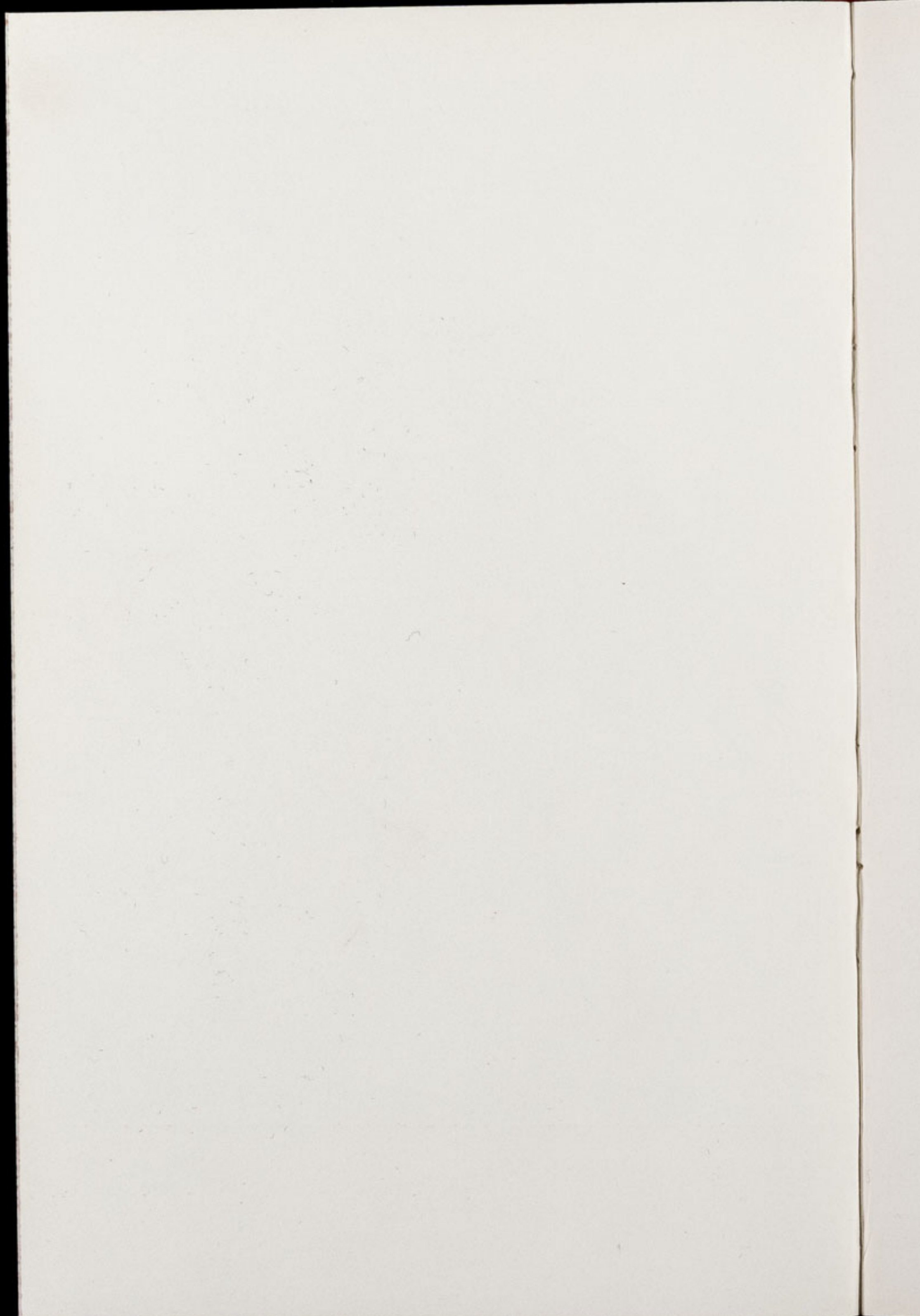




**CHESTER ZOO NEWS
AND GUIDE**

August 1971

Price 5p



The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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COVER: *Kea Parrot; see pages four and five.*

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

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION — NINETY FIVE NEW PENCE POSTAGE PAID

TELEPHONE :: CHESTER 20106/7/8

ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

During the past month the following mammal births have been recorded:

- 1 Brindled Gnu (*Connochaetes taurinus albojubatus*)
- 1 Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*)
- 1 Red Lechwe (*Kobus leche*)
- 1 Barbary Ape (*Macaca sylvana*)
- 3 Agoutis (*Dasyprocta aguti*)
- 15 Gerbils (*Various species*)

The Brindled Gnu calf is on view in enclosure No. 93, where there are two other young Gnus, one of which can be seen in the photograph on the right.

