



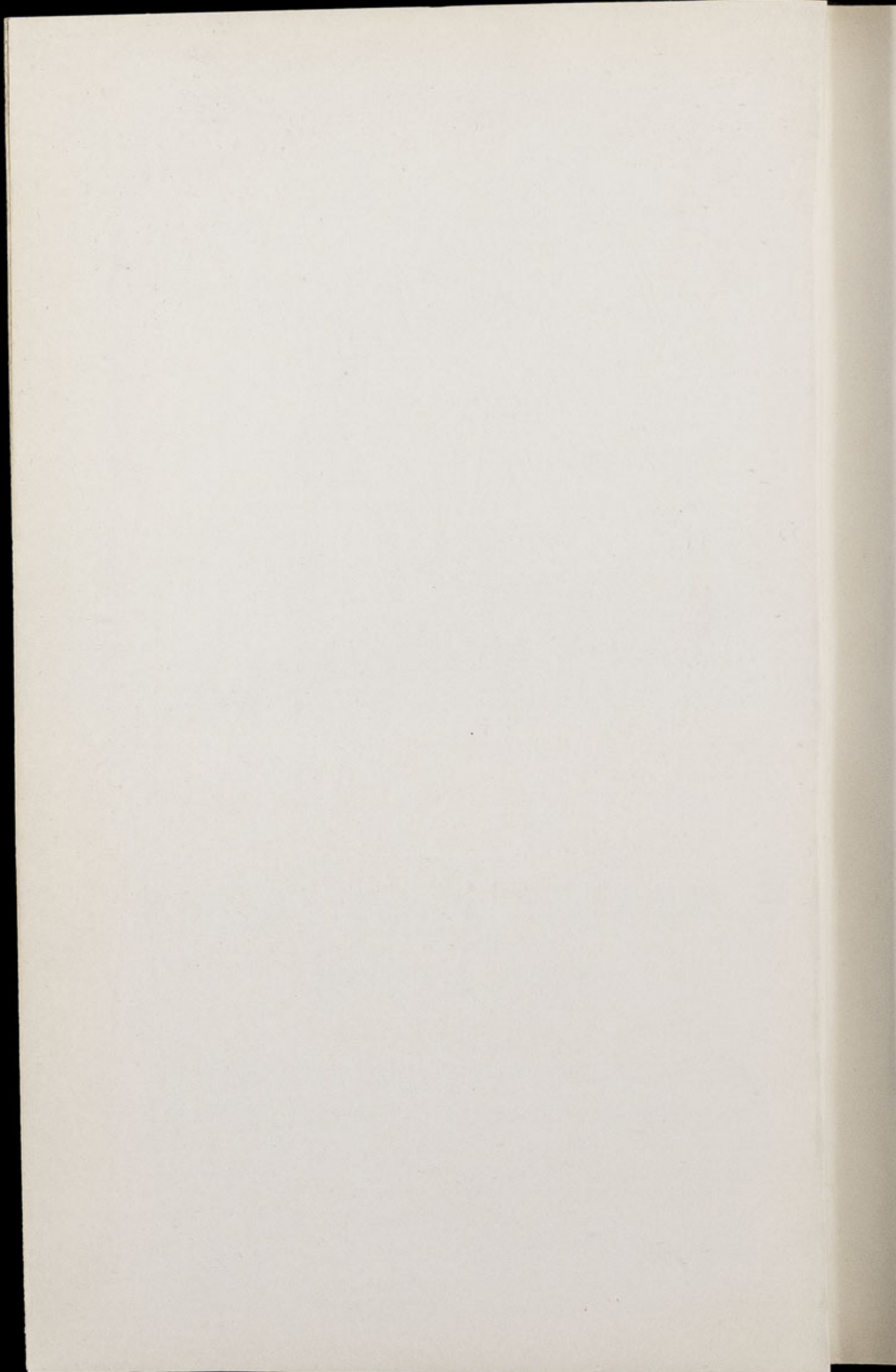
Chester Zoo News

AND GUIDE

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

January 1980

Price 15p



The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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COVER PICTURE

Blacksmith's Plover

By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

Annual subscription — Two Pounds and Seventy Pence, postage paid

Telephone Chester 20106

INDIAN ANTELOPES

The Blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*) is one of two Indian antelopes to be seen at Chester; the other representative is the Nilgai, the largest Indian antelope.

In Enclosure 100 our group has just been increased to four, with the birth of a female during December, 1979. As can be seen from the picture opposite, the males are handsomely marked, the back and sides of the body are black and the underside of the belly, insides of legs and rump patch are white. Prominent head features of the male are the white muzzle and eye patches and beautiful spiralling horns. The females are much duller in appearance, being a yellow-fawn above and white below. Only the males carry horns, which develop during the second year and may reach up to 18 inches long.

Blackbuck usually run in herds of from ten to fifty animals, frequenting the tall grasslands alongside rivers, and usually avoiding forests. The herds consist of females and their young, young males and a dominant male.

Fighting between the males often breaks out during the main rutting times around February-March and August-October. The fight ritual also includes displays between the males as they prance towards each other, either holding the head up high, or low with the horns pointed towards the opponent. However, despite the fact that a great deal of damage may be done with the horns, fights rarely end fatally.

In Zoos youngsters are born throughout the year, as there does not appear to be a set rutting time.

