



*By Courtesy of K. W. Green, Esq., A.R.P.S.*

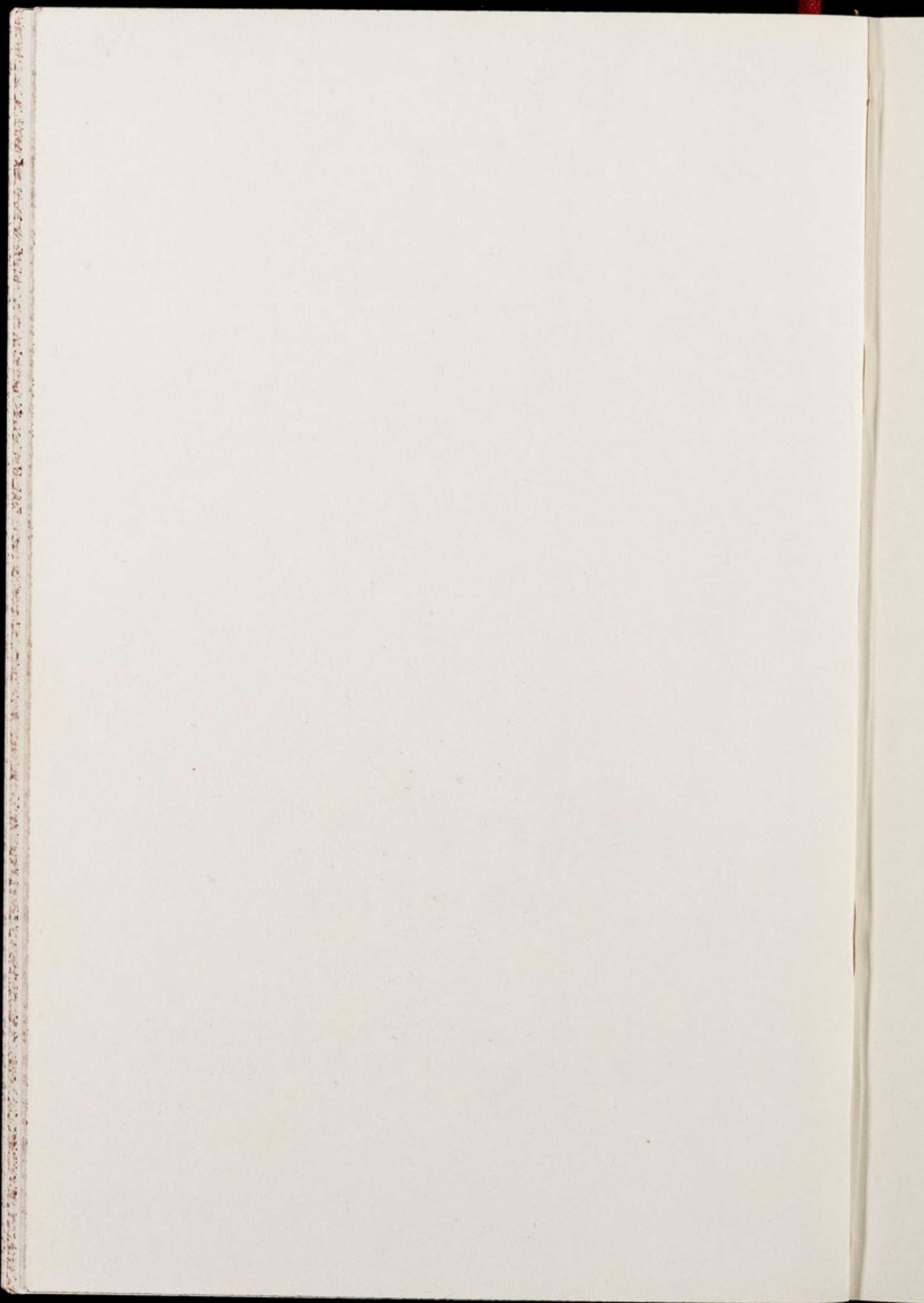
# **Chester Zoo News**

## **AND GUIDE**

**THE NORTH OF ENGLAND ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON - BY - CHESTER**

March 1966

Price 1/-



## Editorial

With the coming of Spring the Zoo once again becomes more active, although during the winter a considerable amount of work has been taking place. As the Spring draws nearer the work becomes more intensified in getting everywhere ready for the crowds, which we expect to start at Easter time. All catering establishments have to be decorated and brought into full use; seats have to be cleaned and painted, pay boxes have to be cleaned and stocked up with the necessary tickets and the animal houses will also have their spring clean.

