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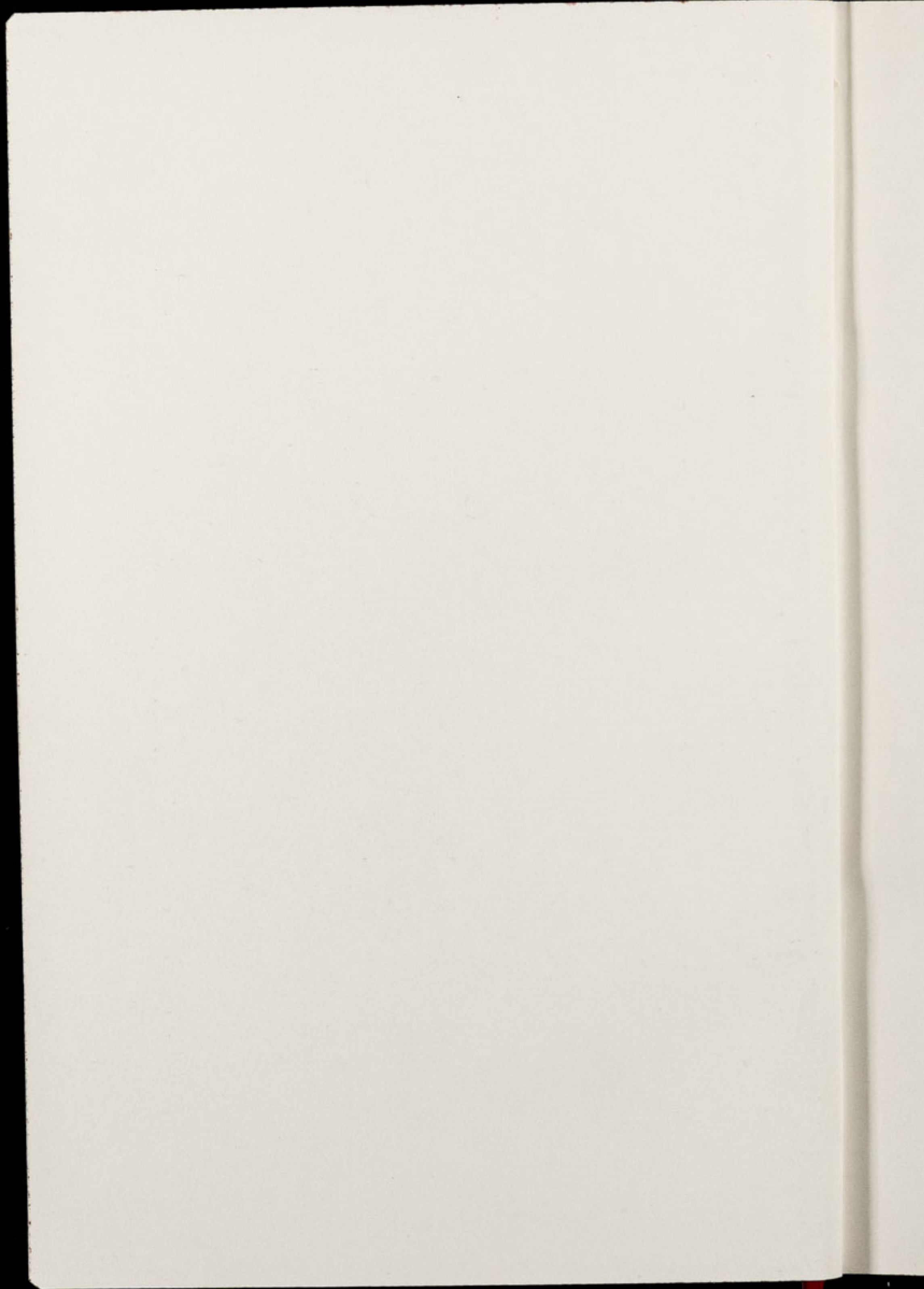
Chester Zoo News

AND GUIDE

**THE NORTH OF ENGLAND ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON - BY - CHESTER**

January 1966

Price 1/-



Editorial

We would like to wish all readers a Happy and Prosperous 1966.

