

# "Our Zoo News & Guide"

A MONTHLY CHRONICLE OF NEWS AND GUIDE TO  
CHESTER ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

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## The Month goes by.

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Among the numerous disturbances of Hitler's War has been the trials of many Zoological Gardens, not only in England but throughout the whole of Europe. Many no doubt will have passed for ever into oblivion, but others will rise again to take their places in the life of the country.

In England we have at least been able to carry on and although our problems have been many and will be more so as the war continues, we feel that it is in the country's interest that we should keep the Zoos alive to fulfil once again their functions when peace returns.

Soon after the outbreak of war we instituted an Adoption Scheme which helped us greatly through last winter. Now this novel method of assisting the great financial burden of Zoos has been adopted by London, then Edinburgh and Bristol Zoos. So now the four Zoological Societies of this country have made themselves responsible for the maintenance of the five public Zoological Collections—namely London, Whipsnade, Edinburgh, Bristol and Chester—and are relying on animal lovers to help them in their task.

Since the issue of our last "News", many events of importance have taken place at Chester, but a very depleted staff with a much larger collection has, to a very great extent, been responsible for the delay of this Bulletin. We feel sure, however, that readers will agree that the animals' welfare is of first importance, and having seen to their many wants we can now give a little time to relate some of the happenings during the last three months.

Soon after going to press with our last "News", "Hope" gave birth to three more lion cubs—almost exactly twenty-four weeks after her last cubs were born. Early one Monday morning when paying a visit to the Lion House, we found "Hope" proudly watching over her babies as they nestled close to her. They were all three in perfect health and it was with great interest that we noticed one of the cubs was devoid of markings and of such a light colour as to be almost white.

There were many speculations as to whether we should rear a "white lion" or not but during the past few weeks its colouring changed until now it is practically the same as the two other cubs.

We have not handled these cubs except soon after birth when we decided to make "Hope" more comfortable, but from a hasty observation we think that there are two males and one female.

From "Hope's" appearance one would at once say that bringing lion cubs into the world was the finest tonic a lioness could have, for she is a picture of health and happiness.

Our Lion House is truly a wonderful sight for our lions are the admiration of all who see them. Even those people who are not particularly fond of the great cats, admire their splendid condition and contentedness. The sight of a noble lion with its mate and family provides a sight not often seen in Zoological Gardens in this country.

"Faith", whose cubs are now over twelve months old is expecting another family shortly, in fact our lions are almost like the proverbial cat. We can only hope that the war will soon end so that Chester Lions can help to restart some of the depleted Zoological Gardens throughout Europe.

The next new arrivals came from Butlin's Camp, Skegness, and these were in the form of one leopard and two leopardesses. This brings the total number of occupants in our Leopard House to five.

They are very fine specimens and a lot darker in colour to our own. Two of them mated immediately on arrival and this saved us the problem of accommodation. Before they came it was decided to move the Himalayan Sun Bear to another cage and thus allow the leopards in turn, to pass through the trap door into his cage which is roomy and open air. It is now found that this arrangement is satisfactory in every way.

Another addition from the same source was a Polar Bear. "Punch", who has for years lived alone and who has been the subject of many feelings of sympathy from people who thought that he looked lonely, at last has a companion.

"Judy", as we have christened her, arrived in a crate plentifully bespattered with "Danger" and "Keep away from the bars" in red paint. Her journey was uneventful and she arrived at her new home all ready to take up residence.

"Do they agree"? That is a question most readers will ask. Well at first it was deemed advisable to allow only one bear to occupy the enclosure at a time until "Judy" had approved of her new home and companion, but now they are together and except for one or two minor differences when their bark is worse than their bite, they agree very well indeed, even to the point of taking a bath together.

A pair of very nice wolves have been presented to us by Edinburgh Zoo, where unfortunately they have had to destroy their very fine pack. As material for building enclosures is at present out of the question, we have had to move the Rhesus Monkeys indoors, so that the wolves could have their large outdoor cage. We had hoped to turn these animals into a large enclosure but as it required so much repairing, the project had to be abandoned.

Thanks to Mr. L. H. Marten, of Berks, our Aviaries have been wonderfully enhanced by the gift of his very fine collection of foreign birds. This included many softbills, and their bright colours have added greatly to the charm of the Aviaries.

Mr. T. Millner-Sapcote, of Hastings, very kindly sent us his White Fantail Pigeons as the war had come too close for their safety. These birds have settled down at liberty and make a pretty picture as they fly about the Zoo grounds.

Two baby owls which were given to us are thriving considerably and what they lack in size they make up for in noise.

Another addition to the Zoo is "Bruce", the twelve months old bloodhound. Strictly speaking he is not an exhibit, but he sleeps in a large cage inside the "Chimp House", and arouses a good deal of interest with the public. Various guesses have been made by visitors as to what kind of an animal he is, and at times "Bruce" has been called anything but a dog. However, although he glowers fiercely at the ignorant one, he is very good tempered, and judging by the quantities of toffee papers, nuts and apples found in his bed he is rapidly becoming a favourite of both children and adults.

We are pleased to report that the Griffon Vultures succeeded in rearing a young one. When the egg was laid during the extremely cold weather which we experienced at the early part of this year, it was feared that it would be a failure, but fortunately in this respect our fears were ungrounded. Griffon Junior is now fully feathered and has recently taken his first flight. He has thrived wonderfully and except for his colouration which is a richer brown than that of his parents, it would be difficult to distinguish which was which when standing together.

