
"Our Zoo News"

(and Guide to Chester Zoo).

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Photograph by June Mottershead.

"REFLECTION ON THE POND."

A tranquil scene at Chester Zoo earlier this year.

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August, 1946.

"Our Zoo News."

The very unsettled weather during July had an exceedingly adverse effect on our gate receipts. Only two or three days of the month could be described as summer-like, with the resultant loss to the Zoo of several hundreds of pounds. Not that our gate receipts are below those of previous years, they are in fact higher, but the greatly-improved Zoo would have drawn far more people had the weather been kinder.

The re-opened and reconstructed Aquarium has been a very popular feature of recent weeks. Many thousands of visitors have paid for admission, and showed a keen interest in the exhibits. Almost all of the thirty-three tanks and cases (fourteen tropical tanks, twelve cold-water tanks, and seven vivarium cases) are now stocked, but we have been compelled to duplicate some of the exhibits and this will of course be altered as soon as we are able to procure additional specimens.

A start has been made on the construction of Aviaries for Owls, Kestrels and other Falcon species. The completed Aviaries will allow plenty of flight for the birds and, in the case of the Owls, afford protection from sun-glare.

A remarkable number of injured Cuckoos have been picked up by people this year, and we are constantly being asked to identify a bird that has

either met with an accident or been caught by some means. Strangely enough, very few people (even those who profess to know something about birds) recognise the Cuckoo when they see it. At the present time, we have no Aviary suitable for the accommodation of these birds, so those that recovered from their injuries were liberated.

Considerable headway is now being made with the construction of the open-air enclosure for the Lions. A good start was made with the help of several workmen on holiday from various Works, who seemed to enjoy lending a hand.

The job of hauling into position the heavy anti-tank road blocks was a very strenuous one, but in two days three men had hauled and erected no fewer than one hundred and eighteen blocks each weighing fourteen hundredweight. This completed the foundation along the western side of the enclosure a distance of seventy-two yards.

A still more laborious part of the work was the utilisation of these heavy blocks to build the extra dens at the northern corner of the enclosure and adjoining the Lion-House. It was necessary to raise the blocks several feet and truly set them, otherwise their own weight would soon bring them down again. Now that they are in position, they will make dens of considerable strength.

Some people may be tempted to ask "Is it necessary to make these dens so strong?" The answer is "No, but as building materials are in such urgent demand at the present time for the building

of houses, these Lion dens are being constructed out of war materials which would otherwise have to be broken up, thus a job of breaking-up is dispensed with by effecting some building-up instead".

We have so frequently expressed the hope that this enclosure would soon be a reality that we hesitate now to make any promises, but can say definitely that we are doing our best to proceed.

On 8th August, 1939, Chester Zoo's first Lion cubs were born and, as no quiet quarters then existed for "Faith" the mother, we at once set about building a den at the rear of her cage. The work was commenced about two o'clock in the afternoon, less than an hour after her first-born had arrived. By ten o'clock the same evening it was sufficiently advanced to allow Faith to enter the den, but it was two days before she took advantage of our efforts.