One of the commonest questions asked by members of the public is:— How do the animals which come from warm climates fare during the cold weather? The answer to this question is outlined in an article on page 6 giving a "behind the scenes" glimpse of the Zoo during the winter.

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COVER: This month's cover shows one of the Banded Monitors — a specimen over seven feet long. For further details see page 4.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION SIXTEEN SHILLINGS POST PAID

TELEPHONE: CHESTER 20106/7/8

PRESENTATIONS

Two Versicolor or Silver Teal (*Anas versicolor versicolor*) were presented to the Zoo on the 1st December. These Teal are to be seen on the Waterfowl enclosure (No. 47 on the plan) where they joined the other thirteen species already in stock. They are particularly attractive as both sexes have bright coloured plumage throughout the year.

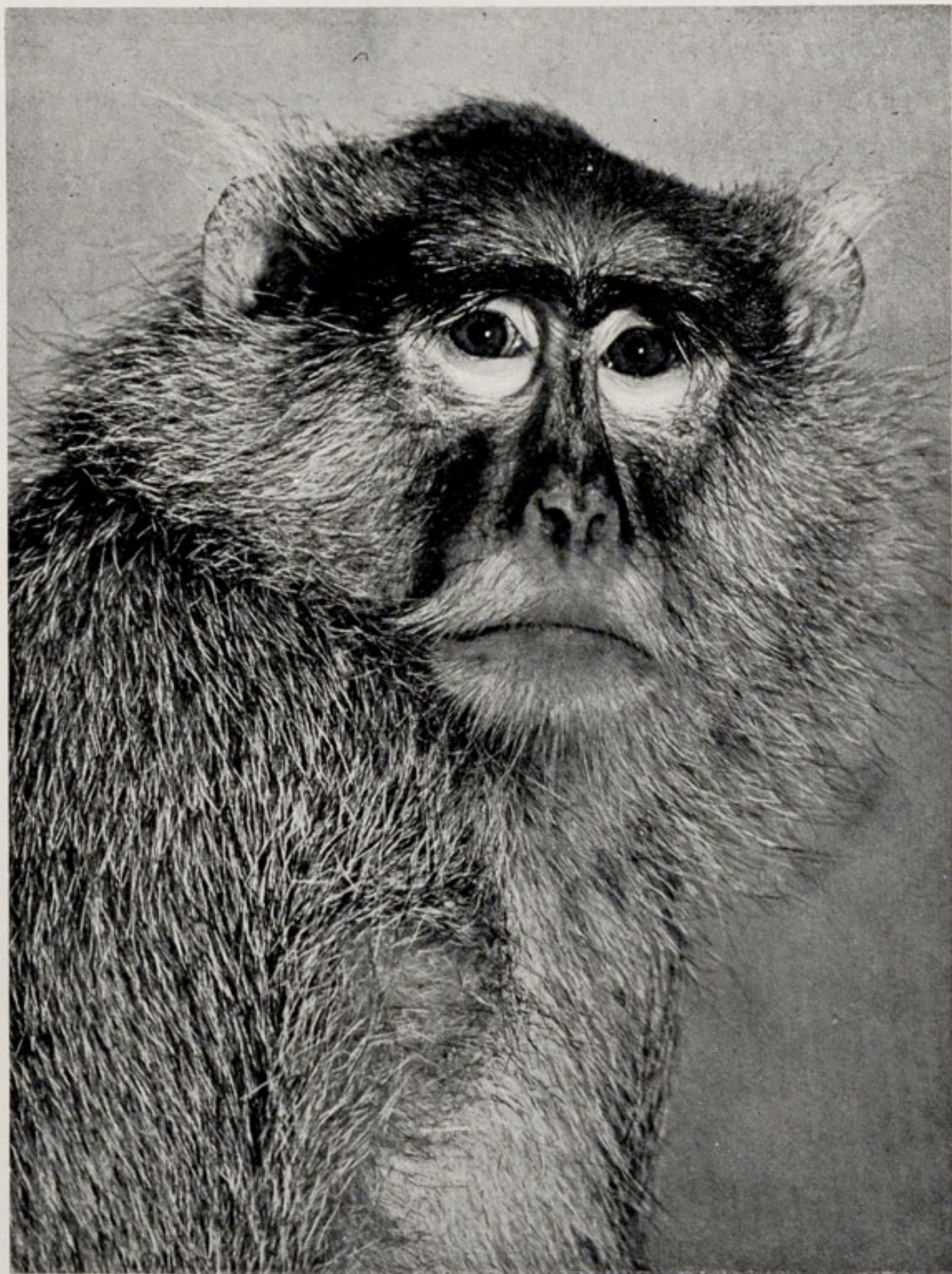
Versicolor Teal are found in South America from Central Chile to the Bolivian Chaco, Paraguay, South Brazil and Northern Argentina. They are usually a resident species and are quite common in their own habitat. Normally they do not associate with other Waterfowl but are found in small groups. The Versicolor Teal is not commonly seen in British Zoos. The first specimen to reach Europe arrived in London during 1902.