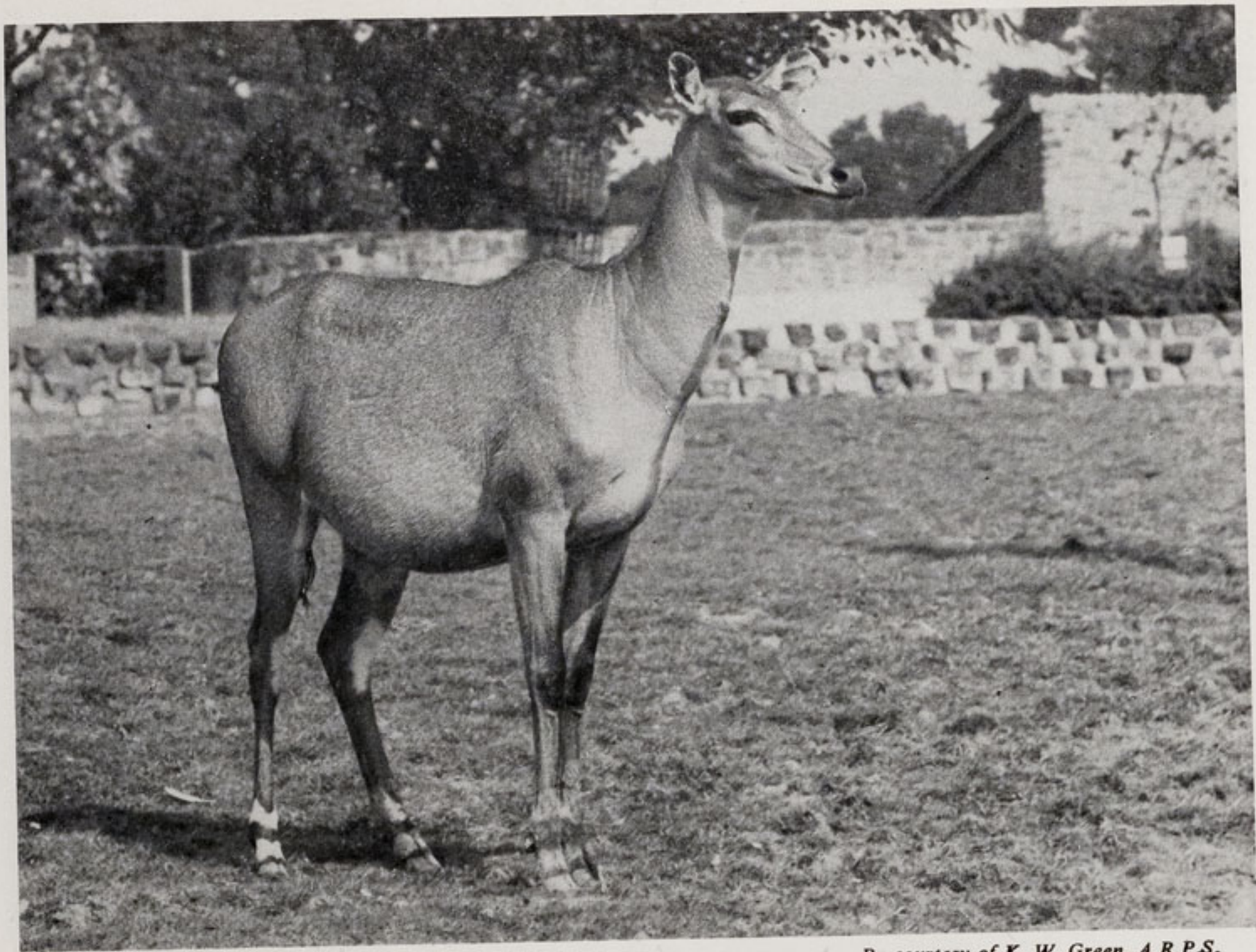
Territories are marked by using the scent glands on the face; these are pressed against the ends of branches and twigs in the home range to signify that the area is occupied.

The Blackbuck has keen eyesight and adults keep a watchful eye open for predators; youngsters are usually concealed in the surrounding vegetation. However, if an escape must be made, then this beautiful animal has the turn of speed necessary for a successful retreat.



By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

MALE BLACKBUCK



FEMALE NILGAI

By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

In some provinces, the Blackbuck is also called the Sasin and held to be sacred to the moon and therefore protected, in much the same way as the sacred cows of India.

We have seven Nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*) and this number includes two beautiful fully-grown bulls.

This is the largest of the Indian antelopes, reaching about 54 inches at the shoulder. The name Nilgai means "blue cow" but the cow is, in fact, a sandy-fawn colour, whilst it is the bull that has the steel-grey coat which the name describes. The bull also carries very small, slightly curved horns which may reach eight to nine inches in length—the record is $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Both sexes have a small neck mane and a white patch on the throat. Other characteristics include the white markings on the ears, nose and legs, which can be seen opposite in the picture of a Nilgai cow.

Small herds of Nilgai can be found in open forest and the females produce one or two calves after a gestation period of 247 days.

GARDENING NOTES

During January, the Gardeners will be giving a fair amount of attention to the plants in the Animal Houses. Pruning is one of the main tasks to be attended to; the *Bougainvillea* which, since they have been established for quite a few years, will need last year's growth pruning back to the main stem. This also applies to the *Abutilons*, which have their main branches trained on wire frames.

