



*By Courtesy of J. Whitwo*

# Chester Zoo News

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

March, 1964

Price 1/-



## Editorial

Many readers may have seen the B.B.C. Television programme "World Zoos" which featured Chester, on Friday, 14th February. Although the programme took only a brief twenty-five minutes, viewers were able to see the Giraffes, Gnus, Gorillas, Chimps, Orang Utans, Brown and Black Bears, American Bison, Père David Deer, Eland, Polar Bears and a glimpse of the new Rock Garden.

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*COVER: Our Cover Picture this month shows Chester Zoo's female Bengal Tiger relaxing in the sun.*

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### ZOO BABIES

**WALLABY:** The first baby Bennet's Wallaby of 1964 was seen peeping out of mother's pouch on the 15th of February. All our Bennet's Wallabies are now accommodated in one of the Crane and Waterfowl enclosures opposite the Rhino House.

**"MAXIE":** The Baby Giraffe, pictured opposite with his mother, is growing fast. At first he was "all neck and legs" but has now put on a considerable amount of weight. His half brother — "Gerry" — was always mischievous but rather timid with human beings. Maxie is quite the opposite and, like his father, has developed a decided interest in cameras!

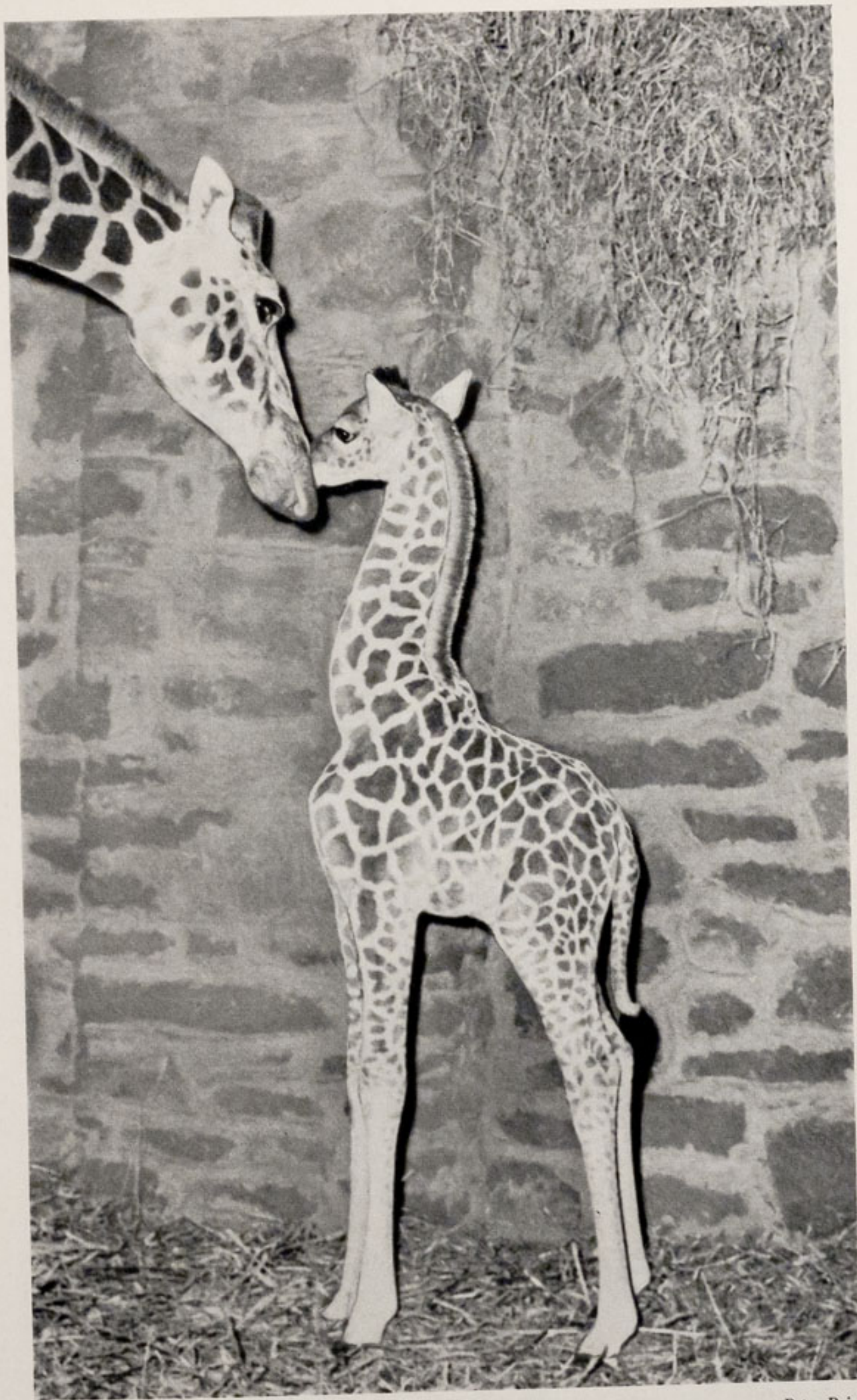
### PURCHASES AND PRESENTATIONS

**MACAWS:** Impressive additions to our Bird Collection are a fine pair of Hyacinthine Macaws, purchased on 30th January, 1964. These birds share a compartment in the Parrot House and are neighbours of "Gorgeous" the Roseate Cockatoo and several other members of the Parrot family, including two Sulphur-crested Cockatoos.

The other morning the new Macaws were sitting quite happily on their perch alongside the adjoining compartment, when one of the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos realised that the tail feathers of the female Macaw were within reach of his beak. Obviously such an opportunity could not be missed and the nearest feather was given an almighty tug. The outraged Macaw shot off her perch screeching with rage and soon every bird in the Parrot House joined in the chorus. You can well imagine the din, with more than fifty members of the Parrot family squawking their heads off.

**FRED:** "Fred" — a Crab-eating Macaque — was presented to the Zoo some months ago by the licensee of a public house. At that time his favourite "night-cap" consisted of a glass of rum and blackcurrant. However, we might add that since arriving at the Zoo he has been completely teetotal.

His owner was forced to part with Fred because of the monkey's unfortunate habit of snatching spectacles and breaking them to pieces. The final blot on Fred's copybook happened at a wedding reception. The bridesmaid came over to make friends with him and



*Peter Price*

"MAXIE"

Fred, for some unknown reason, took exception to her dress and proceeded to tear it. After this incident it was decided that it would be safer and less expensive for all concerned if Fred came to Chester Zoo. He has now settled down very happily in our new Monkey House.



*E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.*

"JIMMY"

