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Chester Zoo News

AND GUIDE

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

February 1970

Price 1/-



The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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COVER: Lion in his spacious enclosure near the Oakfield Restaurant.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION SEVENTEEN SHILLINGS POSTAGE PAID

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ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

The latest arrivals at the Monkey House are a pair of Squirrel Monkeys (*Saimiri sciureus*) from South America which have been presented to the Society.

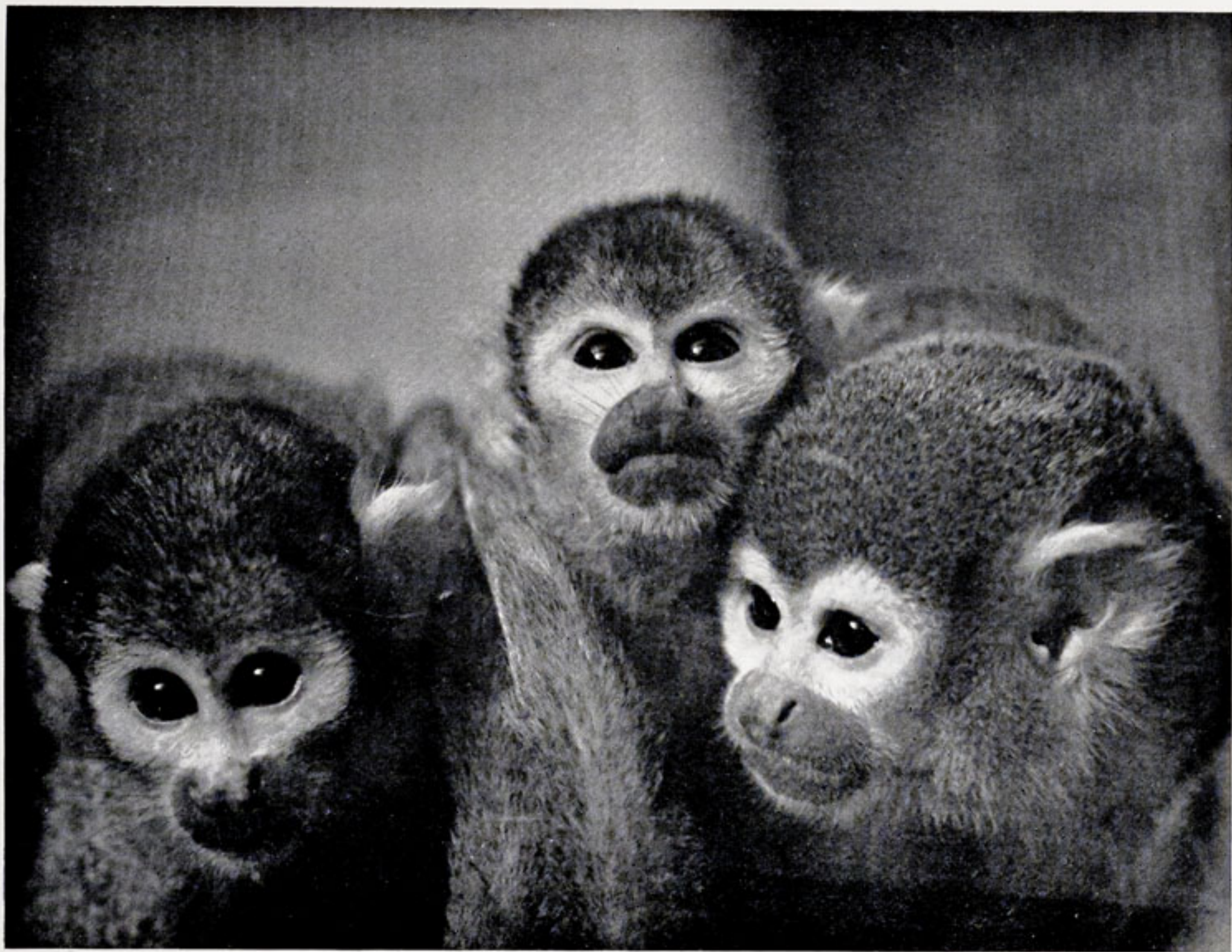
A Kamchatka Bear (*Ursus arctos collaris*) has given birth to three cubs. For some weeks she has nursed them in her den but they are now on view to the public. The Kamchatka is a sub-species of Brown Bear found in the Kamchatka Peninsula in North East Asia. The cubs are born blind and helpless after a gestation period of 180-250 days. At birth they are relatively small measuring only about 8in. long and weighing 1½lbs. but growth is rapid and at nine months old they are well able to fend for themselves. They reach full maturity at three years of age.

