John Jennison - Belle Vue

relating

The Making and Growth of the Famous

Zoological Gardens, Belle Vue, Manchester

And The History of its Competitors

A Century of Lancashire Open-Air Amusements
1825-1925

Written from new items, private

records, and personal experience by

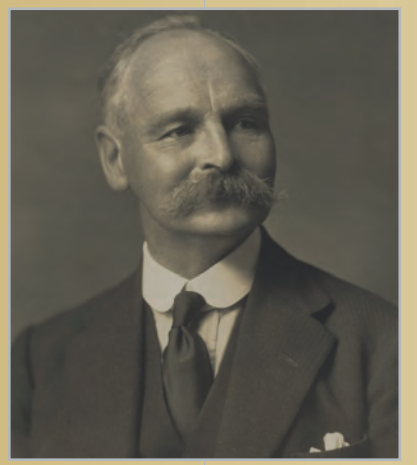
George Jennison, M.A., F.Z.S.,

His Grandson

Berwick Lodge, Disley, 1929

Belle Vue Hyde Road Entrance c.1900

John Jennison
(1790-1869)



George Jennison
(1872-1938)

Introduction

The twentieth century story of Belle Vue Zoological Gardens has been extolled by many authors but many people who savoured the delights of the venue are unaware that its origins were in the nineteenth century and the founder John Jennison was born in 1790! He, and subsequently his sons, ran Belle Vue for almost one hundred years. John's grandson, George Jennison compiled a personal history of the company and his manuscript together with many private and business documents were donated to Chetham's Library to become part of the Belle Vue archive.

George's manuscript has been used as reference material and is recognised by historians as an important primary and secondary source but it has never been published. The narrative is significant for the study of social history as it illustrates how one family developed a leisure complex that survived longer than any of its competitors and how their nineteenth century 'business model' was paramount to achieving success. A decision was made to annotate the text and make the manuscript available in the accessible format of an ebook and together with supportive images, newspaper articles, maps and George's personal recollection; provides a fascinating insight into the world of Belle Vue.

The initiative for this project came not only from Terry Wyke of Manchester Metropolitan University and Dr. Michael Powell from Chetham's but also from George Jennison himself and his prophesy that his story would serve as a reminder when Belle Vue was 'but a blurred and misty memory'; so let him tell you in his own unique way…

FOREWORD:

Since the beginning of civilisation, there must have been places of amusement for the populace, yet scarcely one has left even a name behind it.

The commonplace is the nation's life and, alas, always too common to be kept.

As a student of the past, I have suffered much from the lack of such records, and, mindful of the fact, I have essayed to please the present and earn a word of thanks from those who live when Belle Vue is but a blurred and misty memory.

George Danson 1861

Original in Manchester Art Gallery

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"This book is written as a monument to a mighty mind and an indomitable will."

"A token of gratitude to one who did so much for his descendants."

The Birth of Belle Vue

"If you are no satisfite, I winna come no more; I'm not bout money."

These words were the first spark that lit the beacon that was destined to blaze for over a century to the honour and renown of the speaker, - **John Jennison**, a silk weaver by trade, who worked his cottage loom in Macclesfield in the first decade of the 19th. century.[1] He was a tall man, thin in face and figure, remarkable for the piercing brilliance of his eyes, and a mouth and chin foreshadowing the determination to succeed that carried him over so many difficulties to the heights of success. Injustice he abhorred and combatted either as persecutor or victim. On one dramatic occasion in later life he rose superior to vindictiveness when a lesser man would have used his power to wreak a personal vengeance. Here he was the victim; the foreman complained of the work brought in - wanted to fine him, but he would have none of it; he left and was henceforth his own master. A master without servants, a working man, without even the rudiments of education.

John Jennison (1790-1869)

The love for botany showed itself at an early age; he was passionately fond of flowers; garden work in his spare time had given him the little money mentioned in our opening remarks, henceforth gardening became his trade.

Here we may interrupt our narrative to point out the difficulties that must be faced by the historian who is obliged to trust to contemporary accounts of events in forming his judgment on acts and character. John Jennison was almost sacrosanct to his children, who appear not to have had the slightest scruple in deceiving even his and their own relatives on the true facts of his early life. The tale we were told, and which the writer at least believed implicitly until he stumbled on the truth through certain legal documents that came under his observation, ran somewhat in this wise: [2]

Having taken up gardening and made of it a lucrative profession he was obliged to give it up and lose his connection in a most dramatic manner. The escape of Napoleon Bonaparte from Elba in the early months of 1815 sent a tremor of panic through the Chancelleries of Europe.[3] In England, as elsewhere, there was a call to arms; volunteers were not numerous and the Press Gang was very active in filling the ranks with unwilling recruits.[4] John Jennison, a tall vigorous young man of 25, was very suitable for their purpose. He heard they were seeking him and he fled from their clutches to Stockport. Thus far the tale rings true: John was no coward but he never would and never did submit to injustice. He ran from the Press Gang, we think quite rightly. The rest is apocryphal; it says he established himself in Stockport, built a house and invited his aged parents to spend their declining years in comfort under his protection. John did nothing of the kind. Probably when the scare was over he returned to Macclesfield, lived in lodgings on his earnings and spent his spare time in amusement. Step dancing was his chief hobby; [5] probably he frequented public houses - the usual theatre for such entertainment - but he was never a heavy drinker. He managed to save some money but far less than was accumulated by his father and his uncle George Ives Jennison, who were as fast friends as John and his brother George became in the next generation.

The Jennison family came from Bulwell in Nottinghamshire. A John Jennison born there in 1760 (died Decr 3rd 1826) married in that village on August 10th 1787 Elizabeth Ives who was born in 1757. (She died at Belle Vue in 1847).

John and Elizabeth Jennison had three children - Ann, born 1788; John, the subject of our story, born March 25th 1790 and one other child, George Ives, slightly younger.[6]

The predecessors of our hero were exceedingly industrious workmen, very highly skilled as weavers, George Ives, in particular, earning high wages on the new looms that were patented at the beginning of the 19th. century.[7]

1 *For discussion on the history of the silk trade see S. Davies, A History of Macclesfield (Manchester: E J Morten, 1961) reprinted 1981, pp. 124-31*

2 *George Jennison draws on various legal documents throughout the narrative but they do not form part of the archive.*

3 *See J.M. Thompson, Napoleon Bonaparte: His Rise and Fall, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Mott, 1963) pp.358-82.*

4 *For an account of the operation of the press gangs in Manchester see the autobiographical manuscript of James Weatherley (1794-1860). Recollections of Manchester & Manchester characters and anecdotes relating to Manchester and Lancashire generally from the year 1800 to 1860 by James Weatherley, for nearly half a century a bookseller, (Chetham's Library Ms.A.6.30).*

5 *Step dancing is a little discussed leisure pursuit but see article 'step-dances' in Notes and Queries, 11 May 1907, pp.378-9.*

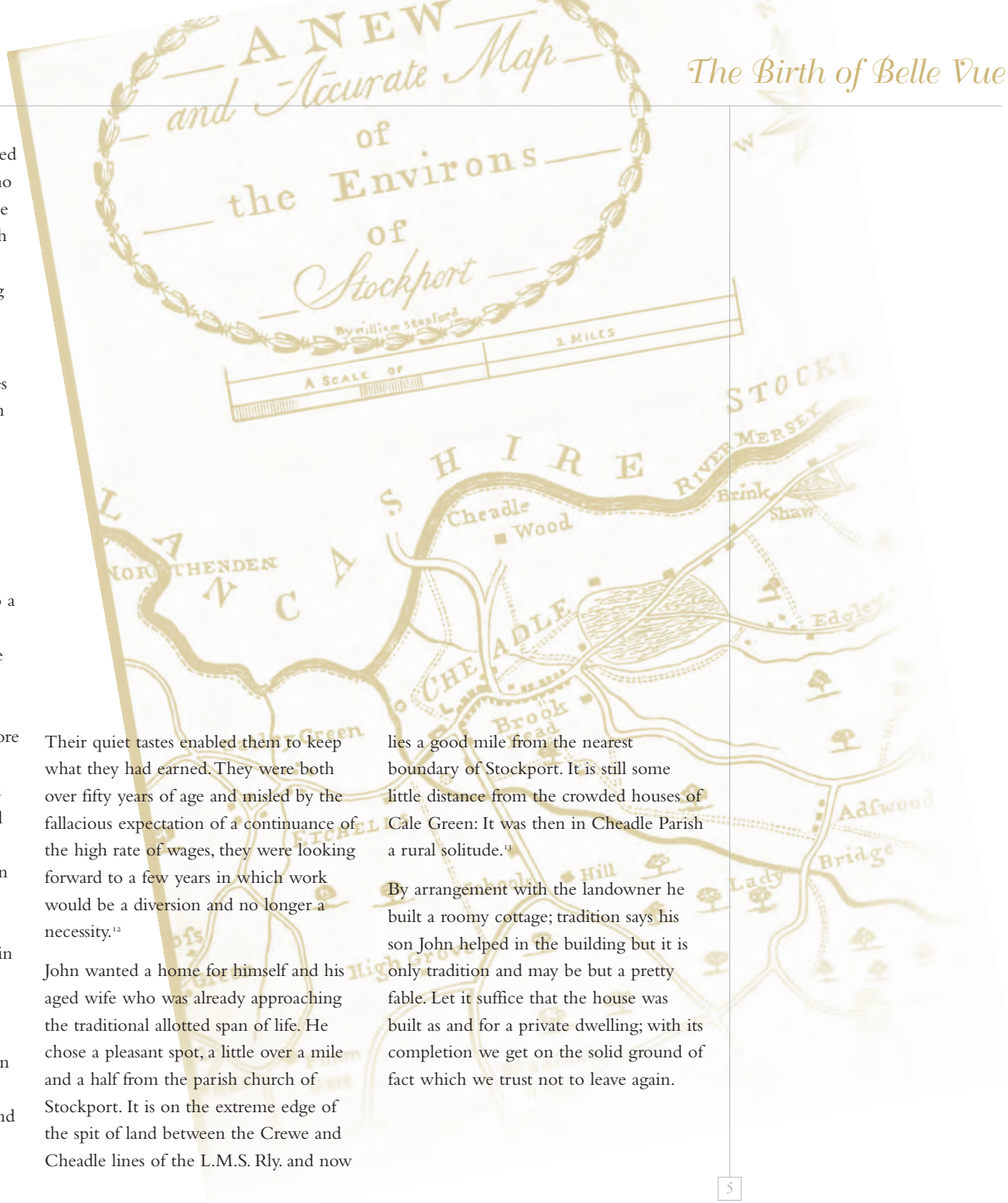
6 *Confirmation of all births, deaths and marriages - www.ancestry.co.uk. See family tree appendix; there are some discrepancies with Jennison's dates.*

7 *See G. Timmins, The Last Shift: The Decline of Handloom Weaving in Nineteenth Century Lancashire (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) Chapter on 'The Rise of the Powerloom', pp.18-24.*

"...tradition says his son John helped in the building but it is only tradition and may be but a pretty fable."

The stock from which they sprang earned their living by agriculture, and those who remained in Bulwell and with whom the family at Manchester kept in close touch for over a century continued in that business and earned a comfortable living as farmers and maltsters.

John and his wife and children, accompanied by the brother George Ives migrated to Macclesfield at an unknown date which may be guessed with some certainty as about 1793 when the War then beginning caused a trade boom in Macclesfield for the supply of silk neckerchiefs for the Navy.[8] How long they stayed in that town is equally problematical. Ann was married there to a certain Joel Potts whose eldest son John became the first monkey keeper at Belle Vue Gardens.[9] This incident is not of much value as a guide to dates. The economic conditions of the time are more helpful. The Peace of Amiens 1814[10] would put a sudden stop to the demand for silk goods in the Navy and John and George Ives who were ever ready to better themselves deserted silk for cotton and moved to the neighbourhood of Stockport, leaving their now grown family to work out their own salvation in Macclesfield.[11] These clever workmen who had enjoyed a long period of exceptional good trade and high wages were both well educated, Georges Ives in particular has left to us many expensive books on botany, medicine and travel, and his calligraphy was exceptional.



Their quiet tastes enabled them to keep what they had earned. They were both over fifty years of age and misled by the fallacious expectation of a continuance of the high rate of wages, they were looking forward to a few years in which work would be a diversion and no longer a necessity.[12]

John wanted a home for himself and his aged wife who was already approaching the traditional allotted span of life. He chose a pleasant spot, a little over a mile and a half from the parish church of Stockport. It is on the extreme edge of the spit of land between the Crewe and Cheadle lines of the L.M.S. Rly. and now lies a good mile from the nearest boundary of Stockport. It is still some little distance from the crowded houses of Cale Green: It was then in Cheadle Parish a rural solitude.[13]

By arrangement with the landowner he built a roomy cottage; tradition says his son John helped in the building but it is only tradition and may be but a pretty fable. Let it suffice that the house was built as and for a private dwelling; with its completion we get on the solid ground of fact which we trust not to leave again.

8 *S. Davies, A History, p.126*

9 *Refer to the family tree appendix.*

10 *Jennison must be corrected here as the date of the treaty was 1802; R. Cavendish, 'The Peace of Amiens signed', History Today, (2000) Vol 52, p.56.*

11 *S. Davies, A History p.130. Also for the history of cotton industry and development in Stockport see O. Ashmore, The Industrial Archaeology of Stockport, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975).*

12 *For consideration of the fluctuations in textile trades see D. Bythell, Sweated Trades, Outwork in nineteenth century Britain, (London: Batsford Academic,1978). This work also discusses the conflicts between employers and employees which may have some bearing on the opening line.*

13 *See 1872 OS map which clearly shows the 'spit' of land between the railway lines. However there are discrepancies; there are many references to John Jennison's property on Adswood Lane and the name 'Adswood House'. There is also reference that the house was subsequently known as 'Adswood Lodge'. The Adswood Lodge on the 1872 map is clearly not on Adswood Lane. The 1844 tithe map does show a building on Adswood Lane but it no longer existed in 1872 as it had been demolished for the London & North Western Railway. It does show a dwelling on the site of the 1872 Adswood Lodge. Assume that the 'Adswood House' on the 1872 OS map is recent as it does not appear on the 1844 Tithe map.*

With the house as security he bought the land for an annual chief rent of £8. 5. 0 – the details cannot be better expressed than by an epitome of the Conveyance:

4th and 5th July, 1815 [14]

SALE by Ralph Jepson of Adswood Yeoman to John Jennison of Adswood in the Parish of Cheadle Weaver - George Jennison of Adswood weaver being a party - of the freehold plot of land and premises below mentioned for a yearly chief rent of £8. 5. 0. A Plot of land containing 2850 square yards forming part of a field called the White Field situate in Adswood or Cheadle Bulkeley bounded on the East by a lane leading out of Adswood Lane on the West and South by other parts of the White Field and on the North by land belonging to Poynton Chapel together with the messuage 15 or dwelling house lately erected thereon by the said John Jennison.