In the Tropical House, the growth of the plants has improved a lot since the apex of the roof was replaced with clear reinforced glass. There is better undergrowth now, which was lacking when the perspex part of the roof became darker. There were some days during the Winter when the House seemed rather dark but, due to recent repair, fewer plants will need to be replaced. Another job which the Gardeners like to get done is that of cleaning the leaves of the plants with a sponge and clean water.

As the Orchids come in flower, these will be staged in the Tropical House along with *Cyclamen* and the blue-flowered *Coleus thrysoideus*. A group of *Cyclamen* and ferns is staged in the Elephant House.

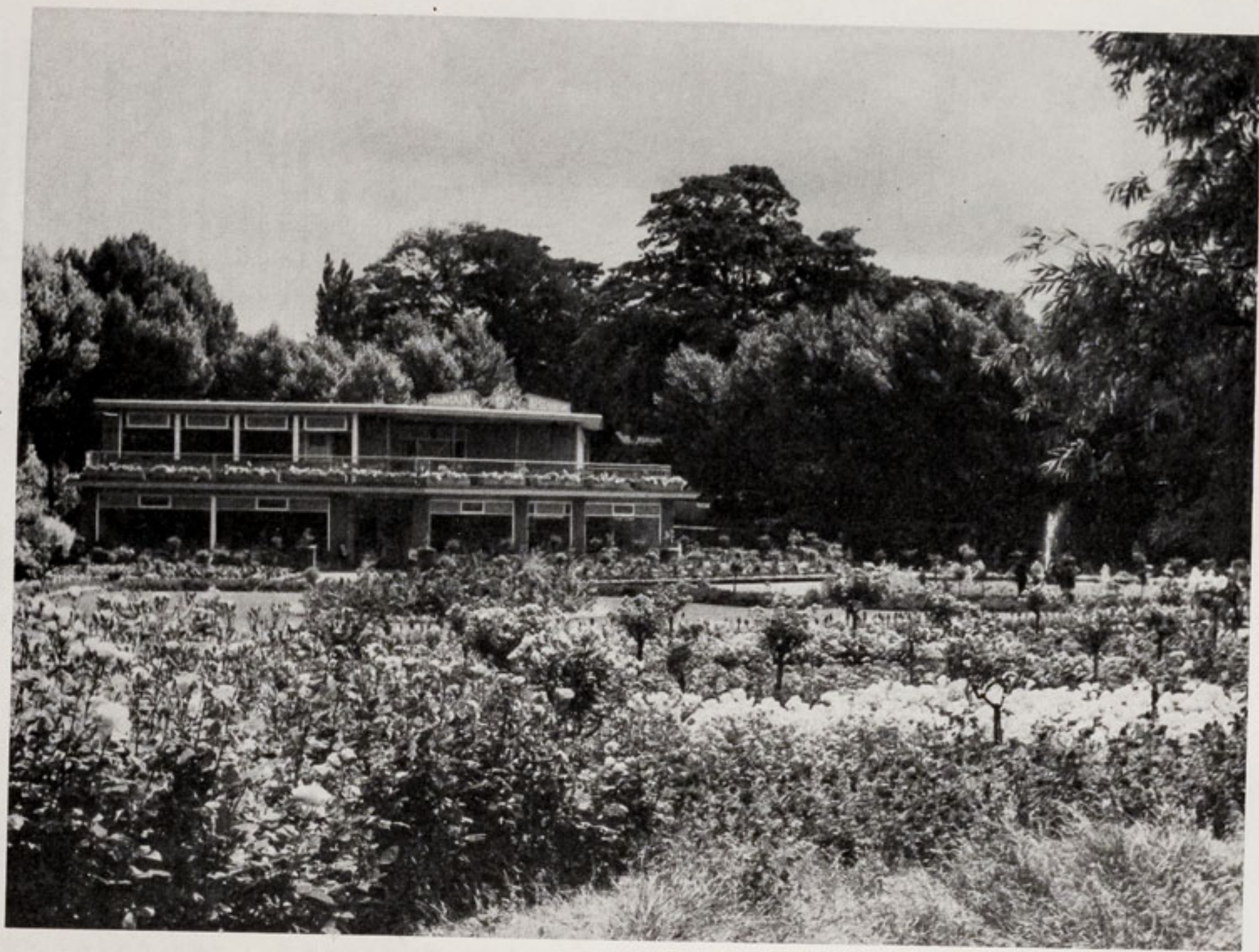
Up to the end of 1979, the weather had been very mild, even though we did have some very wet days, and Chester has been fortunate in that we have not, at the time of writing, had any snow. The result of this mild weather is a healthy green look on all the bedding plants and lawns. This has made the plants far too tender and, if any severe cold weather comes, we are hoping that it will be gradual. *Cobea scandens*, common name "Cup and Saucer", is still surviving on a wall near the Tropical House entrance; usually, the frost has killed it by now. This plant is a half-hardy climbing perennial, but it is usually grown as an annual as it is very fast-growing and self-clinging. The wall it is growing on is 10 feet high and 25 feet long and *Cobea scandens* is usually planted out in June; a few strands of wire are along the wall for added support. The flowers are purple and this plant originates from Mexico. Propagation is from seed.

Gaps in the Roses have been replaced and some varieties completely replaced with new ones. In the H.T. Rose Garden, two new varieties to look out for are Typhoon, which replaced Tenerife, which had deteriorated in growth, and Alpine Sunset replaced Bettina.