As previously mentioned, "Won Lung", the Himalayan Sun Bear was moved into another cage. This is at the extreme end of the "Chimp House", but he shows to much better advantage and receives more attention from the visitors.

We experienced no difficulty in moving him and he has settled down quite contentedly in his new abode.

Our Raccoon Enclosure was finally completed some weeks ago and these little animals were transferred to their new home in the open air. They were highly delighted with it and in a short while had explored every nook and corner, after which they settled down to live "happy ever after".

The Llama is in the news again, having stubbornly refused to be taken down to his field each day. No amount of coaxing would make him change his mind and for a while he wandered at will through the grounds, returning to his little house to sleep at night. He is perfectly harmless and caused quite a lot of amusement with the public.

The other day one of the Ibis apparently resented him strolling around its home and with much noise it flew off round the Zoo. For a time the Ibis showed no intention of returning to its former home, as it spent many evenings at liberty or as an

uninvited guest of the crowned cranes. However, it must have soon tired of this mode of living for like the Llama it is now back in its old home.

Visitors will also notice a pea-hen strutting round the grounds. A couple of years ago it was quite a common sight to see several peacocks proudly displaying themselves on the lawns, much to the admiration of the public.

The Silver Pheasants managed to rear two young ones this year. When roaming around the grounds they are always found to be together.

The Bison, which were at first accommodated near the entrance, have now been transferred to their permanent home, a field of several acres, where they can roam and frolic to their hearts content.

Much speculation was made as to how we would take them the three hundred yards to their new home. Apparently the simplest way would be to drive them like cattle, but would they be driven? However, by placing hurdles down the main drive to keep them if possible off the front lawns, we decided to move them in this fashion.

At first the Bull did not like to leave his home and it was not until the Cow had made six excursions to the lawn in front of the Hall entrance, that she persuaded him to accompany her.

When they both stepped onto this lawn they jumped and kicked like frisky lambs, and finally the Bull came onto the drive, laid down and rolled over and over in sheer joy.

Their progress from here was rather slow, and when they reached the wall surrounding the kitchen garden they decided after various nibbles here and there, that the spot was too good to leave. After enticing them by various ways and means, we decided to try and drive them. To our great relief they were agreeable and soon they arrived at their new home, where they not only seem very happy but look considerably better than they did in their former one.

As it may be many weeks before we can write another Zoo News, may we remind our readers that the winter is now fast approaching and our large family will have to rely on their generosity for their maintenance.

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There are still a lot of animals which need adopting, and further details will be given on request.

Upon entering the Zoo the Visitor is advised to follow the arrows in rotation of their number, and by so doing they will be guided round the Zoo in the shortest possible time.

First we arrive at the Ocelot. A very fine cat from South America.

Past this cage is the new Raccoon Enclosure containing some bonny specimens from North America.

Opposite these last two exhibits are the Malayan Bears, always full of antics as they perform all kinds of acrobatics.

Passing onwards we come to various animals which are sometimes moved from one pen to another for a change. These are the Thar, Fallow Deer, Llama and Dwarf Pony. From these pens we pass along the main drive and approach the Hall where Teas, etc., can be obtained.

Underneath this building is the Aquarium which contains many Tropical Fish, all of which are named.

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## GUIDE.

Leaving the Aquarium we pass several Aviaries containing Touracous, Bare-faced Hang Nests, Budgerigars and Jays, in variety, and a fine specimen of the Nankin Night Bittern. We also find in this locality the Pelican.

We next enter what in days gone by was the Courtyard, and as we stroll round directed by the arrows, we pass several animals in the following order.

American Black Bear.

Russian Brown Bear.

Wolves.

Bloodhound.

Binturong, a most interesting animal from the Malay.

African Civet.

Chimpanzees, "Mary Ellen", "Jimmy" and "Big Boy".

Himalayan Bear, "Won Lung."

Cavies.

Palm Civets.

Agouties.

We next arrive at a various assortment of Monkeys, and afterwards turn sharp right into the Lion House.

Retracing our steps we pass a few small cages containing various rodents, and leave the building by the Vultures Aviary, which contains the only pair of Griffon Vultures which have successfully reared in captivity a young one in this country. This year's young one can be distinguished by its browner colouring.

Leaving this Aviary we make to pass out of the Court Yard but before doing so we enter the Leopard House which contains some very fine specimens.

As we leave this house and cross direct to the Conservatories containing Tropical Birds and Reptiles and leave these to enter the large Aviary containing many specimens of Parrots and Cockatoos together with a large assortment of Doves.

We next proceed down an avenue of trees and on our left we see the Bison and Piebald Sheep, finally we arrive at the Water Fowl Enclosure.

To continue seeing the exhibits we must retrace our steps, and on our left we see Rin Tin, a popular Wolf, then we mount the terrace where we can view "Punch" and "Judy", the two Polar Bears.

Descending we meet "Charlie", a very popular Black-footed Penguin, and then we move along past many Avaries, starting with Birds of Prey and coming to a large collection of many varieties of Softbills, Finches and Parrot-like Birds.

From this point we proceed by the choice of two paths to the Crane Enclosure containing Crowned Cranes from Nigeria, and the Stanley Crane. Peacocks and Pheasants, and numerous other kinds of birds, many of which will be found at liberty.

Before leaving the Zoo grounds we notice an enclosure thickly wooded. In this can be seen the Marrabou Stork and Ibis.

This is only intended to be the briefest of guides and only a very few of the individual specimens are mentioned, but if the Visitor will faithfully follow the arrows in the order of their numbers, they will see all the animals that are on exhibition.

