

A VISIT TO SOME EUROPEAN ZOOS

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(Illustrated by Keith Shackleton)

TOWARDS the end of August, when the last of the season's hatch of goslings and ducklings were feathered and reasonably safe, a small party from the Trust including the Curator and Mrs. Johnstone took a busman's holiday, crossed over to the Continent and visited some of the zoos and wildfowl collections, exchanging views of the care and upkeep of the birds. The Zoos of Rotterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg, Cologne, Copenhagen and Stockholm and one or two private collections had been visited previously, but in 1958 the programme was rather more ambitious.

The 'Vanguard' containing the party and their luggage crossed from Dover to Ostende on 20 August and proceeded non-stop to Rotterdam.

On the journey it was noted that the harvest, mostly wheat and barley, was either already cut and stooked or actually being cut. No combines were seen and the carting was being done by farm waggons pulled by three lovely Percherons; six or eight sheaves to a stook and tied round the neck, straw four to five feet long. Between St. Niklaas and Antwerp for several miles on either side of the road were acres and acres of gorgeous begonias, of every imaginable colour and shade.

21st August. A morning visit to Mynheer Schuyt, a dealer in and breeder of wildfowl, who lives on the outskirts of Rotterdam. His estate is about an acre in size with, of course, a good supply of water, since every house and garden in these parts is separated from its neighbour and the highroad by a rhine, or its local equivalent. There is a large dry barn on the right, the floor of which is divided into pens and covered with dry peat. Infra red lamps are installed. Outside, each pair of birds has its pen and water separated on either side by a wooden partition about 3 ft. high, so that they do not see each other.

One pair of Hawaiian Geese is here on loan from the Trust, and appeared in excellent condition.

After saying goodbye to the Schuyts we drove to Blijdorp Zoo in Rotterdam where we lunched with Dr. Appelman, the Director, Dr. Van Bommel, Assistant Director, and his wife, Colonel Geertsema, and Mr. Jack Death. Among the 83 species of waterfowl two Moluccan Radjah Shelduck (both males), three Spotted Whistling Ducks, and Smew were noted. The rare and valuable Manchurian Crane is represented and there is a fine collection of birds of paradise.

Pride of place amongst the animals must be given to the Clouded Leopard—surely one of the loveliest creatures in the whole world. There were, too, a pair of Lynx, with the fascinating ear-tufts; baby Servals about the size of small cats: both wild horses, Tarpan and Przewalskis: Pere David's Deer: and, of course, a pair of Okapis. The Okapi is found only in the Belgian Congo and is very strictly preserved. The cost of one animal is about £2,500. The history of the Milu or Père David's Deer is very interesting. Originating in East China they were exterminated there about a hundred years ago. A few pairs were rescued from various zoos (after the last had been wiped out in the Imperial Park at Peking) by the Duke of Bedford and brought over to England. He succeeded in breeding quite a large herd from these, and in 1956 two pairs from this stock were sent back to Peking. Not unlike what may one day be done with the Ne-ne, we hope.

Blijdorp Zoo issues a small guide in English, full of very useful information about animals and birds as a whole, and without bragging unduly about their own specimens—probably the shortest introduction to the living animals of the world ever published.

22nd August. Rotterdam being our headquarters for the next four days, we decided to leave the car there and go by train to Brussels where we had an appointment with the head of a firm of colour printers. One of the reasons for this was that we hoped to get our business done early and then pay a short visit to the Exhibition, and we doubted the car-parking arrangements; as a matter of fact we need not have done so, as we found there were parks to hold 5,000 cars all round the Exhibition. These were without attendants, a steady green light showing as long as there was a space available, but as soon as each park was full a winking red light warned drivers to try the next place.

Having finished our business in the city we were very kindly driven to the Exhibition. It was then nearly lunchtime and as we were due to visit Antwerp Zoo on the way back we had not much time to spare. It is obvious that when only a few hours are spent at such a vast Exhibition of this sort only very hazy impressions can be recorded.

For noise, ruthless efficiency, power and enterprise, the Russian Pavilion with its two Sputniks, the long central avenue with its endless clanking machinery on either side and, at the end, the huge overpowering statue of Lenin, was the most impressive. But we were grateful for the quiet relief of the British Pavilion, with its pageantry of distinguished figures in their Coronation robes, the quiet music, and at the turn of the stairs, that exquisite painting of the Queen.

