles at the end.

We have had quite a number of new birds among which are some Night Herons, White-Headed Vultures and various Waterfowl including Eider Ducks, Shell Ducks, Caroline and Mandarin Ducks.

We are very busy preparing accommodation for many new arrivals chief of which are a pair of Tigers which we are expecting in the near future and we hope that in our next issue we shall be able to tell you about their arrival.

Looking back over "Our Zoo News"

By G. S. MOTTERSHEAD.

This is Number 100 of "OUR ZOO NEWS" and I think the occasion calls for a revue of events that have taken place since Number One was first published in November, 1937.

Our object in publishing this journal was in the first place to keep Members of the Society up to date with what was happening at the Zoo, as many Members lived considerable distances from Chester and could only visit the Zoo on rare occasions.

Our first copies were only duplicated pages and it was quite an adventure to write the News then duplicate it and post it each month to members.

From the very beginning it became very popular. In those days it was posted free to Members and sent to Non-Members for 2/- per annum. Our Non-Members Subscribers grew rapidly and by April, 1939, with number eighteen we decided to have the "News" printed and increased the charge to 2/6 per annum, post free.

We still continued to grow but in September, 1942, we decided to publish a larger copy less frequently than a small copy each month and increase the charge to 3/-.

By this time we were in the throes of a world war and carrying on the Zoo and publishing a magazine (if only a small one) was not too easy, but we were determined if at all possible to keep both the Zoo and magazine going.

At the end of 1944 we were forced to increase the price once more, this time to 4/6 per annum, post free, and very reluctantly we were compelled to stop issuing the "News" free to Members of the Society.

Despite this action the popularity of "Our Zoo News" grew greater than ever and to-day many thousands are regular readers of our little magazine which had such humble beginnings.

So much for "Our Zoo News", but what of the Zoo during the same period. In 1937 there were many people who doubted very much whether Chester Zoological Gardens could last very long; we were running at a loss and apart from goodwill and hard work we had little to back us up, in fact apart from the founders very few had any faith in our ability to keep going. When the war came in 1939, most people thought this the end, but we launched at once an Adoption Scheme whereby people could adopt animals and birds at the Zoo by paying so much a week for their upkeep.

This scheme was later copied by nearly every Zoo in the country, with regards to ourselves, apart from the financial gain, it created a very personal interest in the Zoo and we gained many friends.

The late Miss Tomkyns Grafton, and many others including Miss A. C. Hewitt and Miss A. L. Bulley, gave liberally to the funds of the Society which enabled us to reconstruct the Gardens and develop the Zoo on the modern open-air principle.

This appealed enormously to the public and since 1942 we have made increasing progress each year. On many days in 1949 we had as many people visiting the Zoo in one day as we had in one whole year when we first started. Our acreage has increased from ten acres to nearly sixty-five acres and we can proudly claim some outstanding exhibits.

The Lion Enclosure at Chester is the largest in the Country, the same distinction can also be claimed for the Sea Lion Pool. The Reptile House is unique and distinct from all others in this country. Our Bear accommodation is as good as any other English Zoo can show and this is being considerably improved upon this coming winter.

(continued on page 8)

