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'Zoo proliferation'—The first British Zoos from 1831-1840



Entwicklungsjahre und Blütezeit – Die ersten britischen Zoos von 1831–1840

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Abstract

Over the last hundred years or so the history of zoological gardens and aquariums has been frequently documented, more so in recent decades. This has resulted in many chronologies published in a wide number of publications. In this article the author documents the growth and profusion of zoological gardens in Great Britain in the years immediately after the establishment of the London Zoo, revealing that Britain had a number of these institutions when other countries did not have any or, at most, one such place. He also seeks to identify why many of these zoos failed, with the necessary comparative observations between them.

Keywords: Zoo; Menagerie; Society

Introduction

The three oldest zoological gardens are well recognised; namely Vienna (1752), Madrid (1772) and Paris (1793). These three conform to the general recognition of a modern zoo – that is to say that they were outdoors in a garden or park (in part at least) and open to the public (in general terms). That they existed into modern times has also aided their recognition and enables us to preclude the many menageries and private collections that

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existed (mostly in Eurasia) going back hundreds, even thousands, of years. The zoos in Vienna (at Schönbrunn) and Madrid (in Retiro Park, closed in 1972) were courtesy of royal collections; the zoo in Paris (Jardin des Plantes) more accidental, but still with its connections to the monarchy due to the dissolution of the menagerie of Louis XVI at Versailles immediately after the French Revolution and subsequent relocation to the Jardin des Plantes. The animals in Paris came under scientific scrutiny soon enough, for the Jardin des Plantes was outgrowing botany to become the hub of all natural sciences in France. Indeed the new menagerie represented the living part of the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle, even if it well suited the authorities in Paris to find a home for the large numbers of exotic animals kept in the city quite apart from those left behind at Versailles. The new animal establishment in Paris did not go unnoticed in Britain. Sir Stamford Raffles was impressed by the living displays and scientific ethos of the new zoo and he determined that London should have such a facility, representing not only the prowess of British influence around the globe but also embracing the spirit of learning and enlightenment that was *de rigueur* amongst the growing middle-classes. This would be done via a learned society, and so it was that the Zoological Society of London was formed in 1826, with the zoological gardens of the society opening to members only two years later (by which time Raffles had died). In such a way did the world's first independently conceived scientific zoo come about. London had no shortage of wild beast shows at this time, ranging from extensive menageries to individual animals shown for a penny or so. With the exception of the royal collection kept at the Tower of London these were all money-making enterprises. The Tower, in reality, represents the same lineage as the opulent animal gardens of Versailles and Schönbrunn. We can now identify the London Zoo to be quite different from its contemporaries and its influence to be enormous. It is commonly understood that London spawned imitators across Europe throughout the 1830s and 1840s in the shape of extant zoos such as Antwerp, Amsterdam and Berlin. The effect on the British Isles was much more marked however.

Whereas Vienna, Madrid and Paris had grown and thrived in national isolation (more or less), London Zoo spawned a number of imitators – and not only in the form of nascent zoological societies. The image of an animal garden was also grasped by commercial exploiters who up until this point in time had conceived of menageries as largely indoor affairs. Of course those with a view to monetary return were hardly concerned about the financial and social status of their patrons even if, on occasion, they concealed their motivations behind loftier ideals. We can therefore identify two distinct reasons behind the proliferation of zoos in Britain in the 1830s – the zoological society model as exemplified by London, and the 'menagerists' (for want of a better word) who sought to enhance commercial opportunity by placing captive animals in an outdoor, i.e. garden, setting. The London model spawned two notable zoos that exist to this day in the shape of Dublin (1831) and Bristol (1836). Like most of the older zoos their long histories have not always been plain sailing, but they survived the hard times to become today's exemplars. Other British zoos did not survive beyond a few years or a few decades, but it is their proliferation that is interesting, with a number existing before today's Germany had even one such place. A summary of these zoos is therefore worth listing; only one extinct zoo of the era – Belle Vue in Manchester – is commonly recognised today and, at the time in question, that one did not amount to very much, even in Manchester, as we will

identify. So, in chronological order here are the zoos of the United Kingdom from 1831 to 1843:

DUBLIN ZOO 1831

The first zoo, recognised as such, to be opened outside of a capital city (although it is now a capital of course) was in Ireland (now the Republic of Ireland) under the aegis of the Zoological Society of Ireland. Whilst the society was quite clearly modelled on London, a certain pragmatism existed from day one in that the general public could enter upon payment whereas London Zoo was available only to the ZSL's members (Fellows) and their guests (a 'fact' often repeated but there is substantial evidence that a non-Fellow *could* obtain an entrance ticket at the zoo's offices which at that time were situated in Bruton Street in central London {Anon., 1838}). The embryonic Dublin Zoo consisted of 4.5 acres in Phoenix Park situated to the north of the same small lake it surrounds today. By the following year (1832) the zoo contained 52 mammals, amongst them a Wolf and a Leopard, and 72 birds, including two Passenger Pigeons (De Courcy, 2009). Today the zoo covers 74 acres of the Phoenix Park and enjoys massive popularity.

SURREY ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN 1832

It is interesting to note that within five years of its opening the London Zoo had a rival south of the Thames. Nor must we think that this was an inferior version: in fact some observers of the time considered it to be the more impressive place. For sure it had at least one animal house that was far in excess of anything in Regent's Park at the time. The Surrey Zoological Garden was started by the famed menagerist Edward Cross who owned the Exeter 'Change Menagerie on the Strand. In 1828 he was forced to move the indoor institution to Charing Cross, but after only one year this position was usurped as the site for the National Gallery. At this juncture he attempted to ally himself to the ZSL in terms of offering his menagerie, and indeed himself, to the infant society (for the second time – he first did this in 1826 shortly after the ZSL was formed). A showman such as Cross was not to the taste of such an august body as the ZSL and his offer was again declined. If this was to be the case, Cross clearly reasoned, then he would start a zoological garden of his own and by 1831 the Surrey Literary, Scientific and Zoological Institute had been established. Such important backers as the Duke of Devonshire and the Archbishop of Canterbury apparently had no problems with Cross and he quickly raised enough capital to build an impressive garden on 13 acres of rented land forming part of the estate of Walworth House (some five miles from London Zoo). The new zoo's most impressive feature was a circular glass conservatory 300 feet in diameter containing carnivore cages, aviaries and tropical plants. Lions (pairs of both African and Asiatic), Tigers, Leopards, hyenas and other smaller carnivores were kept in the largest such glass construction in the country at the time – the atmosphere in the height of summer may not have been for the faint-hearted! Eagles were chained to a rock grotto, below which was a pond for beavers. There was at least one Bear Pit and a Carnivore Terrace

which pre-dated the one at Regent’s Park. Britain’s first Tasmanian Devils were shown here (Keeling, 1984) and the Surrey establishment unsuccessfully tried to beat Regent’s Park to its first Rhinoceros (Indian) in May 1834 at a cost of just over £1,000 – a huge sum of money at that time. An 1838 account of the menagerie states that “neither expense nor pains are spared, by Mr Cross and his agents, to render it as complete as possible!” There is mention of a Monkey House containing a ‘great variety of Monkeys, Baboons and Lemurs’, a Brazilian Tapir and the Secretary Vulture [sic] was fed on live eels! This 1838 account (a guide to both London and Surrey zoos) also states that ‘an exceedingly fine Rhinoceros’ was introduced whilst the book went to press, this being the only account of such a specimen that the author can locate (Anon., 1838). Later three Giraffes were received, as were Asiatic Elephants and Polar Bears. Britain’s first Congo Buffalo was displayed here, as was its first Wedge-tailed Eagle (Keeling, 1984). It should also be noted that the Surrey Zoological Garden marketed itself as an all-round pleasure garden in order to attract paying customers, and from 1840 onwards extravagant firework displays became a major feature of the zoo. When Cross retired in 1844, to be succeeded by his secretary William Tyler, it heralded a slow decline in the calibre and importance of the zoological side of things. By 1856 the animal collection came under the auctioneer’s hammer although the gardens themselves remained in use, sans animals, until 1877.