### JIMMY AND THE ELECTRIC FENCE

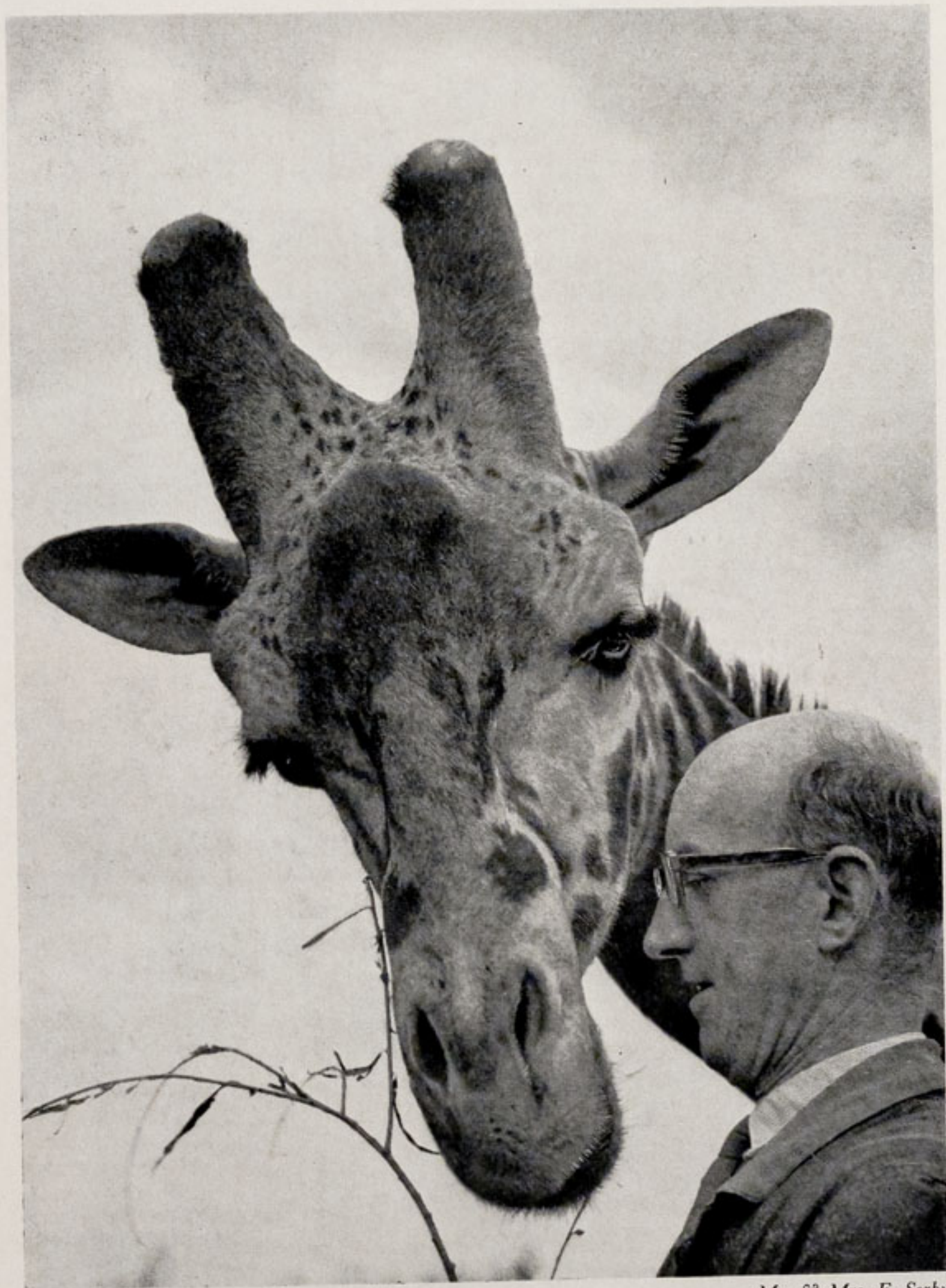
"Jimmy", the Orang Utan has been up to his old tricks with the electrified fence round his enclosure. We thought he had grown out of the habit as it is several months since he attempted to disconnect it. However, on the 13th of February, Jimmy once again demonstrated his contempt for human ingenuity. He walked into the water, short-circuited the fence with a piece of weed and pulled out the underwater supports. This time he made

no attempt to escape. Having proved his point he returned to dry land.

### "GOOFY" FINDS HER VOICE

In the June, 1963, issue of the magazine we reported that two of our Giraffes had been heard to bellow. Now a third — "Goofy" — has also found a voice.

When the Keeping Staff came on duty on the morning of Friday, 14th February, all the Giraffes appeared to be over-excited. (Had they perhaps heard that they were to be seen on television later in the day?) Goofy became so alarmed when the others rushed past the enclosure she shares with Maxie that she uttered a resounding bellow of protest. Two members of Staff were present at the time and the bellow was so loud that it brought other Keepers running to the Giraffe House to find out the cause of the commotion. It certainly had the desired effect as the Giraffes quietened down immediately.



Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby

"GEORGE" WITH HEAD KEEPER NIELD

### POLLY AND JEANNIE

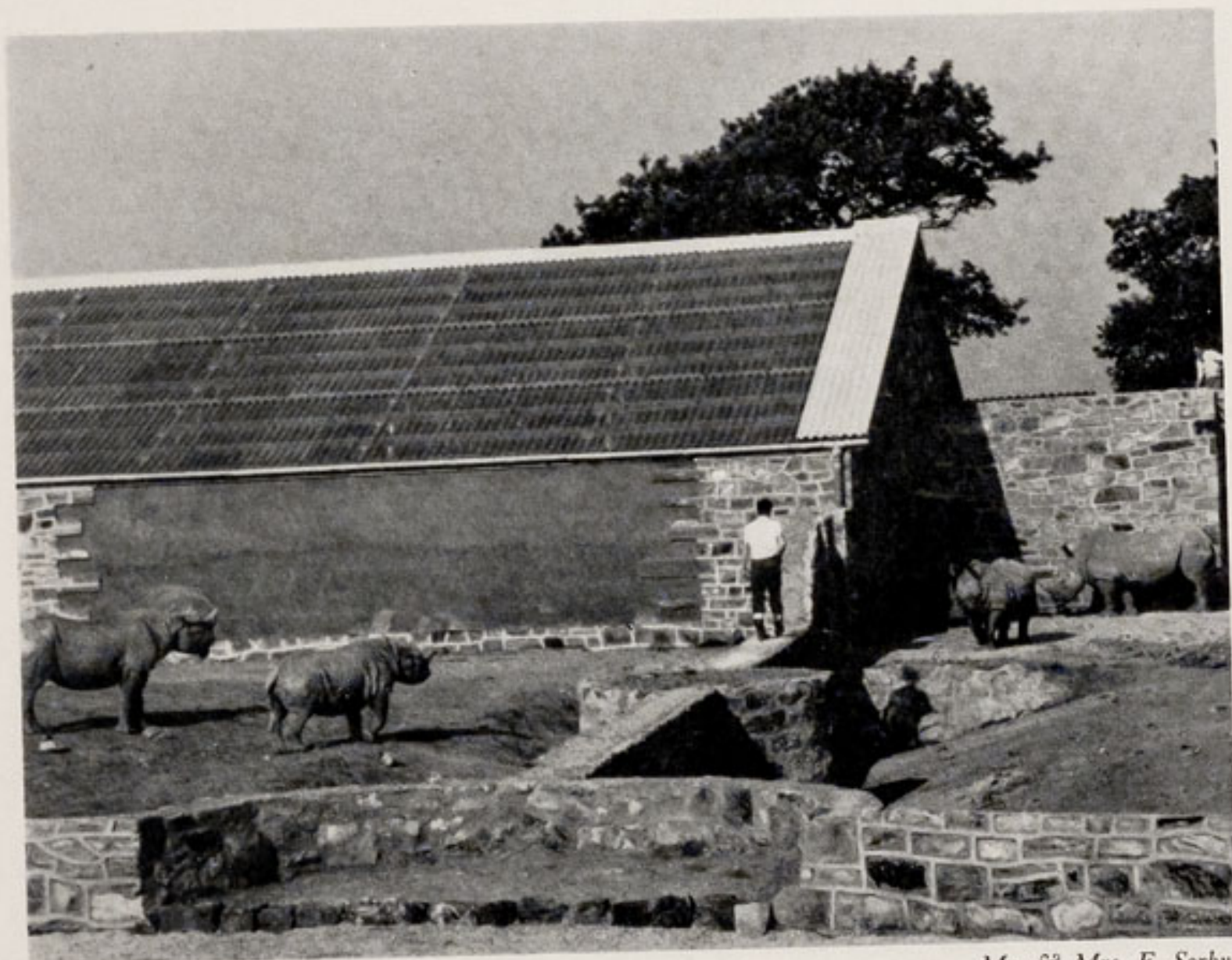
"Polly" and "Jeannie", the two young Chimps, live in the Monkey House at present and, to amuse them, a strong swing was fitted in their enclosure recently. They were most suspicious of this and refused to touch it until one of their Keepers happened to sit on the swing, then Polly pulled her Keeper's feet whilst Jeannie pushed the swing from behind. Now they spend hours clambering over the swing, but still prefer to push rather than be pushed.

### THE RHINO HOUSE AND PLANT PROBLEMS

When, in 1962, we were offered a pair of Square-lipped Rhinos, we felt that we should house them together with our pair of Black Rhinos and a new building was constructed. Built mainly of sandstone, it is roofed entirely with Marley-glaze and insulated with polythene sheeting. The Rhinoceros House is one hundred feet long by fifty feet wide and of the four indoor pens, two are twenty-four feet by forty feet, the third is thirty feet by forty feet and the fourth fourteen feet by forty feet.

The interior of the building is particularly light and well-ventilated and gives a feeling of space. Heating is on the same principle as that employed in the Pachyderm House, but in this case the hot air ducts run under the public passageway and the hot air is blown through vents in the lower half of the walls dividing the animal pens from the passageway. This method of heating proved very successful during the extremely hard winter of 1962-63. At no time did the temperature drop below 50° Fahrenheit, even in the coolest parts of the house.

The outstanding feature of this house was the speed of its erection. From commencement of work on the building to the stage where the animals could be received into it, the time taken was exactly three weeks. This constitutes a record, as far as erecting buildings at Chester Zoo is concerned. Work was synchronised to proceed non-stop during the three weeks. Two gangs of stonemasons worked at opposite ends of the house, whilst the blacksmiths and joiners concentrated on the roof. The net result was that when the Square-lipped Rhinos arrived at Chester they were able to go into a home already planted with Coleous and Hydrangeas. Three outdoor paddocks were completed a little later.



*Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby*

EXTERIOR VIEW OF THE RHINOCEROS HOUSE



*D. J. Tolley*

INSIDE THE RHINOCEROS HOUSE

As is the custom at Chester Zoo, particular attention was paid to the floral decoration of the house. However, we have now had to have second thoughts on the plantings in the Rhinoceros House. It was planted last spring with *Acacia dealbata* to cover the roof, with Camellias on the walls and a Climbing Fuchsia border behind the public passage. All of these grew exceptionally well during last summer, but unfortunately, the further we got into winter the unhappier the Camellias looked. We have had to remove them and those which did not suffer too badly have been potted and put in our nursery to recover. Later in the spring we intend to plant the Camellias outside in the beds by the main entrance.

Although the Acacias lost a lot of leaf they should recover and make new growth during the spring and summer. The Fuchsias have done well and only a few varieties will have to be replaced with others.

It is now our intention to replace the Camellias with Coleous, etc., which will be planted each spring and removed in the autumn. The introduction of plants into the animal houses is in some cases a matter of trial and error and we are learning from experience.

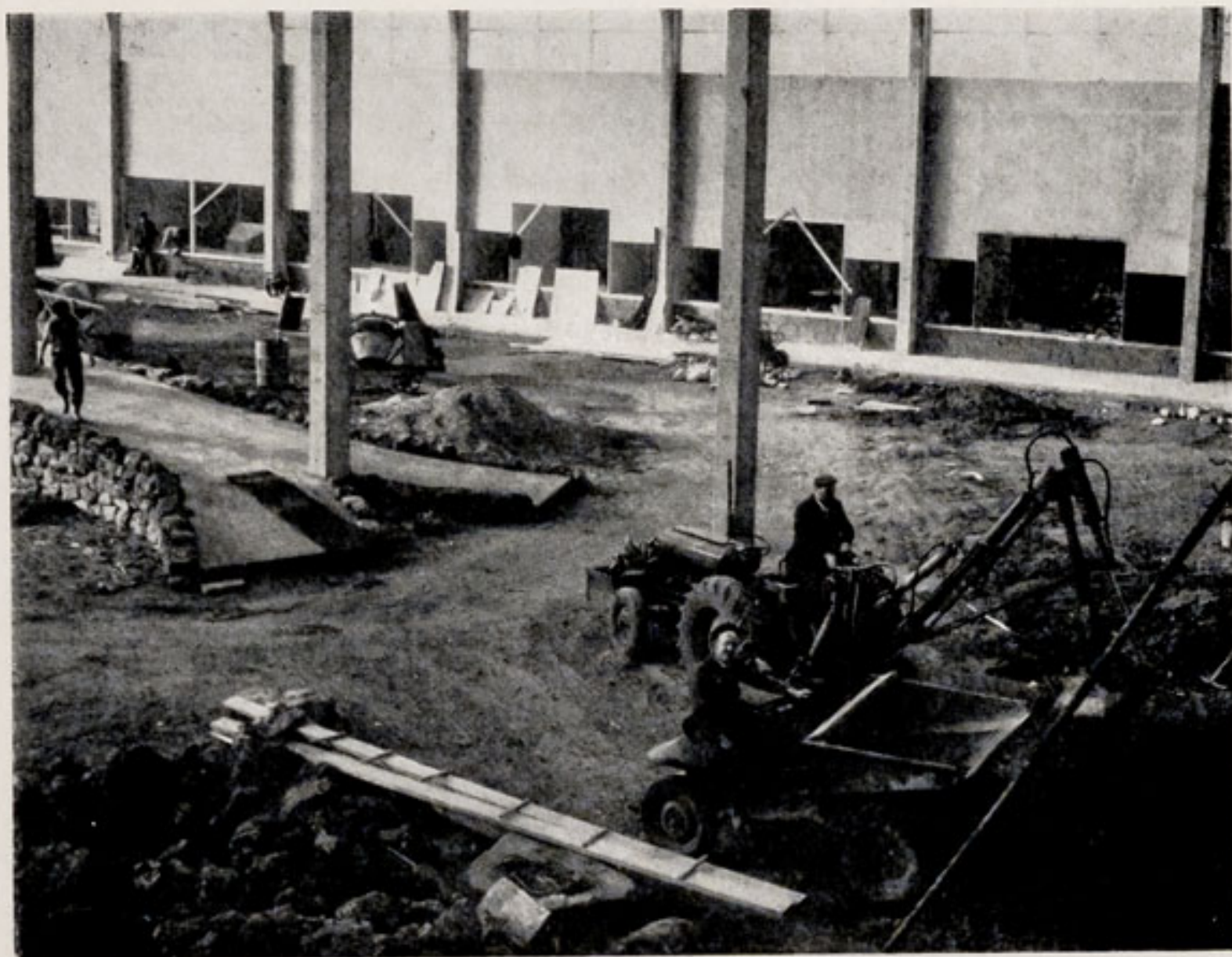
### GARDENING NEWS IN BRIEF

The plants in all the animal houses have now had their spring clean. Climbers, etc., have been pruned and given a rich top dressing of soil. In a few weeks they will be making new growth for our summer display.

We are particularly pleased with the growth of the plants in the Monkey House. The Bougainvilleas, although only rooted from cuttings last May, reached a height of some eight feet. They have now been pruned back to four feet, to encourage them to break into growth from the base and so cover the space allotted to them more completely.

### PROGRESS

The site of the new Tropical House is still one of the busiest corners of the Zoo. We are most encouraged by the progress made in the Reptile Section. All of the thirty four cages have been completed and are now in process of being decorated with natural



Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby

THE REPTILE SECTION OF THE NEW TROPICAL HOUSE CAN BE SEEN  
IN THE BACKGROUND

rockwork and waterfalls. Since the new Reptile House has many more cages than the one at present in use, there will be a much greater variety of exhibits. The sizes of the cages range from forty cubic feet to, in some cases, twelve hundred cubic feet.