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*COVER: This month's cover shows our pair of Hippos and young male in their outside enclosure.*

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### BIRTHS

The first Eland to be born during 1966 arrived on February 19th and despite cold weather at the time, is thriving. The addition of this youngster now brings our total herd to seven and several more young are expected in the near future. The entire herd is ruled by the large male, who arrived from East Africa during October 1960 and then underwent a twelve months quarantine period before being brought to the Zoo.

The Eland have the run of a large grass covered enclosure, almost an acre in extent. They are separated from the public by means of a dry ditch and low sandstone wall. This enables the visitors to have a completely unimpaired view of these animals and of course this type of enclosure is used extensively at Chester Zoo.

Eland are the largest of the antelopes; an adult bull can weigh as much as 1,500lbs. Experiments have been carried out in the use of Eland as milk and meat producers. It was found that when kept in stalls they produced good quantities of very rich milk. As meat producers they are also useful, as they are able to graze on pasture where domestic cattle would find it difficult to survive. Another point in their favour is that they are less susceptible to disease and the bite of the tsetse fly — a great pest over much of Africa.

### ARRIVALS

The most venomous of the new arrivals in the Reptile Section were four ten month old and ten two week old Puff Adders. The ten month old adders, of course, are thriving but the young specimens needed quite a lot of attention in getting them to feed, as they were so small; at the time of writing, however, all are doing well.



ELAND

*J. Gwyn Jones.*

The Puff Adder (*Bitis arietans*) is widely distributed over Africa and Southern Arabia but is not found in Equatorial Forests or extreme desert regions. They have been known to reach a length of six feet, but a more normal length would be three to four feet and a specimen of this size would have a girth of about nine inches. When molested they make a loud hissing noise and puff themselves up to a large size which gives rise to the name of Puff Adder.

Many authorities consider that the Puff Adder is one of the main causes of snake bite casualties in Africa. This is probably due to their habit of concealing themselves in long grass; an unsuspecting person could easily tread on one and thus be bitten. They have a very powerful venom which is haematotoxic in action and their poisonous fangs can measure up to one inch in length.

When kept in captivity, Puff Adders appear sluggish but this is often misleading and they will strike when least expected.

The Long-nosed Viper is a poisonous snake and has to be shown great respect. One of these Vipers was presented to us recently and placed in the vivarium with the other five already in stock. We try to keep all our reptiles in enclosures which are decorated with natural stones, rock work and plant life, etc., to make the surroundings as natural as possible for the various individual species.

The venom of the Long-nosed Viper is more powerful than that of the English variety (*Vipera berus*) which is to be found in many districts of England and Wales.

A friendly new arrival in the Bird House is a Canary-winged Parrakeet which has been accommodated in one of the aviaries now reserved for Parrakeet breeding and exhibition. The Canary-winged Parrakeet is found in Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and parts of

Argentina, where they congregate in large flocks. Although they can make good pets, they are usually rather noisy and for this reason are given to the Zoo. A mid-green colour predominates but they do have a yellow wing bar, which gives rise to their name.

### AQUARIUM NEWS

During the past few months, no fewer than sixteen entirely new species of fish have been added to the collection. Included amongst these are Silver Headstanders, Leaf Fish, Prochilodus, many varieties of Simpson Swordtails, several Rasboras and two new species of Piranha.

The Piranha are undoubtedly the most interesting exhibits, the new additions bringing the total number in the collection to twenty-seven. To the best of our knowledge ours is the only Aquarium in the British Isles that can boast four different species of these incredibly savage fish; eight *Rooseveltiella nattereri*; twelve *Serrasalmus rhombeus*; two *Serrasalmus niger*; five *Serrasalmus brandti*.

