



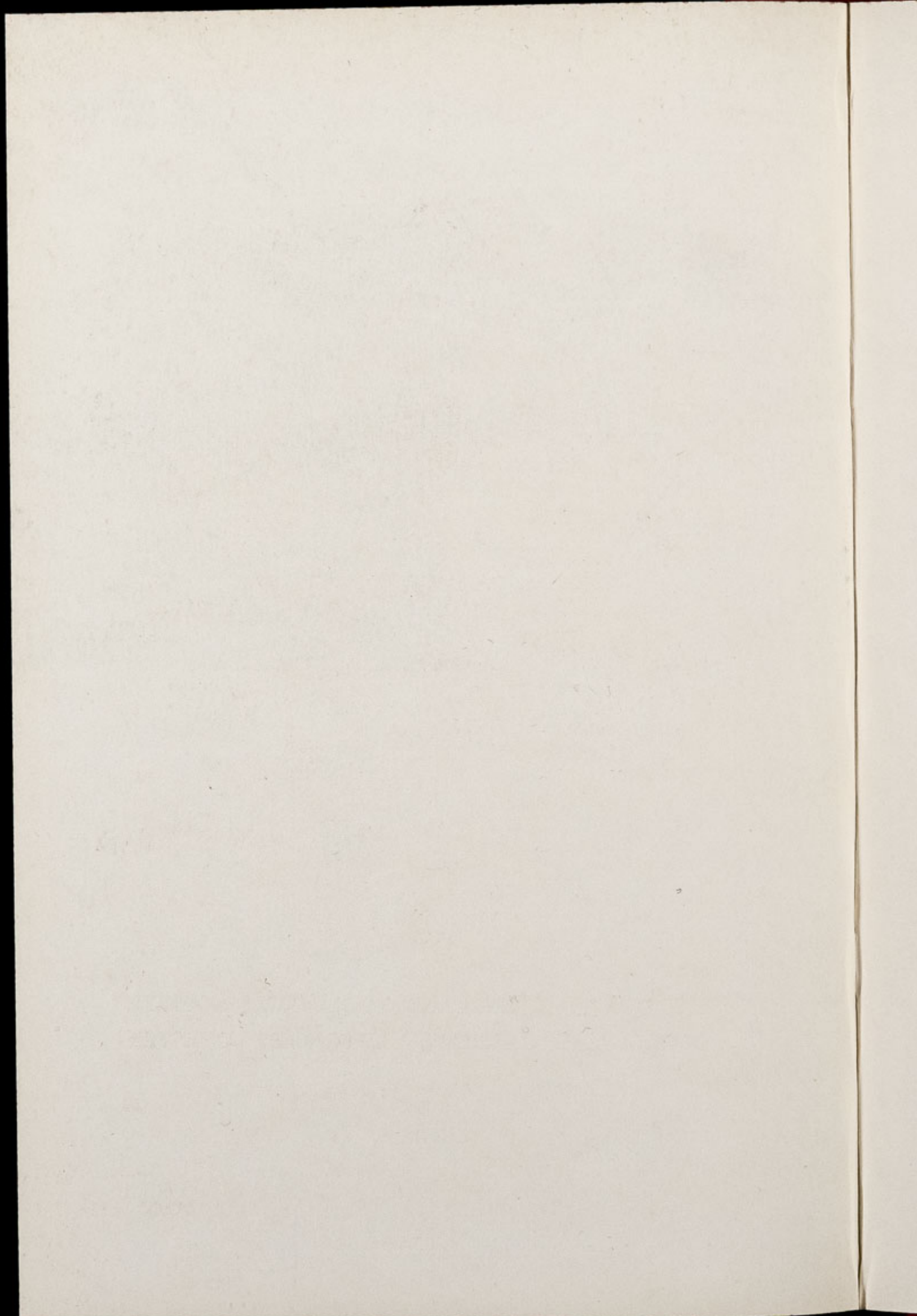
By Courtesy of J. Whitworth, Esq.

Chester Zoo News

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

September, 1964

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Editorial

On Tuesday, 22nd September, Mr. and Mrs. George S. Mottershead, our Director-Secretary and his wife, left Manchester Airport for New York on the first stage of a world tour of Zoos, game parks and reserves. Mr. Mottershead has received invitations to address Zoological Societies in many countries and his journey will take him from America to Canada, then down to Australia, New Guinea and New Zealand before returning via Mauritius, South Africa and Kenya — a trip lasting about 15 weeks.

