



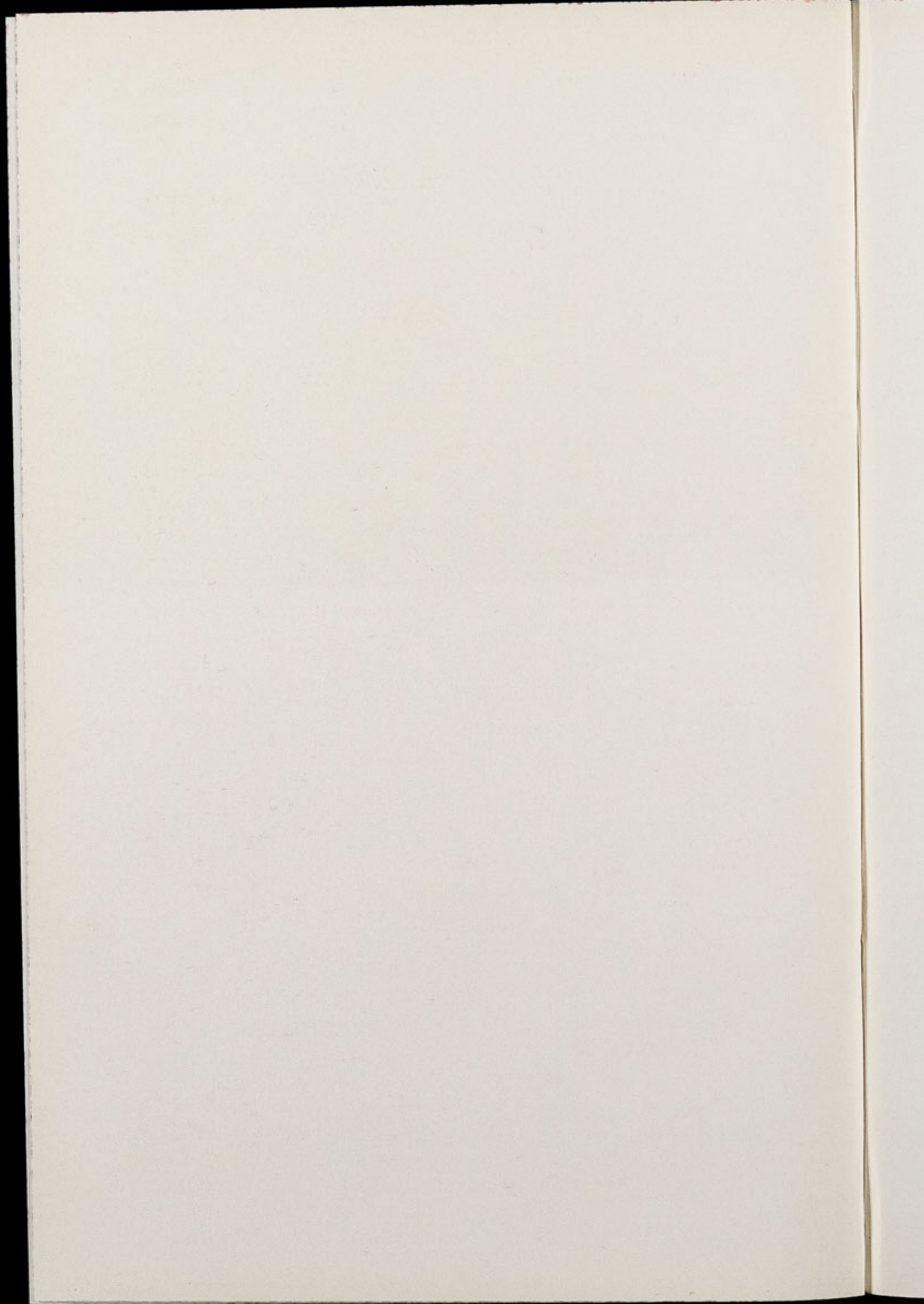
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# Chester Zoo News

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

May, 1963

Price 1/-



## Introduction

As always we have had a busy Easter at Chester Zoo. The number of visitors on Easter Monday alone was 22,383. Attendance figures for the holiday period were rather less than those recorded in 1962, probably due to the unfavourable weather.