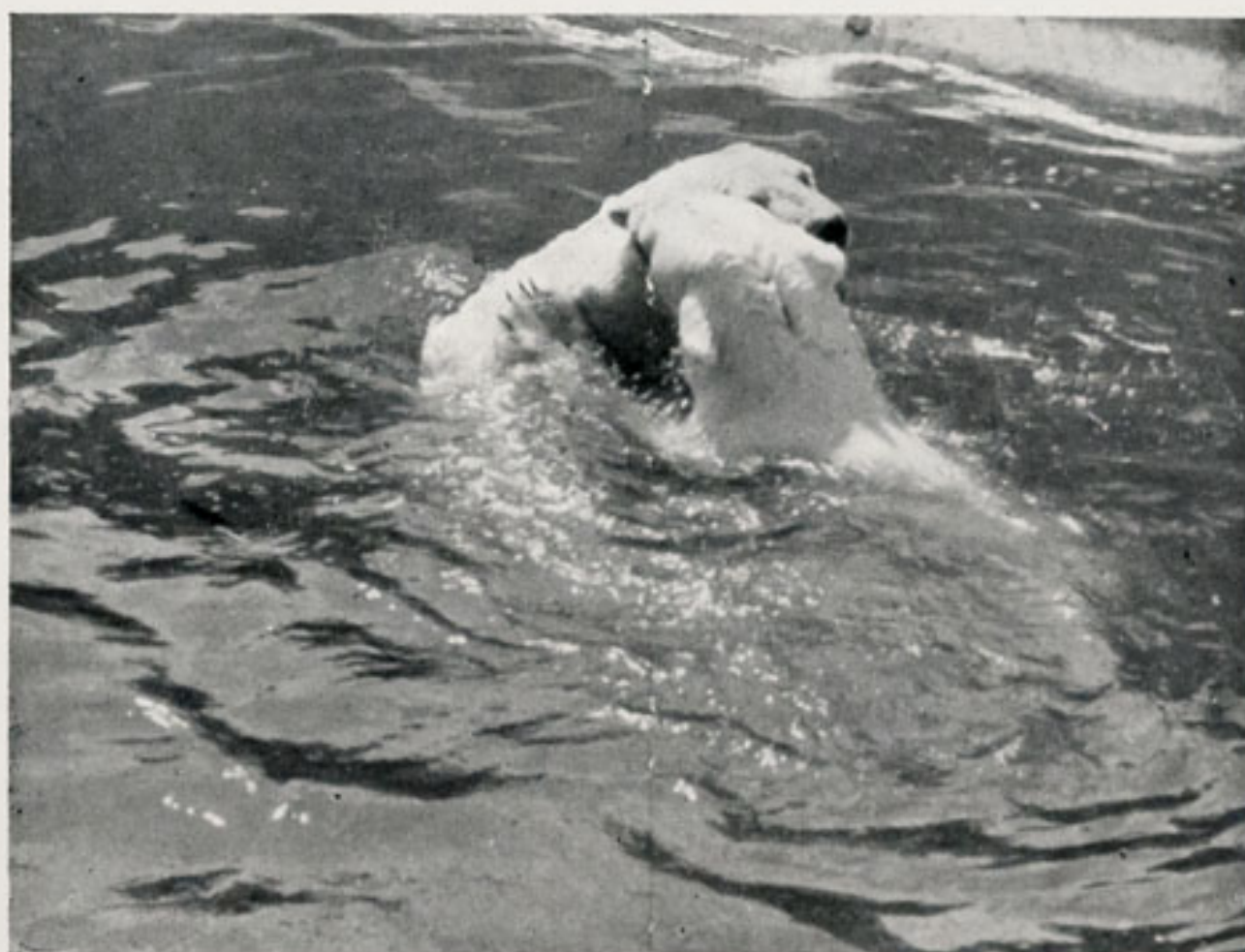
By a strange coincidence, it was seven years to the day, 8th August of this year, that the workmen pulled down the old den as a preliminary to the erection of permanent quarters.

The temporary structure had served its purpose well, over seventy Lion cubs having either been born in it or occupying it at some time. If the new den proves as serviceable, we shall have no complaint to make.