Whilst in Sydney, Australia, Mr. Mottershead will take the chair at the annual conference of the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens, of which he is President and during the visit to New Zealand, Mr. and Mrs. Mottershead are looking forward to being reunited with their elder daughter Muriel and her family.

We wish them a most pleasant tour and a safe return.

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COVER: Our Cover picture shows the Rhinoceros Iguanas which came to the Zoo in May this year.

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NESTING IN THE TROPICAL HOUSE

As time went on, it became evident that quite a number of the birds liberated in the Tropical House had started breeding. Many of the waxbills, avadavats and birds of that order have reproduced, but perhaps the most thrilling hatching has been that of the Fairy Bluebird.

After spending a considerable time selecting a nesting site the Fairy Bluebirds eventually began building on the wall above the alligator enclosure, near the entrance to the reptile section.

Although we were extremely interested in their progress and were very tempted to investigate we did not disturb the birds but simply left them alone to nest as they wished. At last we were rewarded by the sight of nesting material sticking up over the wall.

After some little time, a broken egg-shell was found below the nest and we knew that a youngster had been hatched. How many eggs had been laid we had no idea but we had evidence of only one.

Still later, when both birds were vacating the nest for longer periods of time, one of the keepers took a quick look into the nest and there was one solitary baby Fairy Bluebird. The keeper reported it to be a fine specimen but as yet it has not left the nest.

The cock Fairy Bluebird frequently perches in the nearby vegetation and gives voice to his feelings in no uncertain way. He is obviously a very proud father.

We have noticed a nest built by the Pintailed Whydah but as yet we have no proof of eggs being laid or babies being hatched. It is a very firm rule that the birds in the Tropical House must be left completely undisturbed. Apart from this the nests are being built in such positions that damage could be done to valuable plants if we attempted to get near them. So we must be patient and observe building operations from a distance.

We are confident that as the years go by, many of the exotic birds will reproduce in these tropical surroundings, thus maintaining their numbers in the House.



J. Gwyn Jones

A CORNER OF THE TROPICAL HOUSE JUST AFTER PLANTING

ONE CHAPTER IN OUR HISTORY

Next to the old Elephant House, now used to quarantine new arrivals, are the remains of our old Polar Bear enclosure. Although the older buildings and enclosures are gradually being replaced, we shall probably retain this as a memento of the very early struggles of Chester Zoo, for it was from this enclosure that the fortunes of Chester Zoo really began.

This enclosure housed old Punch, our first Polar Bear. He was an old animal when the Zoo acquired him, more out of charity than as an exhibit, because the conditions under which he was kept in a small private Zoo were anything but suitable for a Polar Bear. We felt we could do something better and the enclosure we provided, while not perfect, was certainly better than the old tin shed which had been his previous home. Even so, Punch did not appreciate the water we provided for him and refused to bathe in his pool.