### WINNIE

"Winnie", the young Giant Anteater (*Myrmecophaga tri-dactyla*) was a very small specimen when she came to Chester Zoo in April, 1963. In fact she was only six months old and we had grave doubts as to whether or not she would survive. However, Winnie was determined to live and continues to thrive.

For a time she lived in the Zoo hospital and later shared an enclosure in the Camel House with a baby Palm Civet. After several months Winnie was transferred to the Small Mammal House

and here her progress was so rapid that she soon outgrew her accommodation. In a corner of that particular enclosure there is a covering over the hot water pipes. At first Winnie could pass comfortably under this covering, but when she grew taller she still forced her way under until her coat was rubbed thin. Of course she had to be moved again.

Finding other suitable accommodation for Winnie was quite a problem until we remembered that one of the new Stork enclosures behind the Monkey House was empty. An electric heater was installed in the shelter and Winnie took up residence. Now she is burrowing so hard that she is in danger of undermining the foundations of her shelter and escaping. However, we feel sure that we will at least be able to retain her until we complete her permanent home in the new Tropical House. Here of course she will have her own area of freedom, although her burrowing activities will have to be somewhat restricted. Apart from the danger of Winnie escaping, she could create havoc with the tropical plants if allowed to burrow at will.

Giant Anteaters are found in Argentine, Paraguay, Brazil, Ecuador and north to Guatemala, usually in open savannah country, although sometimes they prefer forest areas. They are diurnal animals and interesting rather than attractive.

The coat is dark with long, coarse hairs, especially on the back and tail, whereas the elongated, tube-like head is covered with short hairs. A white-edged black band runs from the front of the Anteater's neck over the shoulders. Because the fore paws are turned inwards the animal walks on the outer sides of its strong claws. These claws are used to break up ants and termites nests, the insects being picked up with the long sticky tongue. When sleeping the Anteater curls its bushy tail over its body, rather like a blanket.

At Chester, Winnie is given two feeds each day of raw minced meat, eggs, "Bemax" and ants eggs. She also has a daily dish of fresh milk.