BRIGHTON ROYAL ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS 1832

A little-known, short-lived zoological garden existed at Brighton, the first in England outside of London, opening in the Royal Gardens (not to be confused with the Royal Pavilion Gardens which still exist) in June 1832. The Royal Gardens had already been established as an attraction in this increasingly popular south-coast resort from 1823 onwards, owned by one James Ireland. It already contained a gothic-styled aviary with three different walkways for the public, a significant ballroom and a castellated tower. New owner Boswell Hensman would have inherited a significant development therefore, although he should have heeded the commercial failure of the gardens. In the event the new zoological garden was to last barely six months, before Hensman himself was hauled before the bankruptcy courts owing £30,000 (around £1.5 million today). It is a distinct possibility that he didn’t ever pay in full for the site, hence this action. As for the zoo itself, there was a reasonable collection of two young Tigers, three Leopards including a melanistic specimen, a hyena of some sort, two Brown Bears from Russia, deer, llamas, monkeys, plus Emus, parrots and other birds. A notice in the *Brighton Herald* of the 7th July 1832 claims that “a pair of Wappiti [sic] deer will arrive in a few days from the Parent Society!” This statement is a rather loaded one, indicating a connection not to the Zoological Society of London but to Edward Cross’ Surrey Zoological Gardens, a theory further enhanced by a recent visit from the Duke of Devonshire who, you will remember, was a Patron of the latter establishment. Quite clearly the zoos of Britain aimed themselves at middle class patronage at this time: for instance Brighton Zoo had an annual subscribers’ fee of one guinea (£1 & a shilling), and a daily entrance fee of one shilling which was around a tenth of the entire weekly income for a labourer. The Band of the Dragoon Guards played every Thursday, a day when only the

leisured classes would be available to hear them. No animal houses of any note were ever constructed and all accommodation was of a ‘temporary’ nature (Parry, 1833).

LIVERPOOL ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS 1833

Founded by Thomas Atkins, who was a travelling menagerist (a circumstance that continued alongside his zoological garden), in an area on the West Derby Road that had been a disused clay pit, the effect being that of a bowl or amphitheatre. Over £2,000 was spent on landscaping the area upon its purchase in 1832; by the following year the Liverpool Zoological Gardens had opened. It is tempting to regard these early zoos as rather inferior to the Regent’s Park model, but, as with the Surrey Zoological Gardens, there were elements that were in fact superior – a contemporary report of the principal Menagerie (or carnivore house in effect) at Liverpool states “it is beyond all dispute superior to the buildings appropriated to the same purpose in the Regent’s Park”. The new attraction was popular and well-supported by the moneyed classes, and from all accounts it thrived until Atkins’ death in 1848 and for some years after, closing in 1863. In addition to the Menagerie there were aviaries, an Elephant House, a Monkey House and the inevitable Bear Pit. In thirty years of operation a large number of taxa were on show including the possibility of a Javan Rhinoceros, specified at the time to be Indian, a Quagga and, kept together, a pair of Asiatic Elephants (very unusual for the 19th century). The first zoo breeding of a Lion/Tiger hybrid, a Liger, occurred here in 1833, although the parents, a male Barbary and a female Bengal, had bred before in Atkins’ travelling menagerie. Yet again this zoological garden saw the moneyed, educated, classes as their sole patrons, but the introduction of a drinking booth in 1857 gives a clue to the dismantling of higher aspirations under financial pressure. After all, even the mighty Zoological Society of London had been forced to admit the general public to its zoo by this time (1847). The end was in sight however, and by 1863 the first Liverpool Zoological Gardens (there were to be at least three others) had closed. With regard to Thomas Atkins, the Liverpool Zoo was not his only such venture as we shall see a little later.