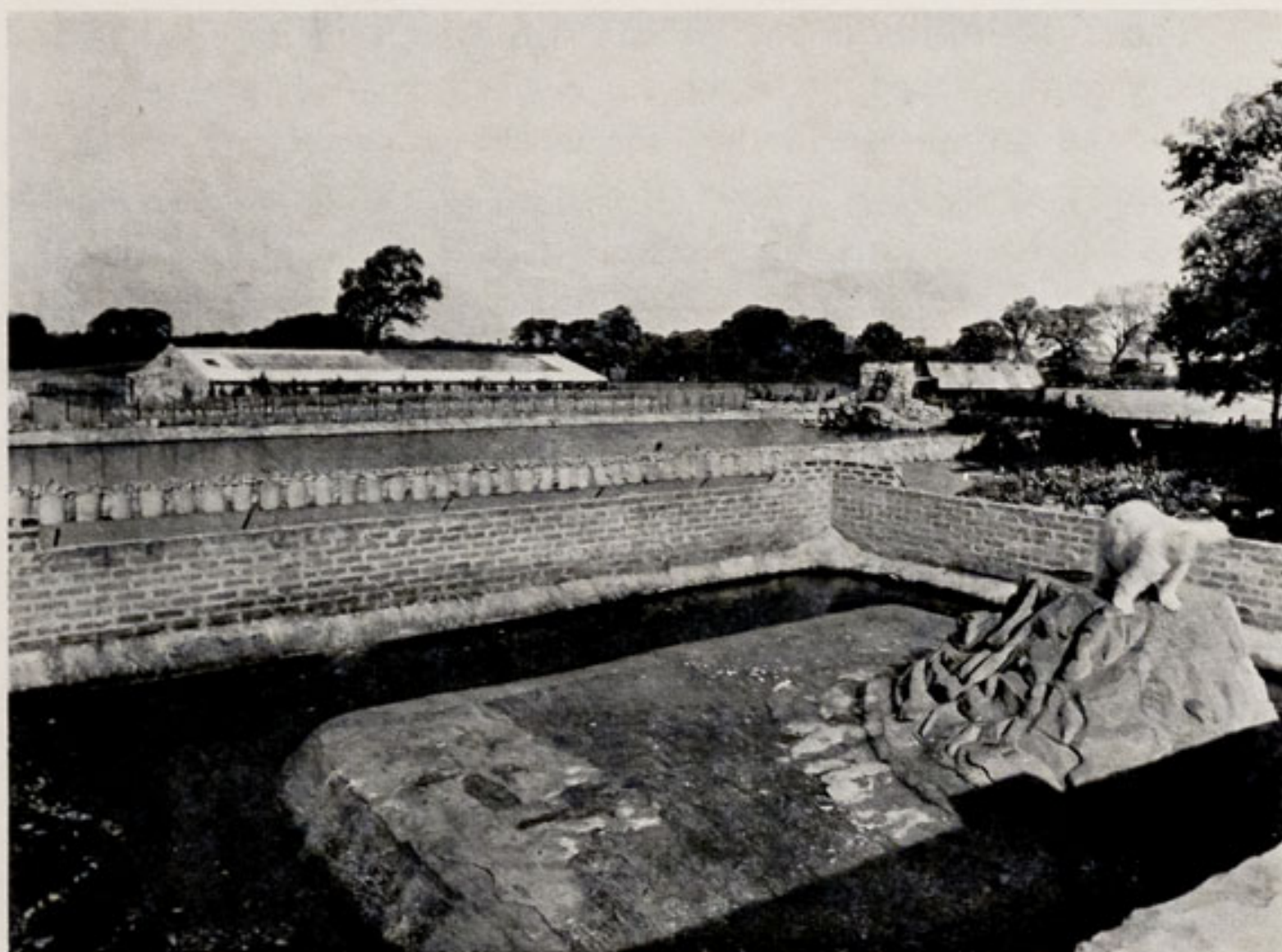
In 1939 a Miss Tompkins-Grafton came to visit the Zoo and she was very perturbed when she saw the Polar Bear enclosure. She wanted to know why we did not provide Punch with a very large swimming pool. The answer was of course simple, it was a matter of finance. Miss Tompkins-Grafton promised to see what she could do to help but unfortunately war broke out and everything came to a standstill — until 1944.

In that year we had to obtain permission to repair the bear enclosures which were then in the old courtyard. We put forward the alternative suggestion that we should build new enclosures and permission was granted for the erection of two bear enclosures immediately opposite the sea-lion pool. One was for the Polar Bears and the other for the Brown Bears. In the polar bear enclosure was a pool containing just over 30,000 gallons of water which was constantly circulated and filtered.

When the enclosure was completed, we invited Miss Tompkins-Grafton to come and see the Polar Bears in their new home. By this time Punch had been joined by a younger bear, Judy. Punch still would not go into the water and was so dirty that we felt rather worried about what Miss Tompkins-Grafton would think. However, she was collected from her Hotel and brought to the Zoo. As she walked to the enclosure wall and looked over, both bears plunged into the water! What had at first been a crystal-clear pool soon resembled pea-soup from the coat of Punch.

After watching the bears for about twenty minutes, Miss Tompkins-Grafton asked to be taken back to her hotel and on the way she turned to the driver and remarked 'I can die in peace now that Punch has got a bath'. Miss Tomkyns-Grafton died the following November and left all her money to Chester Zoo and it was from this point that Chester Zoo was really able to make headway.

Later the Society felt it would like to build a real memorial to Miss Tompkins-Grafton for her kindness and as the Polar Bears were her special interest, we decided to build an entirely new Polar Bear enclosure. This is the one which is so popular in the Zoo today. A plaque placed on this memorial carries the following inscription:—



Will R. Rose Ltd.

THE OLD POLAR BEAR ENCLOSURE

Presented to the Society by Miss Tompkins-Grafton in 1944 and later replaced by the Pool on Page 9 which is such an attraction today.

“TO THE MEMORY OF MISS CATHERINE JANE TOMPKYNS-GRAFTON OF FELLBOROUGH, WINDERMERE AS A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE FOR HER INTEREST IN THE POLAR BEARS AND FOR HER GENEROUS LEGACY WHICH HAS ENABLED THE SOCIETY TO MAKE SO MANY IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE WELL BEING OF THE ANIMALS AND BIRDS AT CHESTER ZOO”.