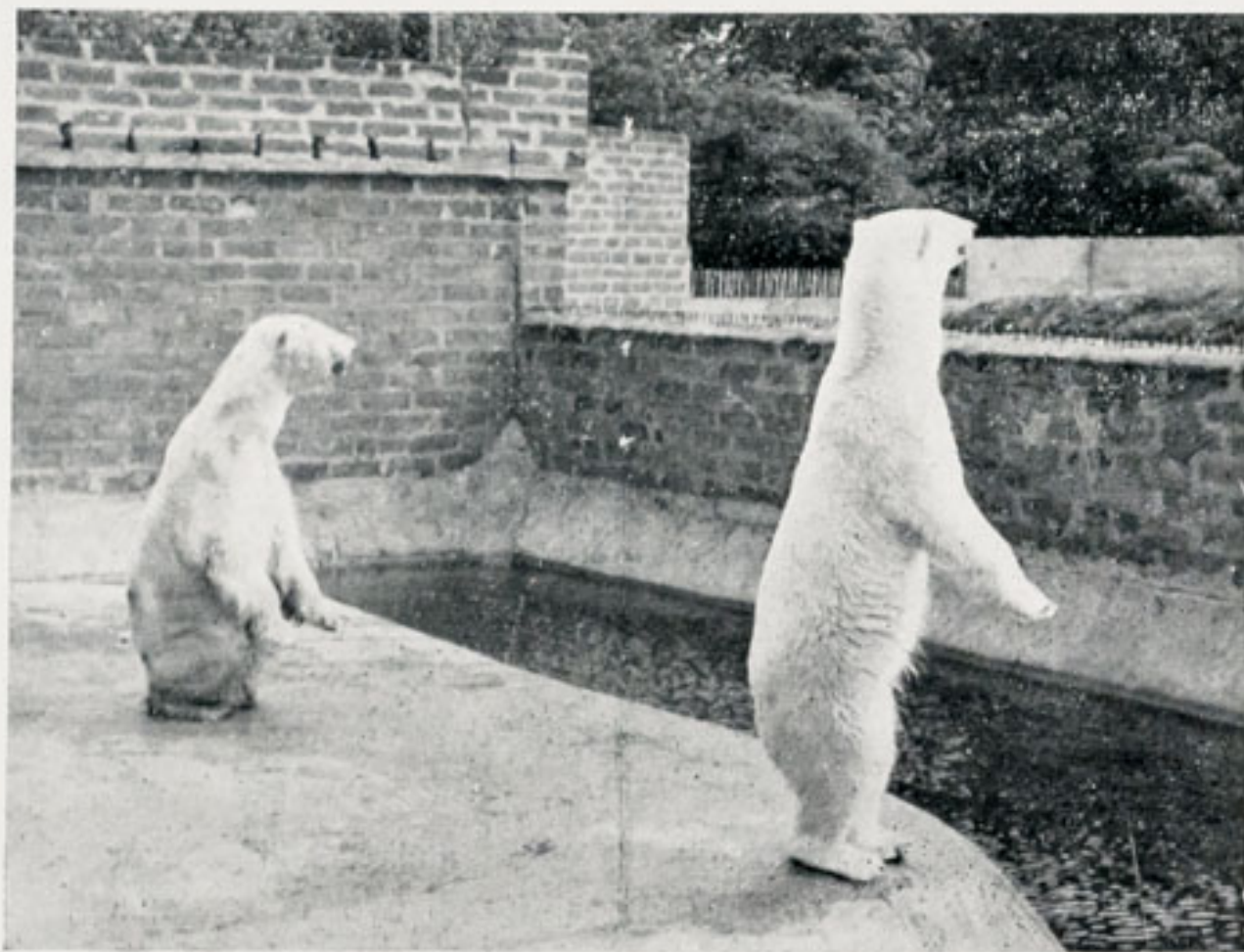
One of the most striking improvements effected this last month is the completion of the renovation of the old Flamingo enclosure, which is situate a few yards inside the Zoo entrance.

Many years ago, this enclosure inhabited by Flamingoes and other fancy waterfowl was an outstanding sight, but during the war it became very dilapidated and overgrown, and it was no easy job to clean it up. After many weeks of work, it is now ready for re-habitation by some birds. At present we have very few to put in it, but are on the look-out for some attractive ones. In any case, the enclosure itself is now a much pleasanter sight than was the overgrown mess which it had become.

On Sunday, 28th July, our Lioness "Cordelia" gave birth to two cubs (one male and one female). Unfortunately, owing to the work in progress at the rear of the Lion-House, we were unable to transfer Cordelia to the back cages; it was a busy day at the Zoo and the Lion-House was crowded with visitors at the time of the births. Consequently, Cordelia was very unsettled and refused to suckle her cubs. They were therefore brought into the house and immediately put on the bottle, but from the first neither of them seemed to be thriving and within a few days both had died.



Punch and Judy in playful mood. Photograph by H. F. Parker, Esq.



Photograph by H. F. Parker, Esq.

One of the last photographs taken of Punch and Judy before Punch died. Punch is on the left of the picture.

OBITUARY.

Dear old Punch, the Polar Bear who appealed so much to the kindly heart and practical sympathy of the late Miss Tomkyns-Grafton, has died of old age; as far as can be ascertained, he was in his forty-second year.

He had aged noticeably during the past few months, and on the afternoon of 19th July he refused his meat; the following afternoon a keeper was nearby and saw him die quietly in his den.

Punch came to Chester Zoo fifteen years ago, after spending many years as a member of the group of Bears in the late Bostock and Wombwell's Circus.