N.B. George Jennison would be put in as a Trustee to prevent dower attaching.[16]

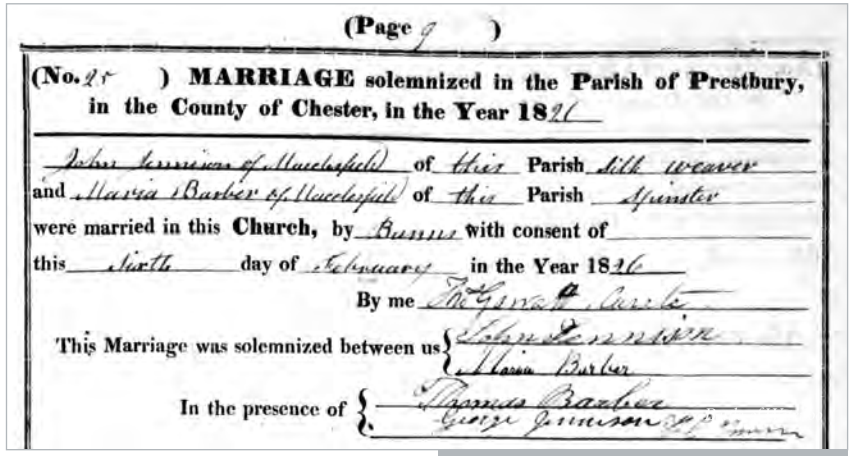
It was an auspicious moment for a house-warming; Waterloo had been fought and won – the news was not a week old yet – and the country was ringing with the tale of our glorious victory, the defeat of the French, and the assurance of peace, power and prosperity.[17] So it continued for a time; as usual there was a great trade boom and as is equally certain, though always forgotten, that boom was followed by a fearful slump and extreme distress.[18] The pinch of poverty came upon these old people in their secluded retreat.

George Ives Jennison would not sponge on his brother. He went back to his silk weaving and found work in Spitalfields, London,[19] and it is from there that he signs the next legal document,[20] and a very sad one, – the borrowing of £80 by John by mortgage of his house. It was but a small sum but it sufficed for the old man's remaining years. He died December 3rd 1825, and was interred at the Cheadle Parish Church.[21]

He left no will and John Jennison his eldest son inherited Adswood as heir at law.

John Jennison had his full share of all the tricks of fortune; here he drew a first prize in the lottery of life and with his accustomed energy he set himself to make it more valuable. He took to himself a wife. He may have been waiting – if not he was swift in his wooing: and he went for metal not for money. His bride, Maria Barber was the youngest of a family of seven, very religious and extremely poor. They lived in a cottage in a wood. There is a drawing of it by a childish hand in the family bible and in the same holy book a father's thankfulness for half a day's work on the roads.

But in spite of their poverty they were well educated to the measure of the time.[22] Her name is well and prettily written on the marriage register of Prestbury Church and quite probably it was her influence that made John Jennison get sufficient book learning to write his name, which was almost if not quite the limit of his attainment in that direction.



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(No. 25) **MARRIAGE** solemnized in the Parish of Prestbury, in the County of Chester, in the Year 1826

John Jennison of Macclesfield of this Parish Silk weaver
and Maria Barber of Macclesfield of this Parish Spinster
were married in this **Church**, by Banns with consent of
this Sixth day of February in the Year 1826
By me [illegible]
This Marriage was solemnized between us { John Jennison / Maria Barber
In the presence of { Thomas Barber / George Jennison

The marriage certificate of John Jennison and Maria Barber 1821

John Jennison and Maria Barber were married, after banns on February 6th 1826, in the presence of George Jennison, the brother, and W. L. Brown.[23] George's signature is rather better than the plain but cramped effort of John. Both are entered as Silk Weavers of Macclesfield so one may imagine that John still followed the trade as a home industry. Maria Barber also signs as of Macclesfield though her home was at Woodford which adjoins Prestbury. The uncle, George Ives Jennison, was not present and may be dismissed in a few words. He signed a deed from Spitalfields in 1835 and in 1837 when he was last called upon as a trustee,[24] he was in business as a warehouseman in Congleton. Though he was well over 70 years of age his signature was as strong and fairly written as it had been 22 years earlier.

14 *George Jennison sourced this important evidence to enable him to reproduce in detail. A letter addressed to him (Jennison Archive 4.11) states these are 'particulars extracted from deeds and abstracts of title in the possession of Messrs Brooks and Baker Solicitors Stockport', the letter is undated. The 1925 Telephone Directory confirms the solicitors practice. However, the documents George Jennison discusses here did not become part of the archive.*

15 *OED - A dwelling house with outbuildings and land assigned to its use.*

16 *OED - A widow's share for life of her husband's estate - John Jennison Snr ensuring that his estate passed to his son.*

17 *See article in Manchester Mercury, 27 June 1815 entitled 'Glorious and Official Corroboration of the Defeat of the Arch Rebel'*

18 *See footnote 12.*

19 *For detail on the silk trade in Spitalfields, see F. Warner, The Silk Industry of the United Kingdom: Its origin and development (London: Drane's, 1921) pp.53-66.*

20 *Document not in the archive however R. Nicholls, The Belle Vue Story, (Radcliffe, Neil Richardson, 1992) p.4 gives the date as 1822.*

21 *Jennison Archive F 4.11 Burial certificate of John Jennison 8 December 1825, Cheadle Parish Church. Also refer to family tree appendix.*

22 *Jennison Archive F 4.11 Research notes state John and Maria were born 'poor but intelligent' and makes reference to the 'Stockport Sunday School learning' received by John. See P. Arrowsmith, Stockport A History, (Stockport: SMBC, 1997) pp. 210-11 for detail on the Sunday school in Stockport.*

23 *Refer to family tree appendix.*

24 *See footnote 14.*

"...they were lovers through life and friendly companions on all holidays to the end and her extreme carefulness helped her husband through many of his early troubles."

Her recent widowhood may have kept his mother away from the ceremony but she approved of the marriage and found a happy home with the newly-married pair, first at Adswood and finally at Belle Vue.[25] She was a quiet inoffensive woman beloved of the new grandchildren; she was 70 years of age when John was born, 87 when the last, Samuel, appeared. She died in her 90th year just after the birth of John, her first great-grandchild; the last ones, for they were twins, the children of Mr. James. Jennison, were born more than half a century later. [26]

She saw much fair and foul weather before she passed away in 1847 and was laid to rest by the side of her husband in Cheadle Churchyard - but she was never more than an onlooker. John and Maria managed their own affairs and never was marriage more felicitous, prosperous and strangely happy in natures most naturally fitted to bring out anger as the flint strikes fire. John was stubborn, hard, imperious, a ruler of men, full of ambitions, reckless of himself and fortune, a man of great wit and great ideas. Maria had no ideas outside her household duties, but her courage, mental and physical, was unbounded. She once found a leopard loose and drove it unaided back into the cage. This trait of character sharpened by the rough harsh lessons of the school of poverty, developed her natural carefulness into a determination to succeed by, saving that made of her almost a miser. A quick temper and a biting tongue backed her arguments so effectively that none of her children even when they had grown to man's estate and married, ever strove against her with success, though they often tried. But she exercised none of her bad arts on her husband - they were lovers through life and friendly companions on all holidays to the end and her extreme carefulness helped her husband through many of his early troubles. Every penny he made went into developments as soon as it was earned; he kept no reserve and his wife often had to go a-borrowing the weekly wages *"from her secret hoard in the mattress."*

John and his wife went at once to their new home, Adswood House; he continued to work as a jobbing gardener, but he cultivated his own half acre with the skill of a professional and the devotion of an amateur. The workers of Stockport had scant leisure except on Sundays, when he, too, was free; he had a young and active wife to help him and he determined to throw open his gay garden as a Sunday resort. It had as yet no zoological side. A thrush led him to fortune. There was a nest in the garden, he netted in the bush with the callow brood; the old birds continued to feed the young through the meshes and the novel sight brought crowds of people and advertised the place. In summer his strawberries were delicious, and very soon his grounds were known as...

The Strawberry Gardens [27]

They were only a mile and a half from Stockport Market Place and the pleasant walk through country lanes became a popular promenade. The success of the thrush stimulated development in that direction - cages were made for British Birds, and Pheasants, even Macaws were added. But in spite of tradition, and in spite of the fact that the house and neighbouring railway bridge are known to this day as the Monkey House and Monkey Bridge, there were no monkeys.[28] John took none with him to Belle Vue nor did he leave them behind. Their exhibition marks an interesting stage in the history of Adswood.

The little Paradise now known as JENNISON'S GARDENS[29] was the most popular and most prosperous resort in the district - they were open daily and on Sundays and holidays the waiting crowds came soon after dawn and sat patiently under the hedges waiting for the gates to open. Adswood was flourishing.[30]

Jennison Family grave in Cheadle Parish Church

25 *It was customary for widows not to accept formal invitations and avoid public places in the first year of widowhood, see P. Jalland, Death in the Victorian family, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) pp.300-1*

26 *Refer to family tree appendix: James was her youngest surviving grandson.*

27 *Earliest commercial directory is Baines's Lancashire Vol. 2 1825 but no listing for the business.*

28 *Photograph in Stockport Library Image Archive www.stockport.gov.uk confirms bridge demolished in 1959.*

29 *No listing in Baines's Lancashire.*

30 *See Arrowsmith, Stockport, Adswood was flourishing due to its proximity to the cotton mills in the centre of Stockport and the bleach and dye works in Edgeley p.125 and p.136. For the origins of the growth of the cotton industry in Stockport see G. Unwin, Samuel Oldknow & the Arkwrights: The Industrial Revolution in Marple & Stockport (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1924) For further discussion on the bleach works see J.J. Mason 'A Manufacturing and Bleaching Enterprise during the Industrial Revolution: The Sykeses of Edgeley', Business History, March 1981, Vol.23 Iss.1 pp. 59-77.*

The proprietor determined to increase his accommodation and expand his business. He added a brewhouse and a four horse stable to his property[31] and became a publican at the very appropriate sign of *"THE ADAM AND EVE."*[32]

This special expense he met by replacing the mortgage of £80 from Mayor by another of £300 from Lawton[33] but the £220, quite insufficient for the work, must have been supplemented by his own economies. The new venture prospered exceedingly: the fame of the botanist and naturalist spread beyond Stockport and attracted wealthy men from the rising town of Manchester. One of these – Mr. George Gill – who resided at Heaton Norris,[34] first suggested Belle Vue as a better opening for John Jennison's talents. All his money and energy went into it. He left his prosperous home at the *"Adam and Eve"* encumbering it

(Febry 25th 1837) with a mortgage of £800 at 5% provided by John Pownall and John Barratt, both provision merchants, from which we may deduce the class of trade by which he had made what was a considerable profit in those penurious days.

He continued as owner paying his chief rent and the interest on his mortgage and drawing a rental until he lost the property in December in 1842 through a misfortune that could not have been foreseen and would have ruined a man of weaker will.

Adswood was offered for sale or rental with or without the livestock…

Stockport Advertiser, Friday, December 3rd 1836 [35]

STRAWBERRY GARDENS, ADSWOOD.

TO BE LET OR SOLD,

With immediate possession,

ALL that PUBLIC HOUSE and GARDEN, known by the name of the STRAWBERRY GARDENS, in Adswood, in the occupation of John Jennison, the owner.—The House Fixtures to be taken at a fair valuation, and the Gardens may be had either with or without the live animals, &c.—Apply on the Premises, or at Belle Vue, Gorton Road, near Manchester.

The property was not sold and the business without John Jennison's personal attention was an utter failure. It was let to a Mr. Bramwell who makes a brave show in The Advertiser from July 13th to August 17th 1838.[36]

Mr. Bramwell's advertisements ceased suddenly. He had missed the spirit of the place. From the Strawberry Gardens of innocent delight it had become a mere public house.

Drinkers were admitted without payment, the others ceased to visit the gardens.[37] Mr. Bramwell retired and was followed by another tenant equally unfortunate, but the old reputation still lingered and there is particular reference to the value of the property in a legal letter relating to the bankruptcy proceedings.


Stockport Advertiser,
AND CHESHIRE, LANCASHIRE, AND DERBYSHIRE, WEEKLY JOURNAL.
FRIDAY, August 3, 1838.
BRAMWELL'S ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS,
PAPER-HANGING MANUFACTORY.

