

“OUR ZOO NEWS”

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

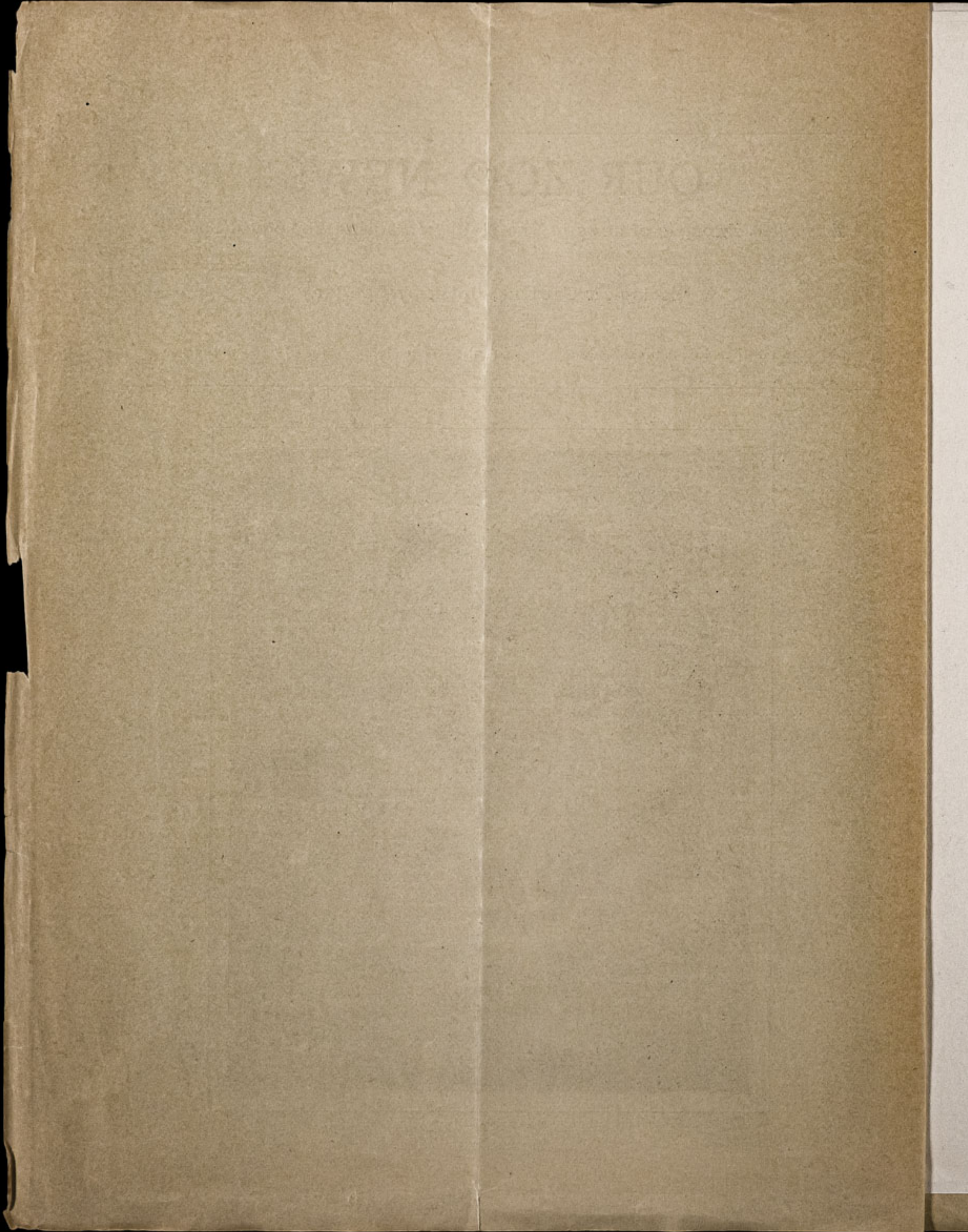
Zoological Gardens, Upton-by-Chester.

Posted Free to Members of the Society, and to Non-Members for 2/- per annum.



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THE LIONESS "KATRINA."



"OUR ZOO NEWS"

Number Fourteen

December 1938

November has been on the whole a very good month for the animals at the Zoo. The almost complete absence of fog has been a great blessing particularly to those animals and birds which remain out of doors throughout the year. In fact we have never had a November here, in which it could be said that all the animals and birds that have been out during the summer months were still out in November. Some of course are taken in at nights but quite a number of them are quite happy and well in their summer pens.

The Malayan Bear enclosure has been considerably improved through the very kind generosity of a friend. As most readers know, a lot of the Zoo is on a very heavy clay, and it is on this section we have the Malayan Bears; and burrowing as they do they make their pen into a veritable mud heap if the weather is wet. Last year a new drain was placed in this pen which ran the surplus water away, but during the wet weather the ground became so clogged the water held in pools. A considerable quantity of the clay soil has been dug up and replaced by cinders and gravel. The suggestion has often been made why the ground cannot be cemented, but any one who has seen these bears burrowing, could not deny them this pleasure. They seem to thoroughly enjoy it and at times more than bury themselves in the holes they have excavated.

