

"Our Zoo News & Guide"

A MONTHLY CHRONICLE OF NEWS AND GUIDE TO
CHESTER ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

Price 2d.

Annual Subscription 2/6 post free.

NUMBER 30 and 31.

APRIL and MAY, 1940.



"SALLY."

Photographed by Mr. Lowe, Brendon, Highfield Road,
Blacon.

Sally's a bear as you will see,
A favourite in the Zoo,
In a large pen she is so free,
To cadge from me and you,
A nut, a sweet or biscuit,
There's nothing comes amiss,

To Sally's dainty palate,
She's such a saucy Miss.
But let me tell you something,
I know she will not mind,
A tin of milk well sweetened,
The brand—well—any kind,
Will give her heaps of pleasure,
And that's just what we need,
For she's such a perfect treasure,
And deserves a special feed.

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The Month goes by.

MARCH and APRIL have been months of preparation for our coming season. After the very severe winter our efforts had to be concentrated on getting the gardens into something like a presentable condition. Only those who visited the Zoo during the very severe weather can realise the havoc which snow and frost caused. Many branches on the trees gave way under the weight of snow and one of the fine cedar trees which are to be found on the main lawn, lost three branches. Several of the conifers were brought flat to the ground and had to be brought back into position by means of pulley blocks. Our duties were doubled as a considerable amount of time had to be spent in clearing away the snow and litter from the paths and lawns.

The first day of March saw signs that Spring had at last appeared and many of the flowers associated

with this time of the year made their welcome appearance, but the most cheerful sign of all was the song of the wild birds. The Rooks once again took up their residence in the tree tops at the entrance to the Zoo. This year there is a noticeable increase in their number and their activities are watched with great interest. To those who are superstitious it is rather interesting to note that the fortunes of our Zoo changed when the Rooks—considered luck bringers—made their first appearance at the entrance, and as they increased in number so the fortunes of the Zoo also progressed. We are not saying that there is anything in this but there are many visitors to the Zoo who will look up at our Rookery with the conviction that they have brought us good luck.

Passing through the gardens we sense many signs of Spring life among the animals. The Cow Bison had been for several days almost as excited as a spring lamb, but this may be accounted for by the fact that through some supernatural instinct she was aware of the fact that there would soon be a new husband for her. Mr. Whitley, of Paignton, having very kindly presented us with a Bull Bison to replace the one which died last winter. Like all animals and birds from Mr. Whitley's collection this bison is a particularly fine specimen and will prove a wonderful attraction to our present collection. Already he is very attached to our Cow Bison and the way he protects her causes much amusement. Should anyone go near the enclosure he at once charges down to the fence bellowing fiercely, and immediately placing himself between the visitor and his lady love.

As stated previously, we are delighted to receive this fine gift, but when we visited Paignton for the purpose of conveying this animal to Chester it was impossible to stifle the feeling of regret that such a rare and beautiful collection of animals and birds, housed and kept under such ideal conditions, had to be considerably reduced. These private gardens were certainly a joy to all animal and bird lovers and it is a thousand pities that the authorities concerned could not see their way to disassociate it from a form of entertainment. In our opinion it was perhaps the most educative of any Zoo in the country, and whatever revenue came from the "Gate" would only have been a very small proportion towards the cost of its upkeep. However, we can only look forward to the day when the Government will look upon Zoological Gardens which are run solely as such, as definite national assets. When that day comes a great step forward will have been taken towards a more understanding aspect of wild animals in captivity.

We realise that such a step is not likely to be taken during the present period while the country is at war, but it is to be hoped that when peace is once more with us, that some national support will be given to Zoos which render a service to the community. In our own case at Chester, thousands of school children visit the Zoo at a very nominal price of twopence per child, and no doubt they receive more impressive nature lessons than they would in the schoolroom from books and museum models.

The Llama, usually a very docile animal was greatly excited by the arrival of the better weather, gaily trotting through the drive each day to a field which if not already rich in grass, has every prospect of soon being so. The other day he missed his entrance into the field and passed into an adjoining one occupied by some horses, finally making his way home with them to their stables. Although it was not far from his own home, it was some considerable distance by road along which we had to bring him. Whether it was that he felt something akin to a camel, or objected to walking on the hard road we cannot say, but during the journey he repeatedly knelt down with a stubborn expression on his face as much as to say, "So far and no further." Eventually he was persuaded to travel the now shortened distance down the drive, and immediately the gates came within his vision he set off at such a gallop to his own particular corner of the Zoo, leaving us all in the shade. Apparently he was on very friendly terms with the horses as two of them decided to return the visit the other evening. After galloping round by the Llama's home, they departed as quickly as they had come.