31 *Jennison Archive F 4.4. Insurance document for the mortgage raised on the Adswood property to fund Belle Vue details the house, brewhouse and stables.*

32 *No listing in Baines's Lancashire or Pigot & Co's Commercial Directory 1834.*

33 *Once again assume George Jennison had sight of the documentation as his figures are specific but supportive evidence is not in the archive. Nicolls, Belle Vue, p.4 gives the date as 1835. Unable to identify Lawton or Mayor in commercial directories as insufficient information to verify.*

34 *F4.4 Insurance document confirms.*

35 *Stockport Advertiser, 23 December 1836.*

36 *Stockport Advertiser, 13 July 1838 and 3 August 1838.*

37 *The trade depression in Stockport from 1837-1843 could have had some influence on Bramwell's failure, see Arrowsmith, Stockport, pp.202-03.*

It was assigned by John Jennison to his trustees in bankruptcy; in December 1842, and they sold the equity of redemption in 1850 for £5, - the property being far from adequate to pay the principal and interest amounting to over £1100.[38]

The rest of the story of Adswood as a pleasure resort is soon told. Still known as Jennison's Gardens it was offered for sale in 1843 and again in September, 1844,[39] without success, and at some later date, probably 1845, John Jennison took it again as tenant and put in his eldest son John as manager. Belle Vue had recovered from its disaster; there was a good zoological collection including monkeys, some of which could be spared to make The Adam and Eve garden attractive and fix the name Monkey House which has endured so long.[40]

But the boy had none of his father's skill as a naturalist or botanist; he was bold in undertaking work but slack in carrying it out; his great merit was physical courage and like most men of that temper he was of an amorous nature far fonder of flirtation than of business. The place in his hands was an utter failure. *"When I was at Adswood I made a pound a day,"* said his father. *"You are losing a pound a day."* And with that he closed the tenancy and put his son under his own eye at Belle Vue where he did excellent work in a position that suited his especial capacity.

Thus closed the association of Jennison and Adswood.

Other tenants took and worked it on the same lines. Mr. Linney, lately Market Superintendent at Stockport, who went to the town as a child in 1852, remembers many visits to see the monkeys but the place was failing and became at length a private house.[41] The rustic arbours were left in the garden and a cellar door still remains with the legend:

William Sid... Adam and ...[42]

38 See Footnote 14.

39 Stockport Advertiser, 2 March 1843 and 30 August 1844.

40 See Manchester Guardian, 1 April 1939 article on demolition of Monkey House and confirming its association with the Jennison family.

41 Jennison Archive F.4.11. Detail in correspondence sent to George Jennison October 5th 1925 however unable to decipher the sender.

42 Assume George Jennison checking his sources and omitted this information.

Belle Vue

"Mr Walker and Mr Crisp, I know, have failed,… but you will succeed."

In the year 1804 his father, John Gill, had taken certain farm lands in Gorton on lease for 99 years from the Dean and Canons of Manchester Cathedral;[1] they were far in the country, more than a mile beyond the last residences of Manchester's aristocrats at Ardwick Green,[2] in a country fertile in corn and grasses and famous for hares and other game. Gorton was a great hunting country - the warning notices are proof sufficient of the poaching that was rife and the old chronicler of the district records *"that one can always tell a Gorton man by the way his ears are thrust forward to catch the music of the hounds."*[3] The fields in this district were let in long parallel strips,[4] the property in question comprising 351/4 acres of hay and pasture land was bounded on the south by Kirkmanshulme Lane, a very ancient highway from Denton to Longsight and so on to Liverpool. The farm houses were usually to be found on this road.

The direct road to Manchester was of very secondary character and importance before 1818, when a fine highway was made from Ardwick Green through Denton to Hyde.[5] The Belle Vue property touched this broad straight road just opposite its junction with the lane that ran through the village of Openshaw to North Manchester as well as to Oldham, Ashton and Stalybridge.[6]

That spot at the North easterly corner became a perfect site for a country inn at which the waggoners could rest and bait[7] their horses on the long journey to and from town. In 1819 the inn was built, and named the BELLE VUE HOUSE. One can see in its title the memories of some soldier just back from the Great War in France. Belle Vue - *"beautiful prospect"* - suited this peaceful rural spot with its ponds and ancient trees and its fields of yellow corn. It lay quiet and alone a mile from all its neighbours, the hamlets of Openshaw, Gorton, Longsight and the nearest edge of Manchester.

The house was half inn, half farm; the ground floor stood 4 feet above the road and a cross wall divided the space below into the farmer's shippon[8] and a public stable. On each side of the doorway which was reached by a flight of steps, there was a single room. That to the West was bar and bar parlour, the lobby was the Tap Room,[9] in the other room the family lived. A verandah at the first floor level gave some suggestion of rustic comfort. About sixty yards away there was a large fine bowling green planted round with shady forest trees which, with the garden, occupied about two acres of ground; [10] thirteen acres were pasture and the remaining twenty were given up to racing, shooting and other rustic sports.[11]

The house was kept from 1819-34 by John Walker and after him by William Crisp.[12] In 1836 the latter surrendered the tenancy and George Gill pressed John Jennison to take over the property. The rent was £135 a year. To a man who had made a little fortune on half an acre of ground the opportunities of an inn and travellers and a bowling green to be added to all his own attractions were very alluring, but the chances were not too bright. As a pleasure ground Belle Vue had been a continuous failure.[13] *"Mr. Walker and Mr. Crisp, I know, have failed,"* said Mr. Gill, *"but you will succeed."* John Jennison thought long before he took the bait and even then he was very cautious. He bargained - one sees his wife in this - for six months on trial and during that time he kept Adswood in full working order. In December 1836 he was satisfied, left his past behind him, and threw himself whole-heartedly into the new venture.

1 *Manchester Cathedral Archives: Reference Mancath/2/A/1/Kirk/6/2 , 1 June 1836.*

2 *Godfrey Edition Old Ordnance Survey Maps: Higher Ardwick 1849 shows large plots and residences and includes a brief history by Chris Makepeace of the development of the suburb.*

3 *Jennison referring to J. Higson, The Gorton Historical Recorder, (Droylsden, John Higson, 1852), p.143.*

4 *Earlier system of farming see G. Youd, 'The Common Fields of Lancashire, Transactions Historical Society Lancashire Cheshire (1961) Vol. 113, pp.1-40.*

5 *Built by the Manchester, Hyde and Mottram Turnpike trust and initially called Sheffield New Road as it continued over the moors to Sheffield. See W. Harrison, 'The Development of the Turnpike System in Lancashire and Cheshire', Transactions Lancashire Cheshire Antiquarian Society Vol. IV (1886), pp.80-92.*

6 *Johnsons Map 1838 shows the rural environment of Belle Vue.*

7 *OED - From Old Norse 'beit' meaning pasture or food.*

8 *OED - Cattle shed*

9 *OED -Room where alcohol served via a tap on a barrel*

10 *For history and popularity of bowling see S.Inglis, Played in Manchester: The architectural heritage of a city at play (Swindon: English Heritage, 2004) pp.80-5. Also D. Brailsford, British Sport: A Social History, (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1992) p.8*

11 *See Brailsford, British Sport for various references.*

12 *1832 Pigot & Co's Commercial Directory lists Walker as victualler at Belle Vue. Crisp took over the tenancy in 1833 and had little success as it was offered for auction by Gill see advertisements in Manchester Guardian in November 1833.*

13 *Previous tenants did not advertise, no results in searches of Manchester Guardian and Manchester Times apart from November 1833 for auction to sell the site. No listing in 1836 Pigot Commercial Directory.*

"...but the grandiose conception was shattered almost at once by the Manchester and Birmingham Railway..."

A new lease of the Belle Vue 351/4 acres was arranged as from June 25th. 1836 for 99 years at a rental of £135 a year[14] and he took in addition from December 25th 1836 at £100 a year, the 25 acres that lay between his western boundary and the Stockport Road in Longsight.[15] This was a bold and brilliant idea. Belle Vue House was at the extreme point of his property with no ingress on the east and a bare six feet to the west of it. He determined to make Stockport Road the main line of approach. A straight wide road 1,000 yards long, with a footpath on either side between double lines of trees was to provide a delightful vista and a lordly approach, terminating in the centre of his pleasure park.

The realization of this scheme was begun at once and the avenues, Newton Avenue with its continuation Belle Vue Avenue which runs forward into the Gardens, remain as they were laid down in 1837 but the grandiose conception was shattered almost at once by the Manchester and Birmingham Railway which ran at right angles across the plot, planted Longsight Station in the middle of the view, and spoilt for ever this magnificent approach to the Gardens.[16]

How this injustice must have rankled! John Jennison's road was level, the railway company would not even make him a bridge and forced him and his patrons to use the neighbouring Kirkmanshulme Lane which passed down a steep hill under a low and narrow arch, and it entailed the construction of a junction road to the Belle Vue gate. What a tyrant the railway must have appeared to him.

But the ogre was destined to be his greatest friend through life and like a good fairy began at once to shower its blessings.[17]

The railway with its convenient station provided cheap and speedy access when other forms of conveyance were rare, slow and expensive, the more so that every passenger from Manchester had to pay toll for using the turnpike road.[18]

What this meant to a business like ours may be gauged from the payments in days of prosperity, e.g. in 186 £[19]

The toll bar on Hyde Road was situated near the Railway Bridge and was not removed until the early seventies, so late that I remember it, though I have no memory of the anxiety while the abolition of turnpikes was under discussion, nor of the special journey to London, the eagerly sought entry to the House of Lords and the joy with which the deputation heard the words *"the toll bar shall remain to -"* and no longer.[20]

Another nuisance proved an equal - perhaps a greater - blessing. A public footpath, Redgate Lane[21], prevented John Jennison from making his sixty acres into one huge Garden. Had he been able to do so he would have been ruined in the troublous time that was so soon to come upon him. With the 35[1]/4 acres which were more than ample for his needs, he managed to pull through.

When he settled in with his wife and five children - Alderman Charles Jennison was the last of the family born at Adswood - he found nothing that fulfilled his requirements. His first work was a cottage for his aged mother, then he enlarged the house and added to the bar, and quite rightly, for he had to increase it further in the immediate future. Then he improved the outbuildings. For the convenience of his better class customers he placed four arbours in the garden. There they took their cakes and milk mostly on Sundays.

The twenty acres of Race Ground were badly fenced and badly drained. He attended to the drainage in which he was an expert and replaced the old hedges by a real fence *"made of old barrel staves."* The great avenue was pegged out and left for future development out of profits.

As capital he had his small savings, the £500[22] from the mortgage of Adswood House, and no doubt something from the railway for severance.[23]

Out of this he had to pay for stock which included certain Alderney cows to which we shall refer later.

14 Jennison must have had sight of these documents but they are not in the archive.

15 Refer to OS 1848 map.

16 Refer to OS 1848 map and see Nicholls, Belle Vue, p.6

17 See Nicholls, Belle Vue p.6. The original station opened in June 1840 and was located some distance from the Gardens where the line crossed Stockport Road however in May 1842 the station was relocated adjacent to Kirkmanshulme Lane; a more convenient location for Belle Vue customers.

18 Harrison, Development of Turnpikes, p.91

19 Incomplete in original manuscript Jennison possibly meant to check the account ledgers.

20 Again Jennison omitted information. For confirmation on the 1864 Select Committee into the demand for abolition of tolls, see G H Tupling,' The Turnpike Trusts of Manchester', Memoirs & Proceedings Manchester Literary Philosophical Society, Vol 94 Issue 4, 1953 p.61. W.Harrison, 'The Turnpike Roads of Lancashire and Cheshire', Transactions Lancashire Cheshire Antiquarian Society, Vol X, 1892, pp.237-47 confirms the turnpike on Hyde Road expired 1st November 1879.

21 Refer to OS 1848 map.

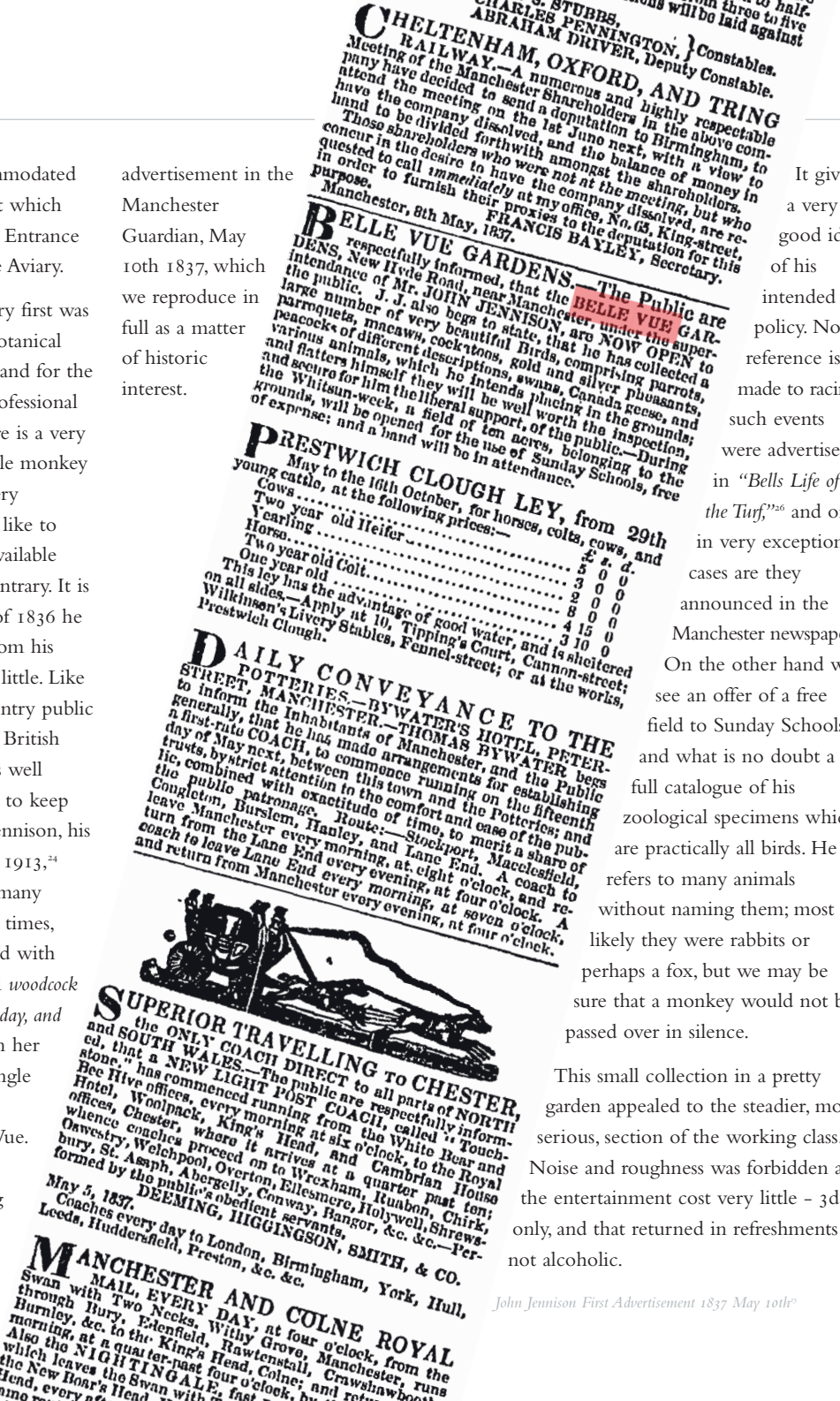
22 Jennison states £800 previously and document in archive (F4.4) confirms this figure. Assume Jennison made an unforced error.

