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# “Our Zoo News”

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Friedel and the Woodcutter's Wife. (See inside).

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## “Our Zoo News.”

The illustrations in this issue were intended for the October “Our Zoo News”, in which articles appeared regarding the Brown Bear and the American Bison. The Blocks were, however, delayed in the post and arrived too late for inclusion in that issue.

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Among the new arrivals at Chester Zoo during October is a pair of Chinese Water-Deer. These lovely little creatures came from Woburn, but their natural home is China where they live among the tall reeds fringing the river banks. We are accommodating them in the large enclosure on the right of Bison Walk, where they have plenty of room, with cover, and also water in which they can swim at will.

The Chinese Water-Deer has no antlers, but the males possess long tusks in the upper jaw. They are extremely active, and when disturbed will rapidly disappear by a series of long leaps to the nearest cover.

In the enclosure which we have allotted to them at Chester, the public should find it possible to study these attractive but extremely nervous little animals under natural conditions, without alarming them.

This is one type of animal which should never be kept in a confined space as, apart from the fact that it would be likely to knock itself about under such conditions, it would also undergo severe nervous strain, which would in our opinion constitute extreme cruelty.

Another addition to the collection during October is a pair of Soay Sheep. These are semi-wild Sheep from the Island of Soay and, in size and colour (brown), they resemble the Mouflon. We now have four varieties of Sheep in the Zoo—the Spanish Sheep, St. Kilda, Mouflon, and Soay.

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A pair of Magellan Geese has also been acquired and added to the small flock of Geese already at the Zoo which are greatly admired.

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### THE GREATER HILL-MYNAH.

We have just received a Greater Hill-Mynah as a gift from Captain Anker of Holland. This is a lovely specimen and, what is more, an excellent talker.

The native home of the Greater Hill-Mynah is Central India, the Himalayas from Kumaon to Assam, Burma to Tenasserim and Northern Malaysia.

Mynahs generally are very attractive birds, not so much on account of their plumage which, in all species, is of a dark colour, but more because of their lively interest in everything and their clever mimicry. Also, in spite of their dark plumage, they are very handsome birds, the feathers being very glossy. The bill is of a bright orange colour, which shows up to advantage against the dark plumage, and they have bright yellow wattles and lappets.

We hope by the spring to have this bird comfortably installed in a new aviary, where it should prove a great attraction and afford much entertainment to visitors by its ability as a gifted mimic.

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## FRIEDEL, MY WILD ROE.

By Helen Rossall.

I thought I was dreaming the day that Hans, the woodcutter, entered the yard followed closely by a Roe Fawn. It stepped—or, rather, limped—confidently at his side, and Hans said to me, "I bring you a present," just as though a Roe Fawn were a perfectly normal kind of gift.

He had found it alone and lame on the wooded mountain-side where he was working. With his profound love of woodland creatures, Hans had quickly won the timid creature's confidence, and by the time he had finished attending to the slightly damaged limb the Roe quite readily followed him when he set off for home.

Hans' wife, sharing her husband's affection for wild creatures, welcomed the pretty orphan, and between the three of us our Roe—Friedel, as we called her—quickly became as domesticated as Lola the retriever and the

two kittens. We allowed her to enjoy natural freedom and often she would trot along to the woods with Hans or would enjoy a romp with Lola who very soon became her devoted companion. She even accompanied Hans' wife and myself on excursions to the shops, much to the delight of the village children.

Friedel was very partial to milk as a goodly portion of her diet and, being free to wander at large, she could also find roots and grasses best suited to her appetite. But one dainty she was particularly fond of—chocolate! and just to mention the word in her presence would bring Friedel's appealing brown eyes upon you. Lola too liked chocolate, and it was amusing to offer her a piece, for just as Lola reached for it Friedel would gently, but very firmly, nuzzle her aside and make away with the larger share. Poor Lola, much too well-mannered to show fight, would sit patiently by eyeing the fast-disappearing dainty. Needless to say, I always saw that she got her portion—somewhat to Friedel's disgust.