Two Ground Squirrels have been born in the Nocturnal House. This species has only one litter of usually 4 to 6 young each year, which are born blind and naked. The gestation period lasts for about 30 days and the young are weaned at six weeks.

NEW BUILDINGS

With the 1970 season near at hand we thought this would be a good opportunity to report on the building which has been in progress during last winter.

Visitors to Chester Zoo last year saw the new Ape House which was built near the North Entrance and accommodates the Lowland Gorillas and Orang-Utans. Adjoining the house on the south side a large free-flight aviary has been erected which covers an area of approximately 5,300 square feet and reaches a height of about 25 feet at the highest point. It has been planted with willow, silver



SQUIRREL MONKEYS

G. W. Ward

birch and many shrubs and will be stocked with a wide variety of birds including Cattle Egrets, Ibis and Quail. The design incorporates grassy banks, pools, rockwork and cascading waterfalls, a feature which should be of special appeal to visitors. Provision has been made for those birds which like a certain amount of shelter so that these nevertheless will remain visible to the public. The whole of the aviary can be seen from a path surrounding it and also under cover from the Ape House. The adjacent areas are being landscaped with borders, flowers and shrubs.

PARROT HOUSE

Opposite the flight aviary a new Parrot House has been built which is rather interesting in its construction. Efforts have been made to avoid "straight lines" and the sixteen aviaries, positioned eight along each side of the house, are built at an angle of 45° to the straight wall which produces the effect of zigzag walls and provides two viewing places both inside and outside at each aviary.

This house has been constructed particularly to accommodate hard-billed birds such as Macaws, Cockatoos and Parrots which do so much damage to wire in ordinary aviaries. The birds are separated from the public by strong weld mesh on the outside and by double-glazed windows on the inside which both insulate the inner hall and prevent any condensation which might be caused by the difference in temperature between this hall and the aviaries. Most of the birds which occupy these aviaries do not require very warm temperatures, but each cage is wired so that if necessary it can be heated independently by a small electric heater. The main indoor hall for the public is planted with sub-tropical vegetation and heated constantly by currents of warm air blown through the building.



VIEW OF THE NEW PARROT HOUSE

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

Each aviary comprises an inner and an outer compartment with connecting glass doors. In summer these doors will be left open but during cold weather the birds will have access to the outer section through a small square hole in the wall. Tubes into which branches can be inserted have been fixed into the floors so that when the branches are chewed through they can be renewed. In fact every effort has been made to design aviaries which will facilitate cleaning and maintenance and ensure maximum hygiene.

At one end of the house there is a flight for smaller birds, possibly Humming-birds or some soft-bills.

In the area between this Parrot House and the Aquarium a new building has been erected which incorporates a pushchair depot, first aid post and a room specially prepared to accommodate lost children. Not surprisingly many children get lost in the Zoo each year and sometimes it is a work of art keeping them occupied until they are reclaimed. Zoo Guides can also be purchased at this point.

NEW ENTRANCE

A new entrance is under construction almost opposite to the new pushchair depot and a few yards to the north of the existing entrance. It will be the fourth to be erected on this site since the North Car Park was opened but in those days the number of visitors was a fraction of today's figure; for some years now over a million people have passed through the North Entrance gates annually. The new arrangement will prevent congestion and speed the flow of visitors into the grounds.