A female Patas or Soldier Monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*) was taken to the Monkey House, where she will eventually join the other two already in residence.

The Patas Monkey is found in dry areas of Acacia scrub and grassland throughout Tropical and Central Africa, from Senegal eastwards to Ethiopia and southwards to Tanzania. They are principally a ground living species and search for insects, grubs, fruit, roots, eggs and small birds upon which they principally subsist. When forced to, they will climb trees and rocks but with such long limbs are adapted to terrestrial living.

EXCHANGES

Three young female Leopards have been acquired. Apart from a young male which was bred in Chester Zoo all our common Leopards are getting old, so the acquisition of these females will enable us to continue the breeding in which we have been so successful in the past.



PATAS MONKEY

E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.

HIPPOS

The young Hippopotamus which was born at the beginning of November is doing very well indeed. It is a male and we are happy to say that all three, the parents and the youngster, are now living happily together in their enclosure.

GREAT INDIAN HORNBILL

The male Great Indian Hornbill which arrived last October has now been introduced to the female and they have settled down very well together.

NEWS FROM THE MONKEY HOUSE

The first Barbary Ape to be born in the new enclosure is having to be hand-reared by the keepers in the Monkey House. The mother was fully prepared to look after the baby but as in previous years it was stolen by the other apes soon after birth. First of all the other female Barbary Ape stole her and then the male took over. We decided to move the young one and hand-rear her, as she would not receive sufficient milk from her mother to survive. The baby is a great favourite with the keepers, spends most of her time at the rear of the Monkey House and has a walk round during the morning for exercise.

BANDED MONITOR

The Banded Monitor (*Varanus salvator*) is found in Ceylon, South East Asia, South China, Indonesia and the Phillipines. The specimen illustrated on the cover of this month's magazine is just over seven feet long. Some Banded Monitors have been recorded at eight and a half feet long but these are exceptional specimens and approach in size the Komodo Dragon, which is also a species of Monitor Lizard.

The food of the Banded Monitor consists of any mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians or fish they can catch; eggs of birds and reptiles are also eaten readily. They are extremely strong and can run at a good speed but if cornered will defend themselves by biting, tearing with their claws and lashing out with a very powerful tail.

Banded Monitors are to be found in the vicinity of rivers and streams and at times will dive from overhanging branches in pursuit of fish. When kept in captivity it is particularly important for them to have a large deep pool so that they can fully immerse themselves in the water. Our Monitors have a good sized pool lined with coloured fibre-glass, which makes cleaning far easier.

