
“Our Zoo News”

A MONTHLY CHRONICLE OF NEWS OF
CHESTER ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

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NUMBER FIFTY.



One of the last photographs of “Mowgli” and “Peter” before their separation.
(By courtesy of the Daily Mirror).

We beg to draw the attention of all our readers to the enclosed Notice, and request that they fill in the Order Form and post at once.

With this issue we propose to start the regular publication of "Our Zoo News," which unfortunately owing mainly to labour has had to be published during the last year or so very spasmodically.

We shall do our best to make the "News" as interesting as possible, and we hope that the day is not far off when we will be able to increase its size, but in the meantime we shall endeavour to give satisfaction in a small way.

One of the innovations we hope to introduce as soon as war conditions will permit, is the running of Photographic Competitions, and with the modernising of the Zoo some very good photographs should be obtained.

The new enclosures mentioned later on in this issue should appeal to artists, and we sincerely hope that students of art will take advantage of the facilities we offer.

The ponds which visitors will remember years ago contained many brightly coloured and interesting waterfowl, are now being cleaned out with the object of restocking this next spring. It will be remembered that all the stock vanished overnight during a very heavy blitz. Now that raids appear to be a thing of the past we feel that attractive waterfowl can once more be introduced.

MOWGLI AND PETER.

We are very sorry that we have had to break the great friendship of Mowgli and Peter, which lasted for three years and proved one of the major attractions of the Zoo.

We beg to draw the attention of all our readers to the enclosed Notice, and request that they fill in the Order Form and post at once.

The reason for this step being taken was we had so many lionesses which we wanted to mate and for whom we had no lion. Patrick, the only adult lion besides Mowgli, being the father of the lionesses in question.

Nero was obtained for the purpose of a stock lion, but unfortunately he has died, after siring six cubs. Although a lion of powerful build he was not of the same stamp as Mowgli or Patrick, but as Mowgli and Peter were such great pals we decided to use Nero and leave Mowgli as a star in another sense, but now Nero has died. So Mowgli has had to take up the place he was originally meant to. We are sure everyone will wish him a long and happy life and very many children.

There is a very strong demand for strong healthy young lions. We have sold ten in as many months and could have sold many more if we had had them, however if Mowgli proves himself we should in the coming year be able to meet some of the demand.

Mowgli and Peter fretted at the start of their break, but they are getting over it and finding new interests in their new friends. Peter is running about with the Dalmatians which can be seen in the Zoo. We cannot allow him to have his complete freedom altogether because he appears to think that all lions are like Mowgli and we do not wish him to walk into the lion dens at the rear of the Lion House, which he might do if he were completely free.

So has ended a partnership which will long be remembered not only at the Zoo, but by thousands of visitors and animal lovers who have enjoyed watching them play together. Some people severely condemned us for allowing these two to be pals, but these people did not understand animals and their ways, and were to be pitied for not being able to command the love and affection which animals both wild and tame are capable of.

POST WAR DEVELOPMENTS.

By A. W.

The time has now arrived when we have to think out plans for the period immediately after the war, for there is sure to be a reaction in peoples lives which will govern their pleasures. While during the war people have had to take what they got in the way of relaxation from their every day task, the time is fast approaching when they will take just what they fancy, and it is the duty of zoological gardens generally to see to it that they will be in the forefront of popular attractions.

Zoological Gardens, that is zoological gardens run by zoological societies will have two kinds of public to cater for. First the public that use zoos as an educational centre, and secondly the public who desire a day's outing to provide enjoyment.

In both cases there is one outstanding demand. That is the public generally do not like to see animals kept in small confined cages, so one of the first things that must be done is to see that any rebuilding which has to be, must provide plenty of room, light and air.

There is a vast scope for zoo designers, and quite an interesting and instructive rivalry could be created among zoos to see which could provide the best accommodation for certain animals.

One might be tempted to say, yes! but the zoo with the most money will be able to make the best show. I do not agree. True money will count, for practically nothing in the way of development can be accomplished without it, labour must be paid for, but a little money wisely spent is quite capable of making a better show than a lot spent without due consideration, and it is not always the most expensive enclosure which is the most attractive or the most useful.

During the last twenty or so years great strides have been made in the use of concrete, and in the modern zoo this can be made almost the sole material required. It is cheap and lends itself to a thousand and one uses, but what is more it is everlasting and if properly done needs no upkeep.

In planning the zoo, a full and comprehensive scheme must be considered so that as time goes on we must not discover that such and such an enclosure is in the way of something else, other-

wise we will find the zoo in much the same position as many of our towns and cities with narrow streets, slums and such like.