The *Serrasalmus rhombeus* will eventually be placed with our large *Rooseveltiella nattereri* and will form the largest Piranha tank on show.

Whilst housing all these new exhibits and trying to discover their likes and dislikes, work has progressed at quite a pace; the tanks have been cleaned out and refurnished for the forthcoming season. A new departure has been made in setting up a permanent acid section for those fish — mainly South American Characins — and plants which require these conditions. So far it has been proved most successful; fish which have done well before being placed in these ideal conditions are now positively bursting with health.

Apart from all this interesting work, many of the fish have spawned and the youngsters reared. From our point of view perhaps the most interesting spawning recently was that of our large Marbled Cichlids (*Astronotus ocellatus*), which laid their eggs in a tank containing twenty other fish. The eggs were, therefore, removed and successfully hatched behind the scenes. The first fry was observed on 10th November, 1965; at the time of writing we are pleased to say they have reached the staggering length of three inches and still have another nine inches to go.

### RECENT BUILDING WORK

Work is now going well ahead with the new animal breeding establishment which is being built at 'Greenlands'. We are hoping that before long this building will be in full use and we shall be able to transfer the whole of our existing plant from the farm.

Readers will remember in our last issue we mentioned the amount of rabbits, rats, mice and poultry which had to be bred for feeding. There is an ever growing demand for these as our stock increases.

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The Cafeteria, which was built in 1952, has been redesigned so as to enable the public to receive quicker service.

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Another welcome addition to the Zoo has been the installation of toilets in the Tropical House. So attractive has the Tropical House become, that many people spend quite a long time in this building and toilets became an absolute necessity.

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Work has also been started on the new laboratories which will be a great asset to the Zoo.



INTERIOR OF TROPICAL HOUSE

*Dr. S. Szinai*

# GUIDE TO ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

## ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES

LIONS—3 p.m. except Fridays

SEA LIONS—2-40, 3-40, 4-40 p.m.

BEARS—3-15 p.m.

POLAR BEARS—4-0 p.m.