ZOO CORRESPONDENCE

One of the thickest files in the Zoo offices is labelled "*Requests for Information*". In recent years the volume of this correspondence



MOUNTAIN GORILLA NOELLE

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

GUIDE TO ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES

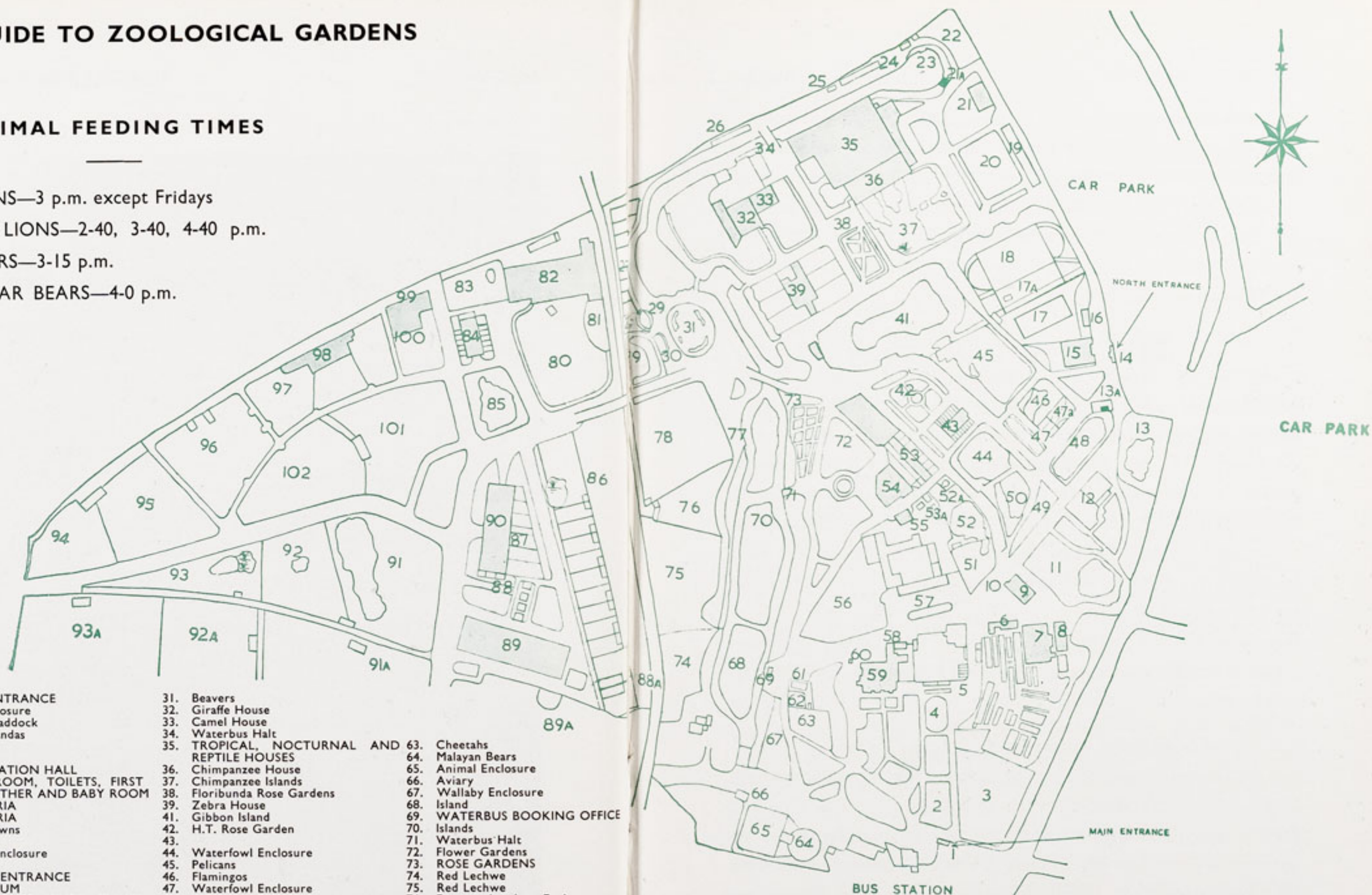
LIONS—3 p.m. except Fridays

SEA LIONS—2-40, 3-40, 4-40 p.m.