Thanks to the generosity of the late Miss Tomkyns-Grafton, during the last fourteen months of his life he had everything for which a Polar Bear in captivity could wish; a large and pleasant open-air enclosure, complete with den in which to shelter, and large open-air swimming-pool. He had also the company of Judy, the female Polar Bear, and they were very happy together despite the fact that Judy is about thirty years his junior.

Punch now rests in the earth beneath the shadow of trees in the Zoo grounds, and the question presents itself "Where are we to find another companion for Judy?"



CHRISTY

Photograph by H. F. Parker, Esq.

photographed the morning after her latest escapade.

"CHRISTY".

By G. S. Mottershead.

As I sit down to write this month's notes about Christy, I am feeling somewhat worn-out and exhausted as the result of a solid hour-and-half spent in hunting for her.

It happened like this. As I mentioned in last month's News, Christy has had to forego her morning walks on account of her rapid growth and also her reluctance at times to return to her cage. Each evening, after all the visitors have left, my wife takes her out for a walk. So long as nobody interferes, all goes well and, after about an hour of liberty, Christy is returned to her cage. This evening, however, for some unaccountable reason, things went differently. My wife left Christy gazing at the Axis

Deer (she is always very interested in them), whilst she slipped away to the Meat-House for Christy's usual piece of meat. On her return Christy had vanished.

I was sitting in the house at the time, and my daughter called me to say that Christy had disappeared and could not be found. A search was organised, and for over an hour-and-a-half the Zoo grounds were scoured, without success. It then seemed almost certain that she must have crossed the road and passed through a field of corn.

As my younger daughter and I walked along the road calling to her in the language of lions, as well as by her name, I felt sure some of the passers-by wondered what we were up to. I had just given a lion's call when, in the darkness, two women passed and bid me a cheery "Good-Night". Probably they thought I was trying to be funny, but I couldn't

help wondering what would have been their reactions had the call come from Christy instead of from me.

The moon was beginning to rise, and we were by now feeling more than anxious, in fact quite worried, for never before had Christy failed to appear when called. We could not understand what had happened, except that she had gone and was not to be found.

Returning to the Zoo grounds, we tried all the buildings, just in case she had got inside one of them and could not get out again. I went back to the house for a flash-lamp, so that I could see better into Rory's den, thinking she may even have got in to him (which was hardly likely—but we were by this time in the mood to try anywhere).

I called her name as I went through the house, and even walked through the Aquarium, as Christy has always visited these places on her rambles, but without success.

It must have been about the time when we were deciding to extend our search over a wider area, that my elder daughter came home, to find the house empty. She afterwards told us that she had not long been in the house when she was disturbed by the wife of a keeper who said that she was uncertain whether or not she had been seeing things but fancied she had seen the hind-quarters of a Lion disappearing into her sitting-room.

Not daring to go unarmed (as far as she knew, it may have been a full-grown Lion) my daughter went in search of a broom and was met by my younger daughter who had returned for some stronger shoes in which to continue the hunt.

What a relief, sure enough it was Christy and, from her appearance, she must have been in the house all the time; she was perfectly dry whilst everywhere outside was soaking wet after many hours of continuous rain. How we missed her we cannot say, but she must have concealed herself well and kept very still and quiet each time we visited the house.

During the search, we had all vowed that it would be the last time she would have her liberty, but when we found her it was such a happy reunion, and we realised that she had only been hiding in the house for the fun of it. So, I am afraid our resolution weakened and no doubt Christy will again enjoy her walks, but one thing is certain, I am sure my wife will not allow her out of her sight again.

The day is, however, fast approaching when these walks will have to cease for good, as Christy is growing so rapidly and, although her actions are

only play, even now if she jumps at you she knocks you to the ground unless you have braced yourself for the impact.

One bright spot is the rapid progress now being made on the open-air enclosure for the Lions. When this enclosure is completed, Christy will enjoy a certain amount of liberty permanently.

News from other Zoos.

WHIPSNADDE PARK.

By Captain Beal.

The half-year ended June, 1946, shows an increase of 120,000 on the number of visitors during the same period of 1945.

The baby Chimpanzee "Uno", born on 9th February, is doing well, and is now on view to the public. She has grown well, which is to be expected from breast-fed babies, and has cut several teeth. BooBoo (2) has been a wonderful mother.