M. van den Berg, the Director, and M. Carpentier, the Curator of Birds, showed us round the Antwerp Zoo. It is a pleasant, compact and tidy place with plenty of water, streams and ponds, and has a good and well-cared-for collection of some 60 species of waterfowl including African Pygmy Geese and Hartlaub's Ducks.

Other birds of note were Black Guinea Fowl, Great Bustard, Congo Peafowl (the first specimens to live in any Zoo). They have also a Manatee, a pair of Maned Wolves, Owl-faced Monkeys, Tarpans, and Gerenuks. The history of the Okapi here is a sad one. The first calf produced was killed by the mother almost as soon as it was born. The second she attacked as soon as it touched her teats, but spared it until the third day when she knocked it down and trampled it to death. The third calf was removed from the female as soon as it was born and put in an incubator, but the heat of this went wrong for two hours during the night and the calf failed to survive. The female is again pregnant and we wish them all luck.



We wish them all luck

23rd August. On our way to Amsterdam we stopped at Delft, a very pretty place with canals, old Dutch buildings and everything an artist could wish for, but a little sad for us as we failed to find what we went for.

Continuing our journey to Amsterdam we passed through huge fields of wheat, almost all stooked, only one combine being seen on the whole journey. The special breed of Fresians, which M. Schuyl had explained to us last year came originally from one island only, seemed very popular as we got nearer Amsterdam and good grass land. These beasts have only a white face, a white stripe on the belly and a white udder—all the rest is pure black if they are of this special breed.

We had lunch in Amsterdam and visited a fine Exhibition of Old Dutch Masters; very interesting, especially as there was a demonstrator in each room who collected groups of visitors and explained the pictures to them. Two hours was indeed better than nothing and it was possible to see the originals of so many pictures that one had previously only seen in reproduction.

After lunch we visited Wassenaar Zoo. The waterfowl looked sad in a muddy compound, several birds looking very bedraggled. The large outside aviaries for the Vultures were however quite good. The pride of the place is a huge glasshouse containing the restaurant and countless small and medium sized birds, some in aviaries with pools, rocks, sand, etc., and some free to fly about and nest overhead in the many tall trees and creepers. The best of the birds were the Vultures, Eagles, Shoebills and Oranje Rotsoos. Recently several birds had been killed in one of the outside aviaries, though no trace of entry by a predator could be discovered. A layer of fine white sand was put down all round the outside and made quite smooth; the following morning small footmarks were found leading to a hole in the wire netting. A tunnel trap was put down and a weasel subsequently caught.

24th August. Drove to Soest in the morning to visit Colonel and Mrs. Geertsema. Their house adjoins the Royal Palace and their garden and collection of wildfowl is very pleasing; there is a stream running through their grounds and there are plenty of trees, shrubs and fine lawns and everything is done to make the birds comfortable. There are Black Swans, several kinds of geese and ducks, also cranes, and aviaries for pheasants and small birds. There is, further, a Green Parakeet that flies free amongst the trees in the garden but comes at once when the Colonel whistles and perches on his shoulder—always the left shoulder, we were told.

After sherry, biscuits and discussion we left and drove on to the Ecoput forest inn for lunch. Here J. Death gave us a very interesting talk on the points of deer antlers; the inn here and the hall at Colonel Geertsema's house were covered with antlers of both red deer and roe.

After lunch we visited the Man In't Veld brothers at Apeldoorn. They are dealers and importers of wildfowl and know quite a lot about their trade. The pens here had tap water only, with zinc trays about 4 ft. square and six inches deep sunk in the middle of each pen. A wooden platform about a foot wide is built all round this to prevent puddling. One pen held 400 Carolinas and there were 50 White-faced Whistling Ducks in another; all the birds looked well and contented.

25th August. Left Rotterdam at 11.30 a.m. On the outskirts of Tilburg, in the midst of a thick pine forest, we found the Zoo of the Van Dijk brothers,

a rather sad spot in the wet, as it was when we arrived, but nice and shady in the hot weather. The area must be about 9 or 10 acres and animal houses, pens, and aviaries are dotted about in the trees, widely separated and often without a distinct path leading to them. This 'Zoo' is really a transit camp for the animals and birds and the Van Dijk's boast is that you can buy anything you see as they are collectors and distributors of live stock from all parts of the world. Few are kept here permanently, or indeed even for long if there is a good market for them.