BEARS—3-15 p.m.

POLAR BEARS—4-0 p.m.

- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. MAIN ENTRANCE | 31. Beavers | 63. Cheetahs |
| 2. Bird Enclosure | 32. Giraffe House | 64. Malayan Bears |
| 3. Wapiti Paddock | 33. Camel House | 65. Animal Enclosure |
| 4. Lesser Pandas | 34. Waterbus Halt | 66. Aviary |
| 5. Aviaries | 35. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND REPTILE HOUSES | 67. Wallaby Enclosure |
| 6. Milk Bar | 36. Chimpanzee House | 68. Island |
| 7. CORONATION HALL | 37. Chimpanzee Islands | 69. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE |
| 8. CLOAKROOM, TOILETS, FIRST AID, MOTHER AND BABY ROOM | 38. Floribunda Rose Gardens | 70. Islands |
| 9. CAFETERIA | 39. Zebra House | 71. Waterbus Halt |
| 10. CAFETERIA | 41. Gibbon Island | 72. Flower Gardens |
| 11. Picnic Lawns | 42. H.T. Rose Garden | 73. ROSE GARDENS |
| 12. Bears | 43. | 74. Red Lechwe |
| 13. Animal Enclosure | 44. Waterfowl Enclosure | 75. Red Lechwe |
| 13a. Kiosk | 45. Pelicans | 76. Deer or Antelope Enclosures |
| 14. NORTH ENTRANCE | 46. Flamingos | 77. Waterbus Halt |
| 15. AQUARIUM | 47. Waterfowl Enclosure | 78. Zebra and Deer Enclosure |
| 16. PUSH CHAIRS, WHEEL CHAIRS, FIRST AID, LOST CHILDREN | 47a. Penguins and Otters | 79. Kamchatka Bears |
| 17. Parrot House | 48. Sea Lion Pool | 80. Elephant Paddock |
| 17a. Large Flight Aviary | 49. Rock Garden | 81. Hippo Paddock |
| 18. APE HOUSE | 50. Polar Bears | 82. PACHYDERM HOUSE |
| 19. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP | 51. Tigers | 83. Tapir Enclosure |
| 20. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn | 52. Waterfowl Enclosure | 84. Small Mammal House |
| 21. TOILETS | 52a. Anteater | 85. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 21a. Tuatara House | 53. BIRD HOUSE | 86. Antelope and Cattle |
| 22. Peccaries | 53a. Nursery | 87. Storks and Ostriches |
| 23. Waterbus Halt | 54. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT | 88. Monkey Enclosures |
| 24. Birds of Prey Aviary | 55. TOILETS | 88a. Lion and Tiger Enclosure |
| 25. Birds of Prey Aviary | 56. Lions | 89. Cat House |
| 26. Owls | 57. NEW ZOO SHOP | 89a. Jaguars |
| 27. Jackal and Hyaena Enclosures | 58. TOILETS | 90. MONKEY HOUSE |
| 28. Animal Enclosure | 59. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT | 91. Waterfowl |
| 29. Porcupines and Raccoons | 60. G.P.O. Telephone Kiosk | |
| 30. Coypus | 61. Animal Enclosure | |
| | 62. Animal Enclosure | |



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|-----------------------------|
| 91a. Highland Cattle |
| 92. Waterfowl and Wallabies |
| 92a. Llamas and Alpacas |
| 93. Cranes and Waterfowl |
| 93a. Zebroids |
| 94. Bison Paddock |
| 95. Deer Paddock |
| 96. Eland and Marmots |
| 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

has increased steadily and it is a trend which the Zoo encourages. A large percentage of the letters are from school-children and students working on zoological projects but the rest cover a wide range of topics. All the information is given free of charge and our only stipulation is that enquirers should pay the cost of return postage. It will be appreciated that otherwise our annual postal bill would be astronomical.