In the Fountain Rose Garden, which is all Floribunda Roses, City of Belfast replaced Ama and Arthur Bell replaced Dearest. Although Dearest was a good salmon-pink rose, it was not suited in the bed in which it was planted. All Gold replaced Sir Lancelot, which had also deteriorated in growth. Although All Gold has been around for a few years, this was the best available colour to fit in with the neighbouring beds.

Anne Cocker replaced Paddy McGredy in the border round one of the Rainbow Picnic Lawns. On a suitable day, we shall be spraying the Roses with a Tar Oil Winter Wash, in the hope that it will help to control Black Spot, Mildew and many other over-wintering pests. This spray can only be used in the dormant season and care must be taken not to get it on any plants or lawns nearby.

Two years ago, when the boatways were drained and then dredged, the Willows were polled. These were growing around the islands and were responsible for a lot of the debris which was silting up the waterways. Since then, they have grown considerably, branches growing out of them, giving the appearance more of a bush than a tree. This month, we will also be thinning out these branches and cutting back the taller ones to keep them under control.



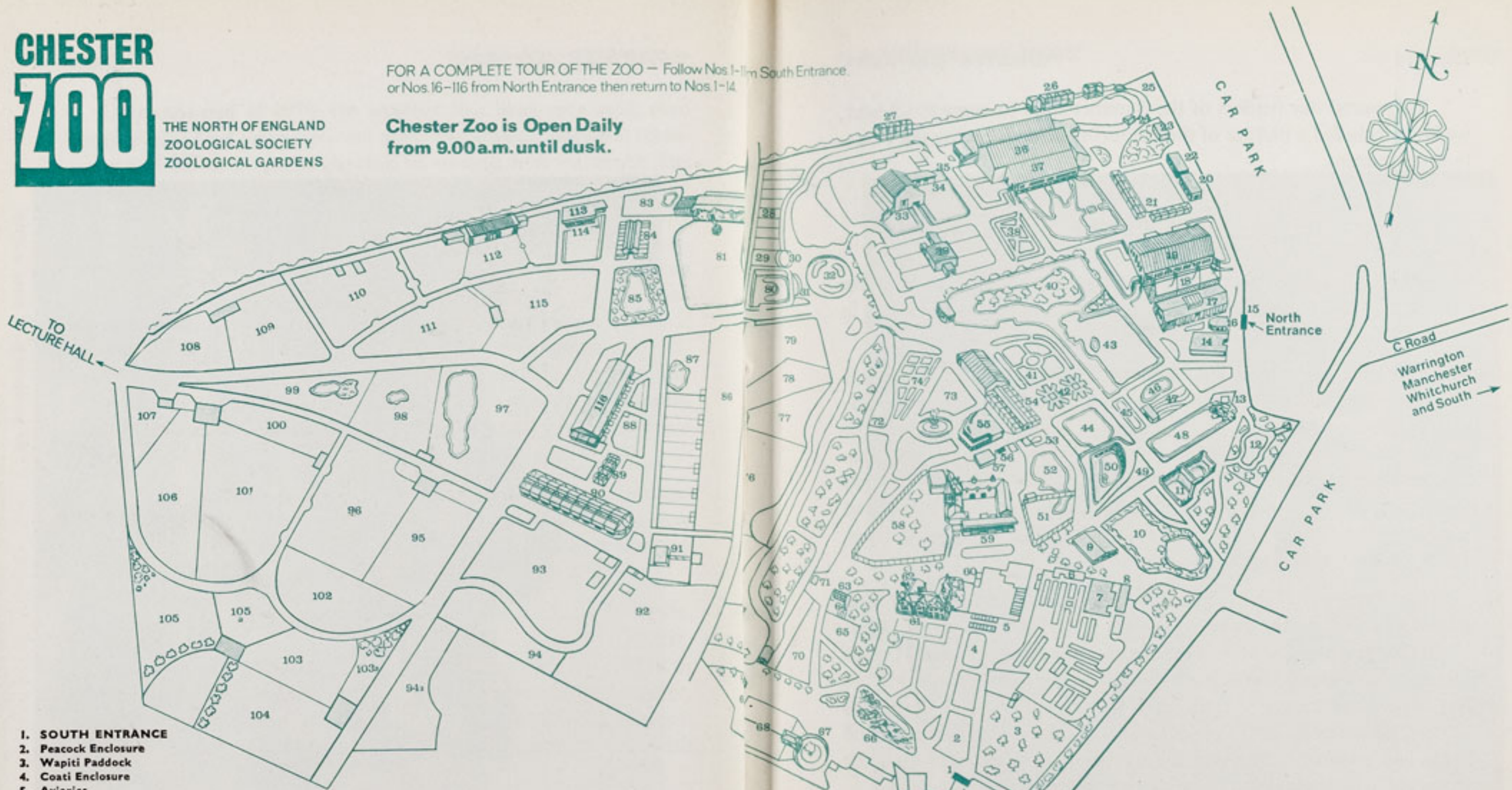
By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.
FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT AND SUMMER BEDDING

CHESTER ZOO

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

FOR A COMPLETE TOUR OF THE ZOO — Follow Nos 1-116 South Entrance
or Nos 16-116 from North Entrance then return to Nos 1-14

