

"OUR ZOO NEWS"

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

Number Two.

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When we sent out the first "Zoo News" we had not the slightest idea how it would be received, naturally we wondered if members would appreciate it or not.

We were not long left in doubt, and apart from the very encouraging expressions of appreciation more members have visited the Zoo than ever before.

In response to many requests we have registered the Society to enable us to sell Intoxicating Liquor to Members, and a page has been set aside in this news giving the rules and other details, which members are advised to keep.

The weather in November has been fairly good, a fair amount of fog and frost, but all the animals are in excellent health.

The African Grey Parrots are so far showing no signs of the cold, and it is hoped they will be able to stand the winter in their new quarters.

The Crowned Cranes have been moved into the Llama pen for the winter, and the Llama and Goats have taken possession of the adjoining paddock.

Work is still proceeding on the Malayan Bear enclosure, the Bears have so turned up the earth, that until a new drain was put in the place became a mudheap, we are hoping to have it finished during the next two or three weeks, but a lot depends upon the weather.

Through having to concentrate on the Malayan Bears, work on the Aquarium has slowed up, but as soon as this is finished an effort will be made to make up for lost time.

The baby Mandrill which has been called Dawn, has cut her first teeth, one at the top and two at the bottom. Owing to the risk of disturbing the mother flashlight photographs had been forbidden, but on the 24th November the press were allowed to take a series of photographs which have appeared in many papers. The infant is growing quickly and now ventures away from its mother, who continually keeps a watchful eye over it.

It is now nearly three and a half years since the Society took over the Zoological Gardens. In that time considerable changes have taken place, the area has been increased from just under nine acres to approximately twenty three acres. A car park has been constructed capable of carrying heavy traffic which the Zoo is now beginning to attract.

Most important of all has been the improved conditions for keeping the animals and birds, and the considerably enlarged collection.

The assets of the Society have increased considerably and the Society can now offer the public full value for their money, the result of this has been that in the first six months of the present year our gate receipts exceed the whole of any previous full year. If this improvement is maintained our annual loss will be greatly reduced, if not entirely wiped out altogether, but there is one point we cannot emphasise too much, if members would whenever possible encourage others to join, any risk of a loss would be greatly reduced and would give the Society that extra bit to enable it to increase its stock to the larger mammals etc.

In the past it has fallen on a few to carry the burden, both financial and administrative, and they do not receive any benefits other than those of the ordinary member.

This burden will be considerably lessened if members will:-

1. Pay their annual subscriptions promptly on January 1st each year.
2. Try to get at least one new member.
3. Talk about the Zoo to all their friends, and advertise it whenever possible.

Do you know the terms of membership? There are several forms of membership as you will see below.

Founders donate £500 and receive benefits which can be designated to a successor.

Benefactors donate £250 and receive the same benefits as Founders except the right to designate a successor.

Patrons donate £25 and have personal admission to the Zoo together with the privilege of introducing two companions daily, and will also receive 20 tickets annually for friends.

Life Members pay a composition fee of £15 and have personal admission to the Zoo, and will also receive 20 tickets annually for friends.

Annual Members pay an entrance fee of one guinea, and an annual subscription of one guinea, and have personal admission to the Zoo, and will also receive 20 tickets each year (as long as they remain members) for friends.

Members can nominate Associates of the Society as follows:-

Wife or Husband at an Annual Subscription of 10/6d.
Children 14-21 at an Annual Subscription of 10/6d.
Children under 14 at an Annual Subscription of 7/6d.

Subscribers subscribe 10/6d per annum and receive 15 Subscribers Tickets per annum.

Zoo Characters.

"Mary"

Undoubtedly the most popular chimpanzee arrived at the Zoo in November 1952 direct from Africa. She was then about 18 to 24 months old. She quickly endeared herself to all by her very kindly nature, and even now at the age of about seven years is very gentle with those she loves. She thoroughly enjoys a rough and tumble game, but her weight and strength are now too great for her keepers to have many of these. She thoroughly enjoys helping in all sorts of work, and can manipulate a screw driver and spanner with the technique of an expert. She is also an

expert smoker but this is not allowed owing to the very great risk of fire. Her exploits are many, so many in fact that they could easily fill a book.

