

CHESTER ZOO

News

News from The North of England Zoological Society

SPRING 1988



Take
a
trek
around
the world



Scottish Wildcat 'Talisker'



Clare Evans and Brillo the Coati.



Humbolts Penguins — 3 of the 18 we hatched.

1987 TOTAL IS 862,471!

Change for
Chester's
Chimps

CHESTER ZOO has just recorded the highest visitor numbers since 1981. By the end of December, over 862,000 people had passed through the gates — an increase of 129,480 on last year's figure.

Research carried out in August shows that over 83% of visitors were making repeat visits, many of them for the second or third time in one year.

The research shows that Chester Zoo pulls visitors from well over 100 miles away, and that the visitors stay for an average of 5 hours.

"We have so much more to offer than most attractions", said Zoo Director Dr Michael Brambell. "The zoo is easy to get to — the motorway link is less than two miles away and public transport is first class. Most coach operators within a 100 mile radius run regular trips to the zoo".

Chester is the UK's largest zoological gardens outside London, with an enviable reputation for its spacious, open enclosures and magnificent, award winning gardens.

Other points of interest revealed by the survey: About half the respondents have visited other zoos or wildlife parks during the previous 12 months, and 80% of them rated Chester Zoo as better than the rest.

Nearly half of the respondents had visited other tourist attractions in the past 12 months, the three most frequently mentioned being Alton Towers, the Rhy! Sun Centre and Camelot Theme Park. Only 2% of these rated Chester Zoo lower than the rest!

The top favourite creatures in the zoo are lions, closely followed by monkeys. Next in the popularity scale, in order of preference, are tigers, elephants, chimps, penguins, polar bears, giraffes, sealions and reptiles.

The balance between adults and children was almost equal — 52% of visitors were aged 16 years or over. One fifth of visitors were 5 years or younger.

Parents, especially mothers, have the greatest influence on the decision to visit the zoo. Over two thirds of the family groups had been influenced by parental decision.

An impressive 96% thought the admission charge to the zoo was good value for money.

10% of the visitors — 86,000 people — came into the zoo as part of an organised party, and the great majority of those travelled by coach.

The zoo has been the North's favourite place for day trippers for over 54 years, and unlike many other tourist attractions, it's a place people return to again and again. There is so much to see and do — one day is never enough!

King of the jungle and top of the polls!

Highest number
for six years



THE FAMOUS chimpanzees at Chester Zoo will be getting a new £1/2 million pound home next Autumn.

Chester Chimp Island is the largest of any zoo in the UK, with only a moat to separate animals and visitors. There are four nursing mothers with their babies among the 22 strong colony. But the public aren't able to see the chimps on very cold days, when the animals are kept inside.

The zoo hopes to start work in the new year on re-building the chimp house to include indoor viewing facilities all year round, and also to extend the island area. This exciting new project should be complete by September 1988.

Gardeners' Secret gives us Top Award

ONCE again, the zoo's talented team of gardeners, led by Eric Rudman, has won the coveted North West Regional prize in the English Tourist Board's "Beautiful Britain in Bloom" competition, for the best tourist attraction gardens.

"We won it last year too", Eric told Zoo News "but we do have one mammoth advantage that no other gardens in the area enjoy". He pointed delicately towards the elephant island.

"Our six elephants produce a copious supply of splendid manure every day — it's wonderful stuff! We once sold it under the brand name "Zoo-poo"!



Every rose-bed should have one...

Favourite

SUBIS, the Orang-Utan is now a year old — she was voted most popular baby of 1986 — and keeper, Neil who hand reared her totally agrees!





Just a few days old, and already he can rock and roll! This little flamingo chick, hatched in July, was the first ever for Chester Zoo, but two more were hatched later in the month. The proud parents — shown here — are clearly tickled pink!



DURING 1987 there were over 670 births or hatchings in our animal collection, and we've every reason to believe there will be similar activity during 1988!



MEET SOME OF THE ZOO'S 1987 NEW ARRIVALS



A young kookaburra takes its first look at the world.

WHATEVER the time of year, there are always appealing youngsters in some part of the 110 acres of the zoo.

But to see the largest selection of baby animals, there's no doubt that Spring is the time to visit. Easter is traditionally a time of new birth — a tradition certainly adhered to by the animals in the zoo!

Every Spring, the female kangaroos have joeys in their pockets, and the patient watcher — or photographer — will be rewarded with the sight of one of these attractive youngsters.

In the paddock areas, there will be baby wallabies, pretty young axis deer, and maybe a

many other pregnancies in the monkey house, couple of new arrivals in the herd of rare Pere David's deer.

The attractive ring-tailed lemurs always produce lots of babies in the Spring, and there are many other pregnancies in the monkey house.

