

"OUR ZOO NEWS"

A monthly chronicle of news of The North of England Zoological Society.

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January 1938.

With this issue of "Our Zoo News" it brings us to a close of events of 1937, and as we were late in starting this innovation it might be advisable to give a short history of the year which has just past.

There is one thing certain, 1937 will go down as the year in which the fortune of the Zoo changed for the better.

At the commencement of 1937 the finances of the Society were being placed on a more equitable basis, and the assets consolidated with a view to securing the Society's future.

The first council meeting of 1937 set into motion a scheme of development which has more than justified itself by the greatly increased gate receipts.

Of the structural additions, the new Lion House stands out as the principal improvement, and no doubt was responsible for the greatly increased gate in the Autumn.

The mortality at the Zoo in 1937 has been much lower than in previous years although we have had to record one or two serious losses, principally the sad loss of the Chimpanzee, "Silver Jubilee" and "Minnie" the American Tapir.

On the other hand we have received some very valuable gifts of both Animals, Birds and Reptiles, to mention all the gifts individually would occupy more space than this News permits, but we might mention a few of the more outstanding gifts.

To Mr. W. Darwall, the Society is very deeply indebted for numerous gifts which included this year, three Chimpanzees and a Pelican.

From Sir Donald Kingdon we have received numerous birds, small mammals and reptiles, but his very generous gift of Gold Coast Bouracos has been one of the most admired exhibits last summer.

From various friends we have received many smaller gifts, some in duplicate, and during the year we have been able to carry out some exchanges with other Zoos.

In the Spring we were successful in exchanging a few birds which were difficult to properly accommodate, for two Malayan Pears and a pair of Lion Cubs.

During December the Society has received some very valuable gifts.

A very fine pair of Water Buck have been presented by Mr. F. Lowe, these have had to be placed in quarantine, and there is some doubt as to the period the Ministry of Agriculture will demand.

Mr. R. Hyde has again brought for the Society a pair of young Mandrills, these have been exchanged with the Bristol Zoo for three very fine Lionesses. He also brought over from Africa a fine specimen of the Bitis Gabonica, a very poisonous snake. As we had not the accommodation to keep such a reptile with safety it has been placed on the exchange list, and will help to provide the Zoo with its first Tiger.

Another very valuable gift in December has been a West African Crested Black Eagle from Mr. R. Humphrey.

During December congratulations have kept coming in on the Society's success in being the first to breed the Mandrill, which was reported in our first issue. We are pleased to say that both mother and daughter are doing very well. "Dawn" is now very frisky and full of life, having cut several teeth her mother allows her to partake of morsels of fruit. Her hair has grown nicely but a very curious thing has happened, the mother very carefully plucks out all her baby's eyebrows, what the reason is we cannot say, as

there is no precedent to judge on we shall have to wait and see if it is usual for a Mandrill to so treat its young. Apart from this "Sarah" is a perfect mother, and an example to many human beings on how to bring up children.

Thanks to the very generous gift of Mr. E. G. Narramore, work is proceeding apace with the Tropical Aquarium, and it is intended to open as much as possible of this, on Saturday, 29th January at the Social Gathering. (see special note)

The fog during December has interfered not only with the public but members visiting the Zoo, and many of the animals have missed their usual weekly visitors.

It is surprising how the animals and birds soon get to know those who come regularly to see them, and it is very pathetic some days to see the look on their faces when someone they have been expecting fails to turn up.

One member comes regularly to see her Lemon Crested Cockatoo which she gave to the Zoo. The bird knows which day she comes as well as any child, and shows great excitement all day, and whether it is some supernatural instinct or not, knows at once when its late mistress enters the gardens although it is impossible for anyone to see or hear from its aviary anything which takes place at the entrance nearly two hundred yards away, but it at once begins to shriek out at the top of its voice till she arrives, and then one has the pleasure of witnessing a most affectionate reunion.

It is nice to think that nearly all the animals have some special friend who is particularly fond of them, and is in the habit of bringing some tit-bit which is specially appreciated.

One often hears the remark, "Doesn't the Polar Bear look miserable and unhappy?" The truth is, "Punch" the Polar Bear has more spacious quarters than ever in her life, for years she travelled in a circus, and it took her some time to accustom herself to her more roomy quarters. Instead of standing and staring at her with a pitying look, go up to her with a cheerful smile and some tasty tit-bit, she will

soon respond to the cheerful note. Quite naturally she objects to being thrown at with paper balls, cigarette packets, sour apples and the like, offer her some fish or something she appreciates and see how her expression changes, and she will remember you.