I have been separated from Friedel for some years now but, of the many and varied pets that have strayed into my possession and affection, Friedel ranks high on the list. Her appealing gentleness would not allow her to be easily forgotten.

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An appealing photograph by Miss W. D. Lusk, of Trotsky the Russian Bear begging for tit-bits. This photograph was taken a few weeks ago; he is now spending much of his time in semi-hibernation.



Photograph by Miss W. D. Lusk. Trotsky reclining, but still alert for tit-bits.



Ferdinand and Billy (father and son), two of the American Bison at Chester Zoo.

## A VISIT TO CHESTER ZOO.

By W. L. Edwards.

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A week-end treat we've planned,  
To me it's something new;  
I'm sure it will be grand,  
A visit to the Zoo.

In woods all kinds we see,  
Of animals and game,  
But none though would harm me,  
For all are very tame.

But in the Zoo they keep  
Such fierce and dreadful sort  
That on you they would leap  
And eat you—awful thought!

For Jumbo we've regard,  
I'd like to see him off',  
For though his skin's so hard  
I'm sure his heart is soft.

Rides on his back old Jumbo gave,  
Oh, my! we rolled around  
As if upon the ocean wave  
Far up above the ground.

His trunk was waving there and here,  
It wanted to be fed;  
A lady turned, she saw it near,  
She gave a shriek and fled.

Now, cake he much enjoys,  
He finds it very nice,  
So all the girls and boys  
For him should take a slice.

But all the creatures there  
Will beg some food of you,  
It's only right and fair  
To take some for them too.

Of great big Jumbo we could say  
Much more in simple rhyme,  
But, sorry dears, we cannot stay,  
For others want our time.

Now, two brown bears we looked at next,  
They begged with pleading eyes;  
We with ourselves were very vexed,  
We'd brought no food supplies.

Now, coming in we'd bought a book,  
They called it "Our Zoo News,"  
The way to take and where to look  
It told us, with some views.

So, guided thus, we quickly came  
To where the Monkeys were,  
And joined some folk and did the same—  
I mean, we helped to stare.

Not only stare, but laugh as well,  
For aren't they sly and comic;  
They dash from place to place pell mell,  
In never-ending frolic.

Now, if you were to ask  
What most I like to see,  
That would not be a task—  
The Monkey-house 'twould be.

The Lion sits, a King,  
He seems to dream of home,  
Where freedom was a thing  
He loved; and he could roam.

The Cubs (how sweet)—they numbered  
four,  
On play were bent most keen;  
Their parents, kept apart next door,  
Would fain have with them been.

Two Vultures next, with feathers pale;  
Two tiny little Deer;  
A Fox we saw, with bushy tail;  
And massive Bison, queer.

There's many creatures yet  
'Bout which I'd like to jot,  
There's some I'd like to pet  
And some I'd rather not.

And so, at last, we reached the end  
Of our delightful roam;  
We should have loved more time to spend,  
The clock, though, called us home.

But soon our wishes all were past,  
And we had dreams instead,  
For, later, we reached home at last  
And were tucked up in bed.

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### THE OPEN-AIR LION ENCLOSURE.

We are pleased to report that we have been fortunate in acquiring a quantity of very heavy link netting, which will enable us to proceed much more quickly than we had anticipated with the open-air Lion enclosure, and if all goes well we hope to have this completed by next spring.

When first planned before the war, this enclosure was to have been built mainly of concrete blocks, and was a very ambitious scheme. The work would have been carried out entirely by the Zoo staff, who built the present Lion-House. In those days our staff lived on the Zoo premises and each one took a personal interest in any scheme for the improvement of the Zoo, so naturally the work on this project was more or less a labour of love. The war, which put a stop to the undertaking soon after it was put in hand, has however changed everything, and the cost of proceeding with our original scheme would be prohibitive at existing high rates for labour.