23 No evidence from archive as George Jennison is making an assumption.

The Zoological side was accommodated in a building about 36 x 72 feet which still stands near the Hyde Road Entrance and was called then, as now, the Aviary.

Mr. Jennison's idea from the very first was to establish a Zoological and Botanical Pleasure ground in addition to and for the most part separated from his professional race and shooting ground. There is a very widespread tradition that a single monkey opened the collection. It is a very interesting idea and one would like to believe it true, but the whole available evidence seems to prove the contrary. It is probable that towards the end of 1836 he brought what he could spare from his Stockport Gardens. It was very little. Like so many naturalists at small country public houses, he relied on Aviaries of British birds for the most part, and it is well authenticated that he contrived to keep alive a Wood-cock. Miss Ann Jennison, his daughter, born in 1830, died in 1913,[24] from whom we have gathered many interesting details of these early times, remembered this woodcock, and with good reason, as she told me, *"A woodcock eats its own weight in worms in a day, and we children had to find them."* On her authority we state also that a single heavy cart carried the whole zoological collection for Belle Vue. There were in it a number of boxes and from the back swung two or three cages of parrots.

John Jennison, founder, opened his establishment with an advertisement in the Manchester Guardian, May 10th 1837, which we reproduce in full as a matter of historic interest.



CHELTENHAM, OXFORD, AND TRING RAILWAY.—A numerous and highly respectable Meeting of the Manchester Shareholders in the above company have decided to send a deputation to Birmingham, to attend the meeting on the 1st June next, with a view to have the company dissolved, and the balance of money in hand to be divided forthwith amongst the shareholders. Those shareholders who were not at the meeting, but who concur in the desire to have the company dissolved, are requested to call immediately at my office, No. 65, King-street, in order to furnish their proxies to the deputation for this purpose.

Manchester, 8th May, 1837. FRANCIS BAXLEY, Secretary.

BELLE VUE GARDENS.—The Public are respectfully informed, that the BELLE VUE GARDENS, New Hyde Road, near Manchester, under the superintendance of Mr. JOHN JENNISON, are NOW OPEN to the public. J. J. also begs to state, that he has collected a large number of very beautiful Birds, comprising parrots, parroquets, macaws, cockatoos, gold and silver pheasants, peacocks of different descriptions, swans, Canada geese, and various animals, which he intends placing in the grounds; and flatters himself they will be well worth the inspection, and secure for him the liberal support of the public.—During the Whitsun-week, a field of ten acres, belonging to the grounds, will be opened for the use of Sunday Schools, free of expense; and a band will be in attendance.

PRESTWICH CLOUGH LEY, from 29th May to the 16th October, for horses, colts, cows, and young cattle, at the following prices:—

	£	s.	d.
Cows	5	0	0
Two year old Heifer	3	0	0
Yearling	2	0	0
Horse	8	0	0
Two year old Colt	4	15	0
One year old	3	10	0

This ley has the advantage of good water, and is sheltered on all sides.—Apply at 10, Tipping's Court, Cannon-street; Wilkinson's Livery Stables, Fennel-street; or at the works, Prestwich Clough.

DAILY CONVEYANCE TO THE POTTERIES.—BYWATER'S HOTEL, PETER-STREET, MANCHESTER.—THOMAS BYWATER begs to inform the Inhabitants of Manchester, and the Public generally, that he has made arrangements for establishing a first-rate COACH, to commence running on the fifteenth day of May next, between this town and the Potteries; and trusts, by strict attention to the comfort and ease of the public, combined with exactitude of time, to merit a share of the public patronage. Route:—Stockport, Macclesfield, Congleton, Burslem, Hanley, and Lane End. A coach to leave Manchester every morning, at eight o'clock, and return from the Lane End every evening, at four o'clock. A coach to leave Lane End every morning, at seven o'clock, and return from Manchester every evening, at four o'clock.

SUPERIOR TRAVELLING TO CHESTER, the ONLY COACH DIRECT to all parts of NORTH and SOUTH WALES.—The public are respectfully informed, that a NEW LIGHT POST COACH, called "Touchstone," has commenced running from the White Bear and Bee Hive offices, every morning at six o'clock, to the Royal Hotel, Woolpack, King's Head, and Cambrian House offices, Chester, where it arrives at a quarter past ten; whence coaches proceed on to Wrexham, Ruabon, Chirk, Oswestry, Welchpool, Overton, Ellesmere, Holywell, Shrewsbury, St. Asaph, Abergelly, Conway, Bangor, &c. &c.—Performed by the public's obedient servants,

May 5, 1837. DEEMING, HIGGINSON, SMITH, & CO.

Coaches every day to London, Birmingham, York, Hull, Leeds, Huddersfield, Preston, &c. &c.

MANCHESTER AND COLNE ROYAL MAIL, EVERY DAY, at four o'clock, from the Swan with Two Necks, Withy Grove, Manchester, runs through Bury, Edenfield, Rawtenstall, Crawshawbooth, Burnley, &c. to the King's Head, Colne; and returns morning, at a quarter-past four o'clock, by the same Also the NIGHTINGALE, fast which leaves the Swan with the New Boar's Head, every Head, Colne; and

John Jennison First Advertisement 1837 May 10th[25]

It gives a very good idea of his intended policy. No reference is made to racing, such events were advertised in *"Bells Life of the Turf,"*[26] and only in very exceptional cases are they announced in the Manchester newspapers. On the other hand we see an offer of a free field to Sunday Schools, and what is no doubt a full catalogue of his zoological specimens which are practically all birds. He refers to many animals without naming them; most likely they were rabbits or perhaps a fox, but we may be sure that a monkey would not be passed over in silence.

This small collection in a pretty garden appealed to the steadier, more serious, section of the working class. Noise and roughness was forbidden and the entertainment cost very little - 3d. only, and that returned in refreshments not alcoholic.

That the good work was appreciated is shown by an early episode. The wardens of St. James's Church, Gorton, ordered him to cease supplying his customers during the hours of service. He refused with the words, *"I am like thee, I make my living on Sundays."* They troubled him no more. The visitors were partaking of buttered biscuits and milk, and of the best quality.

24 See family tree appendix.

25 Manchester Guardian, 13 May 1837.

26 Correct name is Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle published 1822-1886. For history of this publication see T. Mason, 'Sporting News 1860-1914' in The Press in English Society from Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries (eds.) M. Harris & A. Lee (London: Associated University Presses, 1986) pp.168-86.

"The visitors shall have the fresh butter; the tub butter will be good enough for me."

This recalls an incident which one can remember with pride. When Mr. William Crisp, showing the property in June, 1836, came to the Alderney cows, he said, *"The butter sells very well in Manchester Market. The Irish tub butter is good enough for the visitors."* John Jennison's reply has become historic; it showed at once the spirit of the man and explains the wonderful success he had as a caterer. *"The visitors,"* said he, *"shall have the fresh butter; the tub butter will be good enough for me."* That poor feeding he supported for many years. Until the end of 1842, 4/- shillings a week per head fed all the family and the servants;[27] even later when times were better, a carter left his employ rather than drink the same milk (it was half water) as was given to the monkeys. When times improved, John Jennison always had a good substantial meal of the best plain food, and any friend was welcome to a share of it, but from the beginning of Belle Vue to the time when it passed out of the family, the visitors always had the same or better food than the proprietors. The use of Belle Vue as a house of call for carters failed at a very early date. One very wet day the carters found their stable thronged with racing men; they asked to have them cleared out. There was no other shelter and the request could not be complied with, even if John Jennison had desired to do so. The carters thereupon determined to go forward to the next public house, the *"Plough"* in Gorton, and never again used Belle Vue. [28]

The Gardens were left to develop along their own individual lines.

For about 18 months fortune smiled, then he was opposed by a competitor against whom opposition was hopeless.

Johnson's 1838 Map

27 *J.C. McKenzie, Composition and Nutritional Value of Diets in Manchester & Dukinfield 1841, (Manchester: H.Rawson & Co.Ltd, 1965) discusses the 1841 survey and notes that a family of ten spent £2. 9s per week on food in Manchester and a family of seven spent over £1 per week in Dukinfield so Jennison's claim of 4s a week appears low but may exclude home-grown food such as vegetables and bread.*

28 *Higson, Gorton Historical Reporter, confirms 'The Plough' as a popular public house at this time and dates events held there back to 1823.*

Manchester Zoological Gardens

"Why did this wonderful garden fail?"

At Higher Broughton, 1838-1842[1]

About this time there was a great revival of interest in natural history; the London Zoological Society had broken away from the Botanical Society in 1828, and had taken ground at Regents Park, London, for their Zoological collection which was augmented by gifts from the King of animals from the Tower.[2] In 1835 a garden which still exists was formed at Clifton in Bristol.[3] There was one at Cheltenham[4] another at Edinburgh[5] and the Royal Zoological Gardens in Dublin,[6] besides the small but very successful Liverpool Zoological Gardens run by Mr. Atkins, a dealer in wild animals.[7] In 1836, a strong committee of Manchester gentlemen set out to emulate their example and to create an interest in animals as great as that in plants and to rival if possible the Floral and horticultural Society and the later Botanical and Horticultural Society, whose exhibitions were among the noted events of the year. It was an essentially aristocratic committee receiving support from the most distinguished of the nobility and the best citizens.

The Manchester gardens bade fair to surpass all but those in London. The idea mooted in 1836[8] was grandiose, and never carried out in its entirety, but the zoological side reached full maturity.

The Zoological Gardens were situated just below Broughton Park on an undulating southern slope of fifteen acres bounded by Broom Lane on the north and Northumberland Road on the south, a distance of 220 yards. They extended eastwards for 330 yards from a line parallel to the Bury New Road.[9] The north-west corner is now occupied by Mr. Brown's house, which was then the lion's terrace. No better site could have been conceived.

The layout was placed in the hands of Richard Forrest, who had just arranged the Bristol and Cheltenham gardens.[10]

The lawns and shrubberies were the care of Mr. Mearns, one of the foremost horticulturists of the day who came direct from the Duke of Portland's estate at Welbeck.[11] The 1,800 stockholders in the concern were more than lavish in gifts of plants and shrubs, and Mr. Mearns made the meadow a delightful garden where rare and beautiful vegetation rounded and completed the green and close cropped lawns. It was a rival to the Botanical Gardens, while it kept its proper and subsidiary place to the zoological collection.[12] There was an entrance at the north-east corner in Leicester Street, which was not yet named, but the main gate was at the south-west, and approached from Northumberland Street.

A short walk through the gardens brought one to the lake, a magnificent sheet of water 220 yards long, with an island reached by two rustic bridges. Fancy ducks and swans swam on the waters and a fine flight cage 90 feet in length was the home of the birds of prey, a fitting foreground to the main feature of the gardens, the great lion-house, 150 feet by 27 feet, an outstanding feature on the high terrace. East of the lake was the bear pit, from the top of which fine views were obtained, for, following the custom of the time, bears had to be shown in pits, even if one had to build them.
It contained three brown bears. The elephant house was small, 30 feet square, 22 feet high - rather close quarters for the elephant, rhinoceros, dromedary, and deer contained in it, but they all had ample outdoor paddocks, which were also provided for the buffaloes and kangaroos, very great rarities at that time.

1 *Jennison Archive F 4.11 George Jennison amassed a great deal of evidence about this particular competitor; which includes an unpublished article named 'A forgotten Zoo in Manchester'. George Jennison contributed an article to the Manchester Guardian 17 July 1927 titled 'Manchester Zoo at Higher Broughton: The ambitious enterprise that failed,' the content of which is identical to this manuscript.*

2 *For the history of London Zoo see W. Blunt, The Ark in the Park, Zoo in the Nineteenth Century London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1976).*

3 *For the history of Bristol Zoo see A.H.N. Green-Armytage, The Story of Bristol Zoo, (Bristol: Bristol, Clifton & West of England Zoological Society, 1964)*

4 *Cheltenham Zoological Gardens 1838-1844 see V.N.Kisling, (ed.) Zoo & Aquarium History (Boca Raton:CRC Press,2001) p.369.*

5 *For the history of Edinburgh Zoo see T.H. Gillespie, The Story of Edinburgh Zoo, (Aberdeen: Michael Slains Publishers, 1964).*

6 *For the history of Dublin Zoo see C. DeCourcy, Dublin Zoo: An Illustrated History, (Cork: Collins Press, 2009).*

7 *See ODNB for entry on Thomas Atkins (1763-1848) menagerie keeper and zoo proprietor and history of the Liverpool Zoological Gardens. Also E H Bostock, Menageries, Circuses and Theatres, (London: Chapman & Hall, 1927) p.3. Bostock was the great nephew of George Wombwell, the founder of Wombwell's Menageries and ran the business after his death. Atkins was a competitor of Wombwell.*

8 *Discussed in Manchester Guardian article 21 May 1836.*

9 *Refer to OS 1850 map.*

10 *ODNB entry for G F Carden (1798-1874) campaigner for establishment of cemeteries, confirms Richard Forrest as designer of Kensal Green cemetery and also head gardener to the Duke of Northumberland.*

11 *Manchester Guardian, 2 June 1838 confirms and also states Mearns is a 'well known periodical botanical writer'.*

12 *See A. Brooks, A Veritable Eden, (Oxford: Windgather, 2011) for history of the Manchester Botanical Gardens.*

There were about 20 different kiosks for the animals dotted about the gardens, also ponds for otters and gold and silver fish and a tropical house for foreign birds. The monkeys, a very fine collection, had 50 feet at the end of the lion-house. A special pond for the polar bear and others for pelicans and amphibious animals were contemplated at the south-west corner but never completed.[13]

Harry Richardson as head keeper was a felicitous choice. He had had thirty years' experience with Polito's menagerie, he knew where to buy and how to buy, and was wonderfully in advance of his time in hygiene.[14] Mr. Whitton, the chairman, at one of the Society's meetings quoted a visitor's tribute to the marked superiority of the cages in size and freshness over London's. And his reward was great. From May 31st 1838, when the gardens were officially opened, to November 23rd 1842, when sale by auction dispersed the collection, scarcely anything died – a dromedary from debility, an ostrich from the imprudence of an individual, and a few oddments more than made up by gifts; and the breeding successes were wonderful. Leopards, marmozets and ordinary monkeys were born and reached maturity in the gardens, as well as kangaroos, zebu cattle, and lions which present much less difficulty.