We have had an extremely good breeding season with the Red Lechwe as the latest calf is the fifth born this year. The pure white calf mentioned in last month's magazine is still growing strongly and so far has been accepted completely by the other members of the herd.

The three young Agoutis on show in the Small Mammal House are becoming very active, as is the baby Barbary Ape which may be seen in the Baboon pens, No. 89.

A Senegal Bushbaby (*Galago senegalensis*) has been presented to the collection and is accommodated in the Nocturnal House.

BIRD NOTES

In the past month the following chicks have left the nest:

- 1 Red-masked Conure (*Aratinga erythrogenys*)
- 3 Barraband Parrakeets (*Polytelis swainsoni*)
- 1 Derbyan Parrakeet (*Psittacula derbyana*)
- 1 Crimson-winged Parrakeet (*Aprosmictus erythropterus*)
- 2 Nanday Conures (*Nandayus nanday*)
- 2 Masked Lovebirds (*Agapornis personata*)
- 3 Fischer's Lovebirds (*Agapornis fischeri*)



BRINDLED GNU CALF (*Connochaetes taurinus albojubatus*)

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

The Red-masked Conures, which have bred for the third successive year, and the two species of Lovebird are accommodated in the Oakfield Aviaries, No. 5 on the Zoo plan, while the Parrakeets and the Nanday Conures can be seen in the new aviaries on site No. 42.

From Auckland Zoo we have received a pair of Kea Parrots (*Nestor notabilis*) and a pair of New Zealand Woodhens, more commonly known by their Maori name, Weka Rail. The particular race we have acquired is the North Island Weka (*Gallirallus australis greyi*) and is on exhibition in the large flight aviary, No. 18.

The Weka is a large flightless rail about 21 inches in length, with a strong bill and feet, but wings that during the course of evolution have become much reduced in size. Fossil records show that direct ancestors of the Weka were capable of flight but the absence of predators in New Zealand negated the need to fly and gradually the wings became useless. The plumage is mainly brown and black but the tone of the brown and the amount of black vary. On these colour differences and also on slight differences in size, several forms of Weka Rail have been defined. Our birds have more grey on the underparts and brown rather than reddish legs. Wekas walk deliberately with tail flicking but can run very fast and swim without hesitation. They become very active at dusk and are capable rat-killers.

These birds breed up to four times a year, choosing a well-concealed spot under the roots of a tree or in low-lying scrub to lay, the normal clutch being from three to five eggs. Like many ground-nesting birds, Wekas are somewhat vulnerable to predators, especially stoats, which have been introduced into New Zealand but many people consider that adult birds are a match for the stoat. In fact an interesting point about Weka Rails is that they have adapted very well to the encroachment of human civilisation in New Zealand and their numbers are on the increase rather than declining, which unfortunately is not the case with many other native species.

We have had a female Weka in the collection which over the last few years has built nests and we tried to time the arrival of the incoming pair to coincide with the breeding season. So far our plans

have worked and our original female is sitting on at least two eggs. The eggs are typically ralline, being creamy white with scattered brown and light purplish blotches. Incubation lasts from 20 to 27 days.

The new Kea Parrots are a true pair and have been accommodated in the Parrot House with an old female of this species which has been at the Zoo since 1959.

The male Kea is slightly larger than the female and has a longer upper mandible. The general colour of both sexes is olive-green above and below, the underparts being a slightly fainter green. There is scarlet under the wings, a dull scarlet rump and blue outer flight feathers while the feathers of the body plumage and wings have dark crescentic tips. The tail is blue-green with a subterminal black band.