The female staff of the Zoo showed their first feminine trait by commencing the masculine nightmare—Spring Cleaning. "Punch," the Polar Bear, seemed to think that this was just the opportunity he had been waiting for to get into the girls' good books, so he also started the day by spending an extra half hour in his bath, and left most of his old coat in the water. For a couple of hours he proceeded to shake off all the loose hairs, and just as everyone was expressing admiration of his lovely new coat—which now showed to great advantage—he caught sight of one of the keepers cleaning out a nearby pen in true workmanlike fashion. This apparently annoyed "Punch" very much for he no longer decided to enter into the general spirit of cleanliness, but plunged back into the bath and then rolled all over the floor as if in defiance of all the spring cleaning going on around him. Looking very grubby indeed, he retired into his den and refused to show himself again.

GUIDE.

Upon entering the Zoo the Visitor is advised to follow the arrows in rotation of their number and by so doing will be guided round the Zoo in the shortest possible time.

Although it is impossible to say exactly by what number each animal or bird will be found at the time of the publication of this guide on account of certain specimens not being ready to be placed in their permanent quarters, we will try to describe the principle specimens as nearly as possible in the order they will be found.

We first arrive at the Bison enclosure. This contains a very fine BULL and COW BISON, natives of North America.

OCELOT, a very fine specimen of the South American cat, is to be found close to the bison enclosure. Almost opposite are to be found the MALAYAN SUN BEARS, these are very attractive animals, particularly fond of all sweet things.

Proceeding round the bear enclosure we find on our left the RACCOONS from North America, these may often be hidden in the tree which is in their pit.

Passing on we next come to the WALLABIES, which are a small edition of the kangaroo. These particular specimens are BENNETS WALLABY from Tasmania.

In the same enclosure is a tame FALLOW DEER.

We still follow the arrows and next arrive at the RAM BARBARY SHEEP. Its large horns and long hair down the front of its body make him a very impressive animal.

Opposite the last animal are to be found the TAHR from the Himalayas. These animals are wonderful climbers and the male possesses a much longer coat than the females. Before leaving this group of animals and proceeding down the main drive we find in the field on our left the PIE-BALD SHEEP. These are supposed to be direct descendants of the sheep which swam ashore from the Spanish Armada.

After passing the cafes we find the AQUARIUM. As all the tanks are labelled, we will not state here

the contents of the various tanks. After leaving the Aquarium we come to several Aviaries. These contain a great assortment of birds from the tiny FINCHES to the large COCKATOOS. Also in the same area are to be found the PELICANS and PENGUIN.

We now proceed into what in the past was the Court Yard. Now the main block of animal cages.

First we find three different species of BEARS, the AMERICAN BLACK, the RUSSIAN and HIMALAYAN BEARS, all popular favourites, the American Black being the very first animal to arrive at the Zoo when it was first founded in 1930.

After leaving this house we enter the Lion House, a new building built in 1937 as part of a large Open Air Lion Enclosure. Here are to be found several LIONS and some CUBS.