Zoo Characters.

"Sally"

It is now nearly four years since "Sally" came to the Zoo. A small Malayan Sun Bear which had been a gentleman's pet, after getting into various scrapes such as getting into that good gentleman's bed and tearing open the hot water bottle had to be put under more secure observation, hence her arrival at our Zoo. At first she very much resented being kept a prisoner, and made several bold attempts to escape. However she soon settled down and learned to do all sorts of tricks to win a sweet, or a jar of honey. This last Spring the Society were able to give "Sally" something like her old freedom, and some companions. Curiously enough when she was placed in the new Malayan Bear Enclosure, she was quite a week before she settled down, but those that have seen her this last summer more than forty feet from the ground playing with her companions in the tree top must have realised how she was appreciating it. Visitors will have no difficulty in recognising "Sally" for when the bears gather round for tit-bits, "Sally" will get to the rear, and lay on her back, and motion with her feet to throw it over to her.

"Pelly"

One of the oldest inhabitants of the Zoo is "Pelly" the large white Pelican. For years "Pelly" has been a character of his own, he has never strictly speaking been kept confined, although until his mealtime was past he would remain by his pool where visitors expected to see him. If his fish was late he would fly out of his enclosure and make his way to the house, and if the doors were open would walk in. More than one maid has received a great shock on returning to the kitchen to find "Pelly" standing there with a look as much as to say, "Have you any fish here?"

On one occasion a maid was washing up at the sink singing to herself, suddenly she felt something pulling at her apron strings, thinking it was one of the boys playing a prank she told him to let go, but the tugs at her strings persisted, so she turned round suddenly to remonstrate with him, but was met by "Pelly's" great open beak. That shock cost the Society at least one piece of broken crockery.

So much for the old year of 1937. We now enter upon a New Year which we hope will be full of, Health, Wealth and Happiness for all our Members.

It is usual to make some New Year Resolutions. May we suggest one. Persuade a friend to join the Society, just think what a help it will be, and we are sure your friends will be glad you have introduced them to a Society that has the interests of animals and birds at heart.

Now that Christmas has gone we are hoping for better weather to enable work to proceed on the open-air Lion Enclosure. Last year we raised the money to complete the first portion, which consists of the winter or indoor quarters, and we are hoping that sufficient money will be forthcoming to enable us to complete the outdoor enclosure by the Spring, so that the Lions will have the benefit of the Summer out of doors.

There are still several members who have not contributed anything to this modern enclosure, and who have expressed their intention of sending something. There is so much in one's life these days that unless you do a thing at once you are apt to forget.

Having given the Lions what are considered the best cages of any in the country while their large outdoor accommodation is being completed, we are compelled to turn our attention to a very urgent call, and that is, suitable accommodation for our family of Chimpanzees which are rapidly growing up.

Chimpanzees as everyone knows are the main attraction to any Zoo, their high intelligence make them

the most entertaining of all the animals, and as such are classed as the Star Turn. Therefore apart from the necessity of accommodating them in larger and healthier quarters, we must pay them the attention that a Star would demand on the stage, because the Zoo is dependent to a very large extent on their powers of attraction.

We are therefore holding on Saturday, 29th of January, a special day for the benefit of a new Chimpanzee House. At 3 p.m. the Aquarium Extension for Tropical Fish will be opened, this will be followed by a series of Lantern Slides, and Talks on all matters of Zoological interest, an exhibition of Living Creatures under the microscope, together with a scientific exhibition.

There will also be a model of the proposed new Chimpanzee House, which will provide outdoor as well as indoor accommodation, and in a separate room there will be a selection of games for those who are not interested in the Zoological Talks. There will also be a stall for the sale of all kinds of interesting things, (gifts for this will be gratefully accepted) and a running Buffet will supply refreshments free.

Tickets for this Social Gathering which will last from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. (to allow people to come and go as they please) will be 2/6d each, and will include refreshments.

All the money raised by this effort will go to provide the Chimpanzees with larger, brighter and better cages. Their present cages are less than nine feet square, they need at least twenty feet square plus an outdoor cage.

If "Mary" could write an appeal for a larger home no one would deny her, but we are certain of one thing, when she gets it she will show her appreciation, and so will her companions. It is up to Members to make this effort a great success by taking as many tickets as possible, we have a lot to raise, but we are confident of the support of Members and Friends, and the attraction of our Chimpanzee Family which always extends to you a very warm welcome.

Don't forget the date. Saturday, January 29th 1938.