The second phase of the children's farm will be open for Easter 1988, and young visitors will be encouraged to make friends with the goats, ducks, pigs and other domestic animals in their special area.

If the weather is bad, there is plenty of undercover activity. The magnificent Tropical House, for instance, is probably the finest in Europe. In addition to the large collection of snakes and reptiles, there are several varieties of exotic birds flying freely, and a wonderful display of tropical plants.

The fame of the zoo's marvelous gardens is widespread. Many visitors come simply to enjoy the gardens, and find the animals a bonus!

On this page are pictured just a few of 1987's new arrivals. Who knows what 1988 will bring!



Is this the world's first flying coat? No just three months old Brillo taking a leap!

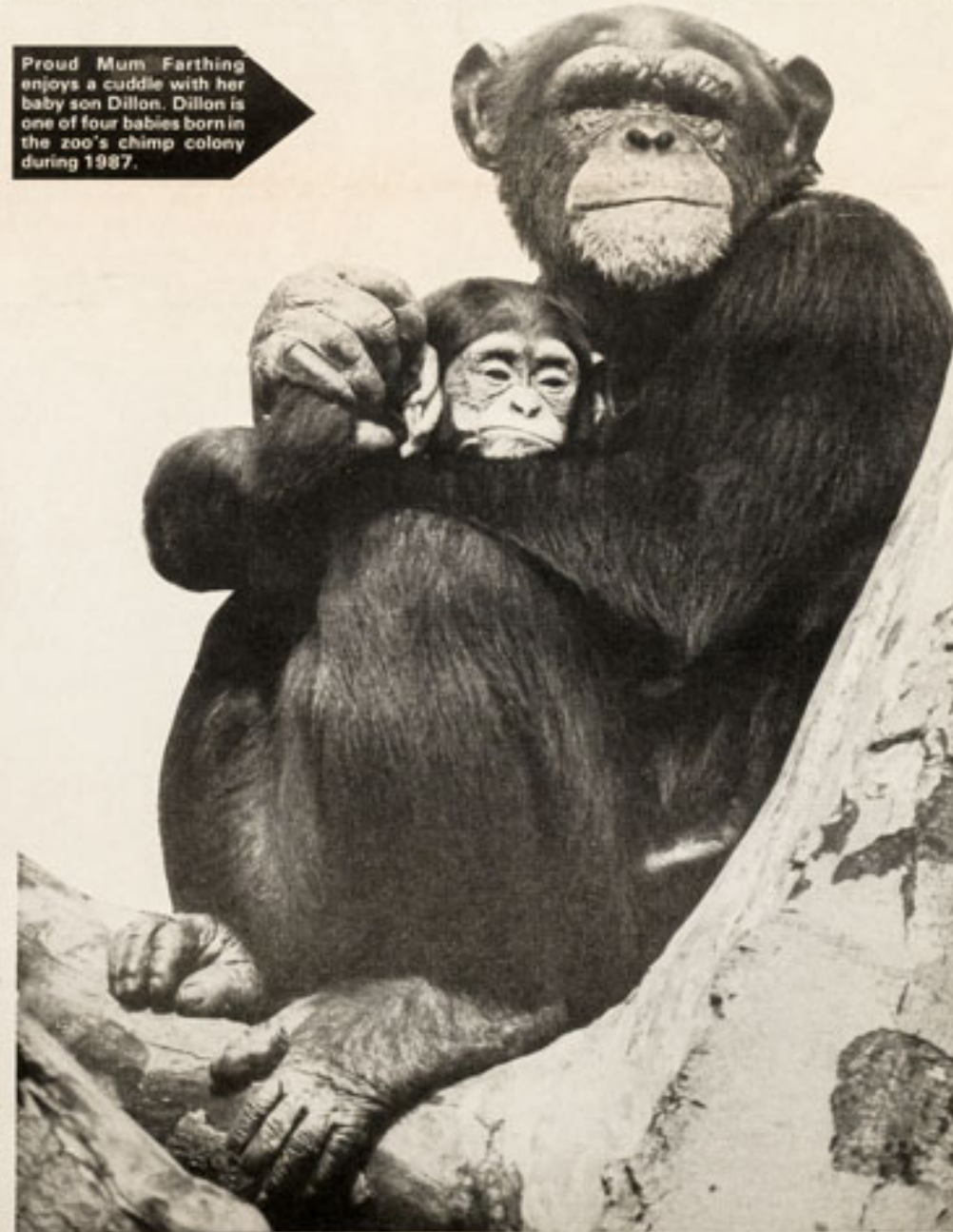


Cathy Pitt from Southport makes friends with one of the 18 penguin chicks hatched in the zoo during 1987.