This legacy enabled the Society to pay off all its liabilities which up to the time of the war had proved such a burden.

Shortly afterwards we acquired a further 42 acres of land adjoining the Zoo and since then we have continued to expand until now the Zoo grounds cover approximately 160 acres. There is an old saying that ‘money makes money’ and this has been amply proved during the years following the legacy.

The Constitution of the Society stipulates that the income and property of the Society, whensoever derived, shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Society as set out in its Memorandum of Association, and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividends, bonus or otherwise to the members of the Society.

This means that the Society has been able to grow year by year, and it is largely because of such a condition that the Zoo has been able to rise to its present standards. We feel that if Miss Tompkins-Grafton were alive today, she would look with pride at the many benefits provided by her generous legacy.

Since 1950 many large buildings and enclosures have been constructed which help to make Chester Zoo one of the most interesting Zoological Gardens to visit. And progress still goes on.

TOUCANS

Three species of Toucans are to be seen in the spacious, planted aviaries in the Tropical House. The Swainson's (*Rhamphastos swainsoni*) and the Ariel (*Rhamphastos ariel*) share an aviary with a Blue-crowned Pigeon, whilst a young pair of Cuvier's (*Rhamphastos cuvieri*), which are less brightly coloured, have an aviary to themselves. These birds cannot be given their liberty within the confines of the house as they are extremely pugnacious towards the smaller birds.

Toucans, of which there are 37 species, are one of the most unmistakable bird families on account of the enormous size of their bills. In spite of its great size, this bill is actually very light in weight because it is honeycombed with air spaces between the hard outer coverings. The Toucan's bill is usually very brightly coloured and as the patterning varies from species to species, the distinctive marking forms a useful guide to its identification.

All species of Toucans are found in the tropical forests of South America from Mexico to Argentina. They live high up in the trees and are usually to be seen in small flocks. Their food in the wild consists mainly of fruit and berries but insects, small birds, mammals and reptiles are also eaten.



J. Gwyn Jones

A YOUNG SWAINSON'S TOUCAN (*Rhamphastos swainsoni*)

In the Zoo we feed them on a variety of chopped fruit with the addition of a little meat and an occasional freshly-killed mouse. Their method of feeding is unique, the bird taking the small pieces of fruit in the tip of its bill, juggling it around for a minute then throwing its head backwards to allow the food to drop into its throat. When a mouse is given, the Toucan will grasp it in the tip of its bill, bang it against a nearby post or branch and then swallow the mouse head first.

Toucans nest in holes in trees — they do not build a nest but just clean out the leaves from the existing hole and lay two to four white-coloured eggs on the bare wood.

The Tropical House is proving to be very suitable for Toucans as the high temperature and humidity closely resemble their natural habitat.