Doubtless Chester Zoo's biggest attraction at the moment is Gerry the baby Giraffe. Gerry is only the second Giraffe ever to be born at Chester Zoo and needless to say, we are extremely proud of him. You can read more about Gerry on page two.

This month, for the first time, we are using colour on the cover of the magazine and will continue to do so throughout the summer.

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*COVER: Our Cover Picture this month shows Chester Zoo's five Orang-Utangs by the edge of their confining ditch. Jimmy, of course, is the Orang-Utang in the water.*

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## ZOO BABIES

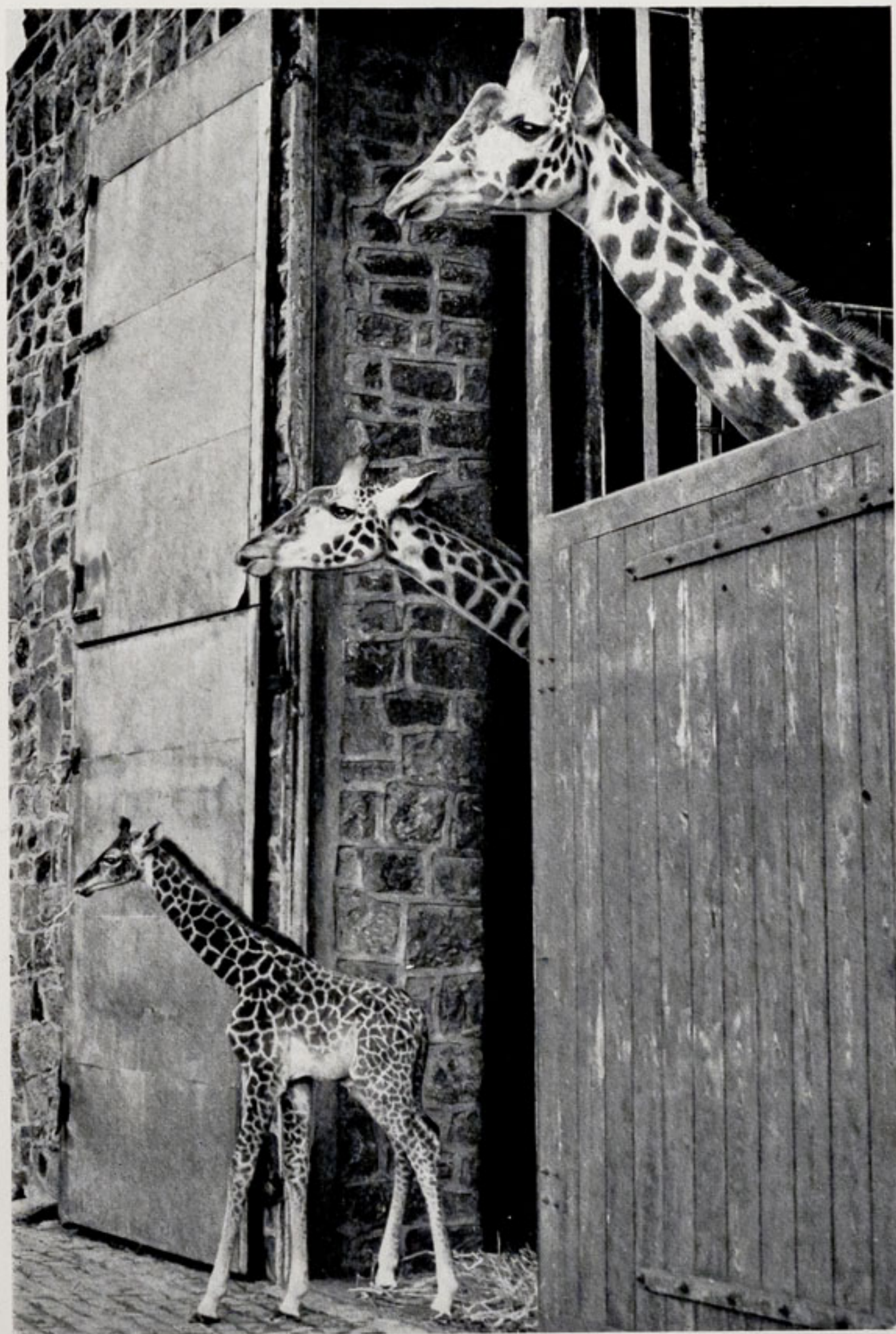
**GIRAFFE:** Several babies have put in an appearance during the month of April. The birth which caused the most excitement was, of course, that of the baby Giraffe. "Gerry" arrived early on the morning of Tuesday, 9th April and is a son of our T.V. star George and the six-year-old Margaret. Naturally we are hoping that he will grow to be as big an attraction as his famous father. Already Gerry has a wide circle of admirers and takes the attention of visitors, Press photographers and T.V. cameras in his leggy stride.