BRISTOL ZOO 1836

The oldest existing zoo now situated outside of a capital city is the one in Bristol. Its history is well known (Brown, Ashby, & Schwitzer, 2011), with the zoo being established along the society lines of London and the concession that the general public was admitted on a daily basis for one shilling (Dublin was half that amount at sixpence, reflecting the somewhat smaller Irish economy). There was also an important difference between a shareholder in the society (a Proprietor) and a season ticket holder (a Member) in that the Zoological Society of London had only members (known to this day as Fellows). Once more, the appeal was to the better levels of society, although it might be said that the infant Bristol Zoo had many financial trials and tribulations in claiming such lofty ground and it was to be almost a century before the zoo could meet purist zoological ideals.

BELLE VUE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, MANCHESTER 1836

In truth, the zoo world has actually lost comparatively few major establishments – Hamburg, Wassenaar, perhaps Vancouver (Stanley Park Zoo) – while many others such as Nuremberg, Rotterdam or Munster were directly replaced by zoos not too far away. When Belle Vue Zoo in Manchester closed in 1977 (actually a few animals remained until '79) Britain lost one of its top half-dozen collections and a zoo that was amongst the world's first such places. However, it wasn't ever a pure zoological facility and a multitude of attractions such as fairground, sports and circus occupied more of the acreage than the zoo itself. When John Jennison opened Belle Vue in 1836 he most definitely had more of a concept of a pleasure garden, replicating the small but thriving success of his Strawberry Gardens (later Jennison's Gardens) in Adswold, Stockport, since 1826. Although a gardener by trade, Jennison saw that animals and drink were a popular combination. Together with horse racing, these were to be the cornerstones of his new venture some three miles from the centre of a rapidly expanding Manchester. The Belle Vue vision was, and remained throughout its history, that of a showground with a substantial zoological element. Thus we can see that Belle Vue Zoological Garden was immediately commercial in a way that the earlier zoos were not, although Jennison still cast his eyes at the better levels of society. He can be compared with showmen and the menagerists rather than zoologists. Even so, the early Belle Vue Zoo was not an immediate success – by 1838 a true, proper and more impressive zoo had opened in Manchester as we shall see – and the new enterprise struggled until a direct rail link and the opening of the local Longsight station brought easy access to working people; a situation not welcomed by some, who complained of "roughs in coarse attire". At this time it was only four pence to enter Belle Vue (all the other English zoos were a full shilling to enter) so clearly Jennison adopted a pragmatic approach, and although his desire was for 'gentlemen and ladies' he made it relatively easy for all but paupers to visit his gardens. Belle Vue was the main zoo of my childhood and as I became a little older, the only zoo I could access on my own by public transport, so I well remember its many animal houses (in fact I had my first job interview there, in the Reptile House). This was at the end of its days, a life that was to amount to 141 years. At the beginning of its life (the part that we are concerned with here) it amounted to much less than the other zoos under discussion, but it was a pioneer in the thread that today reaches its apogee with commercial establishments such as Disney's Animal Kingdom and SeaWorld.

MANCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS 1838

The short lived (1838–1842) Manchester Zoological Gardens represent Manchester's attempt to establish a society zoo along the lines of the Regent's Park model, although strictly speaking it was a shareholding company. Like Bristol Zoo it offered the chance to buy into the company as a proprietor, or shareholder; alternatively an annual membership could be obtained at the rather steep price of two guineas (£2 and 2 shillings) for a family. On the day, it cost a shilling to gain admission, in other words three times the price of a ticket to Belle Vue about three miles away, but for that price the visitor would encounter

Polar Bears, Lions, Tigers, Leopards, a five-year old Asiatic Elephant and buildings as stately as the Grand Menagerie. The bird collection could apparently boast such varieties as the Ground Parrot (*Pezoporus wallicus*) and what would appear to be the Black-collared Lovebird (*Agapornis swindernianus*). It is hard to believe that the latter survived too long (if indeed it was correctly identified as this species), as even modern times have failed to establish it in aviculture. The grounds were laid out by Richard Forrest of Acton, who also designed the Surrey Zoo and Bristol Zoo. By 1842 debt forced the closure of the Manchester Zoological Gardens and the final death knell of the auctioneer’s hammer saw Jennison buy a few things (certainly not all the stock, as has been claimed) including the Polar Bear’s cage, a cage that was to remain in use at Belle Vue until 1960 ([Brown, 2011](#))