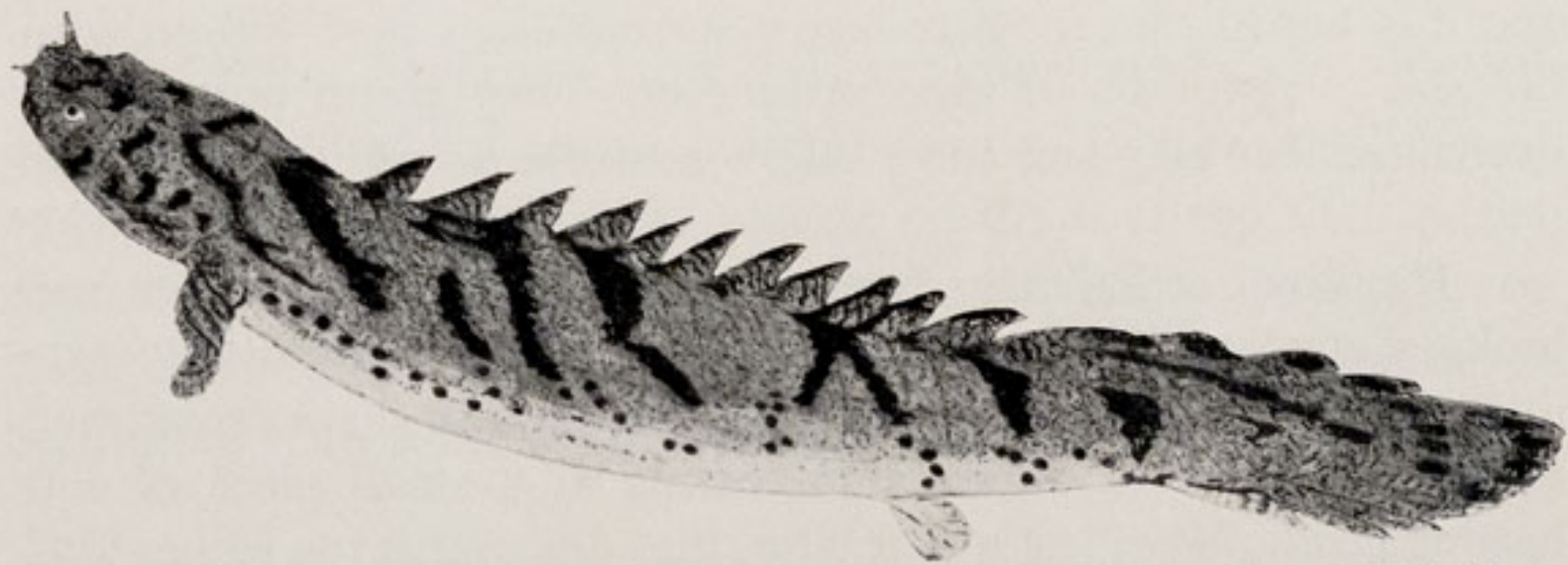
## OTHER ANIMALS DESTINED FOR THE TROPICAL HOUSE

At present our pair of Armadillos live in the Nocturnal House. Here there is only a limited supply of earth for them to burrow in and in their new home this will be rectified. It is hoped that they will settle down and make a rather unusual exhibit, as they indulge in their natural habits.

Also occupying a temporary home in the Nocturnal House are two Brazilian Tree Porcupines — "Elsa" and "Esmeralda". They have lived there quite happily for the past two years but should be even more appreciative of their new home. This will be a small enclosure furnished with a tree and designed to give the illusion that the Porcupines are at liberty.

A number of our small animals live in temporary quarters, owing to lack of more suitable accommodation, but we are happy to say that the day is fast approaching when they will be moved to better and permanent homes.

## AQUARIUM NEWS



*M. D. Murphy*

BICHIR

During the past month most of the display tanks in the tropical freshwater section of the Aquarium have been re-organised. All forms of decoration in the tanks have been given a final spring clean before the season begins, although the rocks have to be given constant attention throughout the year if they are to look their best.

The plants also need a lot of attention at this time of year; cutting and pruning, thinning out where necessary and transplanting

to tanks lacking foliage. Our experiments with the planting of *Hygrophila* and various species of *Cryptocoryn* on pieces of ramified wood has proved most successful. In fact the plants grown in this way look far healthier than those planted normally in gravel and peat.

Apart from the work of getting the tanks ready for display, many new fish have arrived to swell the numbers of the collection, and, in some cases, provide new blood for breeding. The majority of these newcomers are quite common members of the Characin family, but we have also acquired four fine specimens of the recently hybridised Lyretail Black Molly — from which we hope to establish our own stock.

Another eight inch specimen of the Bichir — *Polypterus delhezi* — was also obtained at the beginning of the month and has settled down very well with its two smaller companions.

We are pleased to report that the Arowanas are growing rapidly and will shortly be moved into a larger tank — the one which is at present occupied by our two Electric Eels. The Eels will be transferred to a three hundred gallon tank adjacent to the Piranhas' tank and it is hoped that in these larger surroundings they will grow to full size — about six or even seven feet. They are at present just over three feet long and can swallow a medium-sized rat with ease.