The baby is showing a distinct tendency for getting into mischief. Within hours of being born he wriggled under the barrier between his enclosure and that of Henry — who might be described as Gerry's honorary "uncle." Fortunately Henry was more interested than annoyed by the intrusion and the Keeping Staff returned Gerry to his mother without incident.

A few mornings later, on opening the Giraffe House, the Keeping Staff were horrified to discover that Gerry had once again wriggled out of his enclosure. This time he had joined his father, Debbie and Goofy. The baby was having the time of his life, racing up and down the enclosure — much to the disgust of the other Giraffes, particularly Debbie. She was more than a little alarmed by the antics of the baby. As for Gerry, he was furious at being returned to his mother and lashed out at all and sundry with his tiny hooves.

We are now satisfied that his enclosure is absolutely escape-proof, but wonder what Gerry will be up to next. For those interested in vital statistics — he weighs almost one cwt., stands over six feet tall and is growing fast.

**ZEBRAS:** Three Common Zebras and one Grevy's Zebra were bred in 1962 and the first 1963 additions to our Zebra family are a male Grevy's Zebra and a male Common Zebra. The little Grevy's Zebra was born on 13th April and is named "Danny." His Common Zebra 'cousin' arrived on 18th April and we are calling him "Les."



*Roland Hicklin, Daily Herald.*

GERRY'S FIRST OUTING SUPERVISED BY HIS PROUD PARENTS

**PERE DAVID DEER:** The Pere David Deer born at the end of March was the second to be born at Chester Zoo and the first male. He has been named Prince.

**HIMALAYAN BEARS:** We announced the arrival of the two Himalayan Bear Cubs in our February issue. The Cubs are both males and have been given the names BoBo and YoYo. When the Cubs were four weeks old they had to be taken away from their mother, but this did not upset the robust little animals in the slightest. You can see one of the first photographs of the babies on the opposite page. They are on show in the Small Mammal House and enjoy all the attention they get from visitors to the Zoo.

We hope to have more news and pictures of Chester Zoo babies in the next issue of the magazine.

### ANIMAL CHARACTERS

**PRINCE:** Visitors to the Ape enclosures in recent weeks thoroughly enjoyed the performance put on for their behalf by Prince — one of Chester Zoo's large Chimpanzee family. Prince was at one time a member of a Circus act and loves an audience. He does a most impressive war dance, accompanied by suitable war cries and ends by hurling a clod of earth into the air. Of course, visitors do not realise that he expects a round of applause, so Prince encourages them by applauding himself.

**TOPSY AND TURVY:** Our pair of Malayan Bears, Topsy and Turvy, have an amusing nightly routine. In a previous issue we mentioned their habit of closing the door to their sleeping quarters when retiring each night. However, the performance does not end there. Once inside, Topsy collects a pile of straw and proceeds to prepare a "nest" for herself. Turvy waits until Topsy is comfortably settled then opens the door. Naturally Topsy objects to the draught and whilst she is getting up to close the door, Turvy climbs into the warm nest. Eventually the two Bears agree to share the coveted spot and fall asleep with their paws wrapped around one another.



*J. Woolham.*

BOBO AND YOYO WITH THEIR KEEPER

### NEW ARRIVALS

**PIGMY HIPPO:** Since her arrival in September 1956, we have been seeking a mate for Phyllis, our Pigmy Hippopotamus. At long last we have been successful and "Max" was installed in the Pigmy Hippo House on Thursday, 11th April. He was caught in Africa by Mr. Frans M. van den Brink of the firm G. van den Brink, N.V., Holland. Not content with merely catching Max, Mr. van den Brink made quite sure that the Pigmy Hippo arrived in good condition by delivering him to Chester, personally.