**Chester Zoo is Open Daily
from 9.00 a.m. until dusk.**



1. SOUTH ENTRANCE

- 2. Peacock Enclosure
- 3. Wapiti Paddock
- 4. Coati Enclosure
- 5. Aviaries
- 6. Milk Bar
- 7. CORONATION HALL
- 8. CLOAKROOM, FIRST AID, TOILETS, INVALIDS' TOILETS, MOTHER AND BABY ROOM
- 9. CAFETERIA
- 10. Picnic Lawn
- 11. Ornamental Garden (under construction)
- 12. Jubilee Gardens (Noah)
- 13. Kiosk
- 14. AQUARIUM
- 15. NORTH ENTRANCE
- 16. PUSH CHAIRS, WHEEL CHAIRS, LOST CHILDREN
- 17. PARROT HOUSE
- 18. Free Flight Aviary
- 19. APE HOUSE
- 20. Shop and Kiosk
- 21. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn
- 22. CLASSROOM
- 23. TOILETS
- 24. TUATARA EXHIBIT
- 25. Peccaries
- 26. Birds of Prey Aviaries
- 27. Condor Aviary
- 28. Jackal and Hyaena Enclosures
- 29. Animal Enclosure
- 30. Porcupine Enclosure
- 31. Coypus
- 32. Beavers
- 33. Giraffe House

- 34. Camel House
- 35. Giant Tortoise Paddock
- 36. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL & REPTILE HOUSES
- 37. CHIMPANZEES
- 38. Floribunda Rose Garden
- 39. Zebra House
- 40. Waterfowl Island
- 41. H.T. Rose Garden
- 42. Aviaries
- 43. Flamingos
- 44. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 45. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 46. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 47. Penguins
- 48. Sealions
- 49. Rock Garden
- 50. Polar Bears
- 51. Big Cat Enclosure
- 52. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 53. Anteaters
- 54. BIRD HOUSE
- 55. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT
- 56. Ape Nursery
- 57. TOILETS
- 58. Lions
- 59. SOUVENIR SHOP
- 60. TOILETS
- 61. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT & G. S. Mottershead Memorial Gds

- 62. P.O. Telephone
- 63. Gibbons
- 64. Arctic Fox Enclosure
- 65. Serval Enclosure
- 66. Ornamental Rock Garden
- 67. Wallabies and Kangaroos
- 68. Kangaroo Enclosure
- 69. Guanaco Paddock
- 70. Cheetahs
- 71. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE AND KIOSK
- 72. Rose Gardens
- 73. Fountain Flower Gardens
- 74. Rose Garden
- 75. Red Lechwe
- 76. Red Lechwe
- 77. Deer or Antelope Enclosure
- 78. Zebra and Deer Enclosure
- 79. Zebra and Deer Enclosure
- 80. Brown Bears
- 81. ELEPHANTS
- 82. Hippos
- 83. Tapirs
- 84. Small Mammal House
- 85. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 86. Ankole Cattle
- 87. Emus, Cranes and Flamingos
- 88. Outside Monkey Enclosures
- 89. Baboon Pens
- 90. Cat House
- 91. Tiger Enclosures

- 92. Antelope enclosure
- 93. Antelope enclosure
- 94. Reindeer enclosure
- 94a. Llama paddock
- 95. Antelope enclosure
- 96. Antelope enclosure
- 97. Water enclosure
- 98. Water enclosure
- 99. Water enclosure
- 100. Blackb. Wallab
- 101. Wallab
- 102. Ostrid
- 103. Wallab enclosure
- 103a. Animal enclosure

- 104. Pere David's Deer Paddock
- 105. Przewalski's Horses
- 105a. Onager
- 106. Arabian Gazelles
- 107. Musk Oxen
- 108. Bison
- 109. Pere David's Deer Paddock
- 110. Prairie Marmots, Alpacas
- 111. Antelope Enclosure
- 112. RHINOS
- 113. TOILETS
- 114. Mpila Snack Bar
- 115. Antelope Enclosure
- 116. MONKEY HOUSE

ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES:

LIONS—3 pm except Fridays

SEA LIONS 3 times daily—
2-30 pm, 3-30 pm, 4-30 pm

**ANIMALS MAY BE MOVED
FROM TIME TO TIME**

To remind our readers of the Summer days to come at Chester, we have included a picture of the colourful gardens facing the Fountain Restaurant.

SLOW LORIS

The Slow Loris (*Nycticebus coucang*) is a prosimian, or lower primate, related to the Bushbabies of Africa, and may be found in Southern Asia, Sumatra, Java and Borneo.

This little animal has a most appealing appearance. The coat is fawn-coloured and rather woolly, and the dark eye-rings make the already saucer-sized eyes very much larger again. The dark back, or dorsal, stripe finishes with a short, stumpy tail, and the animal reaches between 10 and 15 inches in length. However, it is the face that holds most of the attraction in its forlorn expression. It is believed that the word "loris" is derived from the Dutch for clown, *loeris*, which this animal is supposed to resemble.

The Slow Loris sleeps by day with its head tucked down and hands and feet firmly gripping a branch. This very strong hold, which the Slow Loris is able to maintain throughout its sleep, is made possible by well-developed fingers and an improved blood supply to that region, which enables the grip to be held without the hands tiring. The index finger is practically non-existent, and the second finger has a claw, rather like the lemurs, which may be used for grooming, which usually takes place at least once a day.

Their wild diet consists of small birds, insects, fruits and berries. We feed our three animals, which are in the Mammal House, on a diet of roughly a third of each of the following groups:—

Banana, Pear, Apple, Orange, Grapes, Tomato.