The Kea is restricted to the South Island mountain area of New Zealand but is not limited to the alpine zone. It obtains much of its diet of leaves, buds and fruits together with insects, in the forests clothing the mountain valleys but also ranges widely to the alpine grassland and sub-alpine scrub for the fruits which are abundant in autumn. In addition it is commonly observed feeding on open river flats. The Kea has received wide publicity as an inveterate sheep killer. However, though certainly Keas have been known to feed on dead sheep and carrion, it is very doubtful if they are able to kill healthy animals.

In the Zoo we offer our Keas a wide variety of food including carrots, apples, lettuce, dandelion, poplar and willow branches, green barley and corn, peanuts and sunflower seeds. Twice per week they are given meat and kidney. One of our specimens was seen to catch and kill a male House Sparrow which had flown into the flight and then to eat part of it.

Other new arrivals in this section are:

- 1 pair of Fairy Bluebirds (*Irena puella*)
- 1 pair of Indian Green-winged or Emerald Doves
(*Chalcophaps indica*)

2 pairs of Western Red-rumped Green Woodpeckers
(*Picus erythropygius nigrigenis*)

4 pairs of Yellow-breasted Buntings (*Emberiza aureola*)

All these birds may be seen in the soft-bill aviaries adjoining the Temperate Bird House, with the exception of the Buntings which have been released in the Tropical House.

The Western Red-rumped Green Woodpecker is a very common bird of the dry, deciduous forest everywhere in its range from Burma to Southern Thailand. It is necessarily a lowland form but ascends the hills to the limit of suitable vegetation, reaching 2,700 feet.

This Woodpecker is one of the several species of unrelated birds which in pairs commonly accompany the loose flocks of White-crested Laughing-thrushes through the trees. When frightened, the Woodpecker flies from tree to tree, concealing itself behind the trunks, all the while uttering a remarkably loud, ringing call. Its main food is termites, in pursuit of which it may often be observed on rotting stumps, logs or even on the ground.

Woodpeckers are found in most parts of the world and are easily recognised by their actions. A Woodpecker flies by noisily flapping its wings for a few strokes and then gliding with them closed: this causes it to dip deeply and results in a heavy, undulating flight. The toes are arranged in two series, the first and fourth pointing backwards and the second and third forwards. The strong claws grasp the crevices of the bark and from their position automatically tilt the body backwards on to the stiff, graduated tail, which is pressed into the bark by the bird's own weight. In this position, the long neck affords a swing for the blows of the pick-axe bill, which is stout and modified into a cutting weapon with the end of the upper mandible vertical and chisel-shaped. It is used to extract

the larvae of wood-boring insects from inside and under the bark and to expose the ends of insect galleries, which are then searched by extruding the long tongue with its barbed tip sticky with saliva. At the same time it is interesting to note that many Woodpeckers feed largely on ants, which they obtain either on tree trunks or on the ground and for capturing which, no specialised structure is necessary.

A final note on the economic value of these Woodpeckers is that an insect, the bee-hole borer of teak which causes a serious degrade in the value of timber in many parts of South East Asia, would cause even more damage were its numbers not kept down by Woodpeckers and it is only one of the wood-boring insects on which these birds feed.

A Watercock (*Gallicrex cinerea*) is another new arrival. This is a large rail, 17 inches in length, which is found in the flooded ricefields and in some numbers amid the tangled vegetation of the larger marshes of South East Asia. When open water must be crossed, the Watercock swims well, riding high and rather resembling a duck. If alarmed, it stretches up its neck and at short intervals, raises the tail with rapid jerks.

Our Watercock has been observed calling. The call is a deep boom, which sounds like ogh-ogh-ogh uttered rapidly. When calling, the neck is puffed out and the bill pointed vertically down; at intervals it is lowered out of sight and the note then changes, sounding exactly as if the bird were blowing into water. Another common call is made by bending the neck forward, opening the bill and working the throat, a sound resembling the popping of corks.

Finally, there have been several presentations to the Bird Section in the past month including two young Curlews, a Common Heron, two Senegal Parrots and a Blue and Gold Macaw.