Being several years younger, Max is somewhat smaller than Phyllis. However, judging by his appetite, it will not be long before he makes up the deficiency. Pigmy Hippos, like their larger cousins, can be quarrelsome and, as his smaller size would put Max at a disadvantage, it will be some time before we can introduce Phyllis to her new mate.

**RING-TAILED LEMUR:** Another recent arrival at Chester was "Tweet," a young Ring-tailed Lemur. Tweet was a house pet before being presented to Chester Zoo and, consequently, is quite a character. He still prefers human beings to other Lemurs and is taken home by a member of the staff each evening.

**BIRDS:** The Bird Section also swelled its numbers in mid-April. New arrivals included Demoiselle Cranes, Humboldt's Penguins, and three species of Pelican.

### WORK IN PROGRESS

In the March issue of the magazine we mentioned that the foundations of the new Monkey House had been laid. Exactly one month later the fibre glass roof was in place and the Zoo Works Department is now hard at work on the exterior walls of the building.

Visitors will have noticed another new erection between the Camel House and the partially constructed Tropical House. This is the skeleton of a footbridge which, when completed, will link the Birds of Prey Aviaries with the new Tropical House.



*Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby.*

BLACK SWANS

### NEWS ITEMS FROM THE BIRD SECTION

Last year we had our first successes in breeding Spotted Eagle Owls and Greater Eagle Owls. The hen birds are again sitting on clutches of eggs and we are now looking forward to the appearance of this year's chicks.

The pair of Black Swans, exhibited in one of the three new Crane and Waterfowl enclosures, have nested and the female is sitting on eggs. We hope that the Swans will be successful in hatching the eggs, as Black Swans have never been bred at Chester Zoo.

Also showing signs of nesting are the pair of Sarus Cranes in the enclosure adjoining that of the Black Swans.

### PLANTS IN THE PACHYDERM HOUSE

We wrote about some of the plants in the Pachyderm House in the last issue of the magazine and continue this month with

comments about the plants at the extreme ends of the House and also those in the entrance way.

Climbing on the sides and over the roof of the entrance is *Jasminum polyanthum*. This plant is now in full flower — the white flowers being very strongly scented. It was only planted last year, when the entrance was added to the building and it will have covered the roof completely by the end of the summer.

On the left of the door are young specimens of *Clianthus punicius*, planted this spring to replace their parents, which succumbed to the very severe frosts of last winter. We have no heat in the entrance, but this climber is almost hardy and a normal winter would have no effect on it. It does have a short life span, but it is such a lovely climber with its panicles of red, pea-shaped flowers that we must always find a home for it.

Also in the entrance way are *Genista fragrans* and *Tricuspidarea*, a rather tender evergreen flowering shrub which will not winter outside at Chester.

On the left as one enters the main building is another fine specimen of *Datura suaveolens*. What a fine shrub this is when given plenty of room to reach its full beauty.

Staged just inside the main building is a group of flowering pot plants. This bed is restaged throughout the year with plants in flower from our Greenhouses. At present it is made up of *Cymbidiums*, *Amaryllis*, *Calceolareas*, *Cinerareas*, *Primulas*, etc. At the back of this group and permanently planted are *Bougainvillea* and *Tibouchina semidecandra*.



J. L. Owen.

CYMBIDIUM

On the walls around the Tapir enclosures the following climbers can be seen:—*Ficus elastica* in variety, *Eucalyptus globulus*, *Abutilon golden fleece*, *Acaceas*, etc. Also



J. L. Owen.

FLOWER BANK

planted and climbing well up the roof is *Passiflora quadrangularis*. What a good thing this was planted here, as it seems that we have lost the very fine specimen in the Small Mammal House — the severe frost of last winter being too much for it. A variety of plants such as *Asparagus sprengeri* ferns, *Coleus*, *Gardenias*, *Plectranthus*, etc., provide further decoration for the walls of the Tapir enclosures.

At the Hippopotamus end of the Pachyderm House we also have climbers to furnish the roof pillars. In addition to those already mentioned are *Rhoiocissus* and *Monstera deliciosa*. *Abutilon megapotanicum variegata* was planted to cover the railing round the Hippo pool. Unfortunately the Hippo pool was filled rather more full than usual on one occasion and the Hippos were able to reach the *Abutilon* and found it much to their taste. By the next morning the plant had disappeared completely.