The wildfowl were mostly in one pen, a sea of mud on the day we saw them and not a blade of grass to be seen anywhere. The soil is black and peaty—it looked as though it were composed of sand with centuries of pine needles mixed with it—not unlike parts of the country around Bournemouth. There were hundreds of White-faced Whistling Ducks standing in the mud and shuffling their wings, 8 Whitefronts, 4 Red-breasted Geese, 2 Common Herons and, as is usual in these parts, half a dozen or so 'call ducks.'

All the aviaries were of the usual type and rather full of birds, including the following: nearly all the species of cranes, Cuban Flamingoes, Screamers, Hammer Heads, Purple Gallinules (53 counted), Nicobar Pigeons, and in one aviary of mixed birds were seven Rose-coloured Starlings, three of them singing lustily in the rain.

The food of the wildfowl seemed to be chiefly lettuce, runner beans and maize, the latter rather large and not crushed.

We were shown the carpenter's shed where all the crates were made; from the smallest to hold a few mice—no bigger than a cigar box, to the crates on rubber wheels that will take elephants and giraffes. In another shed there must have been sixty to eighty monkeys, each in a separate crate just big enough for them to move. (They travel best like this).

The walls of the pens and enclosures for the larger animals are faced with slabs of cement shaped like leaves and overlapping each other—sort of pancakes slapped, wet, one on top of the other.

The Van Dijks have their other business in the town of Tilburg itself. This is under the charge of the younger brother. The elder of the two, who had taken us round the Zoo, insisted on getting out his car and showing us the way. This place consists in the main part of four enormous buildings of four storeys each, possibly part of a grain store at one time. On each floor are thousands of small birds of every possible kind, in cages or small aviaries in three layers. The whole building is further filled with escapees who fly round overhead and cluster on the windowsills. The smaller birds were often mixed, but the larger ones — doves, parrots, etc., — were mostly all one kind in separate pens. It is quite impossible to estimate even roughly the number of birds here, but it must have run into many tens of thousands.

There were store rooms, offices, packing and despatch rooms on the other side of the road and, of necessity, another carpenter's shop.

After leaving Tilburg we made our way in the direction of Frankfurt; with some difficulty and in pouring rain we finally found beds for the night at Roermond, a very pleasant place indeed, but surprisingly empty; the dining room and food were good and mine host extended a more than warm welcome to us. All the tables in the lounge and sitting room were

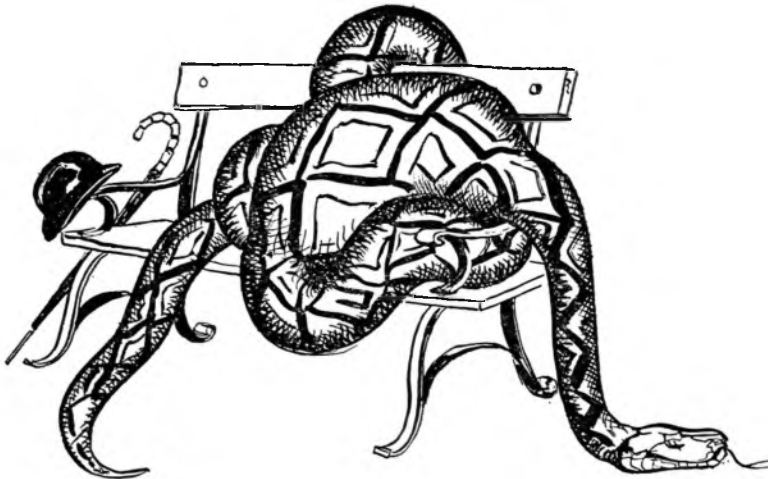
covered with hearthrugs—there seemed to be no special reason for this except that they matched the carpets.

26th August. Left Roermond at 8.30 a.m., joined the Rhine valley at Cologne and continued by the riverside to Coblenz. The vineyards we saw on the way were very wonderful, frequently seeming to flourish almost on the sides of a precipice. Several pairs of Buzzards were seen, but no Eagles yet. There were many oxen pulling heavy fourwheeled wagons, and also more than one pair ploughing. Ploughing with oxen must be a beautifully restful job compared with a Fordson Major.