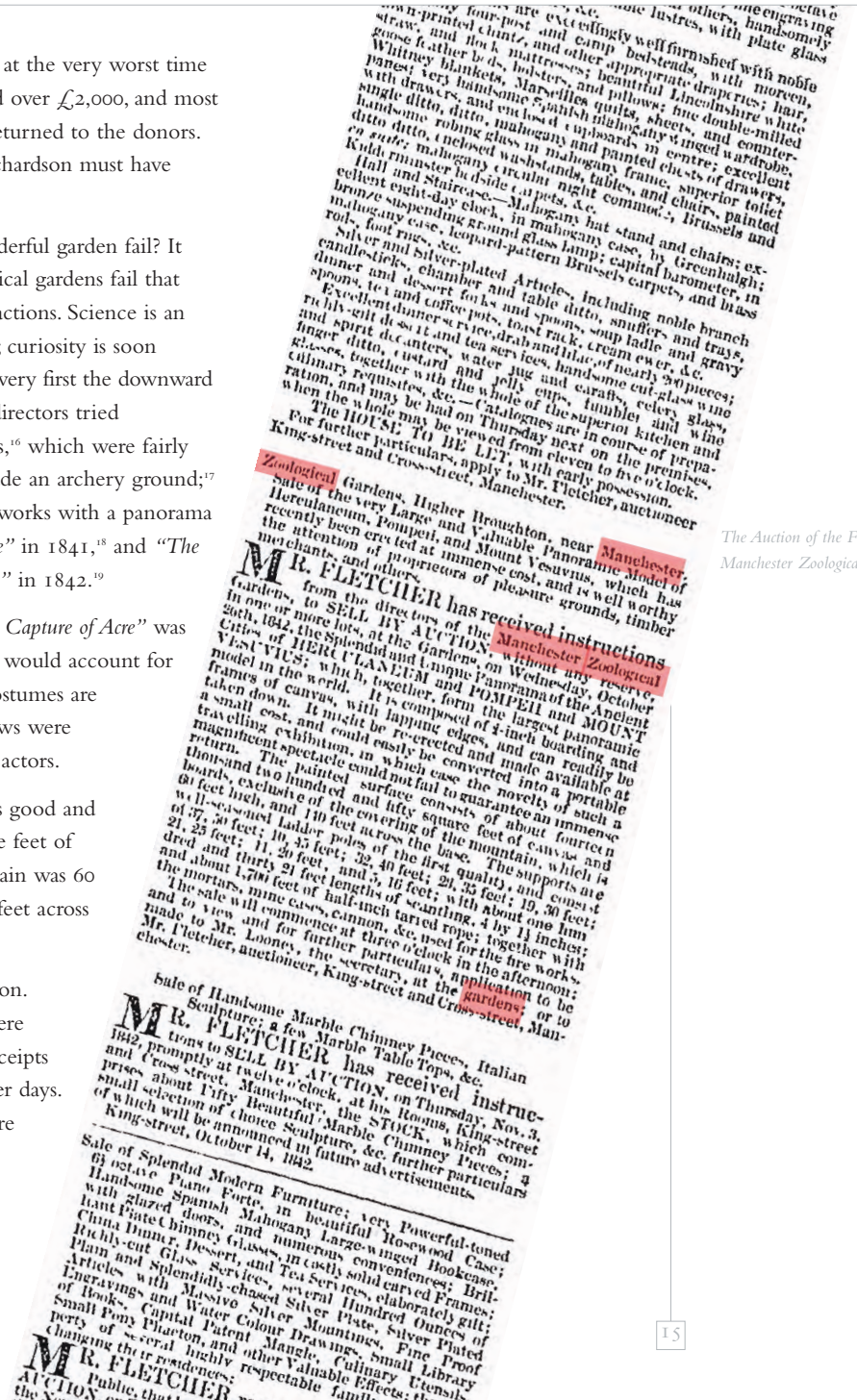
The Society only spent about £2,000 in purchases, but the gifts of many titled and influential friends, Lord Derby among them, raised the value of the collection to £3,600.[15] The sale, at the very worst time of the year, realised over £2,000, and most of the gifts were returned to the donors. What a keeper Richardson must have been!

Why did this wonderful garden fail? It failed as all zoological gardens fail that have no other attractions. Science is an interest of the few; curiosity is soon satisfied. From the very first the downward trend began. The directors tried horticultural shows,[16] which were fairly successful; they made an archery ground;[17] they instituted fireworks with a panorama – *"The Siege of Acre"* in 1841,[18] and *"The Eruption of Vesuvius"* in 1842.[19]

N.B. In 1841 *"The Capture of Acre"* was represented which would account for the cannon. No costumes are advertised; the shows were produced without actors.

The panorama was good and large, 14,250 square feet of canvas. The mountain was 60 feet high and 140 feet across the base.

And it was taking on. Firework nights were popular, £40 in receipts against £1 on other days. The aristocrats were disgusted.



The Auction of the Firework Display at Manchester Zoological Gardens.[20]

13 *For description of the opening of the Gardens see articles in Manchester Guardian 2 June 1838 and Manchester Courier 2 June 1838.*

14 *See Bostock, Menageries, p. 8 for information on Polito's menagerie. Also ODNB entry on Stephen Polito (1763-1814) menagerie keeper and showman. Atikins and Richardson are also discussed in C.H.Keeling, 'The Zoological Gardens of Great Britain', in Kisling, (ed.) Zoo and Aquarium, p.62 & p.65. Authors in this book also reference the zoological works written by George Jennison.*

15 *ODNB - Edward Smith Stanley, thirteenth Earl of Derby (formerly Lord Stanley) (1775-1851) politician and naturalist. He created at Knowsley Hall near Liverpool, a private and extensive menagerie of birds and mammals.*

16 *Manchester Guardian, 1 July 1840*

17 *Manchester Guardian, 11 May 1839*

18 *Manchester Guardian, 25 September 1841*

19 *Manchester Guardian, 25 June 1842*

20 *Manchester Guardian, 15 October 1842*

The wonderful Zoological Gardens finished in as great pomp and circumstances as it had begun. An immense crowd attended when Mr. Fletcher, Manchester's foremost auctioneer [21] disposed of the collection on November 23rd 1842.[22] The Rhinoceros was sold for 265 guineas, the elephant withdrawn at 250 guineas, leopards brought from 8 to 11 guineas and a tigress 45, which are all much below present prices. On the other hand a lion had been sold in 1841 for 300 pounds which is high, and the prices 150 guineas for a lion and 125 and 40 guineas for lionesses are fair even by present standards.

The Victoria Gardens, Seedley, bought one or two small creatures but there were no buyers from Belle Vue.

The deadly enemy was dead and his victim lay moribund. The struggle had been too severe. The counter attraction of a good animal show had made the poor collection at Belle Vue mean and pitiful by contrast. The wayside inn and gardens on Hyde Road lost its quiet good-class customer. When can be calculated almost to the day. The Zoological Gardens in Higher Broughton opened on May 31st 1838. John Jennison ceased to pay his chief rent on the Longsight property as and from the next quarter day.

Even the race ground failed him for there were serious riots in Manchester in 1842[23] and the police looked askance at the crowds of rough men at Belle Vue, set a watch on them that was not to their liking and on one occasion closed the road to Manchester after a big meeting from fear that the crowd might become the nucleus of a seditious mob.[24]

The Zoological Gardens was wound up on Nov.23rd 1842.

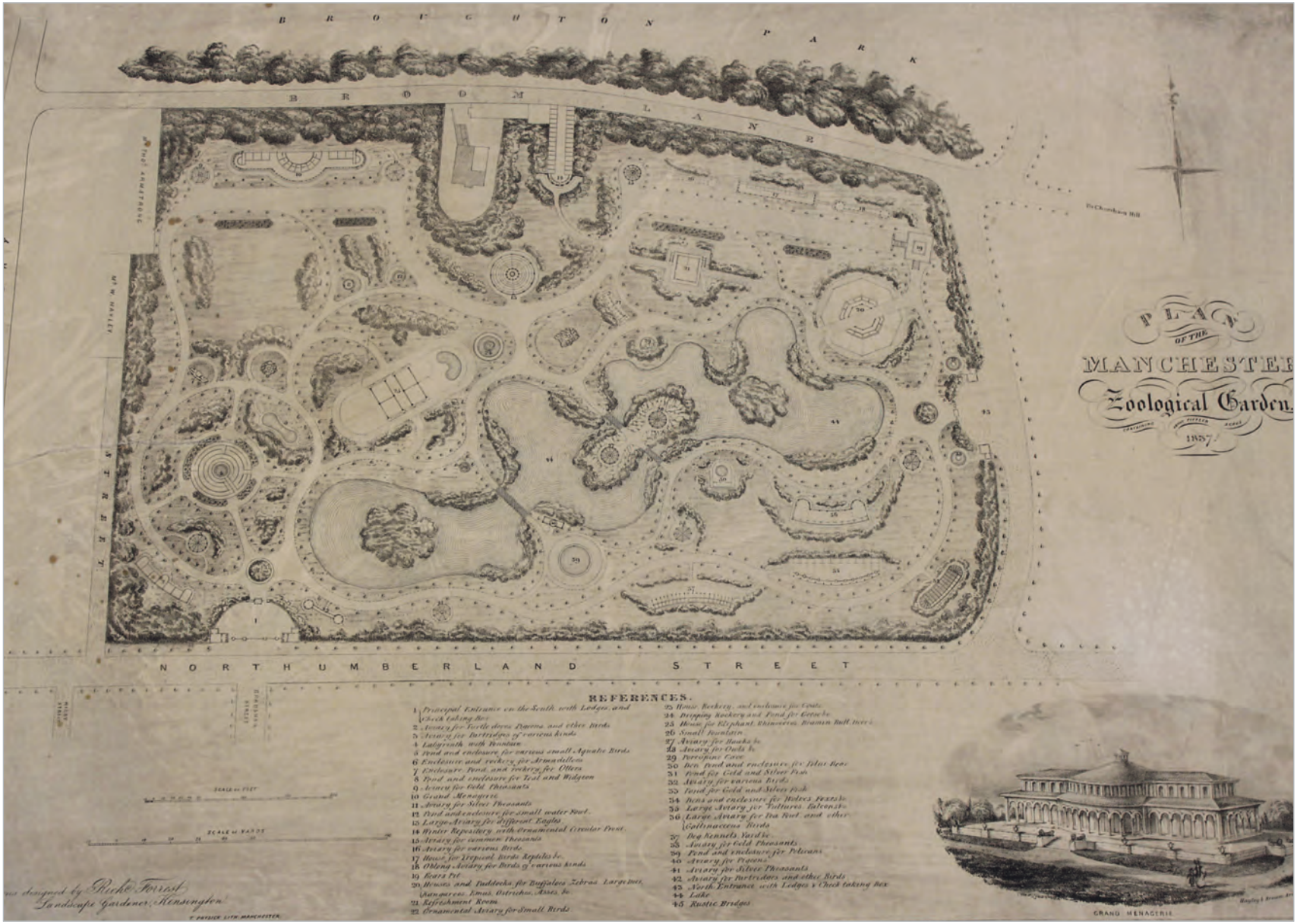
Manchester Zoological Gardens 1837 by T. Physick

21 1834 Pigot & Co Commercial Directory confirms Jasper Fletcher, Auctioneer, 51 King St, Manchester.

22 Manchester Guardian, 9, 23-25 November 1842 advertised the auction.

23 See M.Jenkins, The General Strike of 1842, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1980)

24 Jenkins, General Strike, discusses the numerous meetings held to rally the workers in Manchester city centre, Hyde, Ashton & Stalybridge which would have meant a commute along Hyde Road past Belle Vue, see chapter 'The Turn Out', pp.60-104. Manchester Courier 13 August 1842 reports of 'Alarming riots in Manchester and the neighbourhood'. Higson, Gorton Historical Reporter, p.187 also confirms ' alarming riots in the neighbourhood', 10 August 1842.



Manchester Zoological Gardens Plan 1837
by T. Physick

John Jennison Files His Petition

"Beware what thy heart desirest. For thou shalt surely attain it."

On December 13th 1842 a fiat in bankruptcy[1] was filed against John Jennison, victual dealer and chapman, on the petition of John Hadfield, Flour dealer... £169.14.4, William Drabble, Brewer... £237.00.0 both of Stockport.[2]

We can see how he struggled against his fate, fought to gain time, pledged his credit in promissory notes, in the end tried to keep out of the way, told his people to say he was not at home when creditors called to collect their money. Peter Halton, Mr. Drabble's assistant swears this and Samuel Barber admits in affidavit that these were Mr. Jennison's instructions. On this affidavit E. Ludlow Esq. gave a warrant of seizure to Thomas Aulls, in accordance with which warrant three bailiffs took possession and as it appears, behaved very badly.[3] Mr. Josiah Dearden, Solicitor [4], acting on behalf of John Hadfield, intimates that they will be charged with the value of the beer and segars consumed. At his request one bailiff was withdrawn.[5]

Manchester Guardian 21 January 1843

Papers were filed on January 11th and the final examination took place on January 21st 1843,[6] when the petitioner had in his possession a silver watch and cash £3.14.6., which the creditors left with him.