This spring we have introduced a plant of some rarity to the border alongside the Hippo pool. This is *Rhodochiton atrosanguineum* — a very spectacular climber with its mass of reddish purple flowers. It is a native of Mexico and is so striking that we feel sure that it will attract a considerable amount of attention from our visitors this summer.

### THE CROW FAMILY

Members of the *Corvidae*, or Crow family, vary in size from the small Jay to the Raven, which is the biggest Crow of all. The family includes Ravens, Crows, Pies, Jays, Jackdaws, Choughs and Rooks and has world-wide distribution — being found from the far north of Alaska to the Tropics.

The probable reason for this wide range is the versatility and intelligence of the family and the fact that they are omnivorous. Nothing comes amiss to the Crow family, whether it be flesh, fruit, grain, seed or insect. Indeed the Raven can be a positive menace to sheep farmers in the lambing season and smaller members of the family are equally unpopular with Gamekeepers, as they are inordinately fond of game bird eggs and chicks.

Many observers consider the Crows to be the most 'intelligent' of the bird families, in so far as the word can be applied to birds. Again, others would put Parrots and Waterfowl higher in the scale. In captivity Crows of all species certainly give the unscientific observer an impression of intelligence, not apparent in many other captive birds. Members of the Crow family always seem keenly interested in what is going on and are constantly on the alert for anything they can find. All kinds of bright objects are picked up immediately and hidden in various nooks and crannies and the birds do not forget where they have stored their treasure.

All Crows are fascinated by anything that glitters and this can be a handicap when anyone keeps a bird of this family as a pet. Coins, jewellery, silver and gold objects all have an irresistible appeal. If the bird has partial liberty and visits its owners neighbours, this habit can be somewhat embarrassing. Many years ago, Chester Zoo had a tame Jackdaw which had complete liberty. This bird collected hundreds of coins from visitors and to this day his 'treasure trove' has never been found.

Crows are well represented at Chester Zoo by nine species. In the British Crow aviary opposite the Owl enclosures, there are specimens of the Magpie, Rook, Jay and Jackdaw. All these birds are extremely tame and impudent, and small unwary fingers are apt to get a sharp nip. The contrast between the tameness of these captive birds and the suspicious wariness of the same species in the wild is very marked.

Alongside the Owl aviaries is one housing two African Pied Crows. These birds are very similar in size and behaviour to our native Carrion Crow, but instead of being a uniform black they are black and white in colour.

In the main Bird House are two species of the family — Steller's Jay and the Guatemalan Green Jay, or Bluecrested Jay. Four of the former are housed in the long flight at the back of the Bird House. They are smallish Jays, black and dusky blue with a small crest, but their active, alert behaviour makes up for their somewhat drab colouring.

Looking at the Guatemalan Green Jays in the first compartment of the Bird House, one would think them misnamed, since their main colouring is pale blue. It is a curious fact that the plumage of many birds whose colouring in the wild is green, turns blue after the first moult in captivity. In the same way the plumage of many scarlet-coloured birds tend to fade to pink, unless the birds are specially colour-fed.

The Guatemalan Green Jay comes from Central America, but appears to be fairly hardy if given a little heat at night. Our birds were let into their outside flight on most days during the winter, although shut inside at night.

Opposite the Bird House, in the large Macaw flight at the end of the Parrot House, live two Occipital Blue Pies. These handsome long-tailed Magpies are a mixture of black, white and blue in colour. They come from the Himalayas and breed at a height of almost 5,000 feet, so it is not surprising that the English winter holds no terrors for them. They are exceptionally hardy and in wonderful condition.

Our last representatives of the family are three Ravens. These massive Crows live in the large Bird of Prey flight beyond the Tropical House. In spite of the fact that they share the flight with Vultures, Eagles and Buzzards, they are well able to take care of themselves. Their pick-axe-like beak and uncompromising temperament make them more than a match for other and larger Birds of Prey.

Ravens are still found wild in Scotland, North Wales and the West Country. Being very long-lived, suspicious and wary, they are likely to hold their own in the wilder parts of the country for many more years to come.