We lunched at Boppard, by the riverside and thence to Frankfurt, crossing the river at Mainz; between here and Frankfurt we passed through large areas of market garden and were impressed by acres of asparagus on a scale never seen at home.

27th August. To Frankfurt Zoo in the morning. This is one of the many German Zoos that had been severely bombed, and, as a consequence of this 'slum clearance' all the pokey, out-of-date animal houses had to be replaced with, of course, large modern buildings and all the latest improvements and new ideas. Apart from this, it is a very progressive Zoo in every way and aims at interesting the unwilling public rather than merely amusing it. The name and a coloured print of each bird is displayed on a small board outside all the pens for everyone to see; and in addition there are large distribution charts for each animal in all the animal houses, and also a genealogical chart.

There is one other point of interest: no visitor is allowed to feed any animal or bird. If they do they are fined Dm. 2.50 and escorted to the exit! There are of course large notices warning the visitors of this regulation. As a consequence it is the cleanest zoo ever seen; none of the pens, cages and enclosures are littered with nuts, banana skins, biscuits, or bits of paper.



No visitor is allowed to feed any animal or bird.

The collection of wildfowl was small but well housed and in good condition, but there was nothing of special note among them.

There were two Lion cubs, only a fortnight old, playing in the straw in one corner of their cage whilst their mother sat alone in the opposite corner. The zoo also has Black Leopards, Ocelots, Cheetahs and Caracals. All species of Apes are represented, including a Bonobo, the only other one in captivity being at Blijdorp, in Rotterdam. The most prized exhibit is a Zebra Antelope, the only one in captivity anywhere. The rare and expensive Gerenuks have bred here and successfully raised two young. You may or may not notice in one cage a queer little 'hedgehog thing' poking its snout out of a bed of straw; anyone who troubles to read the description printed below the cage will discover that it is an *Echidna*: an Australian marsupial that lays an egg which it hatches in its pouch. The baby sucks the milk through its mother's skin as there are no teats.

One rather delightful exhibit in an out-door pen is a herd of Chinese Water Deer. The male has no horns but two tusks in the upper jaw, which project three inches or so outside the lower jaw.

At the exit of the lion house you may see through a large sheet of plate glass all the meat hanging in cold storage; the whole room is lined with white tiles, there are no flies and it would put many a butcher's shop to shame. All the food for the carnivora is cut up and prepared here, under the public eye. A quaint idea.

28th August. We arrived at Frankfurt Airport at 7.0 a.m., became airborne at 7.30 a.m. and touched down in Berlin at 9.10 a.m. Templehof is a fine airport. The aircraft taxi right up to the terminal buildings and one steps, under cover, from the plane into the building.

Thence by bus to Charlottenburg. A fellow-traveller—an American resident in Berlin—was our helpful guide on the journey. The bus dropped us outside our hotel in the Kurfurstendamstrasse. The Manager informed us that there was no telephone communication with East Berlin and no taxi would leave the Western sector. We could go to East Berlin by private hire car, and this we did. Our driver spoke perfect English and acted as guide and advisor. Approaching the Brandenburg Gate we saw Russian soldiers on guard at their vast War Memorial. The Tor, damaged but miraculously still standing, is surmounted no longer by a quadriga but by a Red Flag—not, our guide assured us, that of Russia but of Communist Berlin. Here the West Guards stopped us, but after a few words from our driver we were allowed through the gate to the Eastern police; we showed our passports, stated our business, and all was well—we were on our way. We drove through the abomination of desolation (20,000 people were killed in one raid we were told), past heaps of rubble that were once world-famous hotels and museums, past Hitler's Chancellery and death place, the wreck of the Reichstag, and from Unter den Linden into the Stalinallee. Here, under the inscrutable gaze of a massive statue of Stalin, is the shopwindow of Communism. The great width is divided by fine flower beds and the strasse is lined with vast buildings of cream stone—a mere facade, through which could be seen acres and acres of ruins. Here all the shops have a large H.O. displayed, signifying that they are state controlled.

Our faithful driver would not leave us at the Tierpark until he had been assured that they would be responsible for bringing us back before nightfall.

We were taken round by Herr Grummt, the Assistant Director, and Herr Michaelis, who was the Publicity Officer but could speak little English; nevertheless the deference shown to visitors from the Wildfowl Trust was obvious and gratifying.

