

"Our Zoo News"

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SPECIAL CHIMPANZEE NUMBER.



"Joe", the Chimpanzee, who has just thrown a missile at the public.

Photograph No. 5

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Our Zoo News.

WE ARE going to devote nearly all this issue of our Zoo News to our Chimpanzee Enclosures, because now they have completed two years on these islands and we feel sure that it is most interesting to have recorded the reaction of the Chimpanzees and the snags which we have found as well as the benefits.

CHIMPANZEES.

The Chimpanzee House is really only part of a much larger structure which, for want of a better term, we are calling the Tropical House. It was not until January of this year that the indoor quarters were completed, but the Chimpanzees did last year occupy their sleeping quarters and were able to come out into what is now their indoor yards and also out on to the islands. This experiment has been, I think, very successful on the whole. When first the animals were liberated we actually starved them for a little while and then let them onto the islands and put food on the other side of the water to see if they would attempt to get it.

They carried on and became very boisterous but none of them would face the water to obtain the food and we therefore let them out regularly onto the islands.

In 1956 there was no attempt at all to cross any of the waterways, but the Chimpanzees grew in vigour. They grew wonderful coats and although they had easy excess to go inside to their sleeping quarters in the winter, for the most part, even on very cold, wet days, they spent their time playing about on the islands and having quite a good time.

In one quarter of this area, as will be seen on several of the photographs, is a large pond full of bullrushes. Strangely enough the Chimpanzees are extremely fond of these and they will reach out as far as they possibly can to pull these bullrushes in, then, although they have pulled them up right by the root, they will sit on the bank and seem to thoroughly enjoy them, but of course the main concern of everyone who sees the animals in these enclosures is "Will the Chimpanzees get out", or "Can

they get out".

Well, there are only two occasions where the Chimpanzees have actually crossed the water, and on both occasions it was, I think, a pure accident.

The first one occurred in the enclosure containing Meg, and her young baby, born last October. On this particular day Meg was perched high on one of the poles similar to the one which can be seen in photograph Number One, where a chimp is already on the cross-bar; but Meg was perched right on the top of the upright. Her youngster was playing along by the waterside when it accidentally fell in. Seeing her infant's predicament, she made one bounding leap to rescue it and through the impact of her jump she could not stop herself, but grabbed the youngster and rolled headlong into the water with it. Reaching the bottom she immediately struggled to get out, still clutching the youngster, but unfortunately she got out on the wrong side. She was quite docile and immediately ran round all the enclosure trying to get back to the islands from which she had come. She then made an effort to get across to the other island with the other chimps. By then, of course, with her being out, there was pandemonium, and we felt certain that the chimps, if they could get out, would do so on this occasion, but despite all efforts to try and persuade her to cross over on a plank which we had put across, Meg resolutely refused to cross the water again, and we had to entice her in from the public passage by removing one of the panes of glass which look down into their indoor quarters.

The other occasion was where a Chimpanzee crossed from one island to another. On this occasion it was Compo, a Chimpanzee which had only been at our Zoo a matter of several months, and he was isolated, for the time being, on the centre island. He made many efforts to get across to his bigger brothers and finally decided, after studying the situation properly, that by taking a running leap against the wall he could drop down and touch something in the water and leap across. This he did and was immediately, of course, set about by several of the big Chimpanzees on the island onto which he had landed. He, of course, then



General view of Ape House from the south.

Photograph No. 1



Ape House, showing the New Nocturnal House.

became alarmed and went back to the island he had come from the same way.

This was rather perturbing because we couldn't understand how the Chimpanzee had jumped and reached the other bank without getting really wet. We decided that we would shut him in and investigate the ditch of water between the two islands which he had crossed. To our great surprise we discovered that at the bottom of this, and only a few inches below the surface of the water, was a huge slab of concrete which had been left in by the builders. We had not really noticed it because when the work was on, the muddy water of course did not reveal what was to be seen at the bottom, and as the water cleared so it became dense with duckweed. However, the Chimpanzee discovered that this rock was in the centre of the water and made one flying leap at the building, which dropped him in the centre, bounced off this concrete, and landed on the other island.

This offending piece of concrete was removed and we made certain that there was nothing left for him to repeat the performance and the following morning he was liberated on the island to see what his reactions would be. He immediately tried to do the same as he had done the day before. He made one flying leap at the wall, dropped on to the water in the hope that his feet would touch this concrete and enable him to bounce off, but the concrete was not there and the Chimpanzee went in. He immediately scrambled back onto his island and from then onwards would have nothing at all to do with the water and has remained quite on his own ever since, except that now we have given him a mate.

Those are the only two occasions on which the Chimpanzees have actually crossed the waterway, and although the water is not very deep there seems to be no doubt that it is quite sufficient to keep these animals within bounds.

We are indebted to "The Times" for the very fine photographs which we are publishing in this issue.

Number One gives a very fine view of the House itself; through the glass panel the public can walk and look on the other side into the indoor quarters, also through glass panels. The Chimpanzees have plenty of shelter under this public pathway and there spend most of the day when they are not playing about on the islands themselves.

On the right of the Number One photograph can be seen a large mushroom-shaped shelter. This is a large metal dome which,

we believe, was constructed as something in the way of a bombproof cover for a pillbox, but although not seen on the photograph, the Chimpanzees, despite its thickness in strength, have now very much dented this dome in.