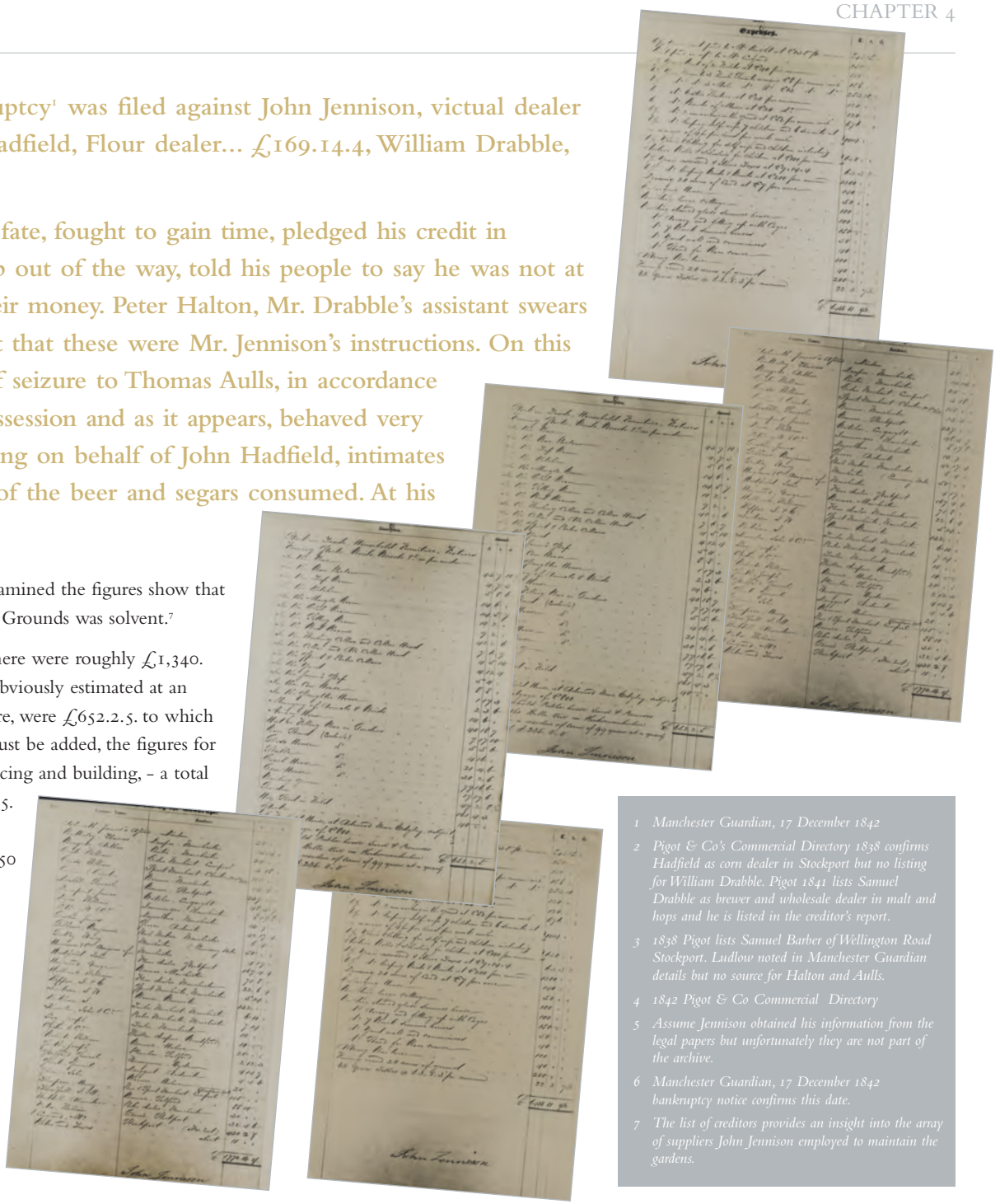
The Balance Sheet shows:

Debts	1770.14.0½
Capital	540.00.0.
Profits (sic)	4938.20.0.
	£7348.14.2½
Credit	
Debts due	10. 10. 0.
Property	652.20. 5.
Losses (Bad debts)	147.10. 0.
Expenses	6438.18.9½
	7348.14. 2½

The details have a social and economic interest of their own as valuable as the perfect picture they provide of John Jennison's early activities.

Carefully examined the figures show that the Pleasure Grounds was solvent.[7]

The debts there were roughly £1,340. The assets, obviously estimated at an auction figure, were £652.2.5. to which £940.0.0. must be added, the figures for draining, fencing and building, – a total of £1,592.2.5. – leaving a credit of £250 without taking any account of goodwill.



1 *Manchester Guardian, 17 December 1842*

2 *Pigot & Co's Commercial Directory 1838 confirms Hadfield as corn dealer in Stockport but no listing for William Drabble. Pigot 1841 lists Samuel Drabble as brewer and wholesale dealer in malt and hops and he is listed in the creditor's report.*

3 *1838 Pigot lists Samuel Barber of Wellington Road Stockport. Ludlow noted in Manchester Guardian details but no source for Halton and Aulls.*

4 *1842 Pigot & Co Commercial Directory*

5 *Assume Jennison obtained his information from the legal papers but unfortunately they are not part of the archive.*

6 *Manchester Guardian, 17 December 1842 bankruptcy notice confirms this date.*

7 *The list of creditors provides an insight into the array of suppliers John Jennison employed to maintain the gardens.*

John Jennison Files His Petition

This fact dawned upon the creditors after an abortive attempt to sell the Gardens on the evening of January 30th 1843. A sale advertisement in great detail appeared in the Manchester and Stockport papers.[8]

No one was sufficiently interested to go into the wilds of the country on a winter evening to buy a derelict Zoological Garden and race ground.

A second sale date was fixed, March 3rd 1843, at 10a.m. and 3p.m., but before that date the matter was squared.[9] Some of the creditors agreed to wait for their money – one hears of a Stockport man taking out his debt in beer brewed at Belle Vue. Some were satisfied out of the sale of the lease of 25 acres of land in Longsight which were already worth much more than the £100 per annum charged upon them; the rest of the debts were met by a loan.[10]

That loan brought a trouble of its own. Interest was in default, a seizure was threatened; Mrs. Jennison threw the note in the fire, and, says Mrs. Kelsall (Anne Jennison)[11] the lenders were annoyed because the money was paid off so quickly. This threatened seizure was a bluff that failed.

In March 1843, Belle Vue was free again; with Adswood gone and the lucrative Longsight property squandered to meet the pressing liabilities, nothing remained but the original 35 acres.

From the profits of those acres the rest had to be recovered; bought back when railways were thoroughly appreciated, when Manchester was extending far and fast; bought when the seller could charge a fancy price to an eager and obstinate buyer.

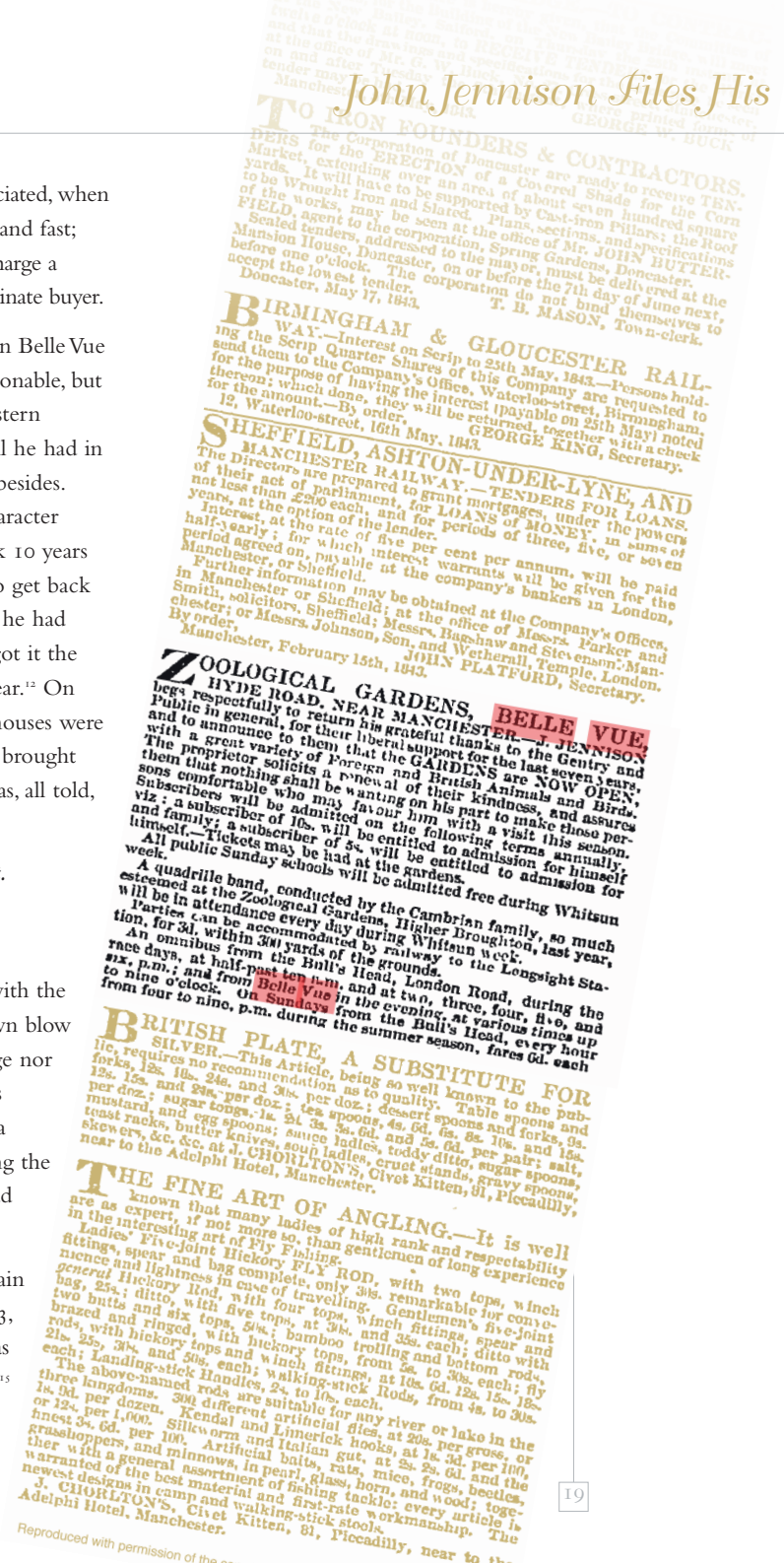
To repurchase the land between Belle Vue and Longsight Station was reasonable, but the rest was sheer obstinacy, a stern determination to finish with all he had in the beginning and something besides. Nothing marked old John's character more strongly than this. It took 10 years of struggle and 12 of success to get back the land bordering the avenue he had struck in 1837. And when he got it the new chief rent was £1000 a year.[12] On each side of Newton Avenue houses were built in the early sixties – they brought good rents but the purchase was, all told, pure pride.

"Beware what thy heart desirest.
For thou shalt surely attain it."

Emerson[13]

John Jennison began his task with the utmost vigour. The knock-down blow had stunned neither his courage nor his enterprise. He increased his attractions and must have had a sardonic satisfaction in engaging the Cambrian Family band that had worked for his defunct rival.[14]

After six years of silence he again appears in print May 27th 1843, – this time and henceforward as Zoological Gardens, Belle Vue.[15]



TO BRASS FOUNDERS & CONTRACTORS.

The Corporation of Doncaster are ready to receive TENDERS for the ERECTION of a Covered Shade for the Corn Market, extending over an area of about seven hundred square yards. It will have to be supported by Cast-iron Pillars; the Roof to be Wrought Iron and Slated. Plans, sections, and specifications of the works, may be seen at the office of Mr. JOHN BUTTERFIELD, agent to the corporation, Spring Gardens, Doncaster. Sealed tenders, addressed to the mayor, must be delivered at the Mansion House, Doncaster, on or before the 7th day of June next, before one o'clock. The corporation do not bind themselves to accept the lowest tender.

Doncaster, May 17, 1843. T. B. MASON, Town-clerk.

BIRMINGHAM & GLOUCESTER RAILWAY.—Interest on Scrip to 25th May, 1843.—Persons holding the Scrip Quarter Shares of this Company are requested to send them to the Company's Office, Waterloo-street, Birmingham, for the purpose of having the interest (payable on 25th May) noted thereon; which done, they will be returned, together with a check for the amount.—By order,

12, Waterloo-street, 16th May, 1843. GEORGE KING, Secretary.

SHEFFIELD, ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE, AND MANCHESTER RAILWAY.—TENDERS FOR LOANS. The Directors are prepared to grant mortgages, under the powers of their act of parliament, for LOANS of MONEY, in sums of not less than £200 each, and for periods of three, five, or seven years, at the option of the lender.

Interest, at the rate of five per cent per annum, will be paid half-yearly; for which interest warrants will be given for the period agreed on, payable at the company's bankers in London, Manchester, or Sheffield.

Further information may be obtained at the Company's Offices, in Manchester or Sheffield; at the office of Messrs. Parker and Smith, solicitors, Sheffield; Messrs. Bagshaw and Stevenson, Manchester; or Messrs. Johnson, Son, and Wetherall, Temple, London.

By order,

Manchester, February 15th, 1843. JOHN PLATFORD, Secretary.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, BELLE VUE, HYDE ROAD, NEAR MANCHESTER.—J. JENNISON begs respectfully to return his grateful thanks to the Gentry and Public in general, for their liberal support for the last seven years, and to announce to them that the GARDENS are NOW OPEN, with a great variety of Foreign and British Animals and Birds. The proprietor solicits a renewal of their kindness, and assures them that nothing shall be wanting on his part to make those persons comfortable who may favour him with a visit this season. Subscribers will be admitted on the following terms annually, viz: a subscriber of 10s. will be entitled to admission for himself and family; a subscriber of 5s. will be entitled to admission for himself.—Tickets may be had at the gardens.

All public Sunday schools will be admitted free during Whitsun week.