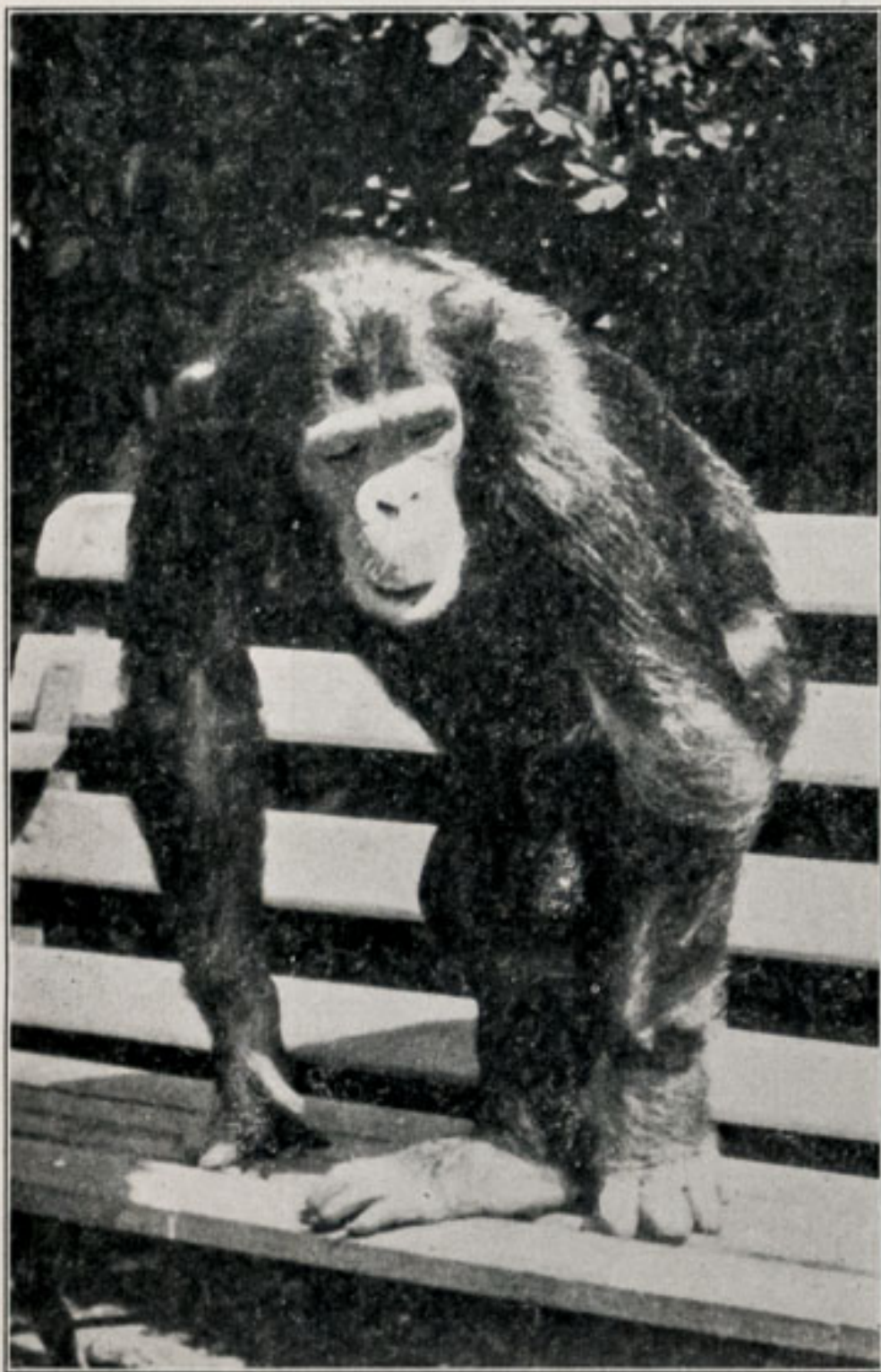
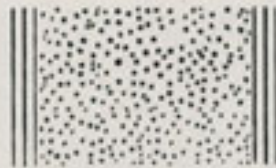
Well Known Characters who have appeared in "OUR ZOO NEWS"
since issue No. 1.



By kind permission of the Cheshire Pictorial Press Agency

THE LIONESS "KATRINA"

