

"OUR ZOO NEWS"

A monthly chronicle of news of The North of England Zoological Society.

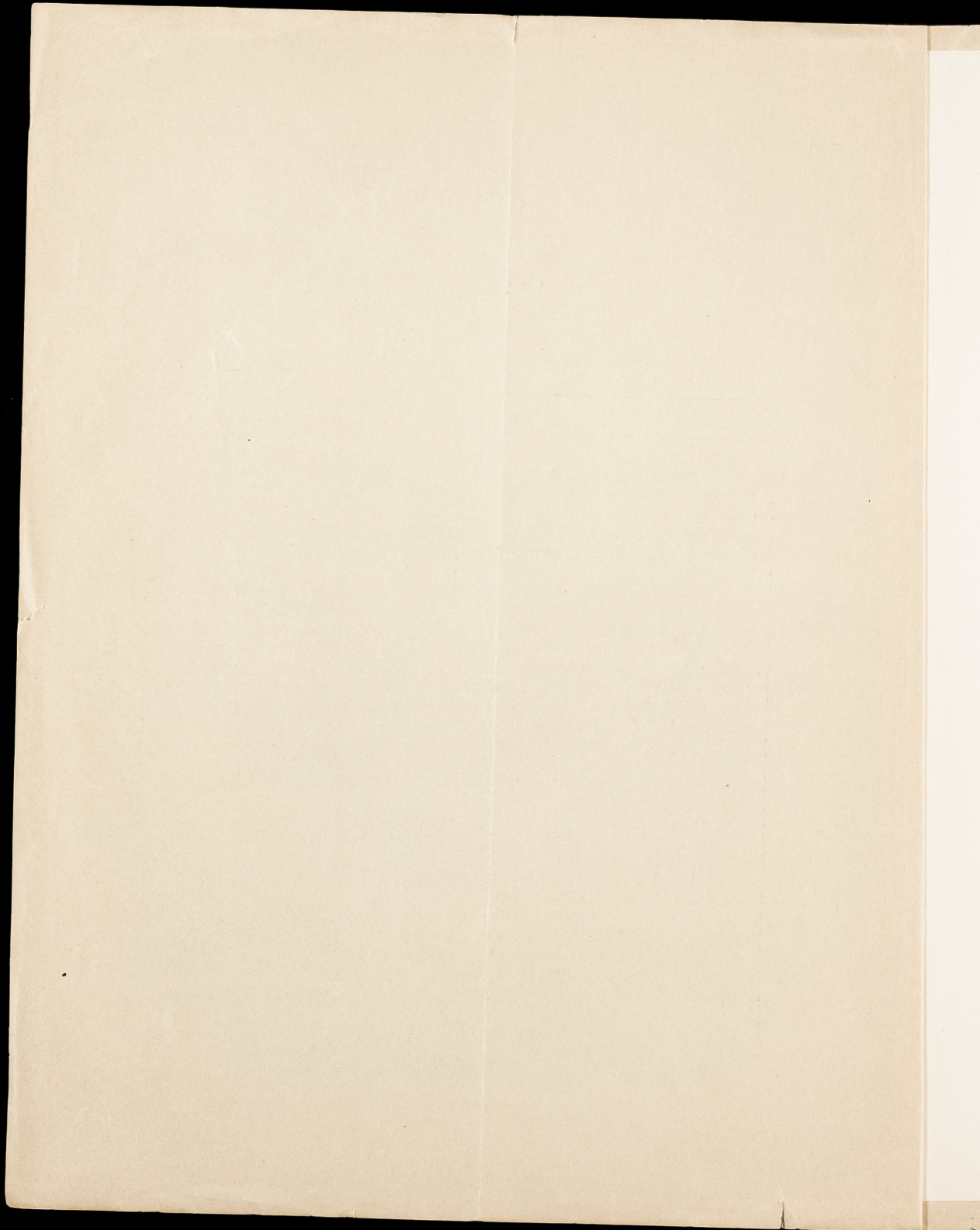
Zoological Gardens, Upton-by-Chester.

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THE LIONESS "KATRINA."



"Our Zoo News"

Number Five.

March 1938.

February has been a very open month as regards weather, and the Zoo has benefited in many ways. It has been very encouraging to see the number of members who have visited the Zoo this winter. The Sunday immediately after the issue of the last Zoo News saw more members present on one day than ever before.

Now that the risk of severe frost is getting less, work has again started in earnest on the open-air Lion Enclosure. Much work in connection with this has to be done which the average person cannot see, but during the next few weeks work will be pushed forward on the arches which are to carry the public terrace. These arches are to serve a dual purpose, for underneath Cafes and Buffets are to be built to deal with the ever increasing demand. Work will also start on the Northern end of the Enclosure so that our present stock of Lions can be more easily managed.

When will the Lion Enclosure be completed? This question is continually being asked. The answer is, it all depends upon how the money is subscribed to pay for it.