Z.F.6. (Meat containing vitamin additive).

Farex, milk, egg and Abidec.

And locusts when they are available.

The Slow Loris has a gestation period of about 174 days, after which a single youngster is born, which the female carries around clinging to her stomach. The lifespan can be anything up to ten years.



SLOW LORIS

The Slow Loris has been noted to prefer its enclosure to smell of urine, and it has been suggested that this may be normal territorial marking behaviour. Lorises have been seen to immediately "mark" a clean cage with their urine as soon as they are returned to it.

Our three Lorises spend the majority of their time in a hollow log but, from the picture opposite, readers can see a rare study of these attractive animals.

SOUTH AMERICAN CATS

We are very pleased to report the arrival of a male Pampas Cat (*Felis colocolo*). This rare animal has, so far, eluded all photographic efforts, but, perhaps when it has settled down a little more, we will be able to take a picture of this beautiful cat.

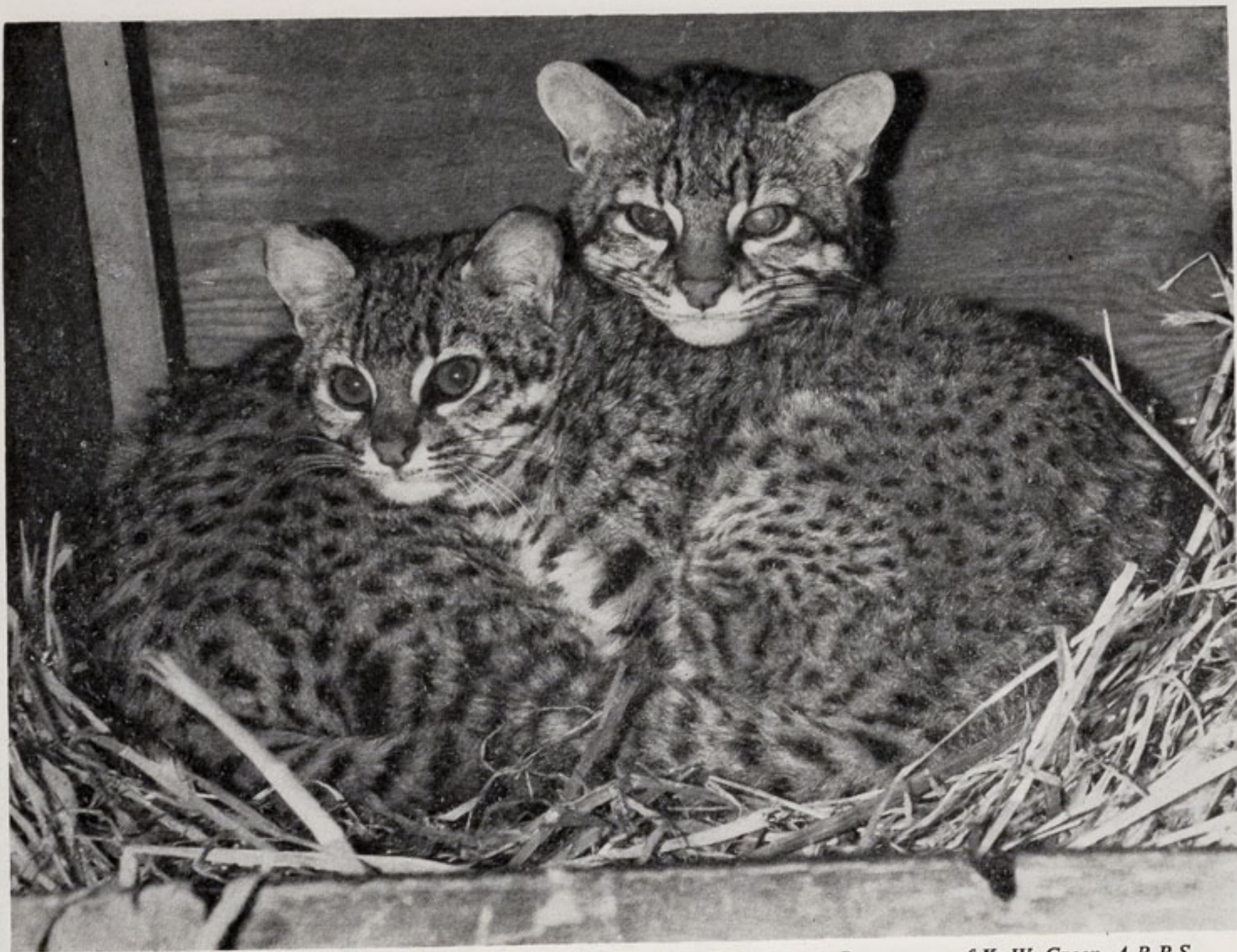
We now have the following specimens in our collection of rare South American cats:—

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Geoffroy's Cat	1	1
Jaguarundi	2	3
Margay	1	1
Pampas Cat	1	—
Jaguar	2	5

We are very much hoping that we will be able to obtain a female Pampas Cat to make up a potential breeding pair.

The absence of the Geoffroy's Cats from their outside enclosure may be due to the fact that a lot of mating behaviour has been noted recently, although at the best of times, these lovely animals are rather shy and secretive. Our pair came to us during September, 1978, and a picture of them is shown opposite, shortly after their arrival.

