

"OUR ZOO NEWS"

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

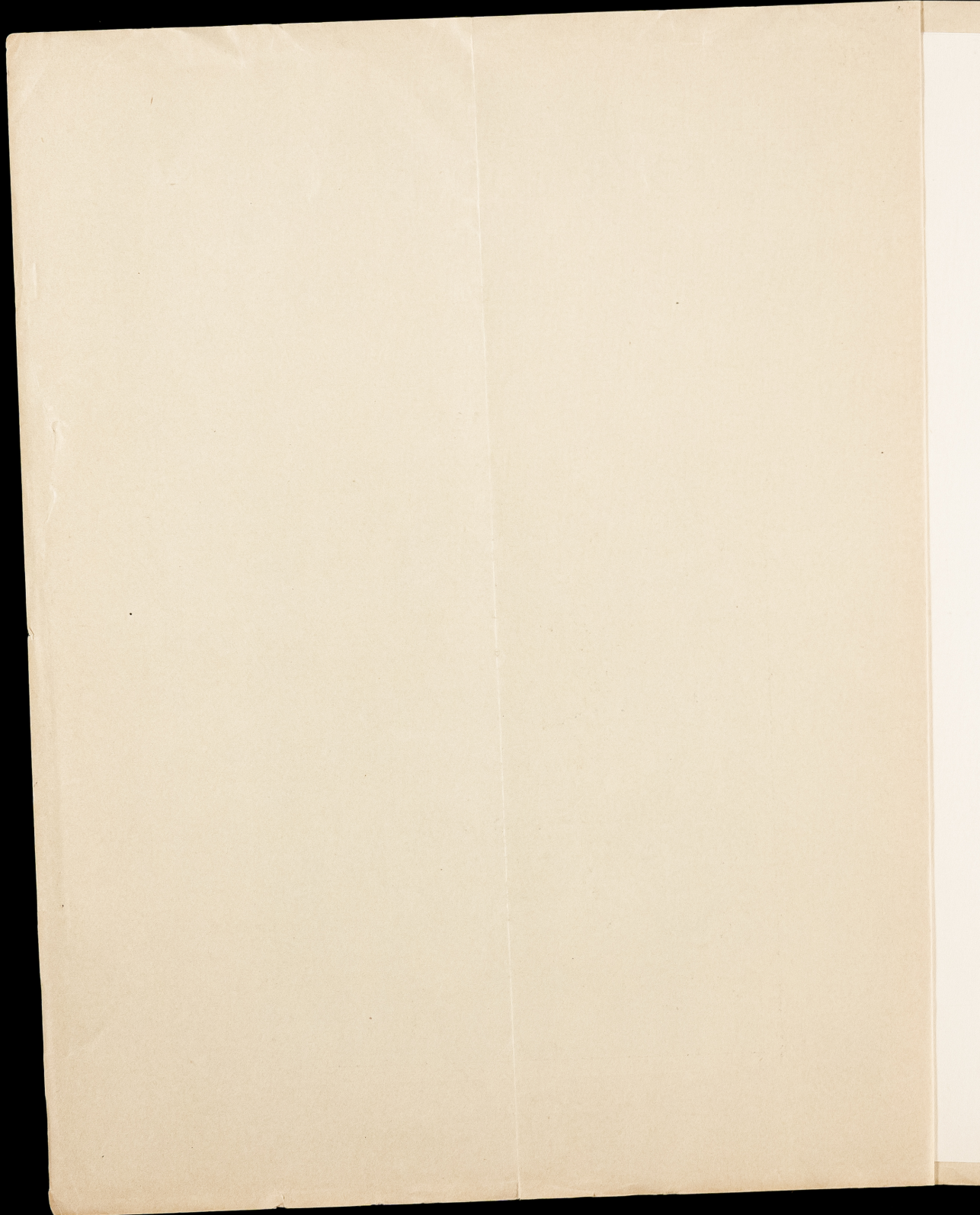
Zoological Gardens, Upton-by-Chester.

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THE LIONESS "KATRINA."



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Number Seven

May 1938.

April has gone, and with it one of the finest Easters as regards weather we could desire, as a result we had record crowds at the Zoo, bringing to the Society an income it stood sorely in need of, after struggling through the winter with the largest stock of animals it has ever had.

The large increase in visitors was very encouraging, but although there is every reason for us to be optimistic we must not allow ourselves to get too excited, but rather feel grateful for the success which has resulted from our past labours, and steel ourselves to forge still further ahead.

Several exchanges have taken place, and chief among these are two very nice Wallabies from Dudley Zoo in exchange for a pair of Drills. As readers know we had two pair of Drills, and this was rather too many for their cage. For two Crocodiles we received from a Dutch trader an exceptionally fine Ocelot, and from the same source a fine specimen of the Rhea or American Ostrich, this was in exchange for several pairs of Cockatiels.

These exchanges brought specimens to the Zoo which were not represented in the collection, so their arrival is an added attraction.