GREY-NECKED WOOD RAIL

Probably the most friendly bird at liberty in the Temperate Bird House is the Grey-necked or Cayenne Wood Rail (*Aramides cajanea*). This species is found in South America from Colombia and British Guiana to Northern Brazil and can be seen in the photograph on page 5. In common with other species of Rails the Grey-necked is shy and secretive in its habits and also has extremely good camouflage, the colouration merging into the thick vegetation of its natural environment.

Our specimen has only recently been moved into the Temperate Bird House; during the summer he was accommodated in the Macaw Flight. When the Temperate Bird House was first opened we tried to introduce him; he was, however, so tame that we were afraid he would be trampled under-foot, so we transferred him back to the Macaw Flight. With the advent of colder conditions and consequently less visitors through the Bird House, it was decided to introduce him again. He is not quite so tame now,

but he comes to investigate members of the public as they walk through. One of his curious habits is to follow a visitor along the pathway, but if spoken to he cowers down, fluffs out his feathers and walks away. One afternoon keepers thought he was missing and instigated a search of the building; after much hunting he finally strolled from the side of a plant. He had been standing motionless watching all the goings on, unobserved by everyone due to such a good camouflage.

AT THE ZOO DURING WINTER

Winter started unusually early for us this year with snow, low temperatures and cold winds during November. Of course these temperatures cause problems to members of the Zoo staff, especially as Chester is an open air Zoo.

All animals that cannot withstand the cold weather are moved inside during the winter. It is not always the tropical animals that are susceptible to the cold weather — in fact many animals which come from tropical areas are very hardy once they become acclimatized.

It is very interesting to see the Lions out of doors in all weathers. For the greater part of the year they love the raised log platform which is in their enclosure and they seem to have no qualms whatsoever about the weather. Of course it must be remembered that all the females in our enclosure were born and bred in Chester Zoo but the male which came from Uganda some years ago is a wild-bred animal.

The Elephants and Rhinos are allowed to go in and out as they please from their houses which are continually warm but if the weather is at all mild the animals prefer to be in the open particularly if there is even only a chilly winter sun showing.



GREY-NECKED WOOD RAIL

K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

GUIDE TO ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES

LIONS—3 p.m. except Fridays

SEA LIONS—2-40, 3-40, 4-40 p.m.

BEARS—3-15 p.m.

POLAR BEARS—4-0 p.m.

1. MAIN ENTRANCE
2. Bird Enclosure
3. Wapiti Paddock
4. Lesser Pandas
5. Aviaries
6. Milk Bar
7. CORONATION HALL
8. CLOAKROOM, TOILETS, FIRST AID AND LOST CHILDREN
9. CAFETERIA
10. Shelter
11. Picnic Lawn
12. Bears
13. Animal Enclosure
14. NORTH ENTRANCE
15. AQUARIUM
16. PUSH CHAIRS AND WHEEL CHAIRS
17. Animal Enclosure
18. Animal Enclosure
19. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP
20. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn
21. TOILETS
22. Peccaries
23. Waterbus Halt
24. Birds of Prey Aviary
25. Birds of Prey Aviary
26. Owls
27. Jackal Enclosures
28. Wolverines
29. Racoons
30. Coypus
31. Beavers
32. Giraffe House
33. Camel House