The five baby Bear cubs have grown, and are a great attraction, always entertaining the public with their playfulness.

The two Kodiak Bears, male and female, presented by Mr. Alfred Ezra, O.B.E., arrived safely and are being accommodated in the Tiger Pit. They are magnificent specimens, especially the male who, standing on his hind legs with fore-limbs stretched up against a wall, reaches just on twelve feet.

The six Pere Davide Deer are being suckled by goats and doing well.

No major births have occurred since our last news, but those then reported are doing well and growing.

Some major improvements have been effected in the Park, which is being gradually brought up to its pre-war condition.

MAIDSTONE ZOO PARK.

By Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt Drake.

Lovely summer weather at last, grand for hay-making and good for "gates", although the lure of the almost-forgotten seaside draws many.

New arrivals include a Yellow and Blue Macaw, a Sooty Mangaby, a young Lion suffering from rickets for which I am treating him with sunlight, exercise, and cod-liver oil, and also a young Viscacha born in the Zoo.

Factory and school holidays are starting, so we expect to be extra busy for the next six weeks.

Guide to Chester Zoo.

Entering the Zoo at the main gate, visitors are advised to proceed along South Drive. In the past, this roadway was a public highway but was closed about sixty years ago on the construction of the road now known as Oakfield Drive.

Passing along South Drive, we come to the Elephant loading platform from which Molly the Elephant gives rides daily, except Fridays and wet days, during the summer months. Molly is a native of Ceylon, about twenty years of age, and has travelled considerably, having visited most of the European Countries at one time or another. She has, however, been in this Country for the past eight or nine years, and her Mahout has been with her since she was quite a youngster. Elephants, as a rule, live to a great age and continue to grow until they reach the age of about twenty-five years; Molly has grown considerably since she arrived at the Zoo in 1941.

Leaving the Elephant stand and continuing to the left, we notice the Raccoon enclosure, at present unoccupied. On our right we find the Malayan Bear enclosure, in which are at present Sally and Teeny, two female Malayan Bears. Sally has been in this enclosure for about ten years and Teeny (distinguishable by the white marking on her chest) for about eight years. The Malayan Bear is about the smallest of the true Bears and is often referred to as the Sun Bear. Its native home is Borneo and the Malay Peninsula, and it has many peculiar characteristics. Its food in the wilds consists mainly of honey and nectar, which its long tongue is particularly adapted to extract. The fur of the Malayan Bear is much shorter than that of other Bears and is black tending to brown on the face. Its eyes are small, as also are its ears, and very few of these Bears are without the white patch (varying to cream) on the chest, this patch more often than not being shaped like a letter "V". These little Bears have a very peculiar walk, turning their front toes right in, and they are capable of doing considerable damage with their claws. Sally and Teeny used their claws to such good effect in their enclosure that we had last year to have it reconstructed.

Walking clockwise round the Malayan Bear enclosure, we come to several newly reconstructed enclosures in which are domestic goats, etc., and, a

little further on, a yard occupied by Half-Bred Wild Swine. These are bred from a Wild Boar ex a large Black Pig on the one side and a Wild Boar ex a Tamworth Pig on the other side. When born, these Pigs are striped, but the stripes soon disappear.

Turning left at this point, we proceed along Elephant Walk to Central Drive which runs at right angles to the Cafes and main buildings. Facing the Cafe entrance is a Tea Garden and Buffet, where visitors can make their own choice of a meal or light refreshments at reasonable prices. Beyond the Tea Garden, work is now proceeding rapidly on the open-air enclosure for the Lions.

The Aquarium is on the right of the Tea Garden and runs underneath the Cafes. This exhibit is again open to the public, but we have found it necessary to now make an extra charge for admission to it.

Passing the Aquarium, we find on our left the old Court-Yard in which have been situate for many years the Lion-House, the Monkey-House, the Elephant-House, the Leopard-House, etc. Many alterations and improvements are in course of being carried out in this area of the Zoo, and the Court-Yard is about to be closed to the public. New accommodation, in more congenial surroundings, will be found for the animals.

The Lion-House contains some exceptionally fine specimens of the King of Beasts, Chester Zoo being renowned for its Lions. Here are usually to be found a family of cubs, nearly seventy having been bred since the commencement of the war.