The East Berlin Tierpark is vast—400 acres in extent—but unfinished; it may some day become a sort of super Whipsnade. Parties of women were digging, putting in posts for fencing, etc.—all volunteers, the Director told us.

The collection of waterfowl was very good; they have 68 different species including a Black Spurwing, but no *Mergus* of any kind. There was plenty of water, but the grass where most of the birds were was long and coarse and obviously not cut at all. Food seemed to be wheat, maize and bread. Plenty of fish, both small and large, but dead, were being fed to the Pelicans, Storks, Cranes, etc.

Most of the animal houses and bird aviaries are as yet rather primitive and there are few new ones, but the paddocks and out-door pens are splendid: in most of them there is nothing but a ha-ha or water to keep the animals in their place. The magnificent Polar Bear enclosure must have had thousands of tons of huge rocks brought in and erected—there is even a waterfall of possibly 20 feet into the pool below.

There had been here the Giant Panda which was caught in Red China and so was sent first to the East Berlin Zoo, but as the price asked was fifty thousand dollars, it was sent on to Frankfurt and after that to London. On the Sunday before our visit the attendance was 50,000, and it usually amounts to about $1\frac{1}{2}$ million annually.

Herr Grummt drove us to the underground station in East Berlin, bought our tickets and took us through the barrier himself. The ticket collector, an incarnate Mme. Defarge, paid us no heed. The rolling stock, stations and officials all seemed rather worn and sad, but the train was crowded with Berliners travelling quite freely between East and West.

The West Berlin Zoo is another of those with grand new animal houses, the old original ones having been destroyed—"by Lancasters" we were told in an aside. The wildfowl collection was small, but did include a very fine pair of Black-necked Swans.

Among the animals the two-toed Sloths and Spectacled Bears were specially worth notice. Here is what must be the finest Aquarium in Europe. There are over 800 species of fish, among them many exquisite coral fish, all beautifully displayed. The building is on four floors and a central well houses nineteen of the known species of crocodiles and alligators.

An international exhibition of Guppies was being held at the time of our visit. Other queer objects in this house were a Giant Frog which is fed on chicken and cockroaches, and the Frilled Lizards. The 'frill' is a fold of skin that hangs round the shoulders like a cape. When the Lizard is annoyed the frill opens out just like an umbrella. (See *Ninth Annual Report*, p. 73).

It was dusk when we left and a jackal was howling.

In the afternoon of August 29th we returned from Berlin to Frankfurt.
30th August. Left Frankfurt at 7.30 a.m. 'Elevenes' and light lunch at 10.0 a.m. near Ulm, having driven 150 miles through the mountains, mostly on an Autobahn, in $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and paused to watch a pair of eagles hunting.

We arrived at the Astoria Hotel, Munich, at 12.30 and had lunch, 252 miles from Frankfurt. Afterwards we drove twenty miles or more through lovely country, over narrow roads with no direction posts and no sign of human beings, and then, in the midst of a forest of Austrian pines we came suddenly upon a lake with a group of long stone buildings nestling in the trees by its side. This was the Max Planck Institut, Seewiesen, though you might rather expect it to be the palace of a fairy princess.

There was no porter's lodge, and huge iron gates barred the way. But pressure on a bell push in one of the enormous stone pillars produced a blast of German from a small grid not previously noticed, just below. All seemed rather hopeless until at last a very friendly American voice joined in and its owner soon followed to unlock the gates and let us in. This kindly soul was doing research work here and when things were explained to him told us that Dr. Lorenz was away but of course we could come in and he would show us round.

The lake itself is about 10 or 15 acres and on the south and west trees come right down to the water's edge. To the north is a floating weedbank and on the west is the small gravel beach where the Institut is situated and its workers live. There are perhaps 8 or 9 small rafts anchored at different spots out on the lake where the birds can rest when they so desire. There are several pens along the gravel shore reaching into and enclosing portions of the lake. In these there are many birds under observation; geese and ducks cluster tamely round one's feet. Two observation towers, one of which has a bedroom on the top floor, are fitted up with telescopes. Many of the birds present are wild of course, but the permanent inhabitants are either pinioned or feather cut as they are always under observation. The study of these birds and their behaviour is one of the main objects of the Max-Planck-Institut, as it is largely used by ethologists. The administrative buildings and their equipment are sheer delight to the eye as well as the mind. The laboratories and offices open out to aviaries and both fresh and salt-water fish aquaria. There appeared to be every kind of laboratory equipment, and, in addition, a most luxurious library and reading room. We were given tea by Dr. Beatrice Lorenz, a daughter-in-law of Dr. Konrad Lorenz, and after looking over the Landrover of our kind American—which was being modified for his coming expedition into the wilds, we drove back to Munich.