A quadrille band, conducted by the Cambrian family, so much esteemed at the Zoological Gardens, Higher Broughton, last year, will be in attendance every day during Whitsun week.

Parties can be accommodated by railway to the Longsight Station, for 3d. within 300 yards of the grounds.

An omnibus from the Bull's Head, London Road, during the race days, at half-past ten a.m. and at two, three, four, five, and six, p.m.; and from Belle Vue in the evening, at various times up to nine o'clock. On Sundays from the Bull's Head, every hour from four to nine, p.m. during the summer season, fares 6d. each

BRITISH PLATE, A SUBSTITUTE FOR SILVER.—This Article, being so well known to the public, requires no recommendation as to quality. Table spoons and forks, 12s. 16s., 24s. and 30s. per doz.; dessert spoons and forks, 9s. 12s. 15s. and 24s. per doz.; tea spoons, 4s. 6d. 6s. 8s. 10s. and 12s. per doz.; sugar tongs, 1s. 2d. 3s. 3s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. per pair; salt, mustard, and egg spoons; sauce ladies, toddy ditto, sugar spoons, toast racks, butter knives, soup ladies, cruet stands, gravy spoons, skewers, &c. &c. at J. CHORLTON'S, Civet Kitten, 61, Piccadilly, near to the Adelphi Hotel, Manchester.

THE FINE ART OF ANGLING.—It is well known that many ladies of high rank and respectability are as expert, if not more so, than gentlemen of long experience in the interesting art of Fly Fishing.

Ladies' Five-joint Hickory FLY ROD, with two tops, with fittings, spear and bag complete, only 30s. remarkable for convenience and lightness in case of travelling. Gentlemen's five-joint general Hickory Rod, with four tops, with fittings, spear and bag, 25s.; ditto, with five tops, at 30s. and 35s. each; ditto with two butts and six tops, 50s.; bamboo trolling and bottom rods, brazed and ringed, with hickory tops, from 5s. to 30s. each; fly rods, with hickory tops and winch fittings, at 10s. 6d. 12s. 15s. 18s. 21s. 25s. 30s. and 50s. each; winch fittings, from 2s. to 30s. each; Landing-stick Handles, 2s. to 10s. each.

The above-named rods are suitable for any river or lake in the three kingdoms. 300 different artificial flies, at 20s. per gross, or 1s. 6d. per dozen. Kendal and Limerick hooks, at 1s. 3d. per 100, or 12s. per 1,000. Silkworm and Italian gut, at 2s. 2s. 6d. and the finest 3s. 6d. per 100. Artificial baits, rats, mice, frogs, beetles, grasshoppers, and minnows, in pearl, glass, horn, and wood; together with a general assortment of fishing tackle; every article is warranted of the best material and first-rate workmanship. The newest designs in camp and walking-stick stools.

J. CHORLTON'S, Civet Kitten, 61, Piccadilly, near to the Adelphi Hotel, Manchester.

8 *Manchester Guardian, 25 January 1843. Stockport Advertiser, 13 January 1843.*

9 *Stockport Advertiser, 3 March 1843.*

10 *Yet again George Jennison draws on documentation that is not part of the archive so unable to confirm who acquired the lease.*

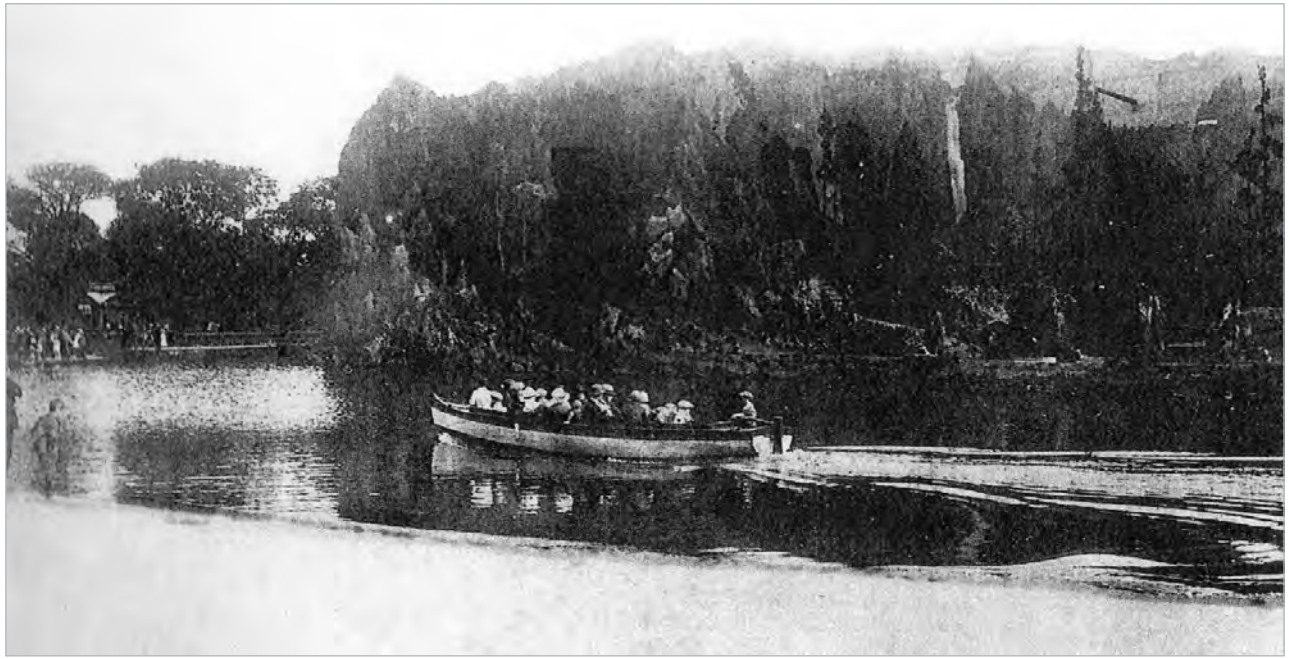
11 *See family tree appendix.*

12 *Compared to original rent of £100. There is no definitive property and land acquisition evidence available to support the land and property transactions that Jennison discusses throughout the manuscript but refer to the Nicholls Collection within the Jennison archive (E6.1) which contains copies of Belle Vue land purchases up to 1931.*

13 *ODNB - R.W. Emerson (1803-1882) American poet and philosopher. Obituary in Manchester Guardian, 29 April 1882 confirms his lectures in Manchester in 1847 at the Mechanics Institute and Athenaeum. Emerson was the guest of Alexander Ireland (1810-1894) whose entry in ODNB confirms him as the publisher and manager of the Manchester Examiner & Times.*

14 *Advert in Manchester Guardian, 27 May 1843 confirms the Cambrian Band 'so much esteemed at the Zoological Gardens will play at Belle Vue'.*

15 *Published in Manchester Guardian, 15 April and 20 May 1843 and Manchester Times, 20 May 1843.*



The year was profitable[16] and 1844 shows a much enlarged programme. The great Weston[17] started on Easter Monday on his walk of 1000 miles in 1000 hours; incidentally we may say that he accomplished this feat very easily. It was his custom to allow the last eight minutes of an hour and the first eight of the next for each two miles, but he completed the 1000th mile in 7 1/2 minutes, and in a very short time he was persuaded to undertake an additional 500 quarter miles in 500 quarter hours continuing through the Whitsun holidays, an attraction which appealed strongly to the public. The crowd saw him walking every afternoon and he brought a great deal of casual custom throughout the whole 24 hours.

Public Houses at that time could remain open at their own discretion and visitors called in at all hours of the night to see that Weston was doing his work, and most of them stayed to have a drink and a chat.[18]

The animals and birds were said to be excellent, the bowling green in fine condition, also the cricket ground, now mentioned for the first time.

The Lake was enlarged and boats placed upon it. This lake was near the Bowling Green, a very small sheet of water with an island in the middle which finally developed into the Firework or Picture Island. The site of the large Lake had been hired in 1839 for £40 a year. It was a nine acre plot of triangular form extending from Belle Vue house to the junction of Hyde Road and Kirkmanshulme Lane.[19] It served as an extra means of ingress and a slight check on what are now called *"door-smashers"*, persons who entered without payment, who were a nuisance to the end, even when they had to scale a 12 foot wall. In that respect it was very valuable but it did not form part of the Gardens, though an advertisement in the hot summer of 1841 states that it contains 7 pounds and the pleasant breezes blowing over the waters are very agreeable to the visitors, but it was not then added to the gardens and developed.[20]

16 Archive does not contain accounts information for this year; assume Jennison acquainted with family information.

17 Manchester Guardian 6 April 1844 confirms that Belle Vue has 'undergone a complete renovation' and confirms the walk.

18 1830 Beer Act enabled anyone to sell or brew beer on their premises on payment of a licence costing two guineas. See F.M.L. Thompson, The rise of respectable society: A social history of Victorian Britain 1830-1900, (London: Fontana Press, 1988) p.312.

19 Refer to OS 1848 Map.

20 Meaning uncertain and no trace in press advertisements from period stated.

During the trouble in 1842 the tenancy lapsed and was not renewed. This valuable land was acquired later (1858) by purchase.[21] The most noteworthy feature of 1844 was an increase in the charge for admission. In lieu of 3d. returned in refreshments it became 3d., or 6d. returned in refreshments, and there was an extra penny *"for the band"*. The patrons resented this imposition so strongly that the extra penny, which was a usual charge at similar places of amusement in Manchester, was dropped at once. In 1845 the charge was only 6d. all returned in refreshments though the special attractions in the Whitsuntide of that year which included Equestrians, Rope Dancers and performing dogs, were much increased. [22]

In spite of the opening of his most successful competitor, the Pomona Gardens, of which we will speak later, the worst time had passed although there was always very hard work without much profit until the Firework Spectacle was started.

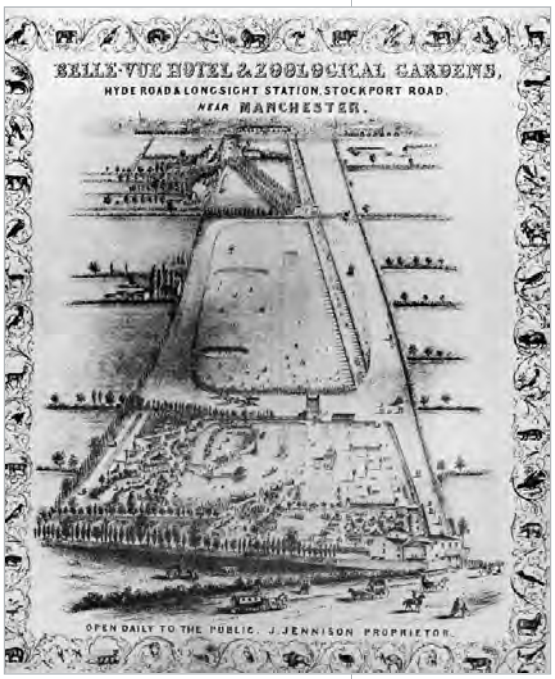
21 Unable to substantiate as relevant documents are not in the archive.

22 Press advertising confirms pricing structure however also reveals that the admission prices for Whitsun (popular holiday period) as 7d.

Belle Vue Zoological Gardens Handbook 1847

"...the price was 4d, an enormous sum and a sure proof of the paucity of purchasers..."

In 1847, Mr. Jennison produced the first guide to the Gardens; the price was 4d., an enormous sum and a sure proof of the paucity of purchasers and the interest of those few in Natural History. And he issued at the same time a very finely engraved plan of the whole property, including the Race track. We have pleasure in reproducing both, having omitted certain long descriptions of animals for the sake of brevity. Obviously we can add nothing to these accounts; our remarks will be merely explanatory.



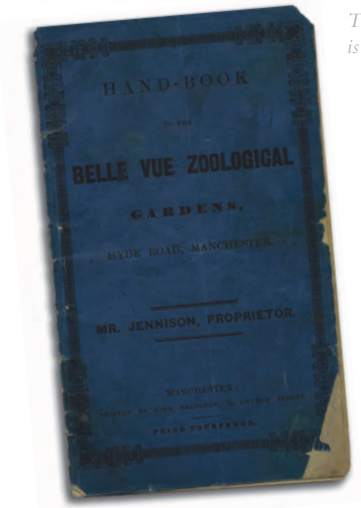
The visitor following the guidebook passed through the Hyde Road entrance which formed the N.W. corner of the hotel and almost abutted on the adjoining property which occasioned great difficulty in dealing with the traffic in busy times. Having entered the gardens he proceeded about 50 yards towards the Race Course then turned back past the Hotel, passed through the aviary, round the Bowling Green - half of which was already given up to Dancing - looked at the bear chained to a pole in a sylvan den, then having visited the Museum he proceeded round the lake, skirted the Race Course and finished his tour at the Deer Paddock, which adjoined the animal house he had first visited. The straight line between the two ponds in the upper part of the picture is the famous straight 440 yards, the best of its time in England - the half mile is shown with one curve; the winning post was near the square tower. The tracks followed the contour of the land and the sprints were run up hill a rise of about one in a hundred feet.

The reader's attention is drawn to the broad straight carriage way to Longsight Station; the one planned in 1837, it continues to Stockport Road, Longsight. [1]

The Longsight Entrance in the design finally adopted and the house near the station are indications of growing wealth and future intention; neither was erected until a few years later but Mr. Jennison had already begun to buy back the land he had lost in 1842.