WELL KNOWN CHARACTERS—*continued*

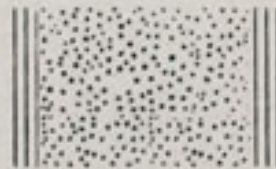


"MARY" THE CHIMPANZEE



"TROTSKY" THE BROWN BEAR

"Trotsky" is still at Chester Zoo but is of course
now very large



WELL KNOWN CHARACTERS—*continued*

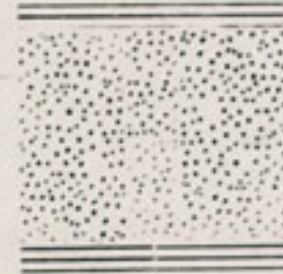
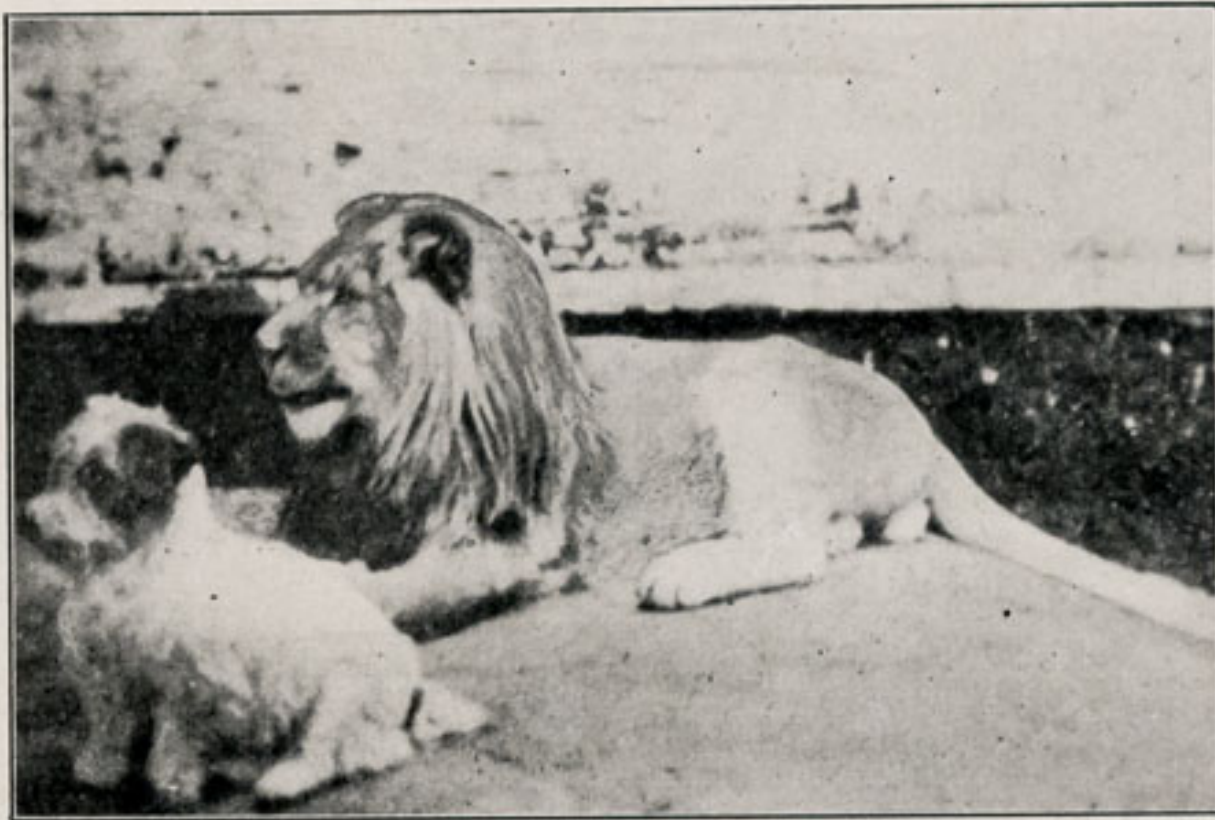


Photo. by courtesy of the Daily Mirror

"MOWGLI" AND "PETER"