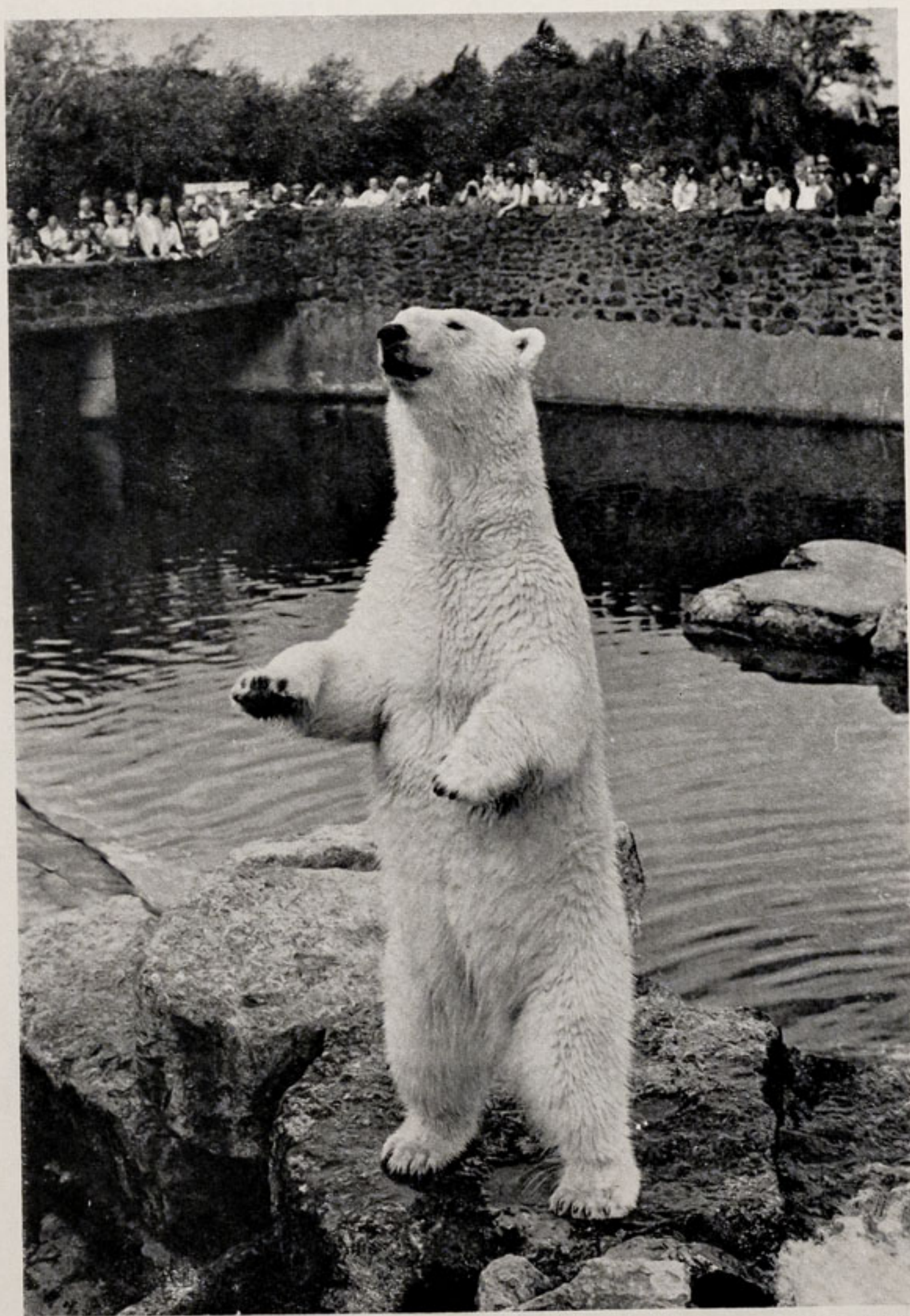
FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

In all Zoos, as one builds and extends, so rough areas appear where old buildings have stood. One such area has developed at Chester Zoo through the demolition of the old Monkey House. To our mind this was always an eye-sore but it was built immediately after the war out of scrap material and, at the time, it was the best we could do. We are happy to say that we have now been able to build a completely new Monkey House.

When the old building came down, it exposed a series of cages which have for many years contained our pumas, hyenas, leopards, etc. Previously the area was covered by a conservatory, but this alas was seriously damaged in the air-raids and had to be demolished. Work is now in progress on new accommodation for these smaller cats. They will be moved to their new house as soon as it is completed and then the old cat cages too can be demolished.

The rough area which will be left is really a most vital spot and we shall redesign it to become a centre piece for the Zoo.

It is our intention to build a modern souvenir shop on the site — one which will enable us to show to better advantage the various



Cheshire Life

ALWAYS POPULAR -- THE POLAR BEAR ENCLOSURE

zoo souvenirs which so many children and adults wish to buy as a memento of their visit. The shop will also provide more space for the films for which there is such a large demand in the summertime.

When this building has been erected we will be able to design something really picturesque in front of it. Although we have not decided the exact form this centre-piece will take, in all probability there will be a fountain and, most certainly, flower beds.

In addition to the old cat cages, we shall demolish the small enclosure which has housed our Husky Dogs for many years. When this is cleared, the Foundation Stone laid in 1937 by the late Lord Leverhulme will be exposed. This is almost the last part of the old Zoo and every effort will be made to turn it into an attractive open area.

On the south side of this area stands the old Elephant House — a solid building constructed of road blocks, sandstone, etc. As it would be too expensive to demolish this house, it will be used as quarantine quarters for some of the feline and canine species which are not allowed on show immediately.

MOUNTAIN GORILLAS

Everyone has noticed the wonderful progress made by Mukisi and Noelle, our pair of Mountain Gorillas since they took up residence in the Tropical House. Here the two animals have a large enclosure in a tropical atmosphere with a passage leading out of doors so that they can come and go at will.