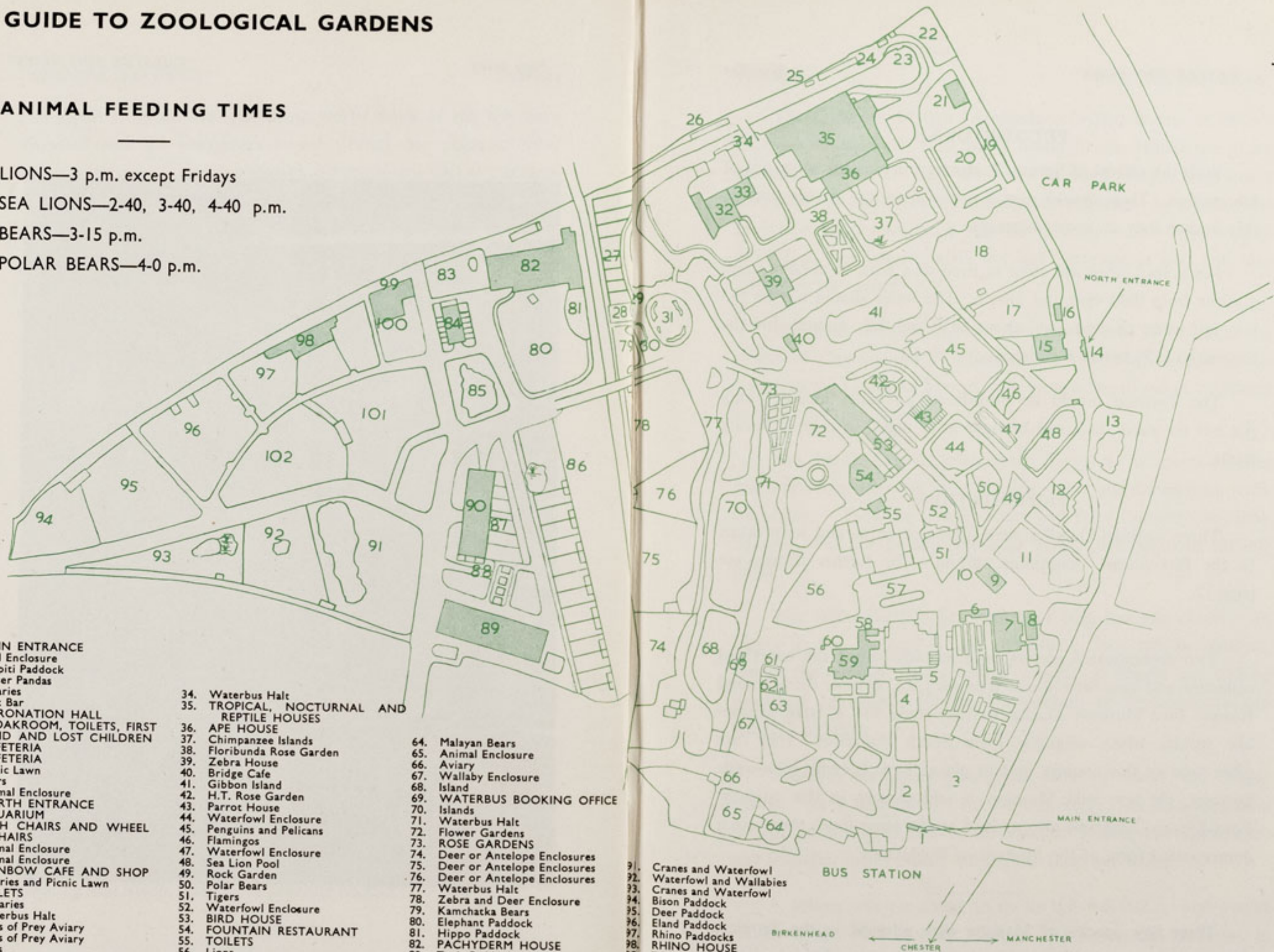
1. MAIN ENTRANCE
2. Bird Enclosure
3. Wapiti Paddock
4. Lesser Pandas
5. Aviaries
6. Milk Bar
7. CORONATION HALL
8. CLOAKROOM, TOILETS, FIRST AID AND LOST CHILDREN
9. CAFETERIA
10. CAFETERIA
11. Picnic Lawn
12. Bears
13. Animal Enclosure
14. NORTH ENTRANCE
15. AQUARIUM
16. PUSH CHAIRS AND WHEEL CHAIRS
17. Animal Enclosure
18. Animal Enclosure
19. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP
20. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn
21. TOILETS
22. Peccaries
23. Waterbus Halt
24. Birds of Prey Aviary
25. Birds of Prey Aviary
26. Owls
27. Jackal Enclosures
28. Wolverines
29. Racoons
30. Coypus
31. Beavers
32. Giraffe House
33. Camel House

34. Waterbus Halt
35. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND REPTILE HOUSES
36. APE HOUSE
37. Chimpanzee Islands
38. Floribunda Rose Garden
39. Zebra House
40. Bridge Cafe
41. Gibbon Island
42. H.T. Rose Garden
43. Parrot House
44. Waterfowl Enclosure
45. Penguins and Pelicans
46. Flamingos
47. Waterfowl Enclosure
48. Sea Lion Pool
49. Rock Garden
50. Polar Bears
51. Tigers
52. Waterfowl Enclosure
53. BIRD HOUSE
54. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT
55. TOILETS
56. Lions
57. NEW ZOO SHOP
58. TOILETS
59. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT
60. G.P.O. Telephone Kiosk
61. Animal Enclosure
62. Animal Enclosures
63. Cheetahs

