



“Our Zoo News”

and Guide.

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CHESTER ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

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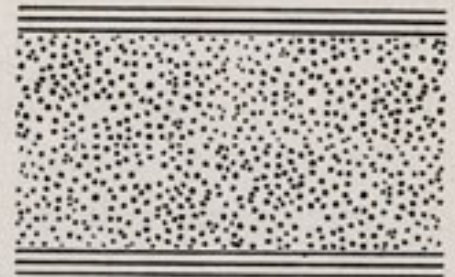
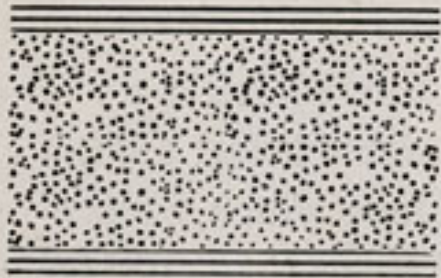
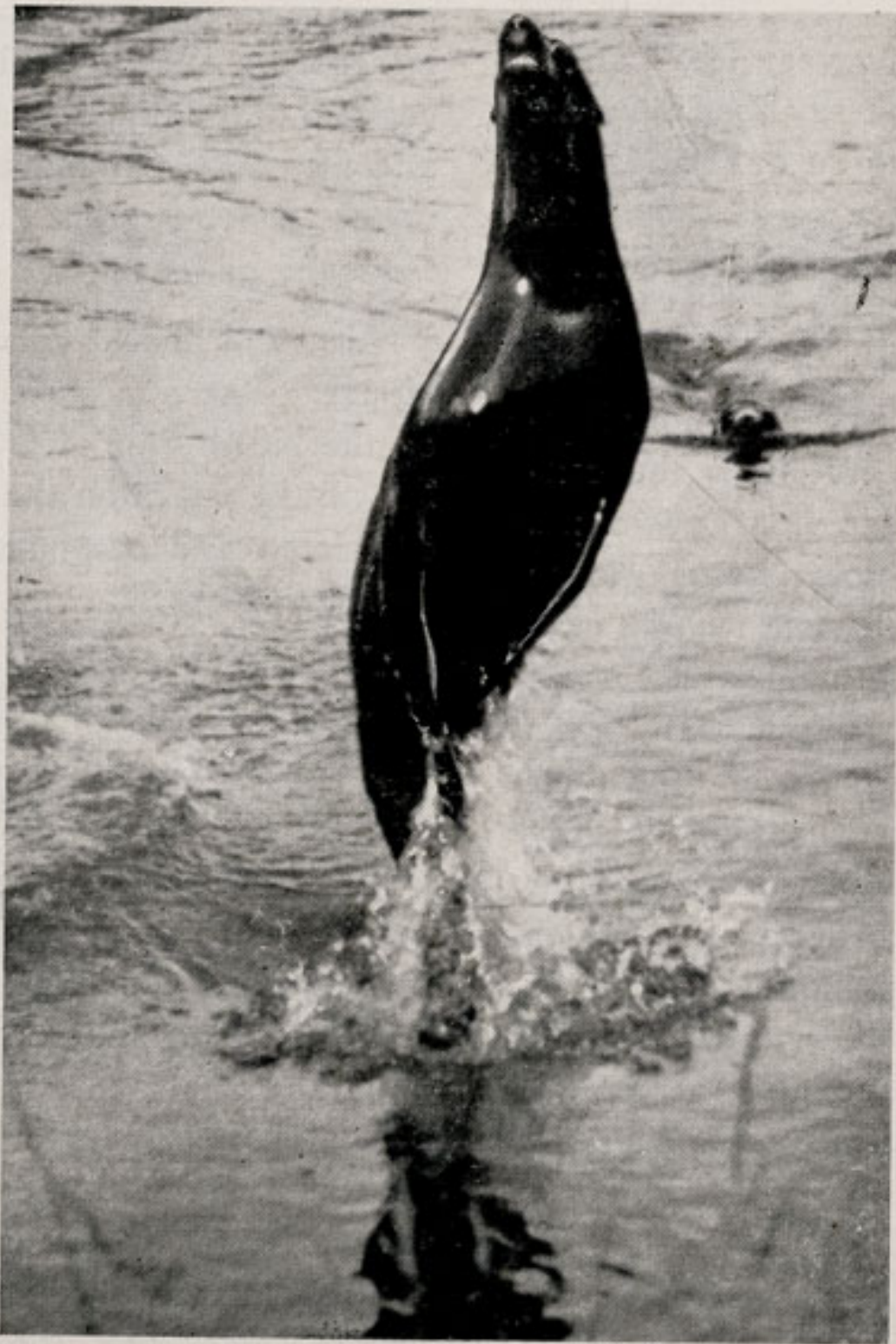


Photo by K. H. M. Sutton, Esq.