At last they are able to enjoy conditions comparable to their natural habitat and the moist air in the Tropical House has had a remarkable effect upon their general condition. Prior to their transfer to these quarters, the Gorillas' skin had a tendency to dryness and they persisted in pulling out patches of hair from their coats. All this has now changed and they have grown good thick coats. Their physique has improved considerably and we are hoping they will breed in a year or two's time.

The Orang Utans have also shown a marked improvement in general health since they were given similar quarters in the Tropical



J. Whitworth

MUKISI



K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

INTERIOR VIEW OF NEW MONKEY HOUSE

House. One reason is that when both the Orangs and Gorillas lived in the Chimpanzee House they had to spend a considerable amount of time indoors. Now they have the best of both worlds.

GARDENING NEWS

At the time of writing, which is mid-September, we can look back with the satisfaction of knowing that at last we have had a good summer. On the whole the weather has been kind and of great benefit to our gardens.

For the past six weeks we have experienced long spells of dry warm, sunny weather which has really brought all the bedding plants into full flower. It is not often that we have the satisfaction of seeing such a blaze of colour as we have this year and even now the beds show little sign of autumn.

It has been an exceptionally good year for Begonias — rather surprising with the hot sunny days as they do not enjoy too much hot sunshine. How rewarding this Begonia family is when used for bedding, giving continuity of flower from early June until well into October. Canna Lilies have also done well and with all the sunshine must have thought they were in their native Sudan and South Africa.

In the Monkey House the Daturas have been very fine with masses of long trumpet-shaped, sweet-scented flowers. The Bougainvilleas which flowered so well during the early summer are now giving us a second flowering, almost as good.

The plants in the new Tropical House have continued to make rapid growth, due to the high temperature and humidity being maintained. It is interesting to see how some plants, which are usually restricted to pots, enjoy the free root run when planted out in beds.

Such plants as Alocasias and Colocasias have made gigantic leaves with excellent colouring. Several new plants have been added since the initial planting, one in particular being the Red-leafed Banana, a welcome addition to the collection.

In the greenhouse, various plants are being housed in their winter quarters. All cuttings have now been taken and are being tended with care, as on the successful rooting of these depends our next summer's bedding display and, with the shrubs, the future planting of shrubberies in the Zoo.

NEW ARRIVALS

20th August saw the birth of our second Bison calf this year. A delightful little fellow, he can be seen sleeping in the sun in the Bison Paddock. What a pity that as he grows, his golden brown coat will darken and make him indistinguishable from his brothers.

During August our Reptile Collection benefited from several

presentations including a European Green Lizard, American Garter Snake, Brown House Snake, and the most interesting of all, a Boomslang. Next month we hope to tell you more about this unusual specimen.

A Two-Spot Civet arrived at the Zoo on the 30th August. The animal — a fine healthy male — was presented to the Society by Mr. S. L. Hobden who brought it to Chester from Sierra Leone. Mr. Hobden also presented us with an attractive pair of Red-faced Love Birds.

On 3rd September a further collection of birds was released in the Tropical House, including Blue-Breasted Waxbills, Blue-Headed Waxbills, Cordon Bleus, Scarlet Tanagers and a Red Avadavat.

Seven puppies were born to our Husky dogs on the 13th September. All the puppies are males and, as with previous litters, they will be going to new homes when they are old enough.