64. Malayan Bears
65. Animal Enclosure
66. Aviary
67. Wallaby Enclosure
68. Island
69. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE
70. Islands
71. Waterbus Halt
72. Flower Gardens
73. ROSE GARDENS
74. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
75. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
76. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
77. Waterbus Halt
78. Zebra and Deer Enclosure
79. Kamchatka Bears
80. Elephant Paddock
81. Hippo Paddock
82. PACHYDERM HOUSE
83. Tapir Paddock
84. Small Mammal House
85. Waterfowl Enclosure
86. Ankole Cattle
87. Stork Enclosures
88. Monkey Enclosures
89. Cat House
90. MONKEY HOUSE

91. Cranes and Waterfowl
92. Waterfowl and Wallabies
93. Cranes and Waterfowl
94. Bison Paddock
95. Deer Paddock
96. Eland Paddock
97. Rhino Paddocks
98. RHINO HOUSE
99. TOILETS
100. MPILA SNACK BAR
101. Antelope Enclosure
102. Antelope Enclosure

Animals may be moved from time to time.



### PET TORTOISES

With the arrival of Spring, Tortoises will start to come out of hibernation. They should receive every attention at this time as this is when they are most vulnerable.

For a start, they are often in need of a bath to remove dried mucous from their eyes and mouth. The water should not be too hot, just warm to the touch, about 80°F and deep enough for the tortoise to fully immerse its head.

The Tortoise should be introduced gradually outside; only put out on warm days and brought in at night, in case of Spring frosts.

### PRESENTATIONS

Three Arabian Gazelles were presented to us and were taken to the Birkenhead Quarantine station — for further details see page 12.

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Two domesticated species have recently joined the waterfowl collection and have been liberated on the pool opposite the Mammal House. Five Muscovy Ducks arrived; these are a large Goose-like species which originate from South America. They are often kept in this country and in places have become semi-wild; however, the true wild Muscovy is seldom seen in this country. Four Khaki Campbells also arrived at the same time; these are a domesticated form of the Mallard or Wild Duck.

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Three new species of Mynahs were released in the Tropical House; they are two Bank Mynahs, a Common Mynah and a Jungle Mynah, all of which are natives of India.

The Common Mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*) is one of India's most abundant birds even being found in the Himalayas at an altitude of 8,000 ft. They are found in small villages, large towns and cities, in fact anywhere associated with man. In recent years they have been introduced into South Africa, New Zealand and Mauritius, but unfortunately are fast becoming a pest and also killing native species.

The Bank Mynah (*Acridotheres ginginianus*) is found in the plains of Central and Northern India. Although similar in its habits to the Common Mynah, it is more often found in cultivated areas rather than towns.

The Jungle Mynah (*Aethiopsar fuscus*) as its name implies has a preference for the forested areas and is distributed from India to Malaya. They are usually more shy than Common or Bank Mynahs, but can be seen close to human habitation in suitable areas.

Two White-cheeked Touracos have been accommodated in an aviary in the Tropical House. Eventually they will be released, but at the moment the Touracos already at liberty are staking out their territories and the introduction of newcomers would result in fighting.

Touracos are found throughout most of Africa, the White-cheeked being distributed over Eastern Areas. The Touracos have proved rewarding to keep in the Tropical House, the temperature and humidity seems most conducive to their well-being.

A Raven was presented to us by the R.S.P.C.A. and placed in one of the Bird of Prey Flights. The Raven can be found in the more remote areas of this country but is not very abundant anywhere.

New to the Parrot House is a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, the commonest species to be kept in captivity. They are found in Australia and can be taught to talk but very often give voice to loud raucous screams.