Molly the Elephant can be seen in the Elephant-House, when she is not out giving rides or taking exercise.

Our stock of Monkeys is just now very low, but plans are in hand to build a new Monkey-House which will be stocked with all varieties including Chimpanzees.

The Court-Yard also contains an Aviary in which are the Griffon Vultures, one of which was hatched and reared in this Aviary (the only recorded instance of a Griffon Vulture being bred and reared in captivity).

We must not leave the Court-Yard without first taking a look at little Christy (the orphan Lioness cub whose mother Cassandra died when she was born last Christmas Day). She is being accommodated temporarily in the Quarantine House, pending completion of the open-air enclosure for the Lions,

and has now the company of Peter the dog for several hours daily.

Just outside the Court-Yard, on the left, are the Parrot Aviaries. We have here one or two very amusing specimens including "Cocky" the Slender-Billed Cockatoo, who persistently calls out "Come 'ere" or "Scratch Cocky", but visitors should take care—an unwary hand may receive a nasty bite. Another attractive specimen is "Rob-Rob" the Red and Blue Macaw, who has been at the Zoo since 1931 and is very popular.

Our route now turns left and up Bison Walk, on the left of which are the American Bison. One of these is an exceptionally fine bull "Ferdinand", with a magnificent head and shoulders, the largest American Bison we have ever seen. Some years ago, these animals became almost extinct, although at the beginning of the nineteenth century they ranged the North American Continent in hundreds of thousands.

The enclosure on our right, opposite the American Bison, (in the far corner of which is a well-sheltered pond) contains several varieties of Geese, including the Blue Snow Geese, Egyptian Geese, Chinese Geese, Ashy-Headed Geese, and the Magellan Geese.

Proceeding about a hundred yards or so up Bison Walk, past the roadway leading to the pond, we find on our right a smaller enclosure with a hillock in the centre. Here, with some goats, are the Mouflon (Wild Sheep of Corsica and Sardinia) now almost extinct.

Next, and still on our right, the two new Bear enclosures. In the first is "Trotsky" the Russian Bear with "Paddy" and "Won-Lung" the Himalayan Bears. Trotsky came to Chester Zoo as a small cub and, although he does not object to sharing his home with a lady like Won-Lung, he seems to strongly resent Paddy who was the last arrival in this enclosure. We suspect Trotsky of having grown up with the idea that he owns the Zoo!

Adjoining the Russian and Himalayan Bear enclosure is the Polar Bear enclosure. Unfortunately, our Polar Bear "Punch" died recently of old age, and we are now endeavouring to obtain another

companion for Judy in this pleasant enclosure. Judy, who is about ten years of age, came to Chester Zoo from Skegness in the early days of the war. She loves to swim and frolic in her pool which is one of the largest for Bears in this Country; the water is constantly changing, the inlet supply being at the bottom.

On our left, opposite the Polar Bear enclosure, are the Fallow Deer. These lovely creatures are, like all Deer, very timid, and care should be taken to avoid alarming them. They are natives of Northern Africa and Southern Europe, introduced to Central Europe and the British Isles some centuries ago, and now common in some of our large Parks.

Also in this enclosure are the Spanish Spotted Sheep, the Black St. Kilda Sheep, and the Soay Sheep.

Plans are in hand for a large Sea-Lion Pool and a Penguin enclosure, for which we propose to utilise part of the Fallow Deer enclosure adjoining Bison Walk.

The Wooded Dell at the end of Bison Walk is the home of Water Deer and several varieties of birds. Visitors are advised to proceed clockwise round this dell to the Fountain-Garden, where the filtered water from the Bear enclosures cascades in a water-fall and sprays from a fountain on its return journey to the Bears' swimming-pool.

The garden path leads straight on to the pond in the enclosure containing the sheep and geese. Walking clockwise round this pond we arrive at East Avenue on the left of which is the Orchard. Towards the end of East Avenue, on the left, are the Indian Spotted Deer. Turning sharp left and proceeding along a new roadway, on both sides of which are Aviaries containing birds of many varieties, we eventually come out onto the Lawns, where Peacocks, Cranes, Guinea-Fowl, and other birds, have complete freedom.

Now to the Cafe for a cup of tea.