The most outstanding event in the Aquarium this month has been the extraordinary large number of jewel fish which have been bred in the tank. It is only a few weeks since a pair of Jewel fish were introduced into the Aquarium and they very soon settled down. We have now successfully bred the following species since the Aquarium was opened last Spring.

FISH BRED

Guppies (Lebistes reticulatus)
Green Swordtails. (Xiphophorus hellerii)
Red Swordtails. (Xiphophorus hellerii)
Platys. (Platypoecilus maculatus)
Epiplatys. Chaperi.
Cichlasoma Nigrofasciatum.
Mollies. (Mollienisia sphenops x Liberty)
Paradise. (Macropodus opercularis)
Jewels. (Hemichromis bimaculatus)
Bloodfins. (Aphyocharax rubripinnis)
Aequidens Curviceps.

FISH HATCHED.

(But not reared through lack of accommodation)

Angels. (Pterophyllum scalare)
Barbus Tetrazona.
Axoloti. (Amblystoma tigrinum)

Which we think disproves of the theory that tropical fish cannot be kept successfully under purely artificial light. The mortality of our stock has also been negligible.

The Zoo has received further gifts this month of three very fine Jays and a nice pair of Dingoes sent by Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake of the Maidstone Zoo, and we are hoping that we will be in a position shortly to build these Dingoes a suitable enclosure amongst some of the trees.

We have also received from Mrs. W. Page a very nice tame Jackdaw, though so far this bird, unlike the one we had some time ago, is not a great chatterbox, but he is in excellent condition, and by the way the Parrots have adopted him no doubt he will soon be in lively competition. Which brings us to the point that we are in urgent need of some new aviaries as our stock of birds is getting great and several of our present aviaries, specially those of the Birds of Prey, require urgent attention.

We publish in this issue a list of contributions to our Appeal, a copy of which members will have already received. We know that to many members it is a very bad time, but several that have already given, propose sending a further contribution after Christmas. It is very thoughtful of those to have sent at once as they must have appreciated the fact that whatever happens the animals and birds in the Zoo have to be cared for and this task is considerably greater at this period of the year than at any other. We hope that members who have not yet been able to collect or send anything for the Zoo Appeal Fund will be able to do so at once, even if it is only a small amount. The very splendid offer of £500. providing there was a generous response to the Appeal, is far too precious a gift for the Society to lose through lack of support from the members.

Zoo Characters

"PUNCH"

Punch is one of the animals at the Zoo who is misnamed, but this is no fault of the Zoo, she arrived so christened in 1932. Punch is a female Polar Bear and was for many years a performing bear in the old circus days of Bostock & Wombwell. It was about the year 1930 she was acquired by a private Zoo which afterwards was purchased by the former Chester Zoological Gardens and was in the collection when the Society took over in 1934.

Punch at the time of her arrival in Chester appeared to be a somewhat aged animal, and certainly did not seem a happy one. One could readily understand this for she must have spent many years in the close confinement of a travelling circus and afterwards in a very small cage at her Zoo.

Therefore one can easily understand her utter amazement when she was turned out into her present pen at Chester and was able to wallow at will in the large bath.

Soon after she was placed in her present home she looked as if the shock was too much for her and she became very ill indeed and everyone thought that she would soon pass away; but about that time a horse that was running in a point-to-point race close to the Zoo, fell at a fence and broke its neck. This horse was given to the Zoo for food, and Punch at that time being the only carnivorous animal here had practically the whole animal to herself. The difference to Punch was almost miraculous for since then she has never once looked back, and is to-day perhaps, one of the finest Polar Bears in the country, and certainly appears considerably younger and more active than when she arrived nearly seven years ago.

Punch has in the past been the cause of various complaints from people who think that the Polar Bear should go into the water immediately they come near the cage and should not be allowed to lie down and rest. If the visitor could be present in the early hours of the morning soon after day-break they would invariably see the Polar Bear plunging about and enjoying herself to the full especially in the summer weather. Some people, of course, don't seem to realise that the Polar Bear enjoys our warm summers far more than she does our damp foggy winters. She is, on the whole very responsive to visitors who understand her, and it is strange how she can pick out a visitor who has a kind thought in his heart for her.

One will often see her apparently half asleep in her cage when suddenly she sees one approaching who has something to offer her, immediately she is all alert and springs up to the bars, much to the amazement of those visitors who have stood by condemning her for having a rest.

Although Punch is quite a good animal, like all Polar Bears she cannot be trusted too far. In the past we have had one or two hair-raising escapades with her, but these have been caused through taking her too much for granted. There is an old saying that familiarity breeds contempt, and in nearly all cases it has been this which has nearly ended in some minor tragedy. Most people run away with the impression that if a bear attacks you it would hug you, but this is entirely wrong, it would in most instances in attacking, strike with its paw, and this alone is sufficiently powerful to kill a man, as has been evidenced by one or two tragedies which have happened in the past.