An interesting photograph of a Sea-lion leaping out of the water at Chester Zoo. Visitors see some wonderful leaps by the sea-lions which are made possible by the great depth of water in their pool.

The North of England Zoological Society,

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER.

Tel. Chester 1898.

January, 1950.

Zoo News.

During the short December days we can get plenty of time to reflect on the past and plan for the future.

During December we saw very few visitors at the Zoo, but that doesn't say that we were quiet and had time hanging on our hands, far from it. We have now been hard at work for a few weeks on preparing the Zoo for the 1950 season. Very many schemes are on hand and contemplated and it will take us all our time to have all that we wish to do completed by Easter. By far the major operation is the construction of the new Polar Bear enclosure. This is essential as our Polar Bears are so agile and the public so daring we feel we cannot run the risk of allowing them to remain another season in their present enclosure. This new enclosure will be much larger than their present one and has been constructed mainly out of anti-tank block and pill-boxes together with some very massive portland stone which was presented to the Zoo at the end of the last war. This enclosure will more or less be the centre piece of the Zoo and we intend, therefore, to make it as attractive as possible.

On the South Side will be the Penguin and Pelican Pools with an elevated roadway between them and the Polar Bears.

On the West Side a much higher roadway will be constructed so as to enable visitors to have an extended view of the area and also be able to see the Tigers in their enclosure, which will be to the West of the Polar Bears.

The North Side will also have an elevated roadway with flower gardens on the one side and the Polar Bears on the other, and the East will be bordered by the Sea Lions and the Flamingo Pool. It is impossible, as yet, to give the exact water capacity for the Bears, but this we expect will be, when measured up, capable of holding something like one hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand gallons of water. Their present Pool contains thirty-four thousand gallons.

We have almost completed the new Parrot House. There is quite a lot of interior work on the North Side of the House to be finished, but all the cages on the South Side have been completed and are occupied by various Parrots and Cockatoos.

The outdoor aviaries on the North Side of this house have still to be erected and adjoining these will be flower gardens which we propose to develop more and more as time goes on.

We have been compelled to carry out some alterations to the passage in the Reptile House owing to the fact that the Beavers have persisted in going underneath. The threat to this building is so great we have decided as soon as we possibly can to construct another Pool for the Beavers. When we do, we shall make it in the form of an island, so that people can see this interesting animal from all round and at the same time prevent the Beavers from burrowing out. We are all very interested to know exactly what the Beavers Lodge is like inside and after we have moved them we intend to make a careful investigation of this to see what these animals have been up to, the

amount of earth they have moved and the enormous amount of logs they have taken away tell us that they must have been carrying out extensive work underneath the ground, so it is with keen anticipation that we are looking forward to seeing what they have done.

Another new development which we must get completed before the Spring is the Tiger enclosure. Already we have purchased a pair of Tigers, and it is our intention to give them an enclosure on the same lines as the Lion enclosure, and this is to be erected on the left immediately beyond the Elephant House.

Another important improvement will be the completion of the Monkey House, which we hope will be done before the Spring. It will be remembered that the Monkey House has been in a partial state of completion for something like three years, but now that we have been able to move the Cockatoos and Parrots from the old aviaries to their new home we can proceed to extend the Monkey House.

A further development which has been taking place during the last month has been the construction of two more enclosures for the Spotted Hyenas, these will be found on the North of the Lake. Before we can really exhibit our Leopards and so forth we shall have to prepare accommodation for the Vultures and other animals and birds in this range of cages so that we can complete these cages for the larger Cats. Originally they were only temporarily finished to accommodate the present inhabitants.

In addition to all these animal preparations, we have also to provide various kinds of accommodation for the public, whom we hope will come again this next season in ever increasing numbers.



A few Facts and Figures.

During 1949—319,423 persons visited Chester Zoo.

In the same period 50,387 persons paid for admission to the Aquarium.

The Reptile House more than doubled this—102,613 paying for admission.

An interesting feature is the fact that 207,352 meals were served during the year. Many parties visiting the Zoo would have two meals arriving in the morning and spending a whole day in the Gardens.

27,993 went for a Motor Boat trip round the Bird Island.