CHESTER ZOO

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. SOUTH ENTRANCE | 41. H.T. Rose Garden |
| 2. Peacock Enclosure | 42. Aviaries |
| 3. Wapiti Paddock | 43. Flamingos |
| 4. Lesser Pandas | 44. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 5. Aviaries | 45. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 6. Milk Bar | 46. Capybara and Waterfowl |
| 7. CORONATION HALL | 47. Penguins |
| 8. CLOAKROOM, FIRST AID,
TOILETS, MOTHER and BABY
ROOM | 48. Sealions |
| 9. CAFETERIA | 49. Rock Garden |
| 10. Picnic Lawn | 50. Polar Bears |
| 11. Bears | 51. Tigers |
| 12. Animal Enclosure | 52. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 13. Kiosk | 53. Anteaters |
| 14. AQUARIUM | 54. BIRD HOUSE |
| 15. NORTH ENTRANCE | 55. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT |
| 16. PUSH CHAIRS, WHEEL CHAIRS,
LOST CHILDREN | 56. Ape Nursery |
| 17. Parrot House | 57. TOILETS |
| 18. Free Flight Aviary | 58. Lions |
| 19. APE HOUSE | 59. SOUVENIR SHOP |
| 20. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP | 60. TOILETS |
| 21. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn | 61. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT |
| 22. TOILETS | 62. G.P.O. Telephone |
| 23. Tuatara Exhibit | 63. Gibbon Pen |
| 24. Peccaries | 64. Animal Enclosure |
| 25. Waterbus Halt | 65. Cheetahs |
| 26. Birds of Prey Aviaries | 66. Ornamental Rock Garden |
| 27. Owl Aviary | 67. Malayan Bears |
| 28. Jackal and Hyaena Enclosures | 68. Animal Enclosure |
| 29. Animal Enclosure | 69. Aviary |
| 30. Porcupine Enclosure | 70. Wallabies |
| 31. Coypus | 71. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE
AND KIOSK |
| 32. Beavers | 72. Waterbus Halt |
| 33. Giraffe House | |
| 34. Camel House | |
| 35. Waterbus Halt | |
| 36. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND
REPTILE HOUSES | |
| 37. CHIMPANZEES | |
| 38. Floribunda Rose Garden | |
| 39. Zebra House | |
| 40. Gibbon Island | |

- | |
|--------------------------------|
| 73. Fountain Flower Gardens |
| 74. Rose Garden |
| 75. Red Lechwe |
| 76. Red Lechwe |
| 77. Deer or Antelope Enclosure |
| 78. Waterbus Halt |
| 79. Zebra and Deer Enclosure |
| 80. Kamchatka Bears |
| 81. ELEPHANTS |
| 82. Hippos |
| 83. Tapirs |
| 84. Small Mammal House |
| 85. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 86. Ankole Cattle |
| 87. Gazelle Paddocks |
| 88. Storks and Ostriches |
| 89. Baboon Pens |
| 90. Cat House |
| 91. Lions and Tigers |
| 92. Antelope Enclosure |
| 93. Antelope Enclosure |
| 94. Antelope Enclosure |
| 95. Highland Cattle |
| 96. MONKEY HOUSE |
| 97. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 98. Wallabies and Waterfowl |
| 99. Cranes and Waterfowl |
| 100. Llamas and Alpacas |

