

"OUR ZOO NEWS"

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

Number Four.

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The first duty of this issue of "Our Zoo News" is to thank all those members and friends who so very kindly helped to make our Social which was held on Saturday, January 29th a success.

The weather was anything but kind, and this no doubt robbed us of many visitors, but despite all our adversities (and the committee met with quite a few) we are pleased to report that the effort was a success.

To mention all the names of those who contributed to this effort, which was to inaugurate a fund to build a new Chimpanzee House, is not permissible as many have asked to be left anonymous.

Gifts varied from a few shillings to fifty pounds, and we are sure all members will be pleased that the Chimpanzee Family have been given such a gratifying start towards their new home.

There is still a lot to be done, and we shall have to think of other means to raise the full amount, so if any members can offer any suggestions we shall be only too pleased to consider them.

Until the Society is making a profit it cannot embark on these schemes out of its funds, that is why enthusiastic members and friends are raising the money by various means to build modern, healthy, and roomy quarters for the animals.

Apart from giving the animals these benefits their efforts are perhaps doing more than anything else to put the Zoo on a paying basis, because they are providing first class exhibits which the public will pay to see, and as we mentioned in our last news our greatly increased gate is no doubt due to these developments which are taking place.

Those who have visited the new section of the Aquarium will be able to realize what an attraction the Aquarium is going to be when completed. At the time of writing this we have ten tanks stocked with fish, one ready to receive a consignment which is due in a few days, and three almost ready to be set up.

When the whole of the Aquarium is completed it will contain between thirty and forty tanks, both cold water and tropical, and will be an exhibit of great educational value.

It is expected that before February is out the Zoo will have received its first Tiger, this will be in the form of a young Tigress, and should be a very great attraction.

To accommodate this the old Quarantine House is being entirely rebuilt internally, and will give the young Tigress an indoor cage of about twenty eight feet by fourteen feet, with a large outdoor cage adjoining the open-air Lion Enclosure, and on the site of the Penguin Pool.

It is intended to build another Penguin Pool, and it may also be necessary to make fresh accommodation for the Pelicans, both these enclosures and their pools require repairing, and as the Tiger cage will cover the first, and the Lion Enclosure comes very close to the latter, a more permanent quarter is being sought for these interesting birds.

A new arrival on the last day of January, has been an African Python presented by F. J. Woods Esq., this is not so large as those already in the Gardens, but it

is a very nice specimen, and will help to fill the large reptile cage which still requires a few more specimens of this class of snake to make it really effective.

"Dawn" is growing and doing very well, but "Sarah" her mother still persists in pulling the hairs from over Dawn's eyes and forehead, with the result that the beard which is common to Mandrills appears excessively large in the young one.

Zoo Characters.

"Charlie"

Charlie was presented to the Zoo along with a lady Penguin as far back as July 1934 by Miss D. Russell Allen, unfortunately the lady Penguin died leaving Charlie a widower within a fortnight of their arrival at the Zoo.

Later in the year a lady visited the Zoo and noticed at once Charlie's solitude. She said she had a Penguin which would not go in the water she provided for it, and if we cared to collect it from the other side of Preston she would give it to us. One day the journey was made, and we brought the Penguin which happened to be a lady back with us. The reason no doubt why it would not bathe was because several ducks used the same pool.

Upon arriving back at Chester the lady Penguin which we christened "Sadie" was placed in the pen with Charlie. He was positively disgusted with her dirty plumage, and absolutely ignored her. Realizing no doubt the cause of her bad impression upon Charlie she took to the water and for days hardly ever came out except when she saw the fish coming. Although her plumage

improved wonderfully they still lived together as if for the sake of respectability only and nothing else, and they would never feed together.

Early in 1935 Charlie commenced building a nest of stones which is what Penguins use in the wild, but Sadie took not the slightest interest in his labours. Having completed the task to his satisfaction he sat on them some days by himself, then one day quite suddenly he went out and simply drove Sadie into his hole, and made her sit there while he guarded the entrance.

In the course of a few days she laid two eggs, and from that moment she became Charlie's devoted mate, he simply worshipped her. Then the day came when both eggs hatched, and Charlie and Sadie became the proud parents of two chicks.

When the chicks reached the age of ten months Charlie and Sadie thought it time to further increase their family, although their babies were still dependent upon them for food. They had always refused to allow their children to feed themselves, but when two more eggs were laid they felt they ought to, and the result was that both babies died, and what was worse Sadie had tried to combine laying eggs and feeding babies, with the result she died of complications, and ever since Charlie has mourned her loss.

Even now you can hear him at night crying for her, and it is most pathetic to see him trying to maintain his race, for two seasons now he has built a nest, and sat on it hoping for the best.

Last year a rabbit was put into his enclosure, and they have become friends. Charlie will steal the rabbit's carrots for his nest, then as soon as his back is turned the rabbit takes them back.

Each night Charlie calls in vain for his loved one, many people ask why we do not buy him a mate, but Penguins cost about ten pounds each and we cannot afford one.

Readers will be sorry to hear that misfortune has overtaken the Stag Fallow Deer. One evening at dusk a stray dog wandered into the Zoo grounds, and so alarmed the deer that it dropped dead. A post mortem was carried out, and his condition was excellent, his heart being the only thing which had collapsed. These animals like many more animals from the wild are of a very nervous disposition, and that is the reason why dogs are not admitted in the Zoo. A dog may be quite harmless and not even bark at the animals, but on some occasions the animals become extremely nervous at their presence.

Our three large Chimpanzees, Mary, Kiki and Tarzana still keep us fully occupied in keeping them within bounds. Mary the other day succeeded in breaking the strong steel netting which was placed on her cage last year. Once she got a break in the wire she could twist the end easily with her fingers although it is quite impossible for us to bend it with a pair of pliers, which goes to show what great strength these animals have.

We shall have to make as rapid strides as possible with the Chimpanzee House so that we can have them transferred to it before they get too strong. Fortunately for us most of our Chimpanzees are good tempered and can usually be persuaded to do most of the things required of them. There is one thing certain, they are without doubt the pets of the public whom they entertain to a high degree.

Mary has taught nearly all of them the habit of

throwing, this at times is very amusing, but we are afraid they employ it a little too often when they do not receive what they ask for. Even Big Boy the baby of the family has become quite an accurate thrower. He has caused great amusement in the last few weeks by standing a large motor tyre on end and balancing himself on the top. Another feat which kept him employed was rolling the tyre along the floor and jumping through it, he certainly is a little acrobat like his neighbour Jimmy.

We are expecting within the next week or so to once again let the Malayan Sun Bears have their freedom. The work of reconstructing this enclosure has been somewhat minimized by the discovery of a drain which we were not aware of, this has avoided us having to build the wall higher surrounding the Bears.

The Griffon Vultures are now busy building their nest. They have done this regularly at the end of every January and beginning of February ever since they came in 1932. Each year they lay one egg and sit on it till it is taken away from them, this is only done when we realize that the egg is of no use. One year however they did succeed, that was in 1936 when they hatched a young one out, but for some unaccountable reason they ate the young one within a short time of it leaving the egg. We hope however that this year they will not only hatch their egg, but rear the young one.

We do not know for certain whether the Griffon Vulture has bred in captivity before, but we do know that the event would be a very rare occurrence.

We are looking forward to an early Spring, and hope that Members will bear in mind that we want still more Members, the Spring is an ideal time for introducing them.