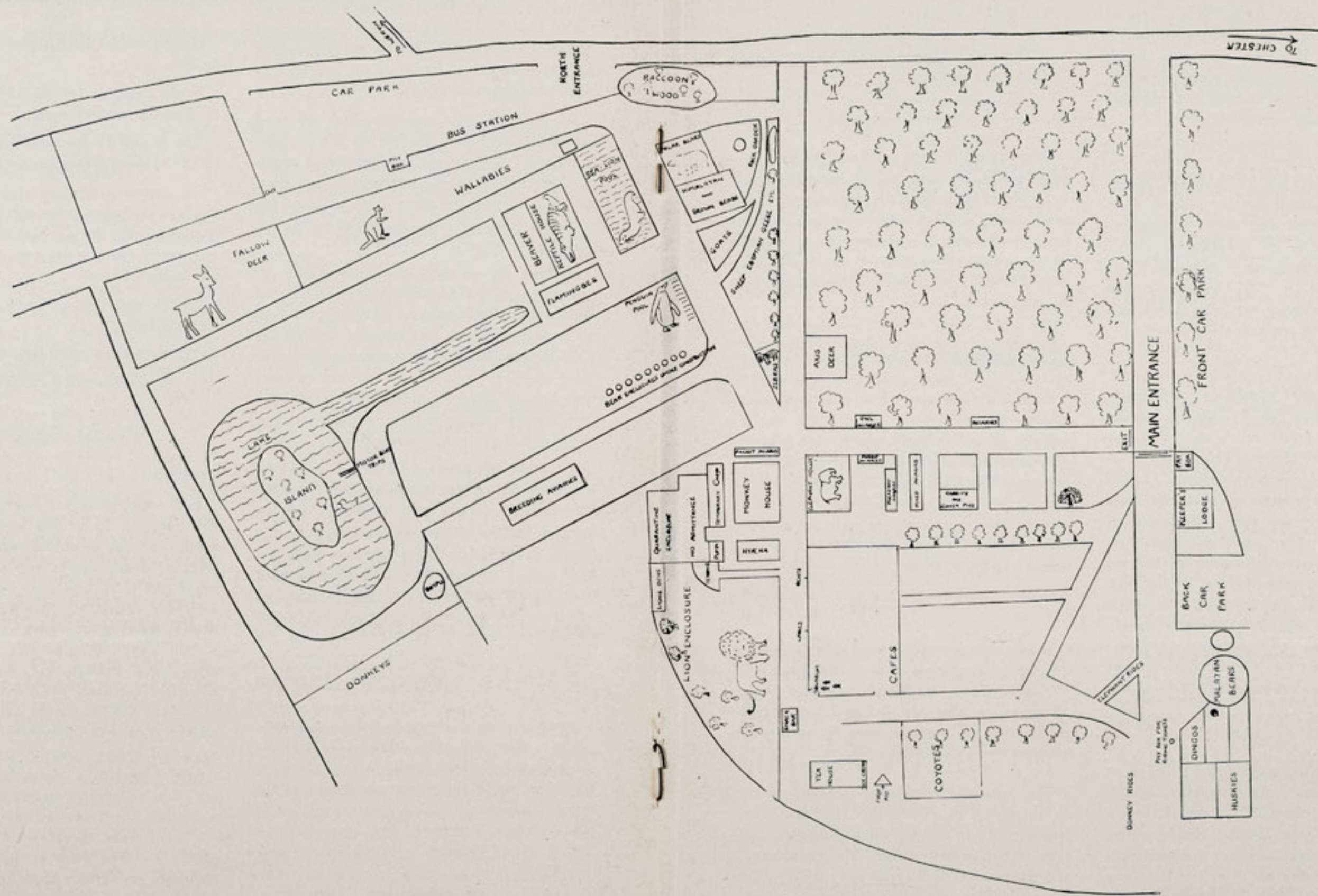
33,866 children had a Donkey Ride.

30,350 persons had an Elephant Ride.

New Arrivals.

TIGERS.

In November we purchased a pair of Tigers. The male is about nine years of age, fairly docile, and has improved wonderfully since its arrival. The female is between three and four years and is on the ferocious side, but is a very fine animal. So far we have not introduced these two to each other but we are hoping they will agree and in due time produce young. Both these Tigers have been with a Circus; the male became too large for the group and the female too savage, but we are hoping they will appreciate the freedom we are about to give them. At present they are in the old Lion House where the cages are about ten times as large as those they travel in with a Circus. They seemed rather bewildered at the space when they first arrived; what their reactions will be when let out into a large open enclosure we do not know, but we anticipate they will be like the Lions and soon settle down to their new liberty.



Plan of Chester Zoological Gardens

BEAR CUBS.

The Zoo has had presented to it a pair of crossbred bear cubs. The cross is between a European Brown Bear and Canadian Black Bear. So far they resemble more the Canadian, but as they are only twelve months old they may alter considerably.

MUNTJACS.

We have also recently acquired two Muntjacs, sometimes known as the barking deer. They are pretty little deer under two feet in height and are a lovely golden chestnut in colour. At present they are in a paddock adjoining the Fallow Deer, but we hope in the spring to let them have the free range with the Fallow Deer.