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ZOOLOGICAL, BOTANICAL AND HORTICULTURAL GARDEN, CHELTENHAM 1838

Not too far from the University of Gloucestershire, at the junction of two roads in Cheltenham, is an impressive Italianate building known as Cornerways House. On Queen Victoria’s Coronation Day, 28th June 1838, this house was the entrance to the new Cheltenham Zoological, Botanical and Horticultural Gardens, an enterprise that was the brainchild of a solicitor, Thomas Billings. Although grand plans existed and a share issue of £20,000 undertaken, it would seem that the embryonic zoo never amounted to much at all in zoological terms. There were Golden Eagles and other birds, a Zebu and at least one Wolf but all in all it would appear that the gardens, with their glass conservatory, were by far the most impressive aspect of the site. By 1844 the zoo had closed and the land was sold to one Samuel Whitfield Daukes, who developed a showground there.

KENT ZOOLOGICAL AND BOTANICAL GARDENS, ROSHERVILLE 1838

Rosherville, or rather the garden of that name, was the creation of one George Jones who took out a 99 year lease in 1837 on an area of land near Gravesend, Kent, consisting largely of disused chalk pits. His intent was to create a zoological and botanical garden aimed, yet again, at the educated levels of society seeking enlightenment. As we are observing time and time again, he was soon forced to lower his sights and by the 1840s the gardens were known as Rosherville Gardens with Jones having taken on two business partners by the names of Imrie and Walstob. The notion of a zoo was left behind, but the pleasure gardens were to have a long life closing in 1900. Animals were featured in constructions such as a Bear Pit and a Parrot House, but these were only a minor part of the attractions on offer. The gardens became a popular steamboat destination from London, resulting in a huge accident in 1878 when the ‘Princess Alice’ passenger steamer was in collision with the collier ‘Bywell Castle’ resulting in the deaths of no less than 640 people. A short-lived attempt to revive the gardens (with more of an accent on the animal collections) occurred in 1913 but was cut short by World War I.

EDINBURGH ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN 1840

Anyone with an interest in zoos will be familiar with the Edinburgh Zoo, which recently celebrated the centenary of its opening in 1913. However, the present zoo was Edinburgh's second attempt at a zoological garden, having previously hosted such a prize asset as long ago as 1840. Covering six acres (2.4 hectares) the zoo was situated at East Claremont Street less than a mile from Edinburgh Castle. The zoo would not appear to have been a shareholding organisation, yet did have the support of a number of influential people – amongst its directors were Sir William Jardine (the famous naturalist) and Lord Macaulay to whom we are indebted for the first recorded use of the word ‘zoo’, with regard to Bristol in 1847: ‘we treated the Clifton Zoo too contemptuously and ended up with more than six pennyworth of amusement’ (Brown et al., 2011). Despite its small acreage, Edinburgh’s zoo contained a ‘Large Carnivore House’, a Bird House, a Monkey House and a large aviary, said to resemble a pagoda, for pheasants and pigeons. The only guide to the zoo, from 1842, states that a house, with bathing pool, will be built for the elephant by the next year, their specimen being a male Asiatic Elephant from Sri Lanka about ‘seven or eight’ years old, which had been for five years the mascot of the 78th Highlanders (Gillespie, 1964). Needless to say the ubiquitous Bear Pit was also present, and the guide makes great play of its circular construction, claiming it to be ‘superior’ to the square shape more commonly utilized. The centre pole in the pit was seventeen feet high. In 1850 the zoo was granted, by Queen Victoria, the privilege of royal patronage and became ‘The Royal Edinburgh Zoological Gardens’ (Gillespie, 1964). Despite the weight and gravitas of the newly-conferred approval it would appear that the zoo was losing popularity and various catchpenny amusements and entertainments more akin to a showground were allowed to take place from 1855 onwards. By 1857 the gardens were transferred to a commercial ownership who built a concert hall in the grounds as well as disposing of the animal collection. Until recently a Blue Whale skeleton that was on display at the zoo was the centrepiece of the National Museum of Scotland, but was removed in 2011 when the museum was renovated. Today’s Edinburgh Zoo has one small connection with the first zoo in that a sum of £55, a vestige of the defunct zoo lying dormant in a bank account, was passed onto the new Zoological Society of Scotland (now the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland) by the descendants of the last Managing Director, Francis Rankin, when the new society started up in 1909.