### ARABIAN GAZELLES

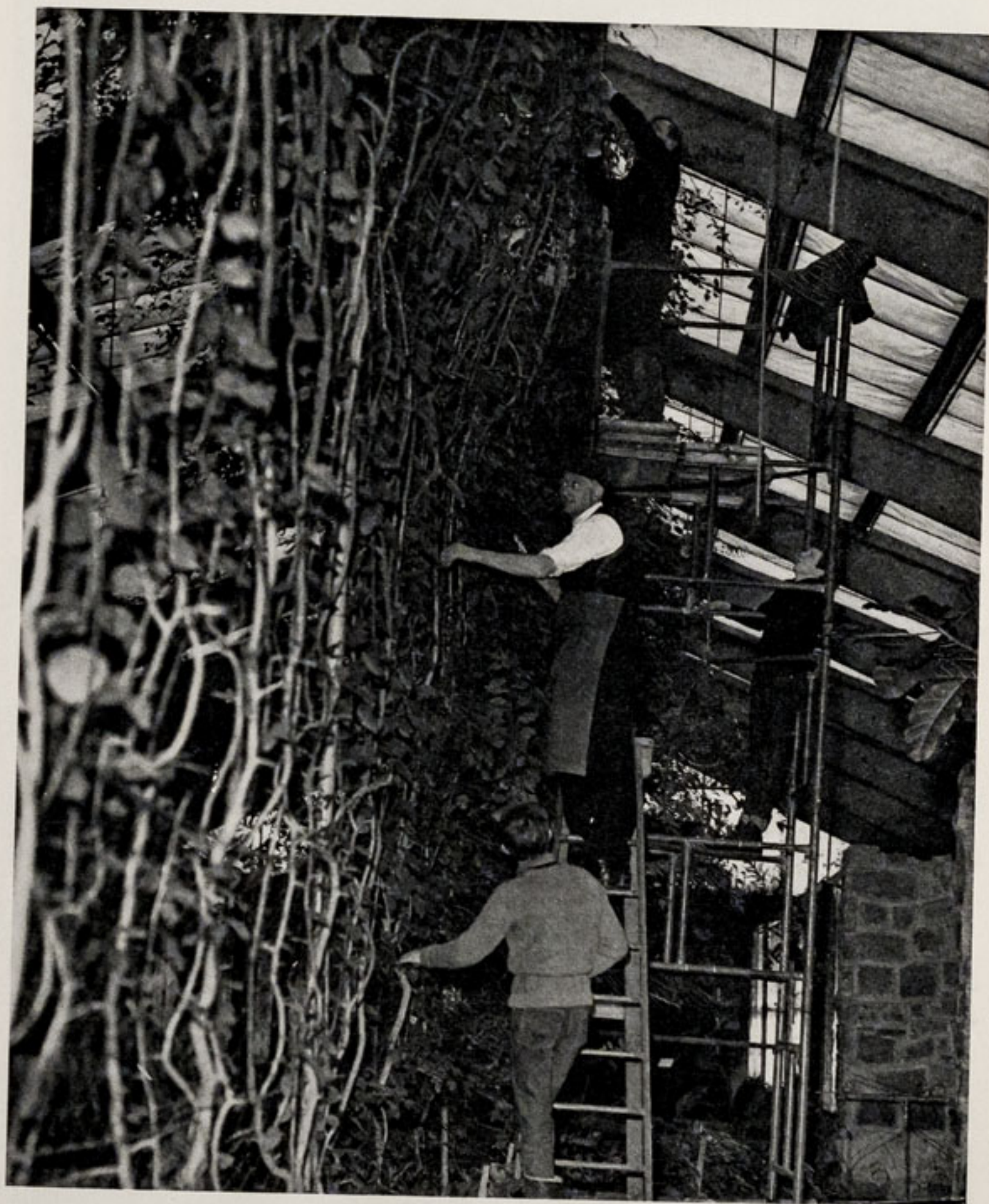
A short time ago we received a letter asking if we would accept a breeding pair of Arabian Gazelles. We were delighted and finally the Gazelles arrived in Liverpool aboard the s.s. Dolius.

We had been warned that a young Gazelle was due to be born and this happened on the voyage from Aden. All three Gazelles, the male 'Anta', the female 'Halawa' and the youngster which we have been unable to sex, were taken to the quarantine station. They will remain there for a year before being brought to the Zoo. The addition of these three brings our herd to eight.

The Quarantine Station is situated in Birkenhead about twelve miles from the Zoo. In accordance with the Ministry of Agriculture regulations, all hoofed animals arriving in this country have to undergo a twelve month quarantine period. As Chester Zoo is in a rural area, all hoofed animals are quarantined at Birkenhead where we have extensive accommodation.