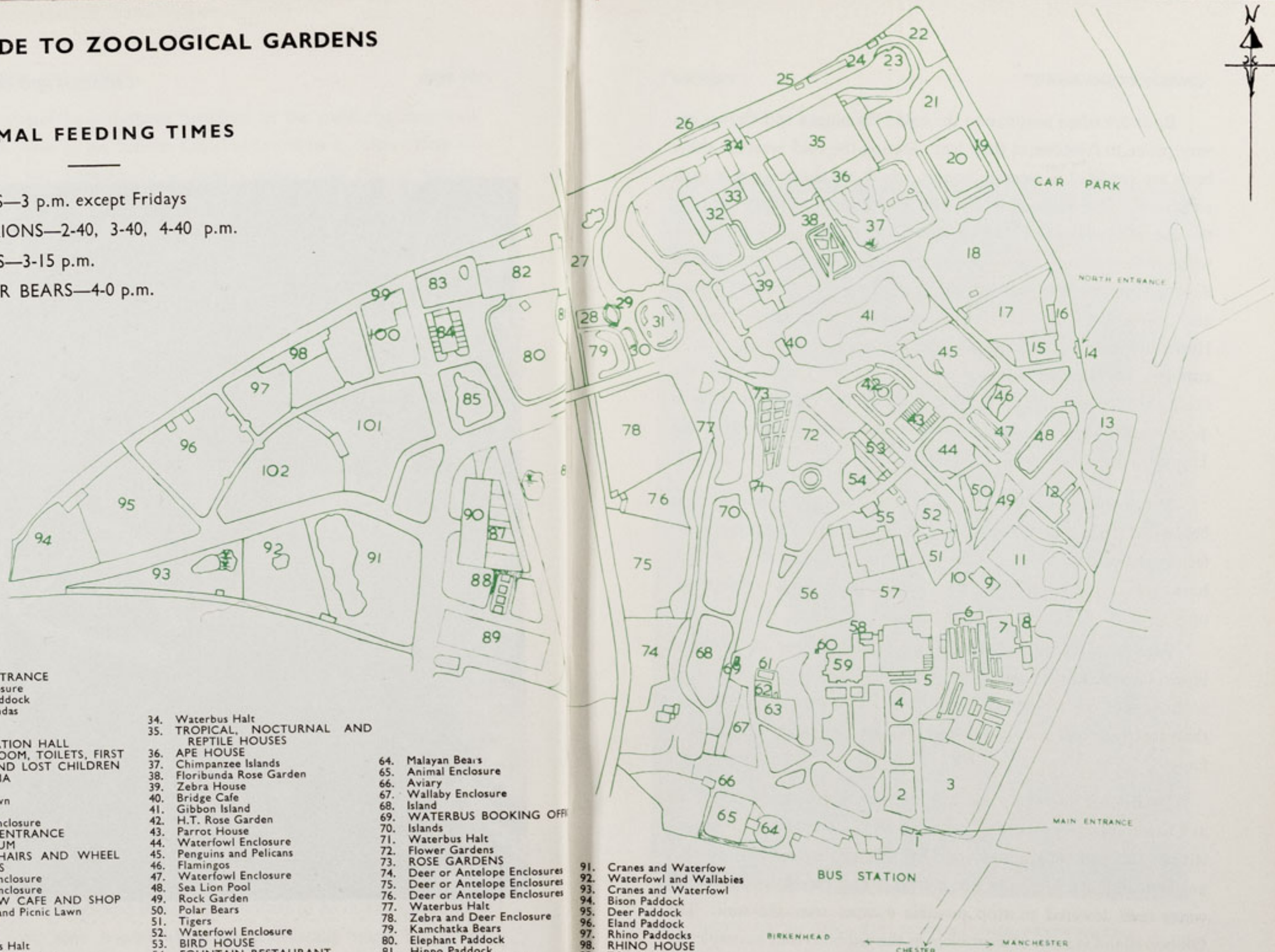
34. Waterbus Halt
35. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND REPTILE HOUSES
36. APE HOUSE
37. Chimpanzee Islands
38. Floribunda Rose Garden
39. Zebra House
40. Bridge Cafe
41. Gibbon Island
42. H.T. Rose Garden
43. Parrot House
44. Waterfowl Enclosure
45. Penguins and Pelicans
46. Flamingos
47. Waterfowl Enclosure
48. Sea Lion Pool
49. Rock Garden
50. Polar Bears
51. Tigers
52. Waterfowl Enclosure
53. BIRD HOUSE
54. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT
55. TOILETS
56. Lions
57. NEW ZOO SHOP
58. TOILETS
59. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT
60. G.P.O. Telephone Kiosk
61. Animal Enclosure
62. Animal Enclosures
63. Cheetahs