### NOTES ON THE INDIAN COBRA

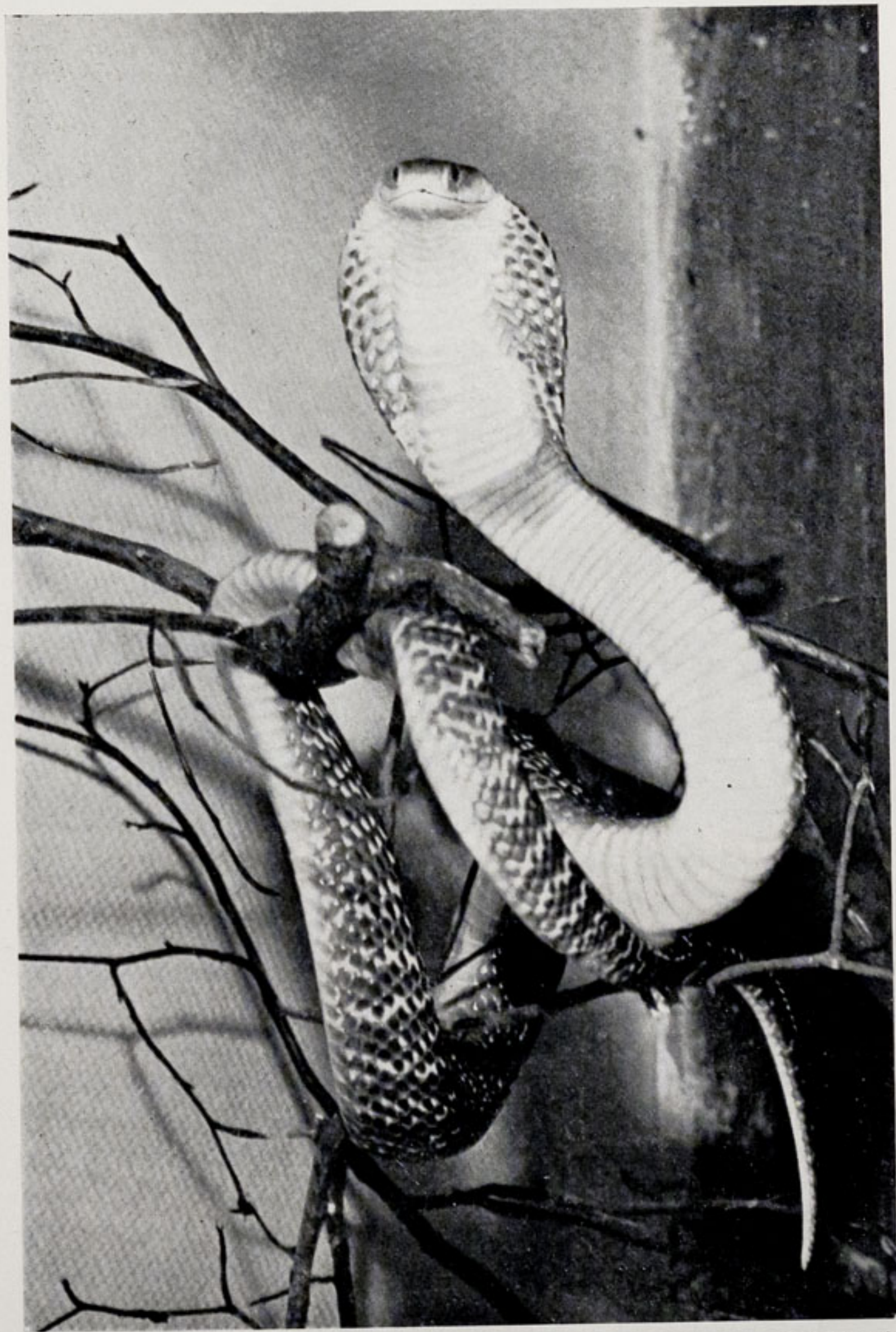
Indian or Spectacled Cobras (*Naja naja*) are probably the most widely known of all snakes and are those most commonly used by Indian Snake Charmers. They grow to about five and a half feet in length and are slender, fast-moving, highly nervous snakes.