N.B. It is often recorded that the first Edinburgh Zoo opened in 1839. This is incorrect, the zoo opened on the 4th July, 1840 (*Glasgow Herald*, 10th July 1840).

HULL ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS 1840

A visit to the Spring Bank area of the east coast port of Hull a short time ago would reveal two public houses named the Old Zoological and the Polar Bear. These were clues to the fact that, over 150 years ago, Hull boasted that most important of a town’s features – namely a living animal collection. In fact the landlord of the Polar Bear Hotel (as it was then named) was the Superintendent of the zoo, one John Seaman. Covering some seven acres (2.8 hectares) of land, the Hull Zoological Gardens offered the then ubiquitous situation

of an annual pass for a guinea (£1 and 1 shilling or £1.05 today) or daily admittance for a shilling. Once more the enticement was to the cultured levels of Hull society. The most significant animal house, designed by H. F. Lockwood, was the Menagerie, a wooden house some 66 feet in length, housing six larger cages for the likes of Lions and Tigers and six smaller cages for, well anything really, there is no record. To either side of the Menagerie was a Monkey House with seven cages and a Bird House containing five largish aviaries and two aquariums of 24 square feet each. A Deer and Antelope House was 37 feet long and 25 feet wide with six stalls and an outer paddock on each side. Needless to say the ever-present Bear Pit was also to be found. An octagonal 'Eagle House' was in fact a compartmented aviary with eight sections as you might expect. It transpires that the zoo was modelled on the above-mentioned Liverpool Zoo of Thomas Atkins and at its height held around 100 species of mammal and bird plus at least one American Alligator. At least one, probably young, Asiatic Elephant was kept at the zoo. It was walked around the area and down to the River Hull to bathe, these meanderings now being commemorated by sculptures in the area. The Elephant House was, once more, a timber affair some 36 feet by 18 feet, and there is some evidence that the animal was obtained before the accommodation was built, with the result that the young elephant was walked to the zoo from stables elsewhere for a period of time. The Hull Zoological Gardens closed in 1860, at the very end only one animal was on show, and on a temporary basis too – but this animal was a Common Hippopotamus, probably the first to be seen in the UK outside of London, by the name of 'Bucheet' (meaning 'fortunate' in Arabic). Imported and originally owned by one Consul Petherick ([Keeling, 1999](#), pp. 79-80) it is likely that Bucheet was on temporary loan to the zoo prior to more formal ownership (a price of £3,000 – an enormous figure at that time – was placed upon him). Eventually the animal moved to the USA, ending his days under the care of circus impresario P.T. Barnum in 1867, but not before the structures and effects of the zoo were auctioned off on 7th April 1862. It is also worth recording that, as was the case with almost every British zoo apart from those in Regent's Park and Dublin at this time, many non-zoological attractions had been on offer in the Hull Zoo including a theatre, shooting gallery (!), fireworks and a 15 foot long scale model of the Crystal Palace.