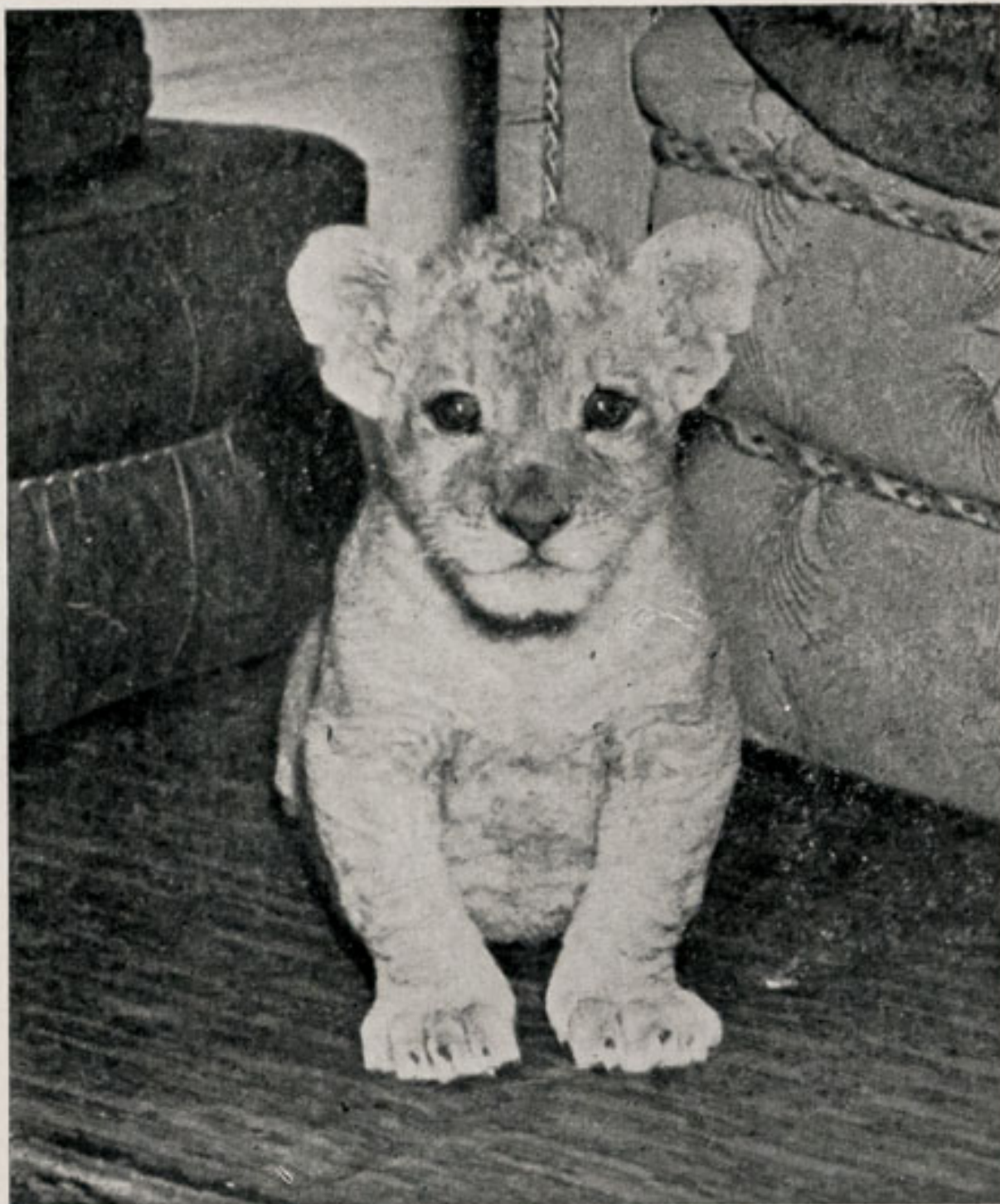
The most famous of all Chester Zoo Characters



"RACK" AND "RUIN"

The two very popular Polar Bears at present at Chester Zoo

WELL KNOWN CHARACTERS—*continued*



By courtesy of Kemsley Newspapers Ltd.

"CHRISTY"

"Christy" is still at Chester Zoo but she is now fully grown and has had cubs of her own

LOOKING BACK OVER "OUR ZOO NEWS"—*continued from page 2*

Tigers are about to be introduced to the collection and will be given an enclosure on the same lines as our lion enclosure. The first half of the Monkey House is completed and is an ideal home for these animals which need protection from infection of human colds and other infectious diseases. It gives ample fresh air to these animals and also protects the public from the smell which is so common in the old fashioned monkey house.

We have a large range of breeding aviaries and our new Bird House will shortly be completed. A Lake has been made and several Waterfowl pools, and the Gardens have been and are being developed from a botanical side to give pleasure to those who love flowers.

An Aquarium has been made which although small has been very popular and many other enclosures are in keeping with our object to provide a bigger and better Zoo.

Our Catering has developed so that to-day we can serve thousands of meals in one day to visitors. Our parking facilities have also increased considerably and during the season Bus Services run direct on to the Zoo's own Bus Station.

We naturally feel proud of our achievement since the first copy of "OUR ZOO NEWS" was published and we do wish to place on record our very grateful thanks to all those who have helped to make Chester Zoo the popular attraction it is to-day.



"BENNETT'S WALLABY"

Zoo Personalities.

No. 8. THE WALLABIES.