Until a Cobra is alarmed it could be mistaken for many of the non-poisonous snakes for, only when it is frightened or annoyed, does it rear its head and expand its hood in a threatening manner. This hood, which is a characteristic of all Cobras, is produced by the eight or so pairs of ribs on both sides of the neck being erected and so stretching the loose skin into a spoon-shaped hood. On the back of this hood is a curious mark, just like a pair of spectacles and this design gives the snake its name.

Before any cobra strikes it nearly always gives a warning hiss and takes up an attacking position by twisting its body into a fairly compact coil. The head is held in an upright position about one third of the snakes length off the ground, with the hood fully expanded and the strike is a forward and downward movement. Often the whole snake is carried forward by the force of the action. The fangs are very small and the cobra will sometimes hang onto its prey with a chewing motion, thereby injecting more venom. The poison is extremely potent and paralyses the nervous system of the victim very quickly.

Our pair of Indian Cobras were born in captivity in 1961 and were two feet long and about three quarters of an inch thick when we received them in early 1962. They came to Chester in exchange for a pair of Copperheads (*Agkistrodon mokasen*) which were born in our Reptile House in 1961.

When the Cobras first arrived they were very nervous, in spite of being accustomed to living in a Zoo and did not show themselves to advantage. Now they can nearly always be seen sitting on one of the rocks in their cage, although they seldom raise their hoods even when their Keeper enters the cage. However, we are sure they would not appear so unconcerned if a stranger were to disturb them.



*J. Whitworth.*

INDIAN COBRA

## CATERING

Catering facilities have grown with the Zoo over the years. You have read about the Animals, the Birds and the Gardens, so why not a mention of the Restaurants and Cafes? Without these a visit to Chester Zoo would be much less enjoyable. Wherever you are in the Zoo, a cup of tea, a cool drink or a full-scale meal is always within easy reach.



*G. F. Williams.*

OAKFIELD RESTAURANT

The first restaurant — the Oakfield (which is licensed) — was opened in 1931. Now the Zoo has a total of two Restaurants, two cafes, a self-service cafeteria, the Coronation Hall for party catering, a Milk Bar and a Snack Bar. A second Snack Bar will soon be completed between the Small Mammal House and the Rhino House.

We are particularly proud of the Fountain Restaurant, which was designed and built in its entirety by Zoo Staff. Work was begun in June, 1959, and completed in June, 1960. You will see the delightful setting of this restaurant in the photograph on the following page.

Those visitors who prefer to bring their own food have not been forgotten and four picnic lawns have been laid down for their convenience. Alternatively visitors can eat their own food and purchase drinks in the Rainbow Cafe.