The shoal of Piranhas have grown at a phenomenal rate and looking at them now it is difficult to imagine what tiny, delicate little fish they were when they arrived. They were a shade larger than a sixpence and had difficulty in tearing at a small piece of soft herring meat. Now, just a year later, they are over seven inches long and demolish a fully-grown rat in a matter of seconds. To see these Piranhas at feeding time reminds one of how savage nature can be, if some hapless creature flounders out of its depth in a river amid several thousand of these terrible fish.

However, to return to the confines of the Aquarium, we are hoping to start work shortly on the Tropical Marine Section which we intend extending down one side of the Cold Water Bay, to incorporate a further nine large display tanks. These will eventually be fitted out with various pieces of coral and volcanic rock.

Volcanic rock is perhaps the best variety for use in salt water tanks as it is full of cracks and holes and will blend extremely well with the coral. As one might expect, most marine fish take up their own particular section of sea bed or coral and defend it against all comers. For this reason the craggy surface of volcanic rock is most suitable in that it will support a variety of fish life and also provide shelter for innumerable invertebrates such as crabs, prawns and shrimps.

Needless to say, the entire section cannot be converted immediately. Those tanks not at first being used for tropical salt water fish will be filled with a multitude of marine cold water fish and invertebrates until such time as they can be converted.

## STORKS

Members of the stork family, or Ciconidae, are found throughout the warmer areas of the world. It is a very ancient family, fossil storks dating back fifty million years having been recorded.

The White European Stork has been considered a bird of good omen for hundreds of years. In many parts of Europe it is believed to be so lucky to have storks nesting on the roof top that special platforms are often erected to attract the birds. Although so common and protected on the Continent, the White Stork has never been more than a rare visitor to Great Britain.

Storks as a race are meat-eaters, living on fish, frogs, eels small mammals and small birds. In captivity they are easy to cater for and usually do well and live to a ripe old age.

At Chester Zoo our Storks are housed in the new enclosures behind the Monkey House. Each enclosure contains a largish pool (a necessity for such water-loving birds) and is planted with grass and trees. The shelters back directly onto the Monkey House, from which considerable warmth is drawn in the cold weather.



*Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby*

MARABOU STORKS

Three species of stork are on view at Chester. The most attractive is a specimen of the South American Jabiru — the largest stork in the New World and one of the largest of the flying birds of America. It is black and white in colour, with a naked black neck. This bird is quite a character and delights in playing with twigs and wisps of grass. These it throws into the air and tries to catch — at the same time indulging in the most comical dance. The Jabiru is on friendly terms with the staff of the Monkey House and taps a greeting on the Monkey House window each morning.

Neighbours of the Jabiru are a pair of Marabou Storks from South East Asia. These are solemn rather unprepossessing birds



WOOD IBIS

*Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby*

with drab-coloured plumage and formidable beaks. They are almost entirely scavengers and as such are protected in their countries of origin. Even vultures will not dispute with them over a carcass and the marabou usually secures the choicest morsels. Due to their somewhat pompous gait these birds were nicknamed "Adjutants" by Indian Army Troops. This name stuck and has become an alternative to Marabou.

Representatives of the third species of stork currently on view are a pair of the much smaller African Wood Ibis which, in spite of its name, is a true stork. Like most storks these birds are mainly black and white in colour, with a bare red head and yellow bill. They also have a crimson tinge on the mantle. Our pair are the hungriest birds in the collection and think nothing of swallowing fifteen or twenty pieces of meat each at a meal. Even this does not seem to make them fat and they appear to have no difficulty in preserving their figures.

### LOOKING BACK

Today Chester Zoo constructs modern animal buildings out of modern materials but this was not always possible. Just after the Second World War building restrictions were very very tight and it was almost impossible to obtain materials of any kind.

Fortunately our Director-Secretary was not easily daunted and realised the potential of all the anti-tank road blocks scattered around Cheshire. Mr. Mottershead approached the relevant authorities (who were somewhat surprised that anyone should actually want road blocks) and was told he could have as many as he required, entirely free of charge.

A local contractor gave an estimate for delivering to the Zoo, all the road blocks within a ten mile radius, but it was rather a shock when something like two thousand arrived, plus assorted pillboxes and other concrete slabs. Now the old Elephant House, Lion, Sea Lion, Bear and many other enclosures all show evidence of the unexpected uses of anti-tank road blocks!