31st August. Munich—a large Zoo and a lucky one, in that they have a stream of gin-clear water, similar to the Itchen or the Test, that never muddies or dries up. Diving duck can be watched feeding on the bottom in water of a depth of 3 to 4 feet. There are countless rainbow trout swimming in all parts of the stream, up to 6 or 7 lbs; none under half a pound were seen. How does this fit in with the Pelicans? It seems this was something we forgot to ask.

The stock of wildfowl looked splendid, as one would expect, and we were shown 7 young Plumed Whistling Duck, bred this year and now nearly fully fledged. There were many other interesting babies including a very small Gnu, a yearling Gauer, and two baby Porcupines little more than a week old; they already had quite a useful quantity of quills 4 to 6 inches long, on their backs, but these are quite soft and supple like pieces of string when they are born, so there is no need for an expectant mother Porcupine to

have a worried look. This Porcupine had produced three babies but being provided with only two teats an attempt had been made to rear the third baby on a bottle. Unfortunately it died after two days. Evidently the milk was not suitable, but to try to persuade a female Porcupine to give a sample of her milk for analysis might have been a problem.

There was quite a stud of Tarpons, Przewalskis, Onagers and Kulans, besides all the Zebras. And a most interesting Pony-Zebra stallion of 4-5 years, all grey with no sign of a stripe anywhere. All 38 kinds of Guinea-pig are represented, including the original wild form that are speckled grey, like a Plymouth Rock fowl. We were amused to see drain pipes up-on-end for the Cranes and Sterks to feed from.

The Director, Herr Heinz Heck, and his nephew Dr. Heck, junior, spent the whole morning taking us round the Zoo, and then to the restaurant for a grand lunch, after which we wandered slowly through the Zoo to the Director's house. There we were joined by the youngest Heck, Director of the Aquarium and Reptilia—a cheerful soul. Before we left the Munich Tiergarten we were shown Herr Heck's treasures, trophies and paintings.

After a drive of $3\frac{3}{4}$ hours we arrived at Lindau at 7.30 p.m. and found rooms in a charming hotel on the front overlooking Lake Constance. It was not until the morning that we discovered we were on an island.

1st September. Left Lindau and travelled by way of Zurich to Basel. Much of the country between Zurich and Basel is planted with tobacco, many acres of it on either side of the road for miles.

2nd September. Basel Zoo at 10.30 a.m. where we were met by Dr. Wackernagel, Assistant Director, who showed us first their young Flamingo and told us all about it: six nests were built, of mud, at the edge of the water, with a hollow on top of each where the eggs were laid and incubated. The bases of the nests almost touch each other, they are cylindrical, quite hard and smooth, without cracks, and diminishing in diameter. The nest in which the young bird was reared was $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet high. Copulation had been seen to take place in deep water, and eight eggs were subsequently laid but only one was fertile. The young bird was covered with dark grey down and the bill was like the adult's though in proportion. The birds get a 25% protein feed—shrimp, kelp and carrot.

The Zoo has a plentiful supply of water from springs within its boundaries, and there is a lovely natural waterfall (continued for 10-15 yards as a rapid) from an artificial lake on high ground to one on a lower level; the trees around could with advantage be cut back. There is a good selection of geese and ducks, including three pairs of Scoters and one female Velvet Scoter.

Stars among the animals were a baby Rhinoceros, who was out in the open with its mother and the keeper; a Zebra filly two days old; Swiss Marmots; Prairie Dogs. Sophy, the Gorilla from Rotterdam was there, with her keeper, waiting to be mated to the male Gorilla. The female Orang came into labour about 4.30 while we were at tea.

Present at lunch were Dr. Lang, the Director of the Zoo, and his wife, Dr. Wackernagel, Dr. Nouvel—Director of the Paris Zoo, an unidentified Fraulein, and the Slimbridge party. After lunch Mr. Freeman Shelley of Philadelphia Zoo joined the party.