The Margays which arrived recently have settled down very well, and can often be seen playing. Frenzied chases through the fir bran-



By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

GEOFFROY'S CATS

ches of their enclosure are quite frequent, and most amusing to watch.

The Jaguarundi is a most unusual cat and we have bred these once in the past. We will be giving readers pictures and a more detailed article in a future issue of the *Zoo News*, together with further information about the Pampas Cat.

Visitors to the Zoo can see all of the cats detailed above in the Cat House, No. 90 on the Zoo Guide.

BIRD NOTES

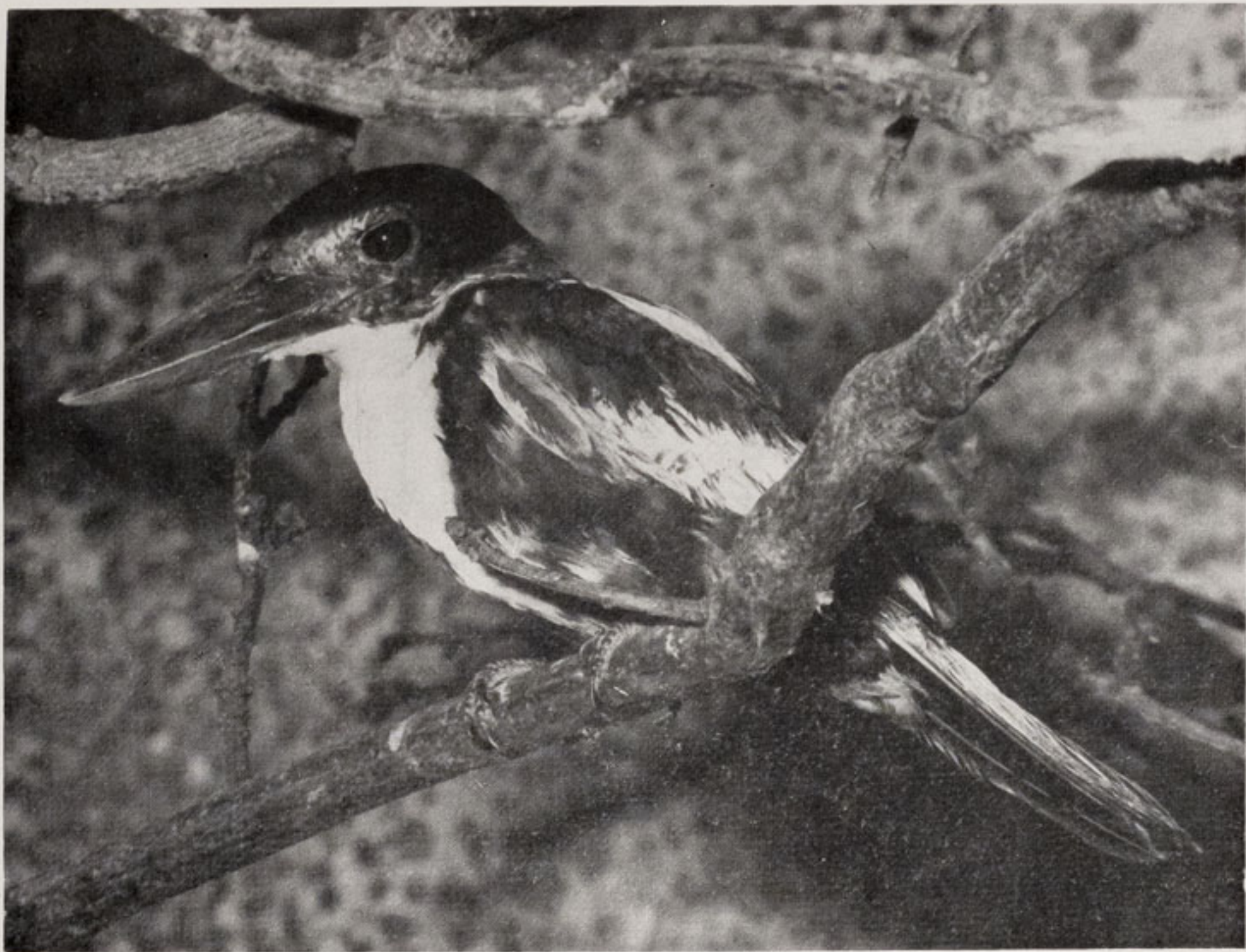
Our cover picture this month shows the lovely Blacksmith's Plover (*Vanellus armatus*). These birds can be found from the Rift Valley in Kenya to the Cape of Good Hope, where they congregate either in twos or small parties to feed at the edges of waterholes in dry, open savannah areas. Their diet consists mainly of insects and their larvae, small molluscs and worms.

This Plover's striking plumage is also an excellent form of camouflage. Pairs nest in open ground, both the male and the female incubating the two to four buffish brown eggs for approximately 26 to 31 days. However, if enemies do discover the nest, the Blacksmith's Plover will immediately feign injury and try to lead the attacker away, as it trails its supposedly broken wing.

At present, we have four Blacksmith's Plovers; two are in the Tropical House and two in the Oakfield Aviaries.

Other recent arrivals include two White-breasted Kingfishers (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)—one of which is pictured opposite—which can be seen in the Bird House. These belong to the group known as Forest Kingfishers and, unlike their more well-known relatives, they tend to live in terrestrial habitats throughout Asia Minor, Iran and the mainland of the Oriental region.