64. Malayan Bears
65. Animal Enclosure
66. Aviary
67. Wallaby Enclosure
68. Island
69. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE
70. Islands
71. Waterbus Halt
72. Flower Gardens
73. ROSE GARDENS
74. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
75. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
76. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
77. Waterbus Halt
78. Zebra and Deer Enclosure
79. Kamchatka Bears
80. Elephant Paddock
81. Hippo Paddock
82. PACHYDERM HOUSE
83. Tapir Paddock
84. Small Mammal House
85. Waterfowl Enclosure
86. Ankole Cattle
87. Stork Enclosures
88. Monkey Enclosures
89. Cat House
90. MONKEY HOUSE

91. Cranes and Waterfowl
92. Waterfowl and Wallabies
93. Cranes and Waterfowl
94. Bison Paddock
95. Deer Paddock
96. Eland Paddock
97. Rhino Paddocks
98. RHINO HOUSE
99. TOILETS
100. MPILA SNACK BAR
101. Antelope Enclosure
102. Antelope Enclosure

†—Under Construction.

Animals may be moved from time to time.



Birds are often sensitive to the cold; Flamingos and Cranes are very prone to frostbite in their feet. During the cold weather these birds are confined in wooden houses, which are constructed in each enclosure. The Flamingos are also given supplementary heat by the use of an Infra-red heating lamp. The Parrakeets can choose whether they occupy the inside or outside aviaries but even on cold days are more often seen out of doors than inside. The Gorillas and Orangs can go from their moated enclosures inside the Tropical House to their outside grass-covered island, by pushing aside a curtain. The Orangs seem to spend more time outside than the Gorillas during the cold weather but the Gorillas often have a quick walk round the island and then return to the warmth of the Tropical House.

Very useful pieces of apparatus in the Zoo are the portable gas heaters which can be taken to any building if animals appear to be feeling the cold and damp. Often it is only necessary to keep these burning for a few hours just to allow the animals to warm themselves up.

All our large animal houses are heated by hot air which is blown into the houses and in all cases is thermostatically controlled so that once the temperature gets to a low degree we are certain that the heat will automatically come on and keep the animals happy.

Additional problems are also caused when ponds freeze, as at Chester a large proportion of the animals are confined to moated islands and will walk across ice. The Chimpanzees, Gorillas, etc., are kept indoors when the water freezes and the Bears have their water level lowered to stop possible escapes over the wall. The Gibbon island is more of a problem as the Gibbons lead a completely natural life on a large island opposite to the Zebra House. They have a shelter which is also used for trapping but they generally



Dr. S. Szinai

LOWLAND GORILLA — KEPT INDOORS WHEN WATER FREEZES

remain outside. In past years they have come across the ice but in recent times, seem to consider the island their own territory.