Australia is the home of the Kangaroo and the Wallaby, but whenever we think of them the picture we usually call to mind is that of the Great Grey Kangaroo, which is the one which is most depicted in book illustrations, stamps and even films. Most of us have no idea that there are at least over twenty-three different species, some as big as a really tall man while others are as small as our own wild field rabbit.

Here at Chester Zoo, visitors often stop to stare and argue over a number of strange animals grazing near the Fallow Deer. These unusual animals look out of proportion and are quite a puzzle until they begin to move, and then the conversation begins to buzz. Some people are sure that they are kangaroos while others are just as certain they can't be as they say that kangaroos are much bigger than that. However, the problem is solved once the neat label has been spotted which heads "**Bennett's Wallabies**".

Wallabies and Kangaroos are closely related and only an expert or a native of the places they inhabit

would attempt to start and try to point out the differences. These interesting animals found on the other side of the globe never fail to arouse the public interest and we are hoping to start a colony of them here and have chosen five members of the smaller type of the Red-necked Wallaby which thrives particularly well in captivity; it is known as the Bennett's Wallaby and is found in Tasmania, where the climate is not unlike our own.

The five Brush Kangaroos—that is the name given to them by the people of Tasmania—have been put in a large green paddock where they live a life of complete freedom, and we are hoping that they will breed successfully and that visitors will have the pleasure of seeing them bring up their youngsters or “joeys” as they are called, as naturally as they would in their own country.

For the benefit of those who have not yet seen our Wallabies, here is a rough description. As mentioned before the Wallaby looks extremely awkward when feeding. You see the hind legs are much longer than the fore legs, the long thick hairy tapering tail is almost as long as the animal is high, and the animal crouches on all four legs to graze. As soon as something attracts its attention a lightning change takes place; it immediately sits up resting the body on the hind legs and tail, drawing the fore legs up to its chest and looking for all the world like a boxer. Incidentally, the Kangaroo and the Wallaby have tremendous power in their limbs, and showmen all over the world have taken advantage of this and taught tame animals how to box, and have even billed them against men to give exhibition bouts, for the amusement of the audience, although I should imagine that it would be no joke to receive a hearty punch from one of these animals.

The greatest change of all takes place when a Wallaby begins to move. They are wild timid

creatures and as soon as they are startled, they seem to balance for a second or two on the tips of their tails and toes, and then are off like the wind, bounding easily along in a succession of long jumps. When seen in rapid motion like this the Wallaby is no longer clumsy, it becomes as graceful as any of the stag family.

The fur is quite long and thickish and in colouring is rather like our wild rabbit, a sort of mottled black and brown, the small head and ears are nigger brown and the back of the neck has a distinct reddish tinge, but the front of the animal is a greyish white and the hair is long and fluffy. The Wallaby stands just over three feet high.

In its native Tasmania, the Bennett's Wallaby is to be found in all the open scrub land and well wooded districts. They feed in the early morning and evening, their main diet being grass, heather, shrubs and bushes. All the Kangaroo family are most partial to a certain type of grass, which is of the short spiked variety with the blades brown on the under surface, and which is called Kangaroo Grass. The Wallabies spend a great deal of their time basking in the sunshine in hollows in their feeding grounds. Like their close relatives the Kangaroos they are marsupials, which means they carry their young in a pouch. The young “joey” is born in an embryo state and then transferred to the pouch, where it remains until it is about four months old and able to run alongside its mother, and even then it skips back into the pouch at the slightest sign of danger, where it remains with just its little head peeping out to see what is going on. It is quite a common sight to see a group of Wallabies running when they have been alarmed and as soon as the youngsters begin to tire, their mothers without slackening their pace simply pick them up and pop them into their pouches. There they remain with just their little heads visible until

the danger is over. However, if the chase becomes too hot, the mother will throw out her offspring in an effort to save her own life, so that she can get along faster.

In certain parts of Australia the Kangaroo and the Wallaby are hunted for sport as well as for their skins. Large dogs, something like the Scottish Deer Hound, are used for this purpose.

The dogs give chase and hold the animal until their masters arrive and the animal is then shot.

Next time you are near the Fallow Deer and the Llama don't forget to look for the Wallabies, will you, They are not very tame but sometimes can be persuaded to come up to the wire fence to take a tit-bit.

J. MOFFATT.



Faint, illegible text at the top of the page, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.

JOHNSON & SON,
PRINTERS,
NANTWICH.