It will be remembered that this Enclosure together with the Lion House, or winter quarters, is being built entirely from money subscribed for this purpose. Last year sufficient money was subscribed

to buy the material to complete the Lion House, but if we are to complete the Enclosure this year we shall require not only the money to pay for material, but some to pay for a little extra labour. Don't forget it will be the largest Lion Enclosure in the United Kingdom, and one of the largest in Europe. Providing accommodation like this for the animals, does more to make the public demand better treatment for all wild animals than years of talking and preaching about keeping them in confined cages. The animals are happier, and in consequence your visit is more enjoyable.

On February 5th the female Griffon Vulture became eggbound, and could not fly to her nest, she settled however over the hot water pipes which pass underneath their cage. Early on the Sunday morning her egg came, and as it was perfect and quite whole it was placed on her nest, and she at once flew up and started to sit on it.

All went well for nearly a fortnight, then for some reason or another they decided to repeat last year's performance, and eat it. We are hoping however that they will try again.

The Black Crested Eagle which arrived just before Christmas is now growing a new Crest, and should look well by Easter.

Either Sarah is growing tired of pulling Dawn's hair out, or the hair is growing faster than she can pull, but we are glad to see that Dawn's baldness is growing less apparent. As regards health and vigour, the little Mandrill leaves nothing to be desired, and like all healthy children is full of mischief. Her Father had made wonderful strides since she was born, and is now beginning to get his colours.

The tropical Aquarium is proving a much appreciated addition to the Zoo, and judging from the remarks made by visitors is sure to be a considerable draw during the coming season. Although the demands on the construction staff are very great we are hoping to add at least another six tanks before Easter.

It was expected when our last Zoo News went out that the Malayan Bear Enclosure would have been completed within a week or so, but once again the unexpected happened. In this particular case our staff became depleted as sickness overcame two or three, but now only the finishing touch remains to be done, and providing nothing unforeseen happens the Bears will be liberated about the 3rd or 4th of March.

With the approach of Spring the birds at the Zoo are showing great enjoyment of life. The Touracos are exceedingly active, and we hope that they will make an attempt at nesting. The various Parrots at times vie with one another as to which can make the most noise, but the Cockatoos nearly always win.

Even the Pelicans are excited at the prospect of the sun once more, and flap their wings and bathe as if every minute was a joy to live.

We are trying to get the fancy Ducks moved into one of the ponds in the newly acquired field, as their home is anything but satisfactory from a water point of view, but before we dare move them we shall have to wire the pond in. To do this we shall use for the time being odd pieces of wire netting. If the fence does not look very attractive we must console ourselves with the thought that at least the Ducks will be happier.

Zoo Characters.

"Peter"

Peter is the Capybara which was presented to the Zoo by His Grace The Duke of Westminster about four years ago.

Ninety per cent of the visitors refer to Peter as that strange animal like a guinea pig. As a matter of fact the Capybara is the largest of Rodents and comes from South America, and is very closely related to the Guinea Pig or Cavy.

When Peter arrived he seemed somewhat uncertain, as if he were not quite sure whether we were friend or foe, but he soon settled down and realised he was with friends.

On one occasion while the keeper was cleaning out his enclosure, Peter who was making a great fuss round him, suddenly bit off the keeper's trouser buttons, to that man's great consternation.

Being a rodent, Peter by nature bites and chews everything which is capable of being chewed, and logs of wood are always left in his pen for this purpose.

"Billy"

Billy the Striped Hyena was presented to the Zoo by W. G. Hughes Esq., He has the distinction of being termed the cleanest hyena they have ever seen by the many who are familiar with these animals.

He is remarkably tame and will beg for all kinds of tit-bits, but of course he cannot be trusted, in fact he has been in disgrace more than once, but it is only his natural inclinations asserting themselves.

However he is a very attractive specimen, and like the Capybara wants a mate. At one time it was thought he would make friends with the Cape Hunting Dog, but the day came when all hopes of this were dashed to the ground.

On Wednesday June 29th the Conservative and Unionist Association will once again hold their Annual Fete at the Zoological Gardens.

In 1936 the Society were approached to see if an arrangement could be arrived at by which the Fete could be held at the Zoo, whereby both the Conservative Association and the Zoological Society would benefit financially. On July 8th of that year the Fete was held and all expectations were surpassed. So great was the attendance that something like chaos prevailed when it came to

catering for the four thousand odd visitors.

On June 2nd 1937 another Fete was held, but we prepared for a large crowd and although the number of visitors were up by many hundreds everything went off smoothly.

This year it is expected to be a much larger affair, and for the sake of all concerned it is to be hoped that fine weather will prevail as in former years, and that the funds of the Society will receive substantial benefit.

The Zoological Gardens is undoubtedly an ideal place for such functions, but before the Society can lend its grounds for such purposes it must be assured of a substantial return, as the expenses involved are considerable.

It is hoped that during the next season many trips will be run to the Zoo from distant towns, and the Society is making provision to deal with these.

We would remind those members who have not yet paid their subscription that the receipt of this will help the Council considerably, and may we once more appeal to members to induce their friends to join the Society.