Last winter we received a very generous gift of Two Hundred Pounds from Miss A. L. Bulley of Neston, to help us make some progress with the enclosure, as she felt that it was badly needed by the Lions. A large

number of Concrete Road Blocks was acquired and a scheme formulated by which these could be used in conjunction with deep ditches. The necessary labour was, however, not available and seems unlikely to be for some time to come, so the Lion enclosure had once again to be left in abeyance. Now we have purchased this heavy wire, with which we can construct an ideal fence, and the Lions should therefore have their new home far sooner than we would have dared hope a short while ago.

The Lion enclosure will, when completed, be one of the largest (if not **the** largest) in the Country, and will include open grassland and wooded areas. It is also proposed to construct well-drained sandy stretches with caves in which the Lions will find protection from our North-Western climate, and the enclosure will be annexed to our present Lion-House so that, in the event of very severe weather, the Lions can go indoors.

The work which was carried out before the war will not be wasted, as it is proposed to complete that section as a raised terrace from which visitors will be able to look down and have a good view of one part of the enclosure.

When Miss Bulley heard about the bargain wire which we had purchased, and the use to which we proposed putting it, she very generously gave a further One Hundred Pounds to enable us to buy a stock of this wire, which will be used in the construction of roomy accommodation for any animals or birds for which it may be required.

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## News from other Zoos.

### MAIDSTONE ZOO PARK.

By Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake.

By the time these notes are published the 1945 season will have closed. What can be said about it? Without much summer weather, but also without many wet days, it has been a good one. The attendance, though not up to pre-war standards, numbered 124,000—almost double that of 1944 (the Flying Bomb year).

As, I am sure, is the case with all other Zoos, much work and repairs are now waiting to be carried out, but where the labour is to come from I do **not** know, and wild animals can do much damage to their quarters during six years.

An interesting birth is to be recorded; a Collared Peccary was born on the same day as its sister was born last year. A Cockatoo, a Badger, a pair of White Turkeys, and a Fox, have also arrived.

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### DUBLIN ZOO.

By C. L. Flood.

Our Lioness "Flame" presented us with two cubs on the 12th of October. This is "Flame's" first litter. She herself was born on the 6th December, 1941, at the Empire Theatre, Leeds, during an air-raid in which her mother was killed. "Flame" was reared on "Cow and Gate" Milk Food, by Mr. Pat McCormac, who was on the stage at the time she was born. Later on, when she was getting a little too big for Mr. McCormac to manage, he presented her to this Society. She travelled to Ireland by air, and then by

'bus to the Phoenix Park, and walked in at the front gate of the Zoo on a lead. She has always been, and still is, a great pet.

Another new arrival is a Bosman's Potto or West African Lemur. This attractive little creature is, at present, being kept in the Superintendent's house, for lack of suitable accommodation in the Gardens. When the time arrives for him to go to his new quarters there will be some sad faces in Mr. Flood's family, as this little chap has really crept his way into their hearts and has, consequently, been given the freedom of the house,

A baby Squirrel, which was picked up by one of our men in the Phoenix Park, has been foster-mothered by the Zoo Restaurant cat "Minnie," who now walks about with her head in the air, fully aware of the fact that she has become one of the most important exhibits in the Gardens,

The finding one morning of ten dead fowl (four Silkies, three Muscovy, and three Bantams) led to a two-hour beat of the grounds, with every available man, and the eventual shooting of a Fox that had escaped from its outdoor enclosure during the night by jumping the wire fence.

We are sorry to report the loss of our Boomslang Snake, after 6½ years in captivity; this seems to us to be a record for this class of reptile. Other long-lived exhibits which are in the Gardens at the present time include a Zebra, aged 40 years, a Sulphur Crested Cockatoo, aged 93 years, a Siamang Gibbon, aged 13 years, and a Griffon Vulture which arrived in the Gardens in 1911. It would be interesting to hear from the other Zoos regarding the length of life of their animals in captivity.