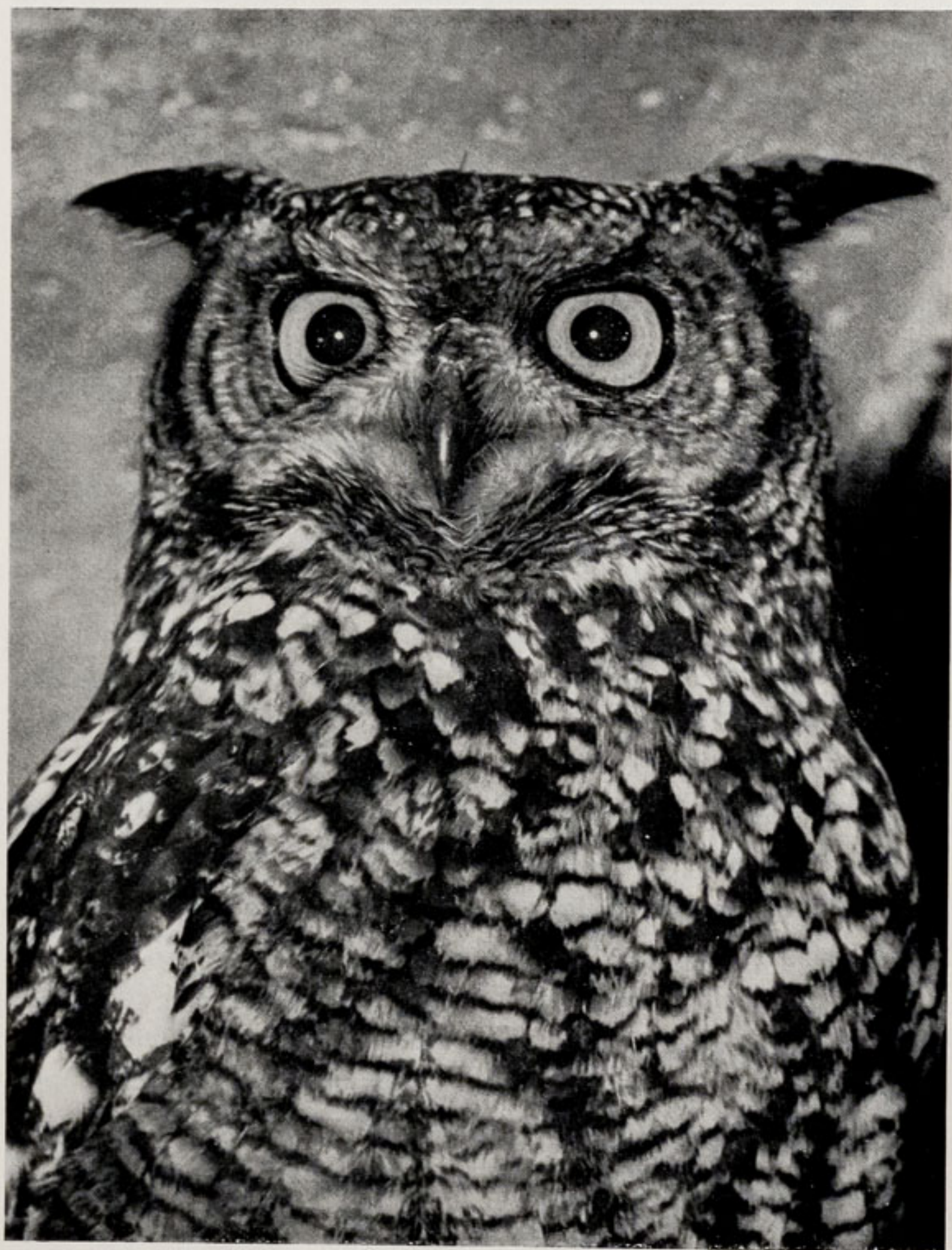
Drifting snow can also be a hazard, especially if it piles up against the inside walls of an enclosure, thus enabling the animals to climb out. Fortunately, snow falls of this type are extremely rare in the Chester area.

NEW AVIARIES UNDER CONSTRUCTION

For some time the range of Owl aviaries (No. 5 on the plan) have been inadequate for our collection of Owls, especially as breeding results have been so good of recent years. It was, therefore, decided to construct a range of new aviaries adjoining the old ones on the site of the Pied Crow aviary. The original aviaries have proved very successful for both breeding and keeping Owls, so the new aviaries will be constructed along similar lines.

In addition to housing Owls, these aviaries will also be useful to accommodate the smaller species of Hawks which we have from time to time. Our Mexican Roadside Hawk was previously housed in the Screamer aviary but during the cold weather has to be moved indoors. This Hawk will be transferred to the new aviaries upon completion and will be provided with sufficient shelter for the winter. During the spring and early summer we are usually presented with several Kestrels and these aviaries will provide them with suitable accommodation, as they cannot be mixed with other birds — even the smaller species of Owls.