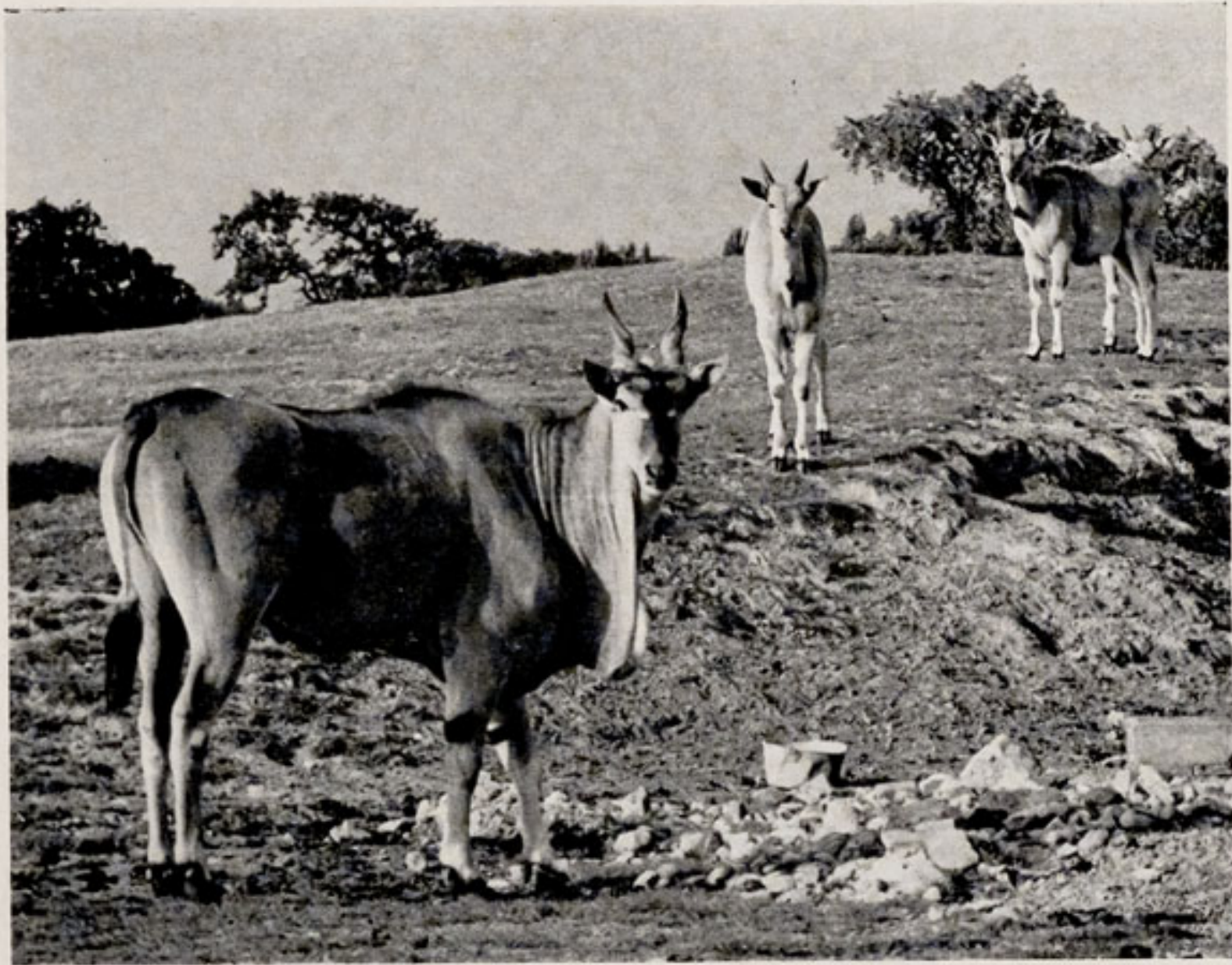
On the 15th September Jill, one of our Llama family gave birth to a beautiful little daughter.

In the Bird House our Golden-Mantled Rosella Parrakeets which breed each year have hatched three youngsters and a baby has been successfully reared by a pair of Scaly-Breasted Lorikeets.

We are happy to record the birth of a baby Chimpanzee to Meg, the eldest member of the Chimpanzee colony. Much to our surprise Meg has decided to rear the youngster herself. In previous years she has abandoned her offspring soon after birth, but at the time of writing she is proving to be a most attentive mother.

A LANDSCAPED ZOO

In the area of the Zoo beyond the Monkey House one can now see not only the Brindled Gnu and the Oryx but also the Black Rhino, White Rhino, Eland, Père David's Deer and Bison without any fences whatsoever obstructing the view. When the Eland, in particular, stand on top of their mound outlined against the sky-



K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

ELAND

line, they make a very spectacular picture and one feels that never again should we attempt to confine animals like these in fenced yards.

During the winter months we are hoping to replace the fences around our Wapiti enclosure with a ditch and low wall. These animals do a tremendous amount of damage to fences and this method — known as an Aha — seems the ideal way to confine them.

We have many antelopes and deer, at present in compounds surrounded by fences, but as time goes on we hope to replace these with the aha, which has so many advantages. Firstly, it allows the visitor an uninterrupted view of the animals; secondly it helps considerably to drain the enclosure and thirdly, when cold winds are blowing, the animals seek shelter in the ditch. Thus, with this protection they stay out of doors during the colder weather and visitors can still enjoy seeing them during the winter months.

In time we hope to provide such accommodation for our Waterbuck, Fallow Deer, Lechwe, Sitatungas, Bushbuck and our newest arrivals — unfortunately still confined to quarantine quarters — a really delightful pair of Gazelles.