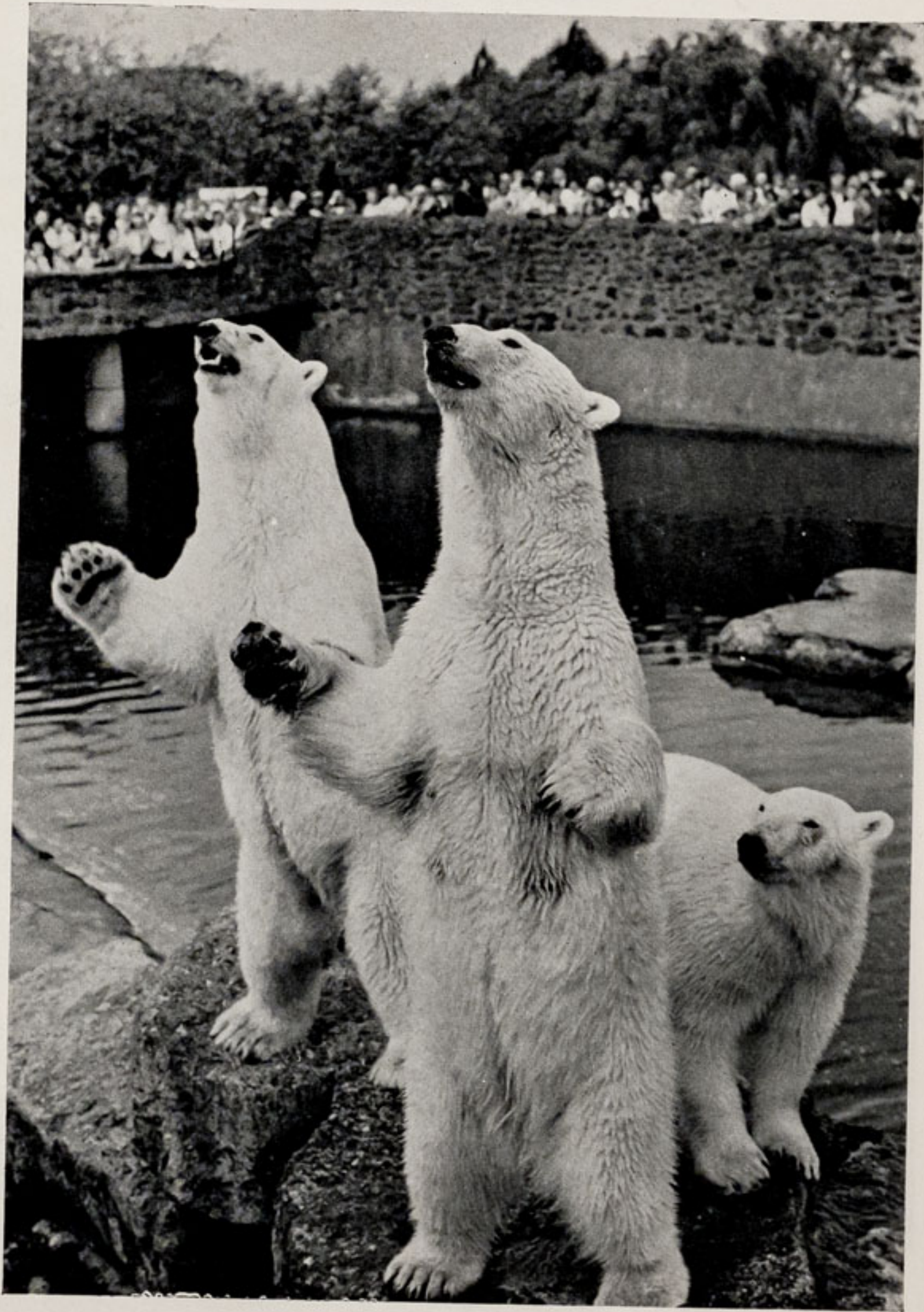
### GARDENING NOTES

In the photograph on page 13, gardeners are seen pruning the Bougainvillæa in the Monkey House. This Bougainvillæa forms a dividing barrier through the centre of the house; some idea can be formed of the height it has attained from the gardeners in the photograph.