On the island in the foreground we have several poles on which the Chimpanzees can perform and the bridges by which they cross from the far island to this can be clearly seen in the photograph. The bullrushes which have just been previously referred to can be seen on the left and just beyond this is the island which accommodates the animals from the centre cages. Compo, the Chimpanzee just mentioned, can be seen quite clearly sat on the island with his back to the camera.

Picture Number Two gives the same house again at a different angle. This time it shows, on the end, the building which is being built now as a Nocturnal House. At the extreme end of this building, although not shown on the photograph, we are now constructing a house for the Pigmy Hippopotamus and the public will enter this Nocturnal House by walking on an elevated gangway through the Hippo's House. In the distance on the left-hand side of this photograph can be seen the Giraffe House and the Camel House, but unfortunately, of course, the picture is not clear enough to distinguish any of the animals properly which are accommodated here.

Number Three photograph is taken at another angle and brings into view at the extreme left, part of the Zebra House. Many of the Chimpanzees can be seen playing about on the different islands and one thing in particular which is of great interest is, on the roof can be seen great clods of grass and turf which the Chimpanzees have thrown. They have in fact been throwing at the public looking at them through the glass and some of the shots have missed and gone right onto the roof. It is truly amazing how far these Chimpanzees can throw and it is very interesting to watch the method of different individual specimens to see how they do actually throw the various missiles which they acquire. Some throw with an underhand swing, others with an overhand swing, and quite a number throw with the bended arm, the same as most humans would throw.

It is positively dangerous to allow any large missile such as a brick or even a block to be within reach of these Chimpanzees because they have, on several occasions, thrown these over with such vigour that they have done quite a lot of damage. Passing one day in the car one Chimpanzee flung three-quarters

of a brick with such force at the car, that it badly dented the panels. One would be very tempted to say "Well, it is not safe because of the glass", but I am very pleased to say that the glass has stood up to all the throwing of the Chimpanzees because, of course, it is "Armour plated".

On the left bottom corner of Number Three photograph can be seen the rose bed which is between the water and the public in this section and has been quite an attraction. Also to be seen in this photograph are several of the water lilies which are to be found in the ditches round the Chimpanzees, which are, incidentally, stocked very heavily with fish which the Chimpanzees delight in trying to catch.

Photograph Number Four shows the interior of one of the indoor yards which the Chimpanzees play in. This is the one containing Meg and her baby, who can be clearly seen in the picture. One of the outstanding features of these yards is that on the walls surrounding these enclosures are many plants—Petunias, Fuchsia, Hydrangers and many others. They have made a very fine relief to the concrete, which the cages are constructed of.

The two doorways seen in this picture are the only entries, except for the one opposite, which allows them to go out onto the island, in these enclosures. The far one, near the wall, enables the animal to pass up the chute into its sleeping quarters up above the service passage, and the door immediately on its left is the one from the service passage to service the large cages. These yards are covered with Rilitite and asbestos sheets and are very light and tall and roomy. Each yard is approximately 35 ft. x 25 ft. excluding, of course, the area underneath the public passage way.

Number Five photograph was taken from the public passage way; a photographer having his back to the scene which can be seen in photograph Number Four. Here one can see Joe, a very popular figure. He was just caught in the act as he had thrown some missile at the general public who were watching him. He is standing on the iron grid which controls the outlet for the water which surrounds their islands. These islands are fed from the lake and the water is never completely stagnant. Unfortunately, despite the fact that there is a NO FEEDING rule in the Zoo the public throw all kinds of litter into this water, such as Ice Cream papers and so forth, and these have to be netted out once or twice a day. Just ahead of Joe in the picture

one can see a few ducks at the far end of the water, swimming about. Quite a number of water fowl inhabit this water, despite the presence of the Chimpanzees, and Swans have even taken up residence there with their cygnets from the lake.

It was most amusing when they first arrived, there was quite a battle royal between the younger Chimpanzees and one of the male Swans. The Chimpanzees tried hard to drive them off but when the male Swan came out of the water and came towards them they immediately turned and fled into their indoor quarters. Shortly afterwards they came out and, looking round for all sorts of missiles, they picked these up and pelted the Swan for all they were worth. After a while they grew tired and the Swans settled down and kept to the water, but, when the Chimpanzees retire at night they come up onto the island with their cygnets and spend the night preening themselves there.

Joe, the Chimpanzee in the picture of Number Five photograph is really a character and is a past master in the way he can catch ducks. If he can get possession of some bread or biscuits he will sit on his haunches close to the water, break a bit off, throw it in to the ducks for them to feed—the next piece he throws a little nearer and the next a little nearer still—till eventually the ducks become quite confident and once they get within his reach he makes one grab at them and very frequently catches hold of one. He immediately catches it by the neck and to everyone's horror swings it round over the top of his head with an expression as if to say "Look how clever I've been". Needless to say, of course, the duck is killed instantly by the action of the Chimpanzee, so there is no cruelty in it. Joe, of course, has many other accomplishments; he is an inveterate smoker and thoroughly enjoys a pint of beer.

Behind the visitors in this photograph can be seen one of our charming rose gardens which, in the season, are a blaze of colour, and above these in the picture can be seen our Zebra House, but unfortunately no Zebras can be seen in the picture.

GORILLA.

We are hoping that some day we will be successful in obtaining a pair of Gorillas to keep under the same conditions as the Chimpanzees. We feel sure that they will thrive far better than if they were kept confined in a cage.



Ape House again, notice width of waterways.



"Meg", the Chimpanzee, and her baby—now one year old.
This photograph shows view from public passage way into the indoor quarters.

Photograph No. 4