The Chimpanzees received a very nice Easter gift from Mrs. G. T. Dickson in the form of swings and trapeze rings which were specially made. The Society expresses its appreciation to Mrs. Dickson, and we feel sure the thanks of the Chimpanzees themselves can be seen from the antics they perform on them from morning till night.

Another gift to the Society, and one which we feel sure will be appreciated by every visitor, is a cheque from Mr. W. Rushworth towards defraying the cost of new artistic nameplates for all the exhibits. This is a thing which has required doing for some considerable time, and Mr. Rushworth's practical help will we are sure make visits to the Zoo more enjoyable.

We have received several letters recently from persons many miles away expressing their appreciation of the Zoo, and the liberty we are giving to animals and birds. In a recent issue of the Cheshire Observer the following letter appeared to the Editor, with the Editors comments thereon.

Wild Animals.

Sir, - Among the thousands of holiday-makers who spent Eastertide in and around Chester, surely those people who visited the Zoo at Upton were the happiest. The pastoral beauty of the enclosure, whose trees and lawns glow with the invigorating freshness of spring, is a refuge from the noise and dust of the outside world. The interesting display of exhibits, from

the majestic lions down to the tiniest speck of tropical fish, is ample reward for visitors. But the children provide the real joy, the happiness that smooths away the cares, and helps one to forget the failures of yesterday and the forebodings of tomorrow. Their happy laughter and honest appreciation of the sights are wine to the soul. The merriment of the monkey-house is infectious.

When adults accompany children to a Zoo, and the children display natural curiosity, as they should, the adults should appreciate the opportune moment to supply any physiological details required of them. If their minds are perverted with conventional hypocrisy, and they find it impossible to do so, they should hide their heads in the lion's den, or, as Robert Browning says, "...leave the child alone, for Christ's particular love's sake," on such occasions.

R.J.P.

Hoole; April 19th, 1938.

(The incident you quote is touching, but the details are not suitable for publication. - Editor)

Zoo Characters.

Our Zoo Characters this month include a pair of Wood Ibis. These grey stork-like birds should be found in the enclosure immediately at the entrance, but their wanderlust is so greatly developed that visitors are liable to meet them almost anywhere. Their strange courting habits are most amusing and a delight to watch. Facing each other tapping the ground with their long beaks and spreading their wings, they make a most peculiar noise, and in fact appear silly in their antics.

The other day one of the keepers accused another of throwing rubbish into an enclosure which he had just cleaned out. He had to apologise when someone caught the real culprits, they were the Wood Ibis building a nest. This is built of twigs and is very roughly made, and as far as comfort is concerned does not look at all inviting, not even to a prospective mother.

We have however a strong suspicion that the male has a better site in view, for he is continually trying to entice his mate on to the top of the partially built wall of the Lion Enclosure. He looks a fine specimen as he proudly stands and surveys the gardens around him from this point of vantage. Maybe he can sense the presence of lions which remind him of his native land.

Another popular character is a Blue-fronted Amazon which arrived some weeks ago. This parrot when asked what it's name was said in quite a distinct voice, "P.O.L.L.Y. Polly," obviously not intending her name to be spelt wrongly. Apart from spelling her name Polly can also count, but on these occasions she praises herself somewhat. For instance you say, "How many can you count Polly?" and she will at once reply, "One, Two, Three, Hurrah," or on rare occasions she will count as far as eight, but whenever she counts she always praises herself. She is now beginning to get used to the public so before long we can expect a real rival to "Cocky's" popularity.

As everyone knows, the open-air Lion Enclosure is being built entirely out of subscriptions like the Lion House was last year, but mainly through lack of funds and being a much larger undertaking, progress seems very slow.

We have received a most generous offer from a lady member, to guarantee the amount required for the Lion Enclosure for a period of one year, provided work is speeded up to complete the work so that it can be opened to enable the Society to reap the benefit of at least two summer months this year, this would mean it would have to be opened no later than July.

The Council appreciated this offer very much, and it was decided to work out what the total cost would be to complete in the specified time. This was done, and the sum of £500 was placed as the outside

figure by rushing the work on. The Council had therefore two points to decide.

1. Could they collect this figure in the time stated, namely one year.
2. If not, could the Society shoulder the burden at the end of twelve months.

To the first question no one could give a definite answer, so the second question was the one which had to be examined more closely, and after taking into account our past hard struggles, and realising the difficulty of providing a reserve for the winter, it was felt that the sum required was too large to commit the Society with at present, despite the fact that all realised what a wonderful drawing power such an enclosure would be.

The suggestion was then put forward that the scheme should be modified, and the area reduced to enable an enclosure to be completed quickly, but unfortunately owing to the shape, to cut the cost substantially would mean reducing the size considerably, however the matter is to be further discussed at a meeting to be held on the 2nd of May.

The tropical Aquarium has been greatly appreciated by many, and much interest is shown in the various species of fish. The principle of showing each kind of fish in a separate tank appeals to the public, as they cannot identify them in a community tank. We are hoping before long to be able to let the public see some of the fish breeding, and when this is taking place the tanks will be labelled to that effect.