GLASGOW ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS 1840

The least well-known of this early group of zoological gardens is the one at Cranston Hill, Glasgow. Covering no more than three acres (1.2 hectares) it occupied one corner of the estate of Henry Houldsworth and was run by Thomas Atkins, the founder of the first Liverpool Zoo. From all accounts the animal collection never amounted to very much and the enterprise was short-lived (basically one summer season). We do know that this first Glasgow Zoo became involved in the attempt to import Alpacas ([Edwards, 1998](#)) and exploit them for their wool, and that a contemporary newspaper report makes mention of donations of a Golden Eagle, 'pig-tailed ape' (most likely a Pig-tailed Macaque), and an Indian Goat. Most advertisements for the zoo however, make far greater play of the model of Mount Vesuvius and its attendant 'eruption' via pyrotechnics. Up to 40,000 people are said to have witnessed this spectacle at any one time, both inside and outside the zoo grounds.

A number of animal collections have opened to the public in Glasgow since the demise of the very first one. The most important of these, the Glasgow Zoo at Calderpark, closed in 2003 after 56 years of operation. Glasgow is now therefore one of the largest European cities without a zoo or aquarium.

LEEDS ZOOLOGICAL AND BOTANICAL GARDENS, 1840

One of the finest relics of any long-extinct zoological garden is to be found today in Leeds, West Yorkshire, where, in the Headingley area, the Bear Castle is still preserved pretty much intact. The zoo opened on the 8th July 1840 (some thirty years before the city had a designated public park) and between £10,000 and £11,000 had been spent (a very similar amount to the Bristol Zoo) on acquiring the land and making the gardens. Plans for the gardens, to be designed by one Mr Billington, do exist and it is a great pity that they were only ever partially realised at best. In respect of the ownership of the zoo, a society – The Leeds Zoological and Botanical Society – was formed in 1837 and quickly subscribed to. The *Leeds Intelligencer* however, informs us that admission was 'Six pence each, children under thirteen years old, and servants having the care of them, Three pence each'. This is the only occasion that we can identify an entrance price of less than one shilling for an adult on the British mainland in a society zoo. Opposition to the zoo came from religious groups who were opposed to the zoo opening on Sundays – a compromise was reached whereby the gardens could open from 4.00 p.m. until dusk! Despite the plans showing Elephant and Rhinoceros Houses as well as those for Lions and Tigers, it seems that smaller animals were the order of the day upon opening, as the *Leeds Intelligencer* reports that "The Swans and other waterfowl, the Eagles, Hawks, Owls, Monkeys, Raccoons and other animals, were all in good condition, and attracted a proper share of attention, especially from the 'rising generation'". Other than bears it may well be that larger animals never actually appeared. In its original form the zoo closed in 1846, only to be sold for £6,010 on the 18th December 1848 to one James Smith, a banker. It was later acquired by one Thomas Clapham who re-opened the grounds with more of a popular element such as firework displays. By 1858 it was over entirely, with the site being built upon and Clapham moving on to open the Royal Park Zoological Gardens in the same city, about which little is known. (Keeling, 1985)

Conclusion

By 1841 the first 'zoo boom' anywhere in the world was over and hardly any new zoos were attempted in Britain in the remainder of the 19th century. It was now the turn of continental Europe. Belle Vue Zoo, Manchester went on to develop itself as a major attraction and was for many years the largest animal collection in the U.K. outside of London, before eventually closing in 1977. Dublin, Bristol and London Zoo are of course still with us today. It is difficult to identify exactly why the establishment of British zoological gardens came to such a marked end, and it was indeed such. Whilst it is true that Britain had something of an aquarium fad in the late 19th century, hardly any zoological gardens, and

none of note, were attempted in the remainder of Queen Victoria's reign. Perhaps it was duly noted that the patronage of the educated middle classes was not sufficient, or even that these same classes were not enamoured enough of science and knowledge as to be viable; after all, virtually every zoo we have examined ended up prostituting zoology on the high altar of entertainment by means of fireworks, shows, rides and the like. Even the lofty Zoological Society of London was forced to admit all and sundry on payment of a shilling (only Monday, Tuesday and some public holidays at first) by 1847. It is true to say, however, that from a historical perspective, the proliferation of British Zoos in the period 1831 to 1840 is greatly under-recognised. Whilst the definition of a 'zoo' is often surprisingly difficult, we can assume that the above collections detailed fall within any such definition and the author hopes that future chronological lists of such places will include those named.

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