The head, neck, flanks and underside of the tail are a dark



By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

WHITE-BREASTED KINGFISHER

chocolate brown, whilst the rump and most of the wings and tail are bright turquoise blue, which looks brilliant under sunlight as the bird moves; the legs and heavy, pointed bill are red.

The White-breasted Kingfisher may be solitary or found in pairs, and they feed on lizards, insects and fish, which they swoop down on from a favoured vantage point.

Incubation of the eggs is from 18 to 22 days and these are usually laid in a cavity; no nesting material is used. These birds do not make any attempt to clean out the nest, resulting in an accumulation of droppings and decaying food remnants, until the youngsters leave the nest at about four to five weeks of age.

ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

MAMMALS

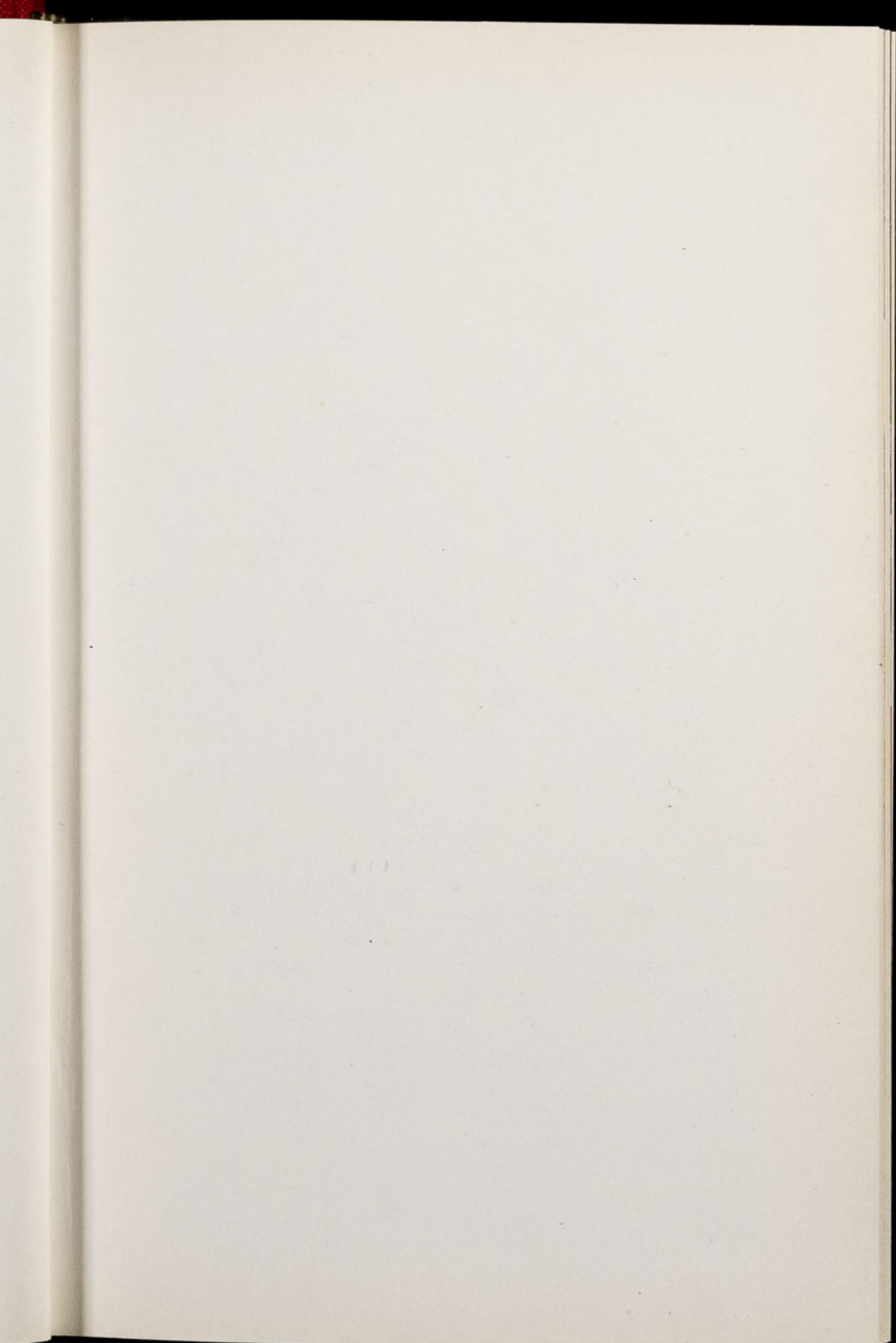
- 2 Arabian Gazelles (*Gazella arabica*) Births
- 1 Blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*) Birth
- 2 White-fronted Capuchins (*Cebus albifrons*) Presented
- 1 Pampas Cat (*Felis colocolo*) Loan
- 1 Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*) Purchased
- 3 Scottish Wild Cats (*Felis silvestris*) Purchased

BIRDS

- 1 Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) Presented
- 1 Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) Presented

SUBSCRIPTIONS

CHESTER ZOO NEWS is at present being produced every month and readers who would like to receive the magazine regularly can obtain subscription forms at the Souvenir Shops. The current charge for 12 issues, including postage, is £2.70 per year. Completed forms can be handed in to the Souvenir Shops or posted to Chester Zoo News, Chester Zoo, Chester.



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