The equipment and luxury of the new Keepers' quarters passes belief. There are separate bedrooms for each person, full length baths and showers,

wardrobes, a drying room, dining room, library and sitting room—all beautifully furnished—and kitchen, larder, food store, and laundry. The animal and bird-food store, in another part of the same new block, had 16 huge hoppers on the top floor which led down to the room below. The food noticed in the hoppers included sunflower seeds, dried peas, beans, maize, crushed maize, millet, crushed oats, barley, meal both coarse and fine. This room contained fresh fruit and vegetables, light wheelbarrows with pneumatic wheels, plastic buckets, panniers, etc.

In still another room were breeding boxes for locusts, cockchafers, grasshoppers, etc. Inside were pieces of apple, lettuce, and a few rolled oats; locusts or cockroaches were there in swarms. There may have been as many as 60 or 80 of these cages. The room temperature was observed to be about 78°.

Before leaving we were given tea—ice cold with lemon—in Frau Lang's sitting room, to the accompaniment of an obligato of "Colonel Bogey" whistled by the pet parrot.

Some of the aviaries here were constructed of vertically stressed steel wires instead of netting, giving an impression of less obstruction to viewing the birds.

3rd September. Before leaving Basel at 9.0 a.m. we telephoned Dr. Lang to find that the Orang baby, a male, had been born and all was well. We arrived in Heidelberg at 3.30 p.m.

4th September. Left Heidelberg at 9.10 a.m. Through glorious fir forests, seeing many buzzards. Thence to Saarbrücken, Chalons sur Marne, and on to Meaux where we arrived at 6.40 p.m.—301 miles for the day's run.

It was interesting to note dew-ponds all round Verdun (of proud memories) which is on high down-land, very like Salisbury Plain; which, of course, also abounds in dew-ponds.

On 5th September we drove from Meaux to Paris, where we stayed until 9th.

7th September. Collected from our hotel by Dr. Chauvier, Assistant Director of the Paris Zoos, and taken to the Jardin des Plantes where Dr. Nouvel awaited us.

We were driven round to Vincennes, about a mile away, where we had lunch in the Zoo restaurant. The restaurant overlooked a paddock where 4 Cheetahs were really able to gallop; this must be a wonderful thing for them as they are known to be the fastest beasts in existence over a short distance.

We visited the young Okapi's pen and were allowed to pat and make much of it, which she stood very well. This is the first specimen bred in captivity.

There were some newly arrived Cotton Teal, and a pair of Whooper Swans, at present with three half grown cygnets. We were shown the Condor, caught 56 years ago and already an adult bird at that time. There was quite a flock of South African Spoonbills, much smaller than the Western variety, and a beautiful deep pink turning to dark red on the flight feathers. They are fed on shrimps and vitamin B¹².

The Cotton Teal here are fed on millet, wheat and 'mild' pimento.

Dr. Chauvier showed us the antivenom serum kept always ready in the Reptile House. It is of no avail for a Moccasin bite. He also very kindly turned the Clouded Leopard out of her den for us to see.

9th September. Parc Zoologique de Cleres. This is the perfect spot for a private collection of wildfowl. The chateau and grounds belong to M. Jean Delacour, and are under the supervision of Mr Frank Fooks.

The chateau is a magnificent place, now filled with caged birds. The Magistrate's court was once housed there, in a fine galleried room. It was the German H.Q. during the war and many of the lovely portrait paintings in the room where they had their Mess have bullet holes through the eyes—good shooting but not such good manners.

The collection of wildfowl is wonderful and must be one of the best. All the birds seem in good condition and breed freely. The pair of Ne-ne on loan from the Trust were quite aggressive and should breed next year.

There is plenty of water and grass and no restriction on food. The whole place is beautifully kept and makes one wonder how big a staff they have.

One did not hear anything about poaching, which apparently would be very easy. But one interesting thing Mr. Fooks told us about predators: it is not crows or hawks or Buzzards that are his chief enemy, but polecats. They seem to be perfect terrors, but a good many are caught.

That afternoon we left for Dieppe and thence to Newhaven on the S.S. Londres. We were honoured by an invitation from the Captain to visit him on the Bridge. Here the wonders of Radar were explained and demonstrated. Our tour was now completed. We had driven 2,500 miles through five countries and visited 17 Zoos and Collections.

Everywhere "the Wildfowl Trust" was held in very high regard and the hospitality shown to us was overwhelming.