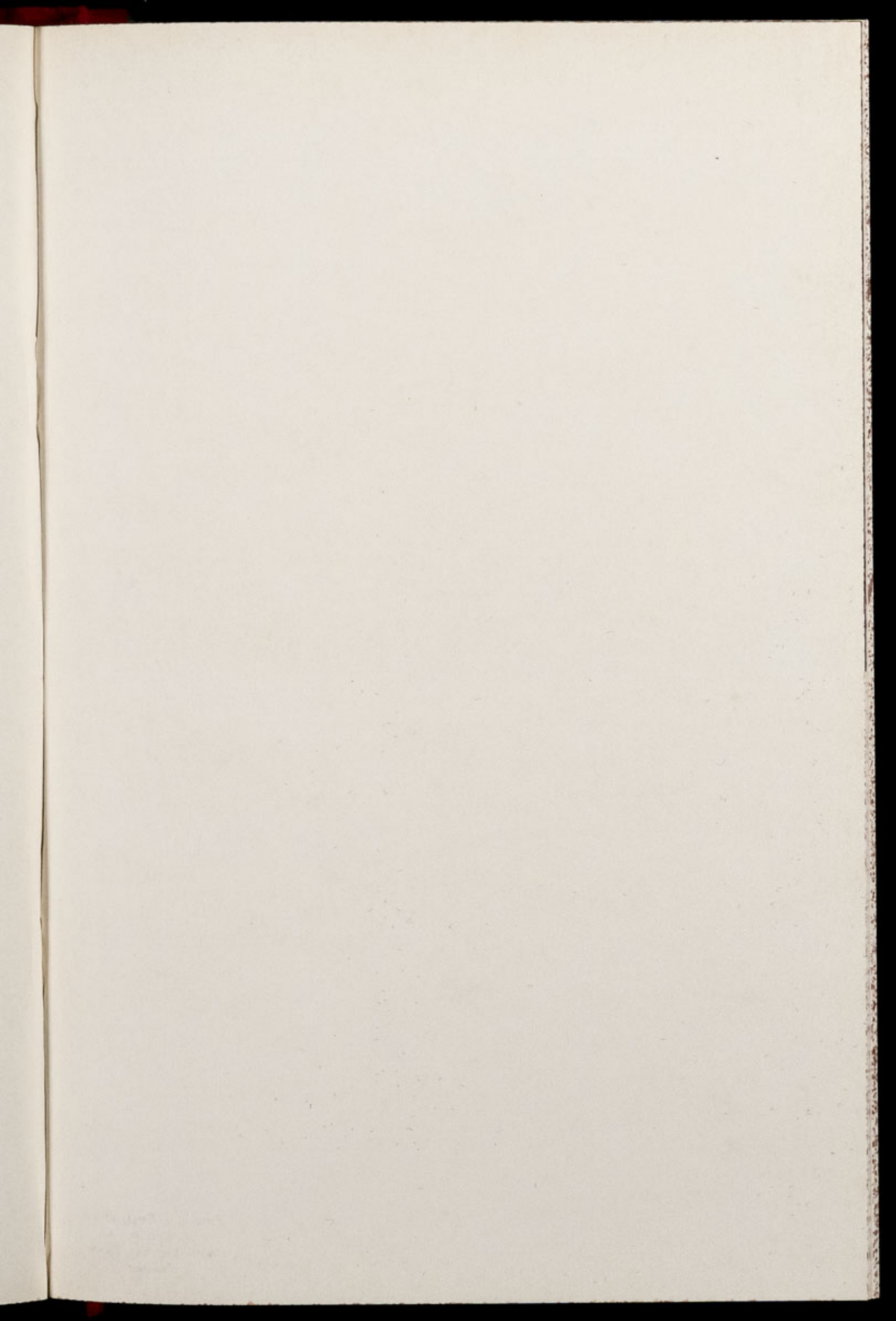
In constructing these enclosures we are also making provision for their planting with trees to add interest to the landscape and again, to provide the animals with protection from the sun and wind.

In a previous issue we mentioned that our Gnus had been moved to one of the new paddocks opposite the Rhino Enclosure. Here they have quickly settled down and make a very good show indeed.

Within the last week the next door paddock has been completed and we have transferred the Oryx to this enclosure. All was well when the animals were moved to their new home but to the consternation of the keepers, who for years had been able to enter their enclosure quite safely, one of the male Oryx turned on them each time they approached. The result is that we have had to make a passageway alongside one of the fences so that food and bedding can be taken to their covered quarters without any risk to the keepers.

We are glad to say the Oryx, like the Brindled Gnu have settled down well and are a wonderful sight in their new paddock.





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