"Cocky"

Visitors to the Zoo will not be long left in doubt as to who "Cocky" is, for as they approach the parrot aviaries they are invariably met by a voice shouting, "Come here, shake hands with "Cocky." "Cocky" was brought to the Zoo by one of the members in 1934, and ever since has made himself the centre of attraction in the parrot aviary. He is a Slender billed Cockatoo, and when the mood takes him is an excellent talker. On one occasion when told by a member that he was yellow, he at once replied, "I am not yellow" and flew into a rage, then suddenly calmed down and said, "Shake hands with "Cocky."

Life in a Zoo is never dull, there is always something happening, in fact one of the main things at a Zoo is to stop things happening, that is things such as animals escaping, but even the most carefully arranged precautions sometimes fail, and then excitement really begins.

We do not like the excitement caused by escaped animals, firstly because they disorganise everything, and secondly they do not inspire confidence among the nervous section of the public, but they have happened and will happen even in the best regulated Zoo.

It was on Saturday, November 27th that we had such excitement. Breakfast had just been completed and the staff had returned to their work, when Rob-Rob the Blue and Red Macaw who spends most of his time on a stand in the kitchen, gave a yell which has long since become a warning that something out of the ordinary is taking place.

At once those in the kitchen looked up to see the cause, and were horrified to see Sammy the large Malayan Bear walking round the top of the

kitchen garden wall. The alarm was at once given and the staff mobilised, in the meantime Sammy had descended into the kitchen garden so it was decided to keep him there if possible while a means of catching him was thought out, so each side of the wall was patrolled and whenever he tried to mount it he was driven down. Once he gained mastery and walked along the top of the Polar Bear den, but fortunately he was driven back.

It was decided if possible to drive him into the Potting Shed and Fruit Store, and then endeavour to get him to enter a travelling crate. Fortunately after about an hour we succeeded in doing this, and he was taken back to his home.

It proved that he had lifted the iron door from his sleeping compartment where he had been shut in for the night with his companions, and then had scaled the concrete wall round his enclosure.

As most members are aware this enclosure is undergoing reconstruction, as the bears had made the whole place into a quagmire. Although it had been contemplated raising the wall several inches no one realised how the bears had grown since they were placed in last winter, but since Sammy's recapture it has been ascertained that his reach has increased over a foot.

However to get back to the story, Sammy was put back in his home, but before leaving him the cause of his escape was rectified. Everyone then returned to their job, but they had no sooner started work, in fact some had only just picked up the feeding dishes, when the alarm was raised that Sammy was out again. This time he had taken a different course, and in a few minutes had left the Zoo grounds and taken to a back lane. Here the chase went on for half an hour when Sammy decided to climb a tree and take things easy. He must have been up the tree about an hour and no amount of persuasion would bring him down, one of the staff climbed an adjoining tree and poked at him with a long prop but all to no avail.

As usual something out of the ordinary must be employed if you are to disturb an animal which has no fear of you. A motor lorry was seen further down the lane and the driver was asked if he would bring it along towards the tree where the bear was, and at the same time make as much noise with his engine as possible,

blow his exhaust and sound his horn, in fact do anything to make an unusual noise.

This idea was successful, the strange behaviour of the mechanical animal was too much for Sammy, he came down the tree like a shot and was driven in the direction of his home, and after several skirmishes was driven into a loose box adjoining his own den, and from there the proceedings were simple.

Many people think that the only activities of the Zoo is to exhibit wild animals and birds in its Gardens, and they would be greatly surprised if they knew how often the Zoo is called upon to relieve the sufferings of these wild creatures.

Hardly a day goes by but what some information is asked for, and in all cases help is given whenever possible.

Just as this "News" was being compiled we received a letter from the Superintendent of Eastham Locks asking us if we would catch a Swan which was in the Locks in a deplorable condition, it being covered with oil.

We caught this bird and brought it back to the Zoo, washed the thick oil from its plumage with paraffin and turned it on to one of the new ponds on the land which the Society has just taken over.

It is one of the many examples of what our wild birds are suffering by the oil discharged from ships, once they get this on their plumage they cannot possibly take to flight, and ultimately meet a sad end from many ways.