Let us be bold in our planning, and build, not for a year or two, but for all time, so that our work will ripen with age and be a mile stone in the progress of zoological gardens.

We ought to decide whether our zoo is to be a representative collection of the fauna of the world, or is only to represent certain countries, or it might confine itself just to certain kinds of animals, in which case the planning would be quite simple.

It is the zoo that is prepared to show a representative world collection which needs the greatest planning, for such a zoo never knows what is likely to come along, and it must be prepared to accept anything at any time.

So far I have only mentioned accommodation for the animals, but there is another very important provision to be made, and that is accommodation for the public. An attractive zoo will attract very great crowds and these must be properly attended to, and their wants while they are in the zoo must be amply catered for, so that their day out will be one of happy memories and a permanent advertisement for the zoo.

BETTER AND BRIGHTER HOMES FOR THE BEARS.

It is now over five years since the war overtook us, and called a halt on all the schemes we had in mind for developing the Zoo. For the first twelve months we acted as a reception depot for animals from less favoured areas, and our accommodation was taxed to the utmost.

Time went on and the severe winters of 1939-40 and 41 played havoc with our cages and many had to be dismantled as it was impossible to obtain materials for their repair. So much so, that to-day our bird population is but a shadow of pre-war days.

We struggled on, making the best of the many difficulties which beset us, but just as many were thinking that the Zoo had reached the limit of its endurance, the tide of fortune changed and in 1942 the Zoo made its first profit. Ever since then the

popularity of the Zoo has increased despite the fact that it was beginning to look a very neglected place, owing to the shortage of skilled labour, and the inability to carry out repairs.

However, with the prospect of the war ending in the near future, we can now set our minds to the planning of the Zoo of to-morrow. This Zoo we hope will be a great advance on the zoo of yesterday, giving much more room to the animals and showing them in more natural surroundings.

With the exception of the Malayan Bears, the bears at Chester Zoo have been confined in cages, and these have become so dilapidated that they have become a real danger and steps have had to be taken to provide the bears with safer quarters.

To repair their old pens would have been more expensive than building new ones, and the materials required for this were also required for the war effort. So permission was sought to construct enclosures which would not use any iron, wire or wood, only concrete and this we are pleased to say has been granted. These Enclosures will, we are happy to say fit into our plans for the Zoo of to-morrow and will give some idea of what the Zoo will look like in the days that are to come.

There will be no bars or wire between the visitors and the animals, only space. In the case of the Polar Bears, they will be surrounded on three sides by a large swimming pool from which they will not be able to get out on the visitors' side. This fine pool is being presented by the Polar Bears very kind benefactress, Miss Tomkyns Grafton, who when we started our adoption scheme in the early days of the war made herself responsible for the keep of these animals. In the rocky background of their enclosure will be their dens, and from these access can be made in case of emergency to another enclosure which will accommodate the Russian and Himalyan Bears. This enclosure will be surrounded on three sides by a deep pit with a smooth concrete wall on the outside which the bears cannot climb. The centre will be natural earth in which the bears can dig if they so desire, a large mound of earth from the deep excavations will be arranged in terrace form over which the

bears can climb.

When completed these enclosures should prove an attractive addition to the Zoo at a less cost than repairing the old cages, and will give the Bears a controlled freedom. As time goes on it is hoped to provide running water through these enclosures and our plans have provided for this installation when the time comes.

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A NEW USE FOR ROAD BLOCKS.

The Road Blocks which have been a bit of a problem to some local authorities, are being put to good use at Chester Zoo. Many hundreds have been acquired and will be used in several ways, but principally they will form the wall side of ditches which will confine the animals to their various enclosures.

This method of enclosing animals has many advantages. First the solid fence provides protection from the cold winds which always sweep across open spaces especially in winter, secondly it dispenses with iron or wire fencing which is always an expense to keep in repair, and a low wall provides an uninterrupted view of the animals. It is our intention as time goes on to plant along these walls shrubs and small trees so as to make these fences as inconspicuous as possible, apart from the charm which trees and shrubs are in themselves.

There is one thing certain, the Bison should be properly enclosed when these blocks are in position, and much worry and labour saved. Although barbed wire will keep the bison in, they have only to find a weak post and it is of no avail. They will push the post over, the wire going with it, and then they simply explore the countryside, causing a considerable amount of anxiety and the expense of much labour, before they are got back to their enclosure.

THE WOLVES.

Proposed new enclosure.