Most of the queries concern the behaviour, appearance, etc., of wild animals but we are sometimes asked for advice by pet owners about diet, accommodation or breeding. Frequently when animals fail to breed it is as a result of too much close contact with the owners. The pets are "humanised" and either lose interest in or don't recognise their own kind. Letters have also been received from people who have rescued abandoned or injured wild animals, asking for advice on the best treatment. One gentleman sent us a splendid drawing of a caterpillar which he thought could be quite rare, though unfortunately we could not positively identify it from this alone. Noelle's pregnancy and the birth of Bimbo the Hippopotamus brought a flood of enquiries and a charming 'New Arrival' card!

Several people have written to us for advice on buying "exotic" pets but in most cases our replies have been gently discouraging. Many animals are acquired when young and very appealing but once mature the same animals may become unruly, prone to unexpected biting and develop habits which by human comparison are most unpleasant. The number of such pets, particularly Monkeys, offered to zoos from owners no longer able to manage them is sufficient indication that it is not a wise venture for people without the proper facilities. Furthermore, lack of space prevents most zoos from accepting all but a small percentage of animals offered.

The awakening concern and interest in conservation has brought a number of enquiries, particularly from schoolchildren working on projects, about endangered species and current measures to protect them. In the long term, education will be a vital factor in the success of conservation and we welcome any opportunity to help in this direction.

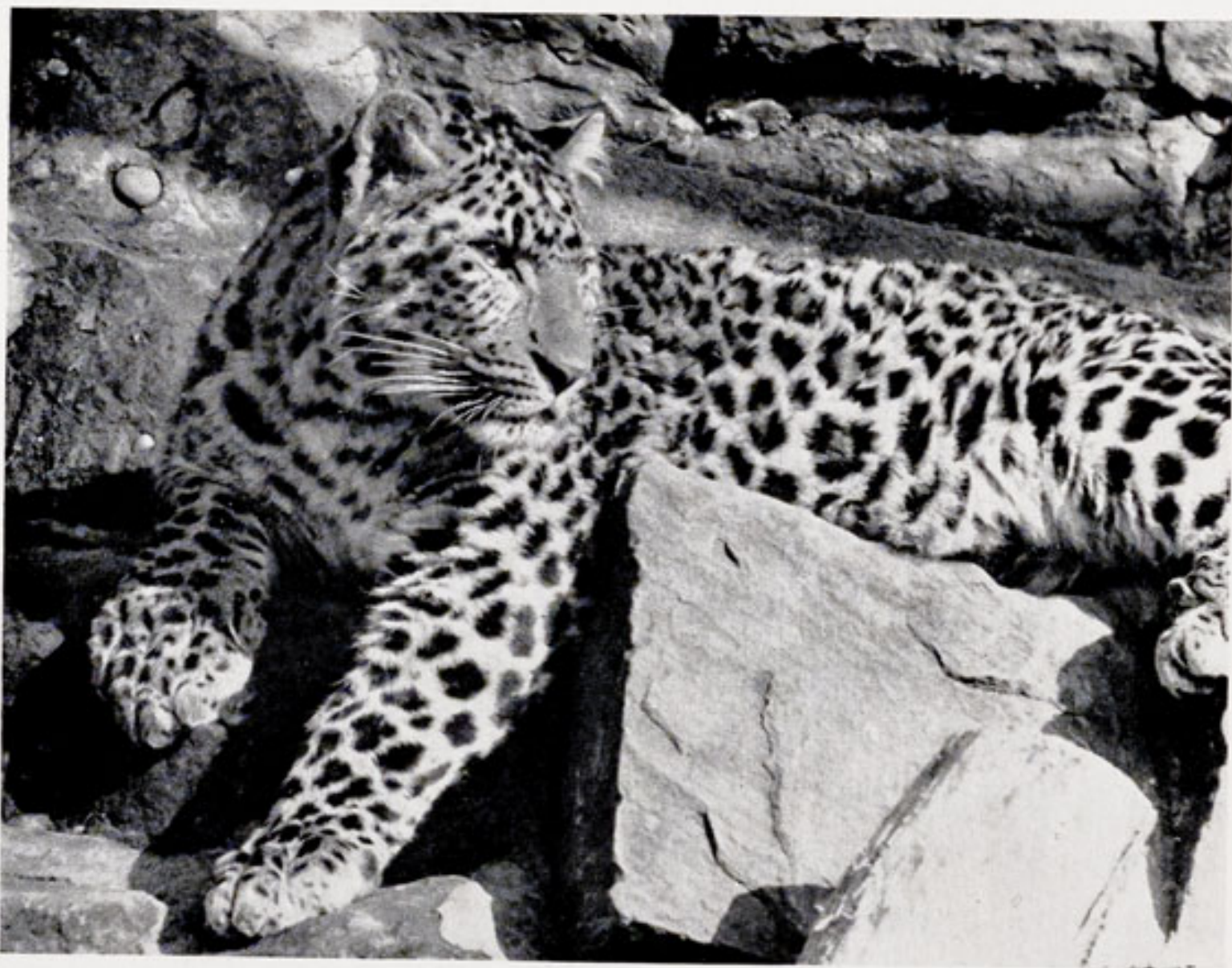
Letters come from all over the world and a popular past-time seems to be collecting zoo brochures. Over the past few months we have corresponded regularly with a young man from Sweden who has sent us some very interesting photographs and accounts of Swedish Zoos and in return we have sent him similar material about Chester Zoo. We are familiar with the Swedish Zoos but we were pleased to have this refreshing personal account.