He's just a ball of grey down at the moment, and it will take this wide-eyed snowy owl chick up to two years to grow his full, adult, snowy white plumage. He was just a couple of days old when he posed for this portrait.

Proud Mum Farthing enjoys a cuddle with her baby son Dillon. Dillon is one of four babies born in the zoo's chimp colony during 1987.



This little capybara, just one week old, is one of a litter of six born in October.

THE ZOO'S A GREAT PLACE FOR PARTIES



A great way to celebrate a child's birthday — bring all their friends for a party in the zoo!

Here's looking at you kids!

THE new children's farm doesn't just appeal to children. Cricketer David Gower couldn't resist these twin pigmy goats when he visited the zoo with fiancée Vicki Stewart. The goats were born in the zoo last Summer, and because they are twins, they are named after the Zodiac sign — Gem and Mini!

PARTY visits of any number are always welcome at the zoo. The biggest single party ever consisted of 2,000 people! All the Cheshire branches of the Mothers' Union held a joint family day at the zoo, and all 2,000 joined together for a massive picnic on the Oakfield lawn.

For parties of 15 or more, there is a substantial reduction. There is a large coach park close to the zoo gates, and parking is free of charge. The 1988 standard entry price will be £3.50 adults, £1.75 children. For parties, the rate reduces to £3.00 and £1.50. There is no charge for the under threes.

Catering

There are plenty of catering outlets within the zoo. The Oakfield Restaurant is an elegant oak panelled room, fully licensed, with waitress service. The Jubilee is a spacious, self-service cafeteria. The Oasis is a self-service snack bar open all through the Summer, and at weekends in the Winter. In addition there are numerous kiosks selling hot and cold snacks and drinks. Picnickers are very welcome, and undercover facilities are provided for wet days. Parties requiring meals need to book in advance.

Playgroups

The zoo is the ideal place for day trips for pre-school youngsters. Most of them come in free! There is no charge for toddlers who have not yet reached their third birthday. The Children's Farm will be completed by Easter 1988, and youngsters will have a wonderful time making friends with the goats and pigs and other domestic animals in the farm.

School Visits

The zoo has a very active Education Department, offering either direct teaching by the zoo's own qualified teachers, or a full support system for school teachers. There is a vast amount of printed material, covering every age group from nursery to undergraduate, and the cost of repeat visits for one class following a particular topic becomes progressively cheaper.

Groups, Clubs and Associations

The zoo is not just for children! Adult groups will have a marvellous day too. The zoo's famous gardens are spectacular all the year round, and with a little advance warning, one of the senior gardeners will be delighted to give a guided tour.

What is a F.E.D.?

F.E.D.S. are Friends of the Education Department. They are enthusiastic volunteers, providing a range of visitor activities, including guided tours, animal brass rubbings, and a "Let's Make" centre.

Disabled Visitors

There are wheelchairs available for hire, and if we know in advance to expect disabled visitors, we can arrange to greet them and escort them to an easy access gate. The zoo is virtually all on one level, and there are toilet facilities for the disabled.

Lecture Theatre

Just on the outskirts of the zoo's grounds, is a fully equipped lecture theatre, opened in 1972 by the Duke of Edinburgh. The theatre has 174 cinema-style seats, each equipped with a foldaway writing desk.

The theatre is available for hire at any time during the Winter months and on Summer evenings.

Equipment available for hire includes: a 35 mm Kodak carousel slide projector; a 16mm projector with sound; overhead projector; neck microphone; free standing microphone and record player. There is a large screen, stage and projection room.



Last Summer's biggest marketing success — Cotswold Farm ice cream. It's the biggest ice-cream cone ever, filled with three flavours of dairy ice-cream, raspberry sauce, chopped nuts and fresh whipped cream! Impossible to eat in less than 20 minutes!

The zoo's gardens are almost as famous as its animals. 80,000 Spring bedding plants, followed by 80,000 Summer flowering ones are planted every year, and the rose beds are stunning at the height of Summer.



Oakfield House, the lovely Victorian mansion which houses the zoo's restaurant, tea rooms and function rooms. The restaurant is open all year, and closes only on Christmas Day.



Our boat-bus is a popular Summer feature, taking visitors on a circular trip to see all the wild water-fowl that make their home in the zoo. It's the best viewpoint for the thousands of daffodils blooming in the Spring.



Party Bookings Secretary Debbie Cooke will be happy to answer any queries from group organisers or coach operators. Ring her, or Lyn Raynor, on Chester 380280.



Chester Zoo News is designed and published by The North of England Zoological Society, Upton-by-Chester, Cheshire CH2 1LH. Telephone Chester (0244) 380280. The zoo is a registered scientific and educational charity.