Many people will be pleased to learn, that in the many alterations which are now under way, provisions are being made to allow as soon as possible the ringing in of the wooded portion of the Zoo known as the Donkey's Nest as an enclosure for the wolves.

This will provide an extensive area for the wolves to roam in, and at the same time owing to the unique nature of the place deaden the sound of their howling which at times becomes very annoying.

Apart from the benefit the wolves will receive, the enclosure will be a very attractive exhibit, for we shall not interfere with the natural wooded formation of the hollow, and when the proposed filter beds are made in connection with new bear enclosure, these will be so constructed so as to add too, rather than take away from the delightful setting.

We shall be very pleased when this work can be done, for apart from the noise they make, the wolves need a lot of watching, for although the majority were born in the Zoo they are very unreliable and have caused more than one accident in one way or another.

HOW THE LIFE ABOUT US STARTED.

By G. S. Mottershead.

Many people will have often wondered how all the life we see about us started. How did the first lion come into the world? What was the first bird like? How did fishes first come?

Well. A very considerable part of the history of the world is lost in the distant past, and we can only piece together an history which dates back millions of years, from the fossils which are to be found, and comparing them with animals and birds

which are, or have been known to the present human race.

Charles Darwin in the last century, put forward a theory which has generally been accepted as fundamentally sound. His theory was that all species had one common ancestor and as conditions of life changed, so did the living things change and develop.

It is such a great subject that it is impossible for one to deal with all the forms of life which we know, but a Zoo can usually show the average person how this principal of evolution is being carried out.

We will first of all go into the Aquarium at the Zoo and see what things of interest we can find there. In times of peace when it is possible to collect specimens from all over the world, we find a very varied assortment of fish. Some very brightly coloured, others very dull and plain, but in all cases we find that the colour is a very great factor for the protection of fish from its enemies, under the heading now known as camouflage, so that it is in harmony with its surroundings. Some fish have stripes so that when they are swimming among rush-like weeds, it is very difficult to see them. Others have spots, and some that live on the sandy bed of the sea are flat and coloured like the sand. Quite a large number of fish differ in colour according to the sex, but the ground or basic colour is more or less the same for protection purposes.

The Climbing Perch which comes from Southern Asia, is capable of leaving the water and propelling itself over dry land, and can climb certain vertically inclined objects. This shows how fish can adapt themselves to the requirements of conditions forced upon them by their pond drying up. Gobies and Mud-Skippers together with the Butterfly Fish are other examples.

When I say there are about six hundred varieties of Gobies alone, varying considerably in their terrestrial development, you will see how slow and varied the evolutionary process is.

Generally speaking, Newts and Salamanders are the next advancement we see, closely followed by

Frogs and Toads. All these are known as Amphibians, which means they are capable of living under water and on land.

We next come to the reptiles which are represented by Lizards, Tortoises, Snakes and Crocodiles. There are many thousands of varieties of reptiles in various processes of evolution, but some of the most interesting varieties have long been extinct. Such as the Dinosaur, which was a giant of lizards growing to as much as eighty feet in length. The Flying Dragons together with the Dinornis which is an extinct bird of great size, was no doubt a connecting link between the reptiles and the birds.

It is however among the birds and animals that the Zoo can best exhibit specimens of evolutionary development, but before I pass on to these I would like to mention the Monotremes, or the Egg Laying Mammals which come from Australasia. These are not what one would think, a link between the bird and the animal, but a mammal closely allied to some extinct orders of Reptiles and Amphibians. They lay eggs like a bird, or I would be more correct if I said like a reptile, and they suckle their young like an animal.

The Monotremes are represented by the Duck-billed Platypus and Echidnas. They are very rarely seen in European Zoos and in fact there is not a great deal known about their wild life. The Duck-bill feeds on small aquatic animals such as insects and worms, while the Echidna almost feeds exclusively on ants.

The number of different species of birds to-day will run into tens of thousands. These are divided into the following orders:

1. Perching Birds. (Passeres).
2. Woodpeckers, Cuckoos, Hornbills, etc.
(Picaricia).
3. Parrot-like Birds. (Psittaci).
4. Owls. (Striges).
5. Ospreys. (Pandiones).
6. Eagles, Falcons, Vultures, etc.
(Accipitres).
7. Pelicans, Cormorants, and Gannets.
(Steganopodes).