A few years ago two Zoo Peacocks met on the terrace surrounding the Polar Bear and here a royal fight took place. After a little while one of them very unwisely flew on to the stone wall of the enclosure and allowed its long sweeping tail to come within the grasp of Punch, who instantly seized it with her paw and dragged the poor defenceless bird into the pen. Death was, of course, almost instantaneous.

It must have been a unique experience for Punch to taste the flesh from the Indian Tropics.

On another occasion a fox escaping from the hounds, bounded over into the Polar Bear enclosure, and was at once pounced on by Punch, who instantly killed him which proves how quick these large animals can be, also how careful humans ought to be in giving an animal too much latitude.

It is only natural of course in these cases that the Polar Bear should kill, but Punch has many lovable ways and is to quite a number, a very great favourite, and is probably the most photographed exhibit in the Zoo.

Monthly Misdemeanour

As last month's misdemeanour concerned an episode with a man's overcoat and the lions, strangely enough this month's relates the story of a youth's coat but this time it is the Chimpanzees, Kiki and Tarzana. The trouble in this case was a youth. Despite the fact that six feet intervenes between the stone wall barrier and the bars of this pen, the youth deliberately climbed over to pick up his handkerchief which had dropped over the barrier and before he realised what was happening the chimpanzees grabbed his overcoat. Realising that he might be dragged into the cage with it, he allowed them to pull it off his back. In a very short space of time Kiki was parading round her cage with the overcoat on much to Tarzana's jealousy, but soon Kiki investigated the pockets and found there some developed films which at once took her fancy. She held these up to the light and studied them as if she were an expert.

While this was going on Tarzana attempted to get the overcoat which however did not last long, as the two chimps could not wear it together they decided to share it, and at once tore it in half.

The crowd of course were highly amused at the antics of these animals and felt they had received one of the greatest entertainments they had ever had.

Fortunately this youth realised he had done a very unwise thing and could appreciate that the loss of his overcoat was a very light penalty for breaking the rules in getting over the barrier, and quite frankly admitted that he never realised the strength of these animals until then, and said he would in future take the Zoo warnings literally.

AN ANIMAL'S APPEAL

I often look with a wistful eye,
At those who come and go,
And sadly wonder why so-an-so,
Can casually pass us by.

We have come from lands across the sea,
To give pleasure to young and old,
And surely you in your inner heart,
Can give something to behold.

Yes, a home that we'll be proud of,
And something more as well,
A kindly thought, and a generous gift,
To make us feel just SWELL.

Jimmy Chimp.

We acknowledge with thanks the following donations to our Zoo Appeal Fund. If your name is not in this list, we sincerely hope to have the pleasure of seeing it, or your nom-de-plume in the next issue. Remember, if you cannot afford much now, a contribution at once however small will be very much appreciated.

	<u>£.</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>
The Viscount Leverhulme	100.	0.	0.
Jimmy's Friend	20.	0.	0.
Anonymous	15.	0.	0.
A Pal of Big Boy	10.	0.	0.
A Friend of the Birds	10.	0.	0.
Mrs. Allen	10.	0.	0.
To help Mary	10.	0.	0.
A.H.Williams	5.	0.	0.
W.E.Mounsey	5.	0.	0.
F.Youatt	5.	0.	0.
E.E.Posnett	3.	3.	0.
Mrs.L.Neill	3.	3.	0.
E.Williams	3.	3.	0.
Miss D.Williams	3.	3.	0.
Miss M.Maxwell-Jackson	2.	5.	0.
Col. Harrison-Johnston	2.	2.	0.
Mrs. P. Brown	2.	2.	0.
Professor A.Ramsbottom	2.	2.	0.
A. Proctor	2.	2.	0.
A.C.Johnson	2.	2.	0.
The Hon.Mrs A.Baillie	2.	2.	0.
W. Sawyer	2.	0.	0.
The Bishop of Chester	1.	1.	0.
J. N. Heath	1.	1.	0.
N. T. Afford	1.	1.	0.
Mrs. Pollock	1.	1.	0.
L. M. Snell	1.	1.	0.
A.C.Alan-Williams	1.	1.	0.
R. Neill	1.	1.	0.
A. Slack	1.	1.	0.
Mrs. Edward Allen	1.	1.	0.
B.H.Cecil Sykes	1.	1.	0.
W.A.Jackson	1.	0.	0.
E.J.Bolton	1.	0.	0.
E.Nicholson	1.	0.	0.
G. Rylands	1.	0.	0.
Miss Edmonds	1.	0.	0.
L. E. Holt	1.	0.	0.
A. T. Worth		10.	0.
A lovely Day in the Gardens		5.	0.