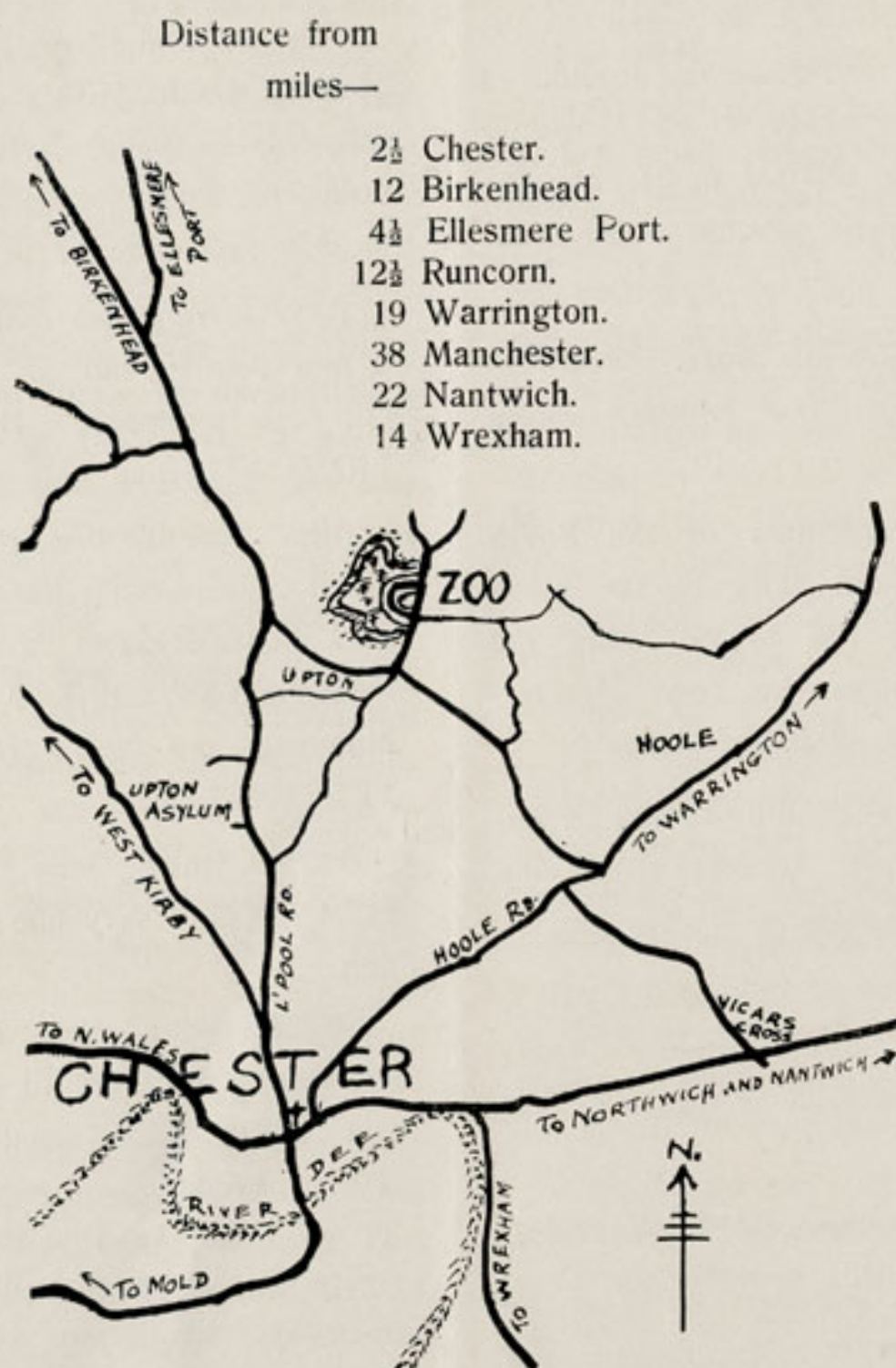
After leaving this block of buildings which in addition to housing the specimens already mentioned, also accommodates a CANE RAT, PORCUPINE, PALM CIVET, GENETS, AGOUTIES, and other small Mammals, we find a large cage containing several VULTURES.

Before leaving the Court Yard we find the LEOPARDS, a very fine pair of which are on exhibition.

Still following the arrows we pass into the Conservatory where are to be found the ALLIGATORS and CROCODILES and some TROPICAL BIRDS. Having already mentioned the Aviaries we carry on till we find the POLAR BEAR, LLAMA, OTTER, DINGOES, HYENA WOLF, and then proceed to the WATER FOWL ENCLOSURE.

From this point we can either retrace our steps and from the Polar Bear proceed to inspect NUTREA, BIRDS OF PREY, and a further collection of FINCHES, PARROTS, etc., or we can pass along a path which leads us through the WILD BIRD SANCTUARY till we come to some large enclosures containing PEA-FOWL, various CRANES, IBIS, STORKS, etc., This is only intended to be the briefest of guides and only a very few of the individual specimens are mentioned, but if the Visitor will faithfully follow the arrows in the order of their numbers they will see all the animals that are on exhibition.

HOW TO REACH CHESTER ZOO.



Tell your friends about the Zoo, or bring them along.

We are open every day including Sundays and there is a very good bus service from Chester Market Square (Upton for the Zoo). Free Park for motor cars and coaches. Cafes.

Special rates for parties, also inclusive prices for tea and admission. We can also quote you an inclusive price for a visit to the Zoo, with or without tea, and a trip up the River.

Ordinary Admission Rate: Adults 1/-, Children 6d.

Persons serving with H.M. Forces, in uniform, half-price.

Malelike, he must have come to the conclusion that if he did not guard his private corner, that also would be turned upside down and nothing in the world would induce him to vacate it again that day.

A great upheaval has occurred in the "bear world." It will be remembered that the cages of "Eve," the Canadian black bear, and that of "Trotsky," the Russian bear, adjoin. The decision was reached that it would be advantageous to both animals if they could be allowed to run together. It would indeed be a difficult task to describe the picture of "Trotsky," young and full of confidence, facing "Eve," older and rather resentful at the thought of losing her much valued privacy when the communicating door of the two cages was raised. "Trotsky," brimful of confidence, ambled up to "Eve" in friendly fashion, but was she playing this propitious game, not she. Snarling viciously she lunged at the unsuspecting "Trotsky" in true boxing fashion, well above the belt too, such a beauty, one up for "Eve." This could not continue was "Trotsky's" quick decision, so he stepped neatly back when the next punch came and "Eve" landed rather disconsolately on all fours. "She is getting old and whilst her temper is fraying I can enjoy to the full this new diversion," so thought "Trotsky," for it was obvious that that was all he considered "Eve." Often during the day "Trotsky" would deliberately pretend to forget that "Eve" existed and when she crept up behind him in readiness for a spring, he would turn round quickly upon her and fasten her in a clinch, only releasing her when she had worked herself up into a furious rage. Night began to fall so "Trotsky" introduced some strategy and showed his superiority by calmly settling down to sleep on top of "Eve's" den with his nose over the doorway, and nothing she could do would move him. "Eve" of course disdainfully refused to sleep in "that bear's den" so reluctantly and having no alternative, was forced to swallow her pride and pretend that "Trotsky" did not exist. With head held high she ignored his presence and retired to bed immediately beneath him. Not content with his victory, "Trotsky" would keep peering down at her much to the other's discomfort and indignation. Now "Trotsky" holds undisputed sway and when for cleaning purposes he was separated from "Eve," he got so annoyed that he tore a hole in the