8. Herons and Storks. (Herodiones).
9. Flamingoes. (Odontoglossi).
10. Ducks, Geese and Swans. (Anseres).
11. Screamers. (Palamedeae).
12. Pigeons and Sand Grouse. (Columbae).
13. Fowls and Game Birds. (Gallinea).
14. Rails and Coots. (Fulicolae).
15. Cranes and Bustards. (Alectorides).
16. Plovers, Curlews, Snipe, etc. (Limicolae).
17. Gulls and Terns. (Gavia).
18. Petrels and Albatrosses. (Tubinares).
19. Divers, Auks and Grebes. (Pygopodes).
20. Penguins. (Impennes).
21. Tinamus. (Crypture).
22. Ostriches, Emus Cassowaries, etc. (Ratitae).

Then there were the extinct Toothed Birds, Patagonian Flightless Birds, and Long-tailed Birds which differed from all others by retaining a long tail like a reptile.

All these birds have some special feature which places them in different orders. These features have been developed by natural necessity. As an example. Birds that lived by the sea had to get their food from the sea, and therefore developed features which enabled them to more easily catch their prey.

The Penguin is a very good example. This bird which is only to be found in the southern Hemisphere is well known to Zoo visitors. It has a quaint habit of walking and has lost all power of flight. Its wings have become flappers which can assist it in swimming through the water at a terrific pace and catch the fastest of fish.

The Pelican, which is another sea bird, on the other hand, has developed great powers of flight and can travel great distances in search of good fishing. It then either alights on the water or stands at the side and scoops up shoals of fish, swallowing them whole.

Sea Gulls fly over the water and when they observe a fish or other morsel of food, swoop down and take it at an alarming speed.

Each of these birds has been designed by nature to make them perfectly efficient for their special mode of life.

If for instance, the Pelican was fed by hand for generations, it would, eventually, lose the power of scooping up shoals of fish. The large dilatible pouch of the lower mandible, would lose its elasticity and no doubt other physical changes would take place very slowly, and after many thousands of years we would find quite a different bird from the Pelican we know to-day.

The same can be said of all creatures. Their advancement from the reptile stage has been governed by the conditions under which they have been forced to live, and whereas, we find some of the reptiles developed into birds to fly through space, or swim and dive, and some like Ostriches, Cassowaries, etc., to simply run on the ground, others became mammals, and their variation in features is probably more marked than among the birds.

Mammals are divided into eleven main groups:

1. Apes, Monkeys and Lemurs. (Primates).
2. Bats. (Chiroptera).
3. Insectivores. (Insectivora).
4. Carnivores (Carnivora).
5. Hoofed Mammals. (Ungulata).
6. Manatis and Dugongs. (Sirenia).
7. Whales and Porpoises. (Cetacea).
8. Rodents. (Rodentia).
9. Sloths, Anteaters, etc. (Edentata).
10. Pouched Mammals. (Marsupialia).
11. Egg Laying Mammals. (Monotremata).

It is among the animals that we find the greatest development of the brain and it is the primates which easily lead the way.

Starting with the Aye-Aye (which is the lowest of the Lemurs) we find the development of the brain far more rapid in this order than any of the other order of mammals. But it is not until we reach the Baboons that any very high intelligence is to be found. Then we really do begin to find a brain that has reasoning powers, and its progress then becomes very rapid till we reach the chimpanzee, which is by far the most intelligent of all the mammals (excluding man).

As a general rule, Chimpanzees develop an intelligence equal to the average child of two to three years of age, then it seems to stop. But individual specimens have gone a little further and it is quite possible their intelligence may improve quite a lot as years go by, but man has got a very big start and it is not likely that the chimpanzee will ever catch up with the human race.

There is, however, little doubt that in the past, millions of years ago, man was no more intelligent than a chimpanzee, and he, like that animal came from a stock which had its origin in the earliest forms of life.

So when you visit the Zoo for educational purposes, remember, that all creatures are part of a wonderful creation. All fitting in an intricate pattern which is steadily moving forward. But many of the actors in the great drama of life will vanish as prehistoric animals have done before, and only their fossil forms will remain to tell the future inhabitants of the world that they had once lived.

It is the space of time which bewilders us, when we begin to think how long it is since life began on this earth, for millions of years life has been gradually going forward step by step till we have reached this high state of civilisation, but we must not forget that many times before we have reached a high standard, and have suddenly been thrown back thousands of years because of great catastrophic events.

NEWS FROM OTHER ZOOS.

MAIDSTONE ZOO PARK.

By Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt Drake.

To all promoters of public entertainments, including Zoos, on the South East of England the season of 1944 has been most disappointing, to say nothing of one of much worry.