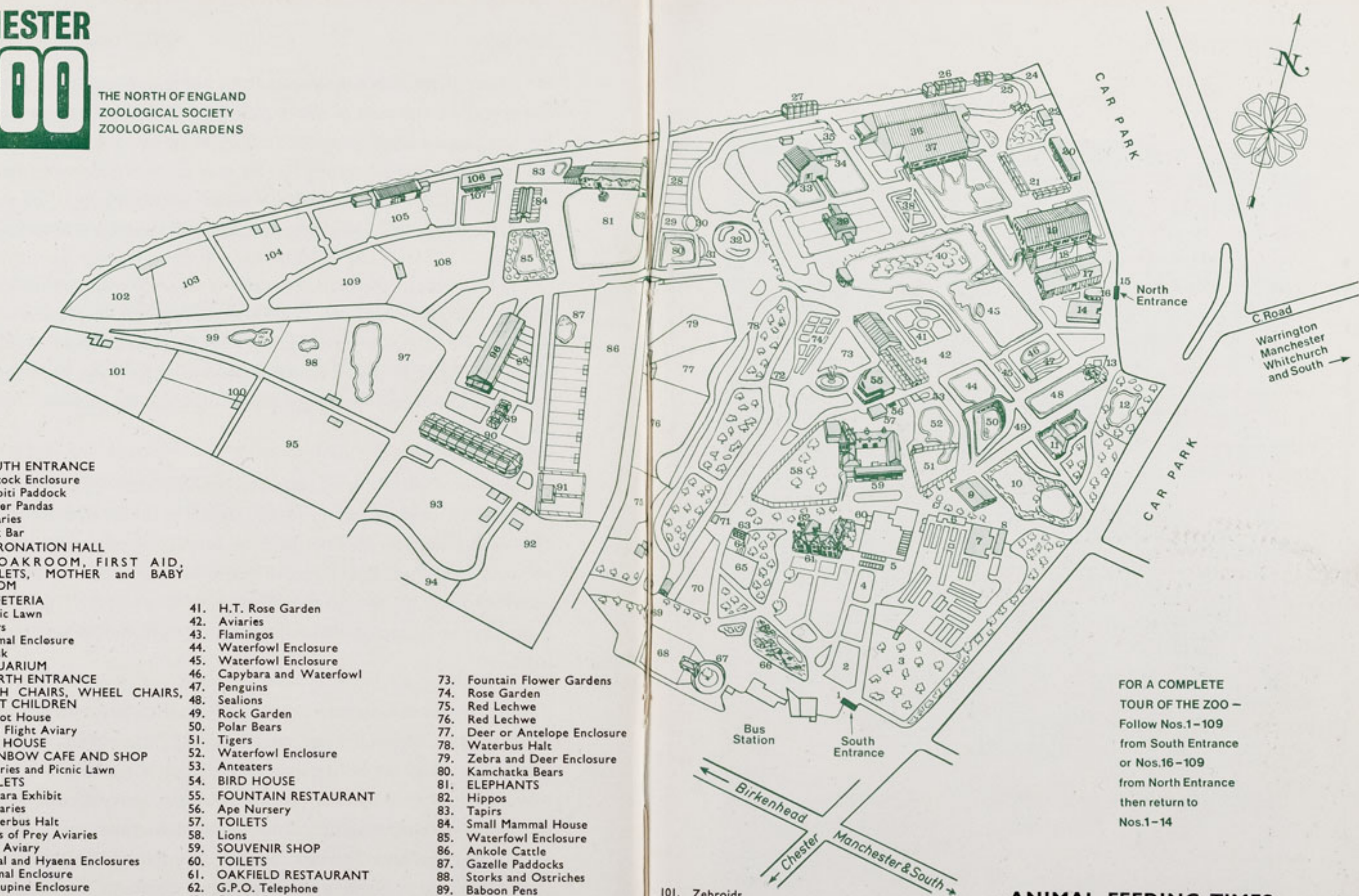
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| 101. Zebroids |
| 102. Bison Paddock |
| 103. Pere David's Deer Paddock |
| 104. Eland and Marmots |
| 105. RHINO HOUSE |
| 106. TOILETS |
| 107. Mpila Snack-bar and Kiosk |
| 108. Antelope Enclosure |
| 109. Antelope Enclosure |

Animals may be moved from
time to time.

ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES:

LIONS—3 pm except Fridays
BEARS—3-15 pm
POLAR BEARS—4 pm
SEA LIONS 3 times daily—
2-40 pm, 3-40 pm, 4-40 pm

FOR A COMPLETE
TOUR OF THE ZOO —
Follow Nos.1-109
from South Entrance
or Nos.16-109
from North Entrance
then return to
Nos.1-14



GENERAL NEWS

One morning keepers at the Cat House discovered one of the recent Leopard cubs looking rather ill. In case it had contacted a virus, the veterinary surgeon decided to remove the cub for examination. However, the trouble proved to be slight concussion, probably as a result of over-boisterous playing and the cub was returned to the mother. Animals do not always accept their young once they have been handled by humans, but the cub had been removed for only a few hours and, as Zoo staff had hoped, when it was put back into the enclosure the other young cub rubbed itself all over its lost playmate, thus eliminating some of the human scent. The female sniffed at the cub for a few moments but has accepted it again completely. The photograph on the right was taken soon after the cubs had been reunited.

Also in the Cat House visitors can see the three Puma cubs which were born in June and are now beginning to venture into the outer enclosure with their mother.