CHIMPANZEES.

We have recently purchased two young Chimpanzees, a male about eighteen months old called Georgie and a female about two and a half years called Meg. They came by air from West Africa but unfortunately arrived the week-end when our exceptionally mild weather deserted us and they both developed colds. However, after about a week they seemed to have thrown the cold off, but we shall have anxious times before we can say that they have become acclimatised. We have received word that one of our collector friends in West Africa has got another four Chimpanzees for us but he is holding these out there till the early summer when the weather should be warmer.

PELICANS.

Before the war we always had pelicans at the Zoo but unfortunately lost them through an irresponsible member of the public throwing harmful matter for them to catch. Now we are stocking up again and we are constructing a special enclosure for them and the Penguins, but in the meantime the Pelicans will be found on the lake.

REPTILES.

We have received many new reptiles for the Reptile House, these include the Blue Tongues Skink, the Royal Python, African Python and various small lizards.

Recently the Society purchased its own Bulldozer so that it could proceed more effectively in its object of making a barless Zoo as far as practicable. Ditches and water will in many cases be the only barrier between the animals and the public and this powerful implement should help us to proceed more quickly with the required enclosures.

An Island for the Goats.

One of the schemes we have in mind is the construction of another island. On this we propose to put the Goats which while being an attraction and a useful part of the Zoo, are extremely destructive and frequently break out playing havoc with the gardens. Billy Goats are not always pleasant to meet so we think that an island will be the best and cheapest solution to the problem.

It has been our object now for some time to develop gardens as well as animal enclosures. We have found the public appreciate flowers almost as much as animals and during 1949 we received many complimentary letters on what we were doing in this direction.

The area of ground which has been used for the new Polar Bear Enclosure and Parrot House, will also contain when completed, some very attractive flower beds. Many new shrubs and trees are to be planted and it is our intention to make a small rose garden on one portion of this site.

Since we started developing after the war, we have purchased and planted many thousands of shrubs and trees and it is truly amazing what quantities are required to make a show. On the Bird Island alone, in addition to nearly 500 assorted trees and shrubs, which were planted soon after it was made—we have added well over one hundred Rhododendrons and two fairly large groups of Azaleas.

Unfortunately when the island was constructed, the workmen buried most of the best soil and we are having to cart large quantities of suitable soil on to the island to get the trees and plants established. It is probably this fact together with the very dry summer which accounts for their growth not reaching our expectations.

As time passes we will no doubt, make other islands for birds, but as we shall be doing our own excavations, now we have the bulldozer, we will ensure that all the best soil is reserved for the top layer.

We are pleased to print the following poem which was sent in by Miss Diana Price—aged twelve years.

CHESTER ZOO.

Each Saturday when work is done,
I go down to the Zoo,
There are Lions and Bears and Elephants
And a sort of Kangaroo.

I run down to the entrance,
(It's sixpence to go in),
Then to the Bear Pits, carrying
Some honey in a tin.

The Bears stand up on their hind legs—
They're anxious for a treat—
I know they're asking me to give,
Them something nice and sweet.

I throw the honey down to them,
One starts to lick therein,
But soon it pokes its nose inside,
Until it's cleaned the tin.

The dingoes are the next I see,
Like yellow dogs are they,
They don't come running to greet me,
They lie and bask all day.

The huskies are more friendly dogs,
Their colours black and white,
They'll eat tit-bits out of my hand,
And never snarl or bite.

The donkey rides come next, but they
Are just for little folk,
What joy it is for them to ride upon
A friendly Moke!

A little further on we see,
Coyotes, lean and wild,
I really don't think that they are
Safe pets for a small child.

The lion and his wives are next,
So lithe and strong are they.
They're very dignified, although
They still find time to play.

A striped hyena next we see,
He lives all on his own,
He's very quiet, and you will
Not hear him laugh or groan.

The monkeys always are such fun,
There's a baby chimpanzee—
She's very small and very sweet,
I wish she'd come home with me.

The elephants are monstrous beasts,
With trunks upon their heads;
They're very hungry all the time,
And sometimes eat their beds.

I look at Molly—Barbar too—
Astonished at their size,
They have large bodies, flapping ears,
And very tiny eyes.

The Zebra with his stripey coat
Is next to come to light,
Be careful though how you approach,
For he may kick and bite.

The Polar Bears I now can see,
Big, shaggy, strong and white.
But don't attempt to pat their heads,
They may jump up and bite.

The sea lion's pool is opposite,
They're clumsy beasts on land,
But in the water—why, their speed
Is hard to understand.

There's a Reptile House, and an Aquarium,
Some goats—a Llama too,
A Parrot House—oh! endless things
to see at Chester Zoo.

9th January, 1950.