dividing wire fence and joined her. Now except for occasional skirmishes they agree quite well.

"Charlie," the penguin, had until recently been housed in our Pelican Enclosure, but he was at a great disadvantage as far as showing himself off was concerned when he had these large birds to compete with. He has now been put back in his old pool where he appears to be very happy. The only thing we need for him to make his happiness complete is a wife. Perhaps later on we may be fortunate to procure one for him. "Charlie" must have looked very forlorn as he has been adopted by Form 1.S. of the girls' department of the City High School, Chester, and is visited by them frequently.

The Public will no doubt be pleased to learn that our two leopards have been put together and have apparently settled down quite happily and contentedly in each other's company.

Our lions were very much admired during the Easter Holidays. "Faith," we are sure, would have felt very proud if she could have understood the praise that was lavished on her three cubs. They certainly are a splendid trio. Their first week on public show found them very shy, but they have now gained confidence and show to much better advantage. "Hope," in the adjoining cage, with her cubs, and "Patrick" feels somewhat jealous of "Faith's" family, and the other day this might have led to serious consequences. "Hope's" cubs are quite good and full of life, frequently making excursions into "Faith's" cage, where they are received on friendly terms. On one occasion our new lady lion keeper decided quite good naturedly to release the intervening door and allow the young cub to return to its own quarters. "Faith" put her weight against the sliding door and went through herself followed by her cubs. All was well until "Hope" suddenly seized one of "Faith's" cubs and attempted to vent her wrath on it, whereupon "Faith" went to its assistance and a lively fight ensued. Great excitement was experienced but we were fortunate in quelling it before much damage was done, and then we were able to induce the intruders to return to their own quarters where peace once more prevailed.

During the past week we have been fortunate enough to receive a young vixen and dog fox cub.

Although both very young they are cute little things and show promise of developing into very fine specimens.

Our Aquarium has also had its interesting events and the most noticeable of these being the Aquidens Portelagensis which have a very nice shoal of young ones. The Cichlasoma Nigrofasciatum are still separated; when we tried at the beginning of the month to attempt a reunion, the male turned with such voracity on its mate that we immediately had to separate them to save the latter from becoming a corpse. Fortunately our action was too prompt to allow much damage and this only amounted to torn fins, which have now healed. This particular pair it will be remembered have in the past produced many hundreds of young fish, a number of which have been sent to other Zoos. Several of the last batch are to be seen in our own Aquarium. The pair of Cichlasoma Severum which were lent last year to the Society for the purpose of trying to induce them to breed, made another attempt this month but have failed. We are inclined to believe that the female is at fault, not being so well developed as the male.

A rather amusing incident occurred one day. One of the keepers was so excited over the fine shoal of young fish which had arrived that when getting "Daphne" for them from the pond he lost his footing and tumbled headlong into the water. What a sight he was, in fact he emerged bootless and it has been reported that when these were retrieved there was more "Daphne" in them than in the net.

Our new Raccoon Enclosure is now nearing completion, and these pretty little animals should be in their new home before Whitsuntide.

We have strong suspicions that it will not be very

long before there will be another increase in the Lion House. The problem which faces us is where to accommodate them. These cubs are such an attraction to the public that we must use all our efforts to keep them on show, but there are in many cases so many things that require attention and owing to war conditions and the lack of funds, they can only be accomplished gradually.



ADOPTION.

Readers will remember that we were the first in the field with the scheme for the adoption of animals during war time.

We have, with our many new additions, still several animals and birds requiring adoption and we would be very pleased to send a list to anyone who would like to help in this way during war time.

The cost in many cases is so little per week and every little helps to keep the animals.

It is surprising how national events effect the Zoo. It may be a lovely fine day, when many people would come, but suddenly there may be some startling war news or some high personage may be giving an important speech which is being broadcast. The result is the animals miss their friends and extra money must be found to replace that lost at the Gate.

Make it easier by adopting one or more for any period you like. You have only to remit the cost of the animal's food and your name is placed on its cage as the adopter for whatever period you wish.