A young female Jaguar born in March last year has been introduced to a young male named Rubenstein which arrived at the Zoo in October 1969. The two animals have proved compatible, meaning that now we have two unrelated pairs of Jaguars. The original pair, Sheba and Khan, arrived in 1965 and have produced a number of cubs, including the young female mentioned.

At the present time the younger Jaguars are accommodated in a large enclosure in the Cat House but a new home for them is under construction alongside the existing Jaguar pens. Eventually all these enclosures will be joined so that it will be possible to transfer the Jaguars to different sections whenever necessary, for instance if a nursery den is required.

We regret that in the Small Mammal House the Fennec Foxes did not rear the cubs mentioned in an earlier 'Zoo News' but hope-



LEOPARD CUBS (*Panthera pardus*)

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

fully they will breed again and be more successful. In the same house the two young Viscacha have been weaned and separated from the female which has been reunited with the male. The young, which resemble miniature versions of their parents, are venturing out from the nestbox to explore their enclosure but are still rather nervous of visitors.

While the weather is suitable we are continuing with the work of dry-moating enclosures around the Zoo. The group of paddocks at present being converted to the aha principle comprises Nos. 75, 76, 77 and a section of 79, the larger part of which was dry-moated about two years ago. As can be seen from the photograph on the right, the link fencing which surrounded the enclosures formerly has been moved back several yards in order that the Red Lechwe and Sika Deer can be left in the paddocks while the work is in progress. On previous occasions problems have been encountered with animals disturbed by the mechanical diggers but the Lechwe and Sika Deer are not affected at all. When the workmen began to dig the Lechwe herd congregated behind the fence in curiosity and several of the females were suckling their calves a short distance away from the operating machinery.

One Sunday afternoon visitors around the Alpaca enclosure had quite a start when a peculiar object attached to a parachute floated down from out of nowhere. Speculating about an invasion by little green men, Zoo staff went to investigate — fortunately before the Alpacas did — but found nothing more sinister than a Meteorological Office weather balloon. The appropriate government department was duly informed.

Chimpanzees Freddie and Boris, having outgrown their enclosure in the Monkey House, were moved to join two slightly older Chimpanzees, Chi Chi and Bobo, in the Chimpanzee House. This lively juvenile group has access to the middle Chimpanzee island where a metal climbing frame with a suspended central pole has been erected for them.



DRY-MOATING ENCLOSURES

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

After some initial wariness of the public the young Sea Lions are thoroughly enjoying life in the new enclosure and have learned to jump over the wall dividing the two sections of the pool. They chase each other from one to another sailing gracefully over the wall in quick succession, accompanied by many a chorus of 'oohs' and 'aahs' from visitors. Now that the water in the pool is clear, the public have the added attraction of being able to watch the Sea Lions performing their skilful underwater acrobatics.

A camera team from the National Geographic Society visited the Zoo to film our great apes as part of a television programme to be shown in the United States. When there is only a short time available for filming, camera crews have to take pot luck in obtaining entertaining shots of the animals but on this particular day all the apes were in a very active mood.

When the male Mountain Gorilla, Mukisi, was let indoors where the cameramen were waiting, he gave a commendable performance, beating his chest, thumping the walls and even throwing water from the moat over the unsuspecting crew. The four young Orang utans, filmed on one of the outside islands, were up to their usual antics. Barry and David dragged long strands of weed from the moat and wrung out the water into their mouths, a trick they have copied from the eldest male in the group, Dennis. He also wraps the weed around his wrists or covers his face completely with it and walks about with arms aloft, occasionally lifting a corner of his soggy green mask to peep out at the visitors. While the filming was in progress Dennis tried scaling the wall of the Ape House in true rock climbing fashion, but with little success.

In early May a female Bennett's Wallaby became very weak and eventually collapsed, rejecting the baby she had been carrying in her pouch. The mother was found to be suffering from a vitamin E deficiency and was taken off show for treatment. She has since made a complete recovery, but the baby had to be hand-reared by our veterinary surgeon.