In addition to answering letters we have in stock some forty information leaflets covering a wide range of topics including Mountain and Lowland Gorillas, Elephants, various Snakes, Lizards, Monkeys and Big Cats and even one on the fascinating Prairie Marmot colony. Three sheets of photographs are also available, one each of Mammals, Birds and Reptiles, which make excellent wallcharts for classrooms. Under each heading there are six postcard-size black and white photographs of interesting animals in the Zoo and these are changed periodically. Included in the current set are photographs of a baby Black Rhino, the Lowland Gorillas, a Great Indian Hornbill, an Anaconda and a rare Tuatara.

During the summer many parties of schoolchildren visit the Zoo and a set of educational leaflets is available to teachers on request. The topics fall roughly into three groups: the first gives general information on Mammals, Birds, Reptiles and Fish; the second, information about the general running of the Zoo which covers food, attendance statistics, duties of keepers and the role of the veterinary surgeon; finally there is a section dealing with specialised animal characteristics under such headings as Animal Camouflage and Nocturnal Animals. All the information relates to animals in the

collection and the intention is to provide the children with some basic facts which they will be able to observe and identify for themselves on their visit.

The information and educational leaflets and the sheets of photographs are available free, apart from 10d. in stamps to cover postage.



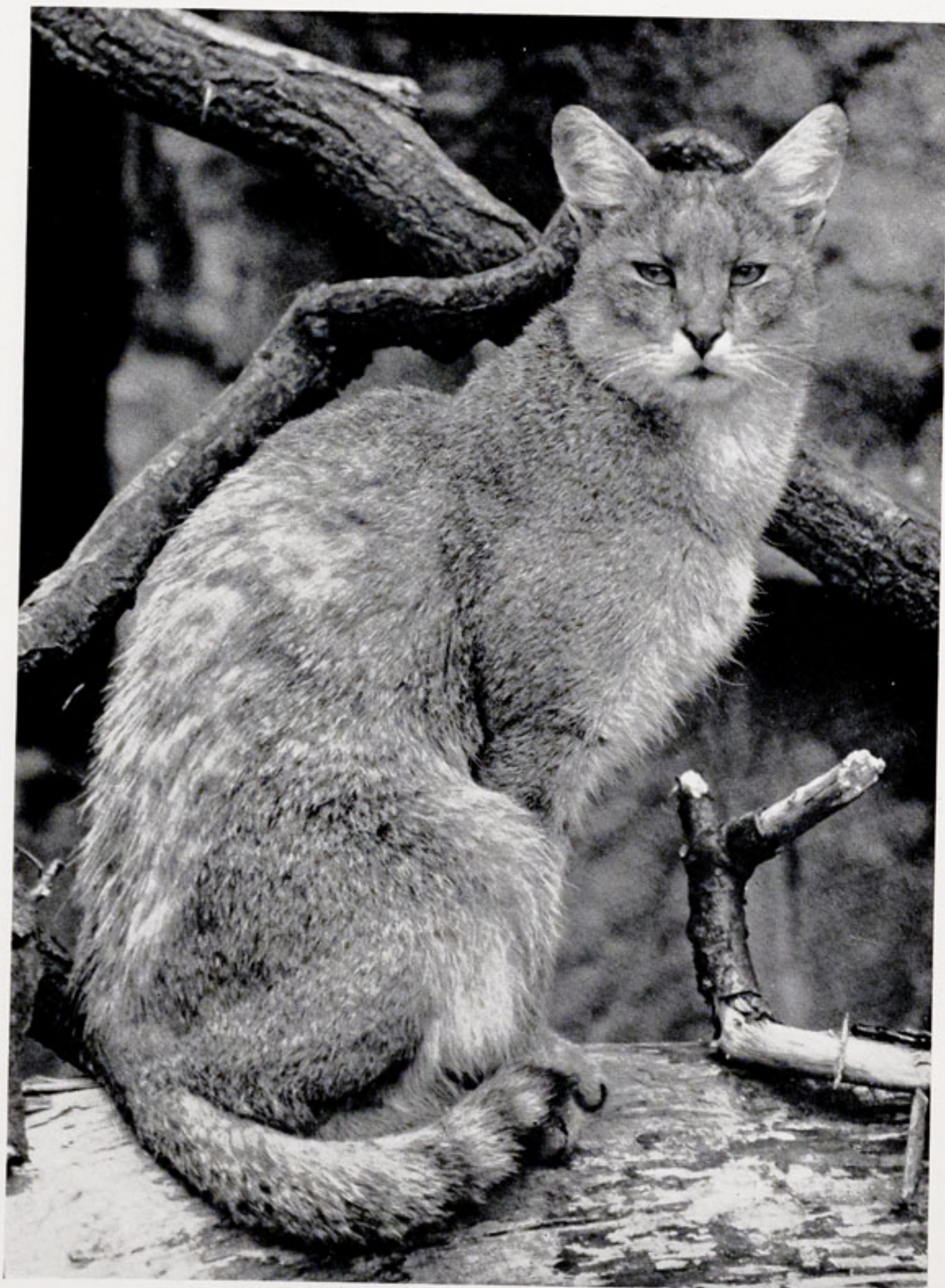
K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

AMUR LEOPARD

AMUR LEOPARD AND JUNGLE CAT

Pictured above is one of the rare Amur Leopards (*Panthera pardus orientalis*) we mentioned in last month's "Zoo News". It is a little smaller than the Common Leopard and has very thick soft fur and a bushy tail. In the wild a few still exist in North Korea and in the Amur district on the borders of the U.S.S.R.