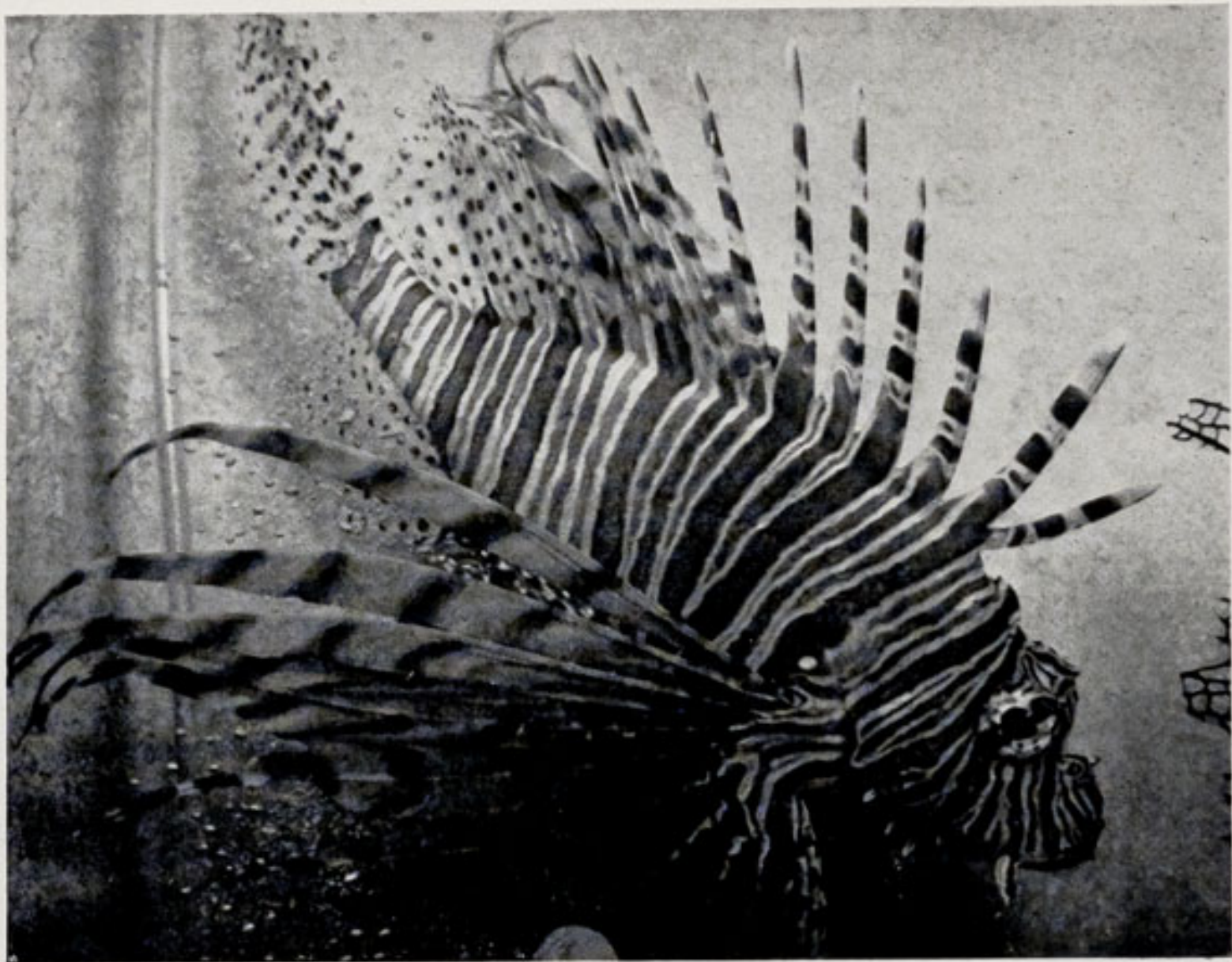
FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT

## AQUARIUM NEWS

During the past month the Marine Section of the Aquarium has been enlarged considerably to cope with new arrivals. At first we decided to have only one marine tank in the Cold Water Section, to house a very fine young specimen of Scorpion Fish. After this arrived, several other varieties of fish became available and we had to expand still further, until only three small tanks remained in one half of the original cold water bay.

The six tanks which have now been converted to house tropical marine fish contain some of the "star attractions" of the Aquarium. Perhaps the most interesting of these are the Sea Horses (*Hippocampus brevirostris*), which arrived at the Aquarium on Thursday, 11th April. Considering that they had travelled from Singapore — a journey of some four days — they proved to be in reasonably good condition.

Six very fine specimens of Clown Fish (*Amphiprion percula*) arrived with the Sea Horses. So sharply defined are the colours on these attractive little fish that they appear to have been painted carefully with bands of brilliant white and deep orange.



Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby.

#### SCORPION FISH

It is a well known fact that the majority of tropical marine fish are brilliantly coloured and show a diversity of shapes, exceeded only by the invertebrates. A typical and somewhat startling example of this is the Scorpion Fish (*Pterois volitans*). The rays of most of its fins are greatly enlarged and developed into many forms, some of which can inflict a very painful sting if the fish is not handled carefully.

Several Mud Skippers have also been added to the collection and are doing well. Other additions are Archer Fish and Malayan Angel Fish, which are housed in brackish water tanks.

A good selection of marine life was collected from Holyhead in Anglesey and includes many Blennies, Butter Fish, Bullheads, Edible Crabs, Hermit Crabs, Shrimps, Mussels, Beadlet Anemones and Plumous Anemones.

Finally a large Cock Rainbow Trout and twenty four smaller, six-inch specimens were obtained and are at present occupying two large tanks. Because they invariably become extremely nasty towards one another as they mature, the younger specimens will probably be separated and used to stock the various ponds in the Gardens.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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