When it was found early one morning, the baby was lying on the ground where the mother had abandoned it, in a very feeble condition and extremely cold. Immediately, it was placed in the flow of warm air from a car heater and taken to the veterinary hospital. An artificial pouch was made from heavy blanket material and in this the young Wallaby recovered slowly. It was found to be a female and named Josephine. Initially Josephine was fed on cow's milk with vitamin supplements and after several weeks became much stronger. Gradually she started to take solid food in the form of concentrates, grass and bread, and began to explore the world outside her pouch. She became a familiar sight hopping around the veterinary surgeon's garden and was even taken along to one or two talks where she quickly became the centre of attraction.

Josephine has now been returned to the Zoo and, although completely independent, is not yet sufficiently strong to join the rest of the Bennett's Wallaby group and is on show in a small enclosure near to the Malayan Bears, No. 67.

REPTILE NEWS

We have been presented with two Estuarine or Salt Water Crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*), two Royal Pythons (*Python regius*) and a Nile Monitor (*Varanus niloticus*).

The Crocodiles are fairly young specimens and for a time will be kept off show in a special vivarium built recently for them. The species has a range in southern India, Ceylon, many islands of Indonesia and northern Australia but its numbers are much depleted as a result of persecution for the skin which makes a fine quality leather. At one time specimens exceeding 30 feet in length were recorded but now there are few that attain even 20 feet. However, in northern Australia and New Guinea the natives who formerly hunted the Estuarine Crocodiles are now helping in their conservation by collecting eggs and taking them along to special hatching centres, where they receive payment. When old enough, the young Crocodiles are released back into the rivers and into areas where they have become extinct.

The Royal Python, of which there are now five specimens at the Zoo, is found in tropical West Africa and grows to an average length of 5 feet. This placid snake is also known as the Ball Python as when frightened it rolls its body into a spherical shape with its head tucked out of sight in the middle of the tight coils.

The Nile Monitor is a large water lizard found along most rivers of tropical Africa. It grows to a length of about 6 feet and, besides being an excellent swimmer, can also travel quickly on land. Like most Monitors, it is able to stand up and run on its hind legs for short periods. The eggs and young of birds and crocodiles form the main part of the diet, the Nile Monitor having strong, sharp claws which aid it to climb trees and dig out crocodile nests. In defence this lizard relies on its speed or hides in rock crevices but if cornered inflates its body, lashes its tail from side to side and hisses loudly.

SUBSCRIPTION FORMS

New readers of the '*Chester Zoo News*' who would like to receive the magazine regularly may like to know that subscription forms are on display in the souvenir shops. An annual subscription (12 issues) costs 95p postage paid, which can either be handed over the counter or posted with the completed form to The Director-Secretary, Chester Zoo, Chester.

OBITUARY

We are very sad to report the death of Mr. Norman Pearson, who was one of our Section Officers. Mr. Pearson, who had been at the Zoo for eight years, died suddenly while at work on the 11th August and is greatly missed by his colleagues and staff at the Zoo.

The following notice is displayed on several boards in the grounds

Please comply with it at all times.

FEEDING OF ANIMALS AND BIRDS

IT IS AN OFFENCE for any member of the public to offer food of any description to any Animal or Bird in Chester Zoo.

This regulation is made for the sake of the health of the Animals and Birds. Since the NO FEEDING rule was introduced, the number of deaths has dropped appreciably and sickness, due to wrong feeding has been virtually eliminated.

What you may be offering to an animal may only be a sweet or an inoffensive piece of bread, but it can mean a death sentence for the animal. For example, a cough drop, which may relieve your cough, can cause instant death to many Animals and Birds in the Zoo.

You must not lose sight of the fact that you are only one of over a million visitors who visit the Zoo annually. If for instance an elephant had one bun from only one tenth of a day's visitors during the summer, it would eat between three and four thousand. You can guess the result.

We realise what a temptation it is for visitors, particularly children, to feed our Animals and Birds and this is why we invite members of the public to be present at the official feeding times.

This is a polite warning to you, asking you not to feed the animals. If you ignore it, the Keepers are authorised to ask you to leave the Gardens.

If you really love Animals and Birds, you will appreciate the wisdom of the ruling — No Feeding by members of the public.

PLEASE HELP US TO KEEP OUR COLLECTION OF ANIMALS NOT ONLY ALIVE BUT IN FIRST CLASS CONDITION.

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