Probably the most impressive Owls to be seen in the Zoo are the Great Eagle Owls (*Bubo Bubo*), which are found in parts of Europe and Asia. Great Eagle Owls have bred at the Zoo during 1962, 1963 and 1964 when they reared four young, and in 1965 when they reared three youngsters. The Great Eagle Owl is a



SPOTTED EAGLE OWL

Eric Kirkland, F.R.P.S.

very large powerful bird; in colour it is mainly mottled brown and has two large ear tufts on the top of the head. In the wild state these Owls are capable of killing animals as large as a Hare, and have very sharp pointed talons.

Probably the most attractively marked of the Owls at the Zoo are the Snowy Owls; these bred for the first time during 1965, after they had been at the Zoo for five years. Unfortunately, the male has since died; the young one is however doing very well. Snowy Owls come from the Arctic and are mainly white in colour; usually the females have more dark bars than the males, but sexing these birds can be difficult. The food of the Snowy Owls in the wild state consists to a large extent of Lemmings and Arctic Hares. During years when the food is scarce they sometimes wander southwards in quite large numbers and have occasionally been seen in this country.

The Spotted Eagle Owl (*Bubo africanus*) is a small species of Eagle Owl, which is found in Africa south of the Sahara Desert. This species has been bred at the Zoo each year since 1962, and young ones have been sent from Chester to many Zoos in this country. A similar although slightly larger species than the Spotted Eagle Owl is the Mackinder's Eagle Owl (*Bubo capensis mackinderi*) which comes from the mountainous areas of East Africa. Very little is known about the habits of this species; we have one in the collection at the moment.

During the Spring and early summer many Tawny or Wood Owls (*Strix aluco*) native to this country are presented to the Zoo. These are usually young birds which have fallen from the nesting hole, or have been deserted by the parents. The Tawny Owl is the commonest species of owl in this country, although it is said it is not found anywhere in Ireland. They are also fairly common through Europe and Asia and are found as far east as China.

In the same aviary as the Tawny Owls are the Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*). This species has an almost world-wide distribution area, except for northern areas of North America and Asia. They vary a great deal in plumage and size over this range; we have a specimen from Central America which is far darker than the British species.

When the new aviaries are completed the Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) will be found a home in one of them. The Little Owl is only about the size of a thrush, but is not the smallest species of Owl. Some gamekeepers class these Owls as vermin, due to the fact that they take some pheasant chicks; however, in the normal way they feed on small rodents, insects and small birds. The Little Owl was introduced into this country principally by Lord Lilford, about sixty years ago. It has since spread from Southern England to most counties as far north as Northumberland, but it is very rare in Scotland and Ireland. Little Owls are also found throughout Europe, Central and Eastern Asia, Arabia and as far north as Africa.

At the moment, other species of Owls at the Zoo are housed in one of the large Birds of Prey Flights (No. 26 on the plan). Three Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) can be seen, a species which comes from North and South America and resembles the Great Eagle Owl of Europe and Asia but is far smaller. We hope that we have a pair of these birds but they are very difficult to sex. Usually females are larger than the males but birds from different areas vary a great deal in size. Also exhibited in this large flight at the moment are several Great Eagle Owl youngsters which were separated from the parents when they became fully grown.

Although most species of Owls are nocturnal in their habits, when kept in captivity they seem to be lively during the day. This is particularly true of the Tawny Owls; those which have been

hand-reared are especially active during daylight. On the contrary the Barn Owls in the Zoo sleep for most of the day but in the wild state they are far more likely to be seen hunting during the day than are the Tawny Owls. The Owls are a very popular exhibit, especially with children, and young Owls are certainly very attractive when covered with fluffy down.

Owls, like Hawks, need roughage in their diet, and it is no use feeding them exclusively on meat. The Owls at the Zoo are fed on a diet of day-old chicks, rats, mice and pieces of rabbit as well as good lean meat. The fur and feathers are brought back in the form of pellets several hours after being eaten. This process is essential to the well-being of the Owl, the pellets having a cleansing effect on the stomach.



Printed in England by
G. R. Griffith Ltd.
Castle Printing Works
Chester