On the right looking rather like a large domestic cat is a Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*). This species comes from the grassland areas of



JUNGLE CAT

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

Asia and North Africa where it hunts small mammals and birds. Fully grown, it is almost twice the size of a domestic cat and is not easily tamed.

Both the Jungle Cat and the Amur Leopard can be seen in the Cat House, No. 89 on the Zoo Plan.



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

SPECTACLED OWL

SPECTACLED OWL AND BRAHMINY KITE

The amusing photograph above is of a rare Spectacled Owl (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*) a species which comes from Central and South America.

The wings and lower body of the Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur indus*) pictured on the right, are a rich chestnut brown which contrasts strikingly with the white head and breast. This species is found over



BRAHMINY KITE

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

an extensive area from India throughout South East Asia to Australia, usually near water. In some sea ports the Brahminy Kite is a scavenger and can be found over the harbours in search of refuse. Further inland it is more shy and hunts along the banks of rivers and in paddy fields for frogs, small snakes and fish, etc.

Both birds can be seen in the Owl aviaries (No. 5 on the Zoo Plan) near the Oakfield Restaurant,

NEW PUBLICATION

A new book by June Johns has been published entitled "Little Brother". It is a lively account of the friendship between a young Chimpanzee Tammy and Craig Timmis, son of a Curator at Chester Zoo and is written for children between the ages of 9 and 11.





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