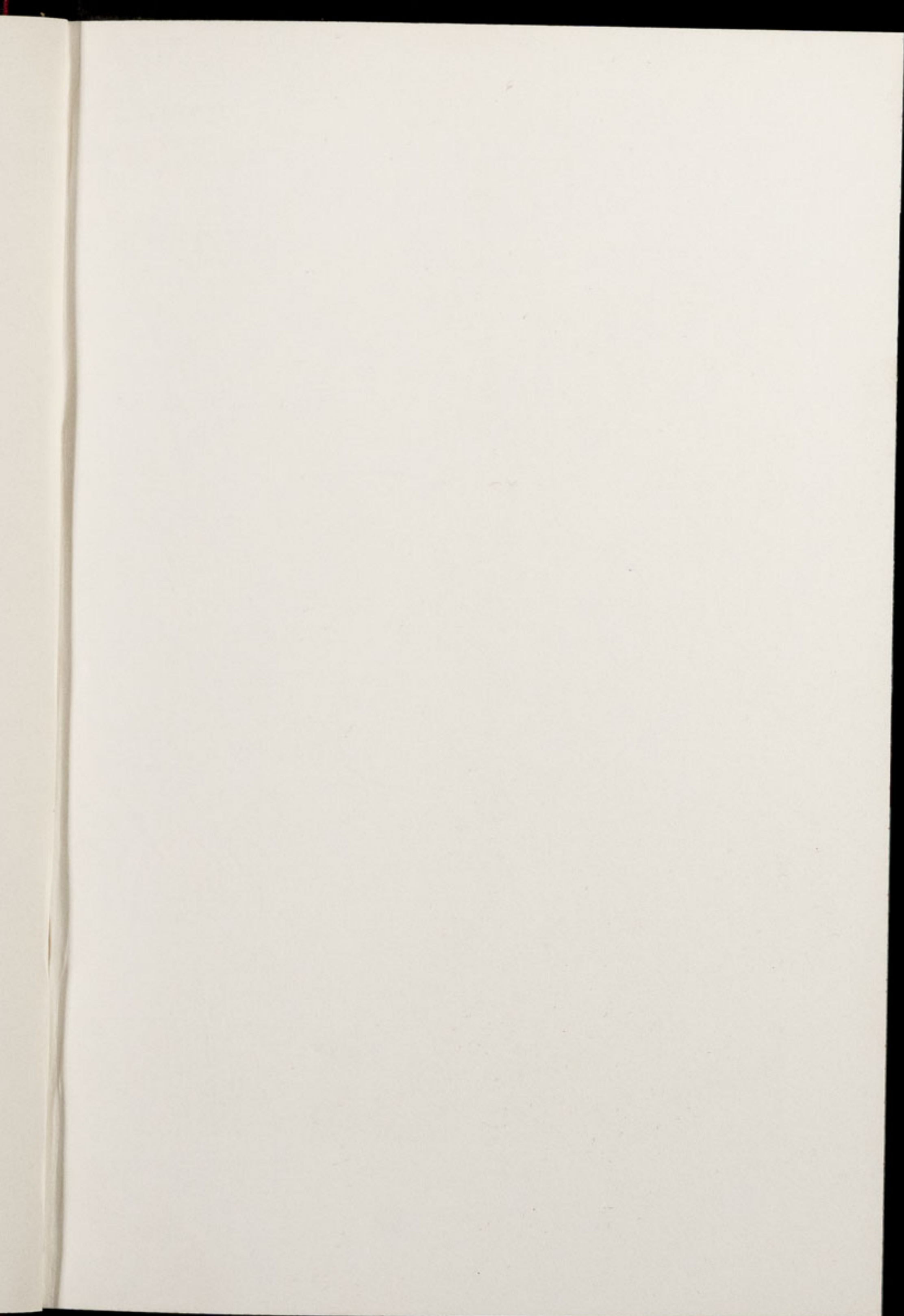
PRUNING THE BOUGAINVILLEA

Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby



POLAR BEARS

*"Cheshire Life"*



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