As an example, the attendance at the Maidstone Zoo Park, up to June 13th was 2924 up on 1943. Then the Flying Bombs began to come over us,

with the result that would-be visitors were afraid to travel, and locals were afraid, as they said, to come to the Zoo in case a bomb fell and let all the animals out while they were there. As a matter of fact three small bombs early in the War did fall in it, and a doodle bug fell 500 yards away from it and broke most of the glass, but no animals were hurt or got out! The result was that at the end of the season the attendance was down 35,500.

As far as providing food for the stock, though this has been difficult, the animals look extraordinarily well, and I am sure we have learned much in the way of using foods we never dreamed of using in normal times, and have found them fairly satisfactory.

One difficulty I expect we have all encountered is the filling up of cages and paddocks that became vacant owing to deaths. With importation practically nil, with the exception of Calatrix monkeys from the West Coast of Africa, one had to depend for fresh stock on what was born or what we could exchange with other Zoos.

The births in the Maidstone Zoo this season included Dingos, Wallabies, Husky Dogs, Mouflons and Spanish Sheep, Royal Welsh Goats, Rheas, a Calatrix Monkey, and a Collared Peccary.

I look forward, however, with confidence that 1945 will be a good year for us. The interest in Zoos by the general public is as keen as ever and money will, I feel sure, still be plentiful.

BRISTOL ZOO.

We are very pleased to hear that "Alfred," the Gorilla, is still very fit, and those in charge of Bristol Zoo should be congratulated on having kept this very fine specimen during the war.

The Air Raid Shelter in the Polar Bear Enclosure was dispensed with last Easter and the Polar Bears' home was re-opened for the young Brown Bears. To the great surprise of their keepers they spent a considerable amount of time in the pool, which was rather amusing as we understand some people were very perturbed when they stayed out in the rain after being released from their travelling case.

We are pleased to learn that the young Male Bison which was born at Whipsnade in 1943 is growing into a fine animal, and still shares his

outside quarters with the female Camel.

The last few months have seen the birth of two Rhesus Monkeys in the Temple, and also a Capuchin and a Vervet in the new Monkey House. All are doing well.

The attendance for the year just ended is easily a record, close on half a million passing through the turnstile, including a large number of Service people who were admitted at half price.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

By G. R. Doubleday.

LONDON ZOO.

The season started extremely well. During the winter the Works Department had been able to make good a great deal of the early blitz damage and Children's Zoo was re-opened at the end of May, for the first time in five years. The animals had wintered well and there was little doubt that it would have been a record season. Unfortunately our troubles started in June when the Flying Bomb raids commenced. Attendances dropped considerably and the Zoo suffered extensive damage from blast. Perhaps the most extraordinary thing to report is that, although at least nineteen flying bombs fell in the vicinity, one actually in the Zoo, there were no casualties, human or animal.

WHIPSNADDE ZOO.

The attendances at Whipsnade this season, although not comparable with pre-war, have been surprisingly good. This may be attributed to the numbers of evacuees in the district. The Park has been kept in very fine condition and in spite of the difficulties of wartime feeding, the animals all look extremely fit.

There have been no notable arrivals, either in London or Whipsnade during this year, but quite a number of animals have bred in the Parks, including Bears and Llamas.

We beg to draw the attention of all our readers to the enclosed Notice, and request that they fill in the Order Form and post at once.

NOTICE.

It is now seven years since "Our Zoo News" was first published. In those days it was simply a duplicated sheet, and was first issued with the object of keeping members of the Society in touch with happenings at the Zoo. Since then it has grown considerably and although our last few issues have been very hurriedly compiled and photographs reprinted from earlier editions the demand has not slackened.

"The Zoo News" has always been posted post free to members of the Society, but we feel that the time has now arrived when we ought to ask members who require the News to subscribe.

For some time now the cost of posting free to members has been roughly about five pounds each issue and we feel sure readers will agree that this is a burden we ought not to carry. It has therefore been decided that "Our Zoo News" will only be posted after this issue to Subscribers, and we sincerely hope that all our members will become Subscribers as we are about to issue the News regularly every month, and make it more interesting than ever.

The price of "Our Zoo News" will remain the same, THREEPENCE each copy. The Subscription Rate will be FOUR SHILLINGS and SIXPENCE per annum POST FREE.

If you are **not already a Subscriber**, please fill in the attached form and post to "Our Zoo News," Zoological Gardens, Upton-by-Chester.

To "Our Zoo News," Zoological Gardens, Upton-by-Chester.

I wish to become a Subscriber to "Our Zoo News", and enclose Cheque-Postal Order for 4/6 (Four Shillings and Sixpence), which will entitle me to receive 12 (Twelve) Copies Post Free.

Signed.....

Address.....

Date.....