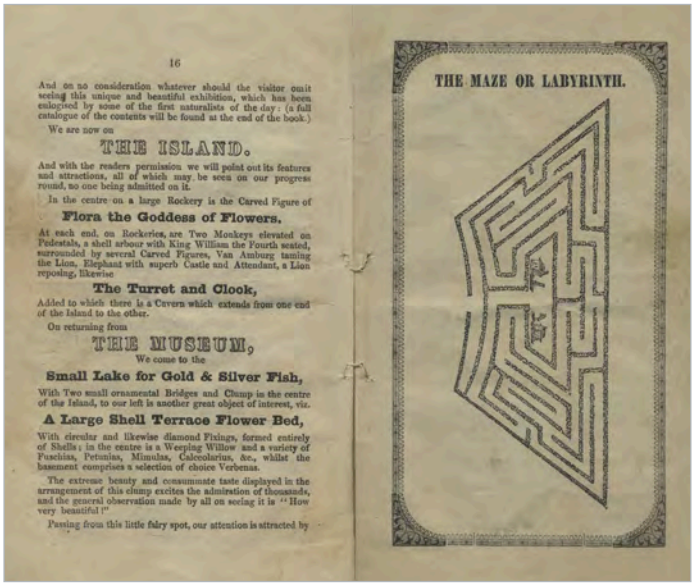
The pleasure gardens occupied 14 acres, the remaining 21 acres formed the Race ground with which they had no communication. Racegoers had a separate entrance and admission, and sporting events never appear in the garden advertisements and only on very rare occasions in the bills printed and issued by the proprietor.


THE HAND BOOK
TO THE
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS,
BELLE VUE,
HYDE ROAD, NEAR MANCHESTER,
CONTAINING A FULL
LIST OF THE BIRDS & ANIMALS,
WITH
DESCRIPTIVE NOTICES OF THEIR HABITS, &c. &c.
ALSO A
CATALOGUE
OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, CURIOSITIES, &c.
PROPRIETOR, MR. JENNISON.
MANCHESTER:
PRINTED BY JOHN HEADWAY, 5, CHURCH STREET.
1847.


HAND-BOOK
TO THE
BELLE VUE ZOOLOGICAL
GARDENS,
HYDE ROAD, MANCHESTER.
MR. JENNISON, PROPRIETOR.

The original copy of the guidebook is in the Jennison Archive

1 *See OS Map 1894*



16

And on no consideration whatever should the visitor omit seeing this unique and beautiful exhibition, which has been eulogised by some of the first naturalists of the day: (a full catalogue of the contents will be found at the end of the book.)

We are now on

THE ISLAND.

And with the readers permission we will point out its features and attractions, all of which may be seen on our progress round, no one being admitted on it.

In the centre on a large Rockery is the Carved Figure of

Flora the Goddess of Flowers.

At each end, on Rockeries, are Two Monkeys elevated on Pedestals, a shell arbour with King William the Fourth seated, surrounded by several Carved Figures, Van Amburg taming the Lion, Elephant with superb Castle and Attendant, a Lion reposing, likewise

The Turret and Clock,

Added to which there is a Cavern which extends from one end of the Island to the other.

On returning from

THE MUSEUM,

We come to the

Small Lake for Gold & Silver Fish,

With Two small ornamental Bridges and Clump in the centre of the Island, to our left is another great object of interest, viz.

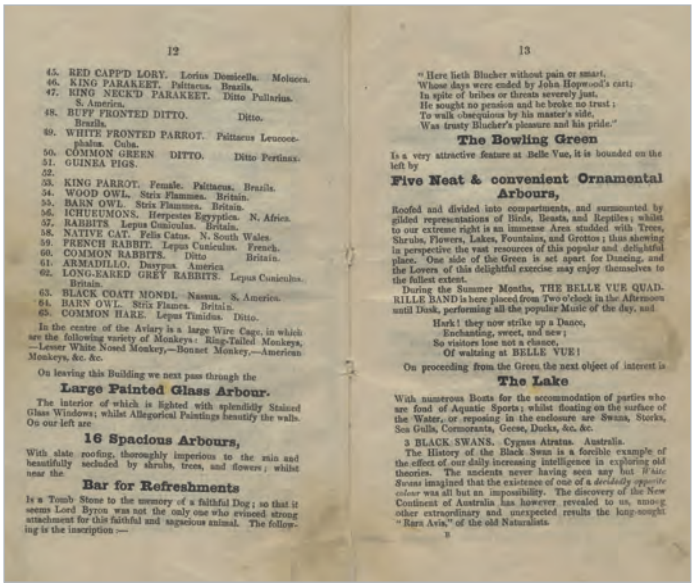
A Large Shell Terrace Flower Bed,

With circular and likewise diamond Fixings, formed entirely of Shells; in the centre is a Weeping Willow and a variety of Fuschias, Petunias, Mimulas, Calceolarius, &c., whilst the basement comprises a selection of choice Verbenas.

The extreme beauty and consummate taste displayed in the arrangement of this clump excites the admiration of thousands, and the general observation made by all on seeing it is "How very beautiful!"

Passing from this little fairy spot, our attention is attracted by

THE MAZE OR LABYRINTH.



12

45. RED CAPP'D LORY. Lorius Domicella. Moluccas.
46. KING PARAKEET. Palttacus. Brazils.
47. KING NECK'D PARAKEET. Ditto Pullarius. S. America.
48. BUFF FRONTED DITTO. Ditto. Brazils.
49. WHITE FRONTED PARROT. Palttacus Leucocephalus. Cuba.
50. COMMON GREEN DITTO. Ditto Pertinax.
51. GUINEA PIGS.
52.
53. KING PARROT. Female. Palttacus. Brazils.
54. WOOD OWL. Strix Flammea. Britain.
55. BARN OWL. Strix Flammea. Britain.
56. ICHUEUMONS. Herpestes Egyptica. N. Africa.
57. RABBITS Lepus Cuniculus. Britain.
58. NATIVE CAT. Felis Catus. N. South Wales.
59. FRENCH RABBIT. Lepus Cuniculus. French.
60. COMMON RABBITS. Ditto Britain.
61. ARMADILLO. Dasypus. America
62. LONG-EARED GREY RABBITS. Lepus Cuniculus. Britain.
63. BLACK COATI MONDI. Nasua. S. America.
64. BARN OWL. Strix Flamea. Britain.
65. COMMON HARE. Lepus Timidus. Ditto.

In the centre of the Aviary is a large Wire Cage, in which are the following variety of Monkeys: Ring-Tailed Monkeys, —Lesser White Nosed Monkey,—Bonnet Monkey,—American Monkeys, &c. &c.

On leaving this Building we next pass through the

Large Painted Glass Arbour.

The interior of which is lighted with splendidly Stained Glass Windows; whilst Allegorical Paintings beautify the walls. On our left are

16 Spacious Arbours,

With slate roofing, thoroughly imperious to the rain and beautifully secluded by shrubs, trees, and flowers; whilst near the

Bar for Refreshments

Is a Tomb Stone to the memory of a faithful Dog; so that it seems Lord Byron was not the only one who evinced strong attachment for this faithful and sagacious animal. The following is the inscription:—

13

"Here lieth Blucher without pain or smart,
Whose days were ended by John Hopwood's cart;
In spite of bribes or threats severely just,
He sought no pension and he broke no trust;
To walk obsequious by his master's side,
Was trusty Blucher's pleasure and his pride."

The Bowling Green

Is a very attractive feature at Belle Vue, it is bounded on the left by

Five Neat & convenient Ornamental Arbours,

Roofed and divided into compartments, and surmounted by gilded representations of Birds, Beasts, and Reptiles; whilst to our extreme right is an immense Area studded with Trees, Shrubs, Flowers, Lakes, Fountains, and Grottos; thus shewing in perspective the vast resources of this popular and delightful place. One side of the Green is set apart for Dancing, and the Lovers of this delightful exercise may enjoy themselves to the fullest extent.

During the Summer Months, THE BELLE VUE QUADRILLE BAND is here placed from Two o'clock in the Afternoon until Dusk, performing all the popular Music of the day, and

Hark! they now strike up a Dance,
Enchanting, sweet, and new;
So visitors lose not a chance,
Of waltzing at BELLE VUE!

On proceeding from the Green the next object of interest is

The Lake

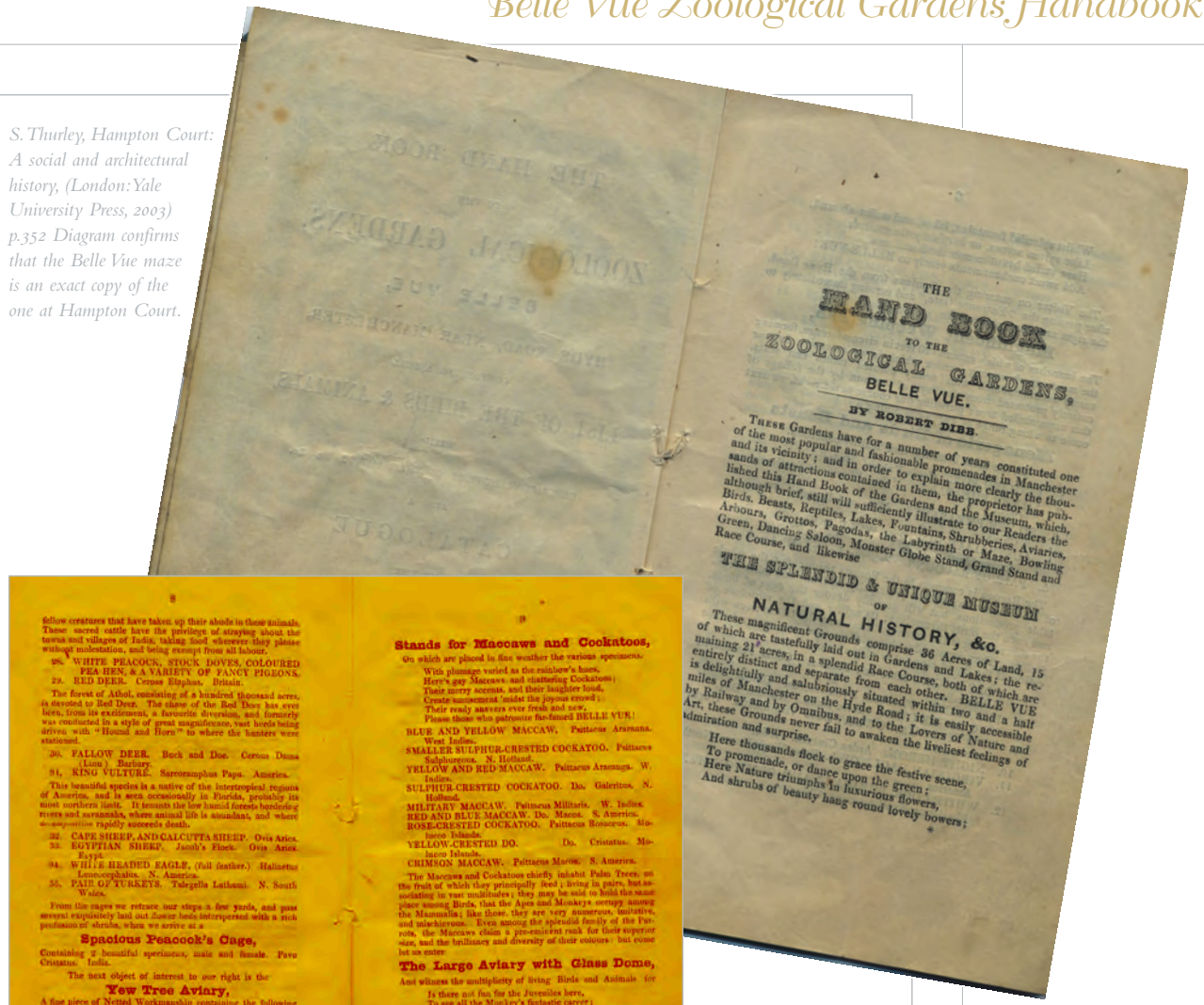
With numerous Boats for the accommodation of parties who are fond of Aquatic Sports; whilst floating on the surface of the Water, or reposing in the enclosure are Swans, Storks, Sea Gulls, Cormorants, Geese, Ducks, &c. &c.

3 BLACK SWANS. Cygnus Atratus. Australia.

The History of the Black Swan is a forcible example of the effect of our daily increasing intelligence in exploring old theories. The ancients never having seen any but *White Swans* imagined that the existence of one of a *decidedly opposite colour* was all but an impossibility. The discovery of the New Continent of Australia has however revealed to us, among other extraordinary and unexpected results the long-sought "Rara Avis," of the old Naturalists.

B

S. Thurley, Hampton Court: A social and architectural history, (London: Yale University Press, 2003) p.352 Diagram confirms that the Belle Vue maze is an exact copy of the one at Hampton Court.



THE

HAND BOOK

TO THE

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS,

BELLE VUE.

BY ROBERT DIBB.

THESE Gardens have for a number of years constituted one of the most popular and fashionable promenades in Manchester and its vicinity; and in order to explain more clearly the thousands of attractions contained in them, the proprietor has published this Hand Book of the Gardens and the Museum, which, although brief, still will sufficiently illustrate to our Readers the Birds. Beasts, Reptiles, Lakes, Fountains, Shrubberies, Aviaries, Arbours, Grottos, Pagodas, the Labyrinth or Maze, Bowling Green, Dancing Saloon, Monster Globe Stand, Grand Stand and Race Course, and likewise

THE SPLENDID & UNIQUE MUSEUM

OF

NATURAL HISTORY, &c.

These magnificent Grounds comprise 36 Acres of Land, 15 of which are tastefully laid out in Gardens and Lakes; the remaining 21 acres, in a splendid Race Course, both of which are entirely distinct and separate from each other. BELLE VUE is delightfully and salubriously situated within two and a half miles of Manchester on the Hyde Road; it is easily accessible by Railway and by Omnibus, and to the Lovers of Nature and Art, these Grounds never fail to awaken the liveliest feelings of admiration and surprise.

Here thousands flock to grace the festive scene,
To promenade, or dance upon the green;
Here Nature triumphs in luxurious flowers,
And shrubs of beauty hang round lovely bowers;

8

fellow creatures that have taken up their abode in these animals. These sacred cattle have the privilege of straying about the towns and villages of India, taking food wherever they please without molestation, and being exempt from all labour.

28. WHITE PEACOCK, STOCK DOVES, COLOURED PEA HEN, & A VARIETY OF FANCY PIGEONS.
29. RED DEER. Cervus Elaphus. Britain.

The forest of Athol, consisting of a hundred thousand acres, is devoted to Red Deer. The chase of the Red Deer has ever been, from its excitement, a favourite diversion, and formerly was conducted in a style of great magnificence, vast herds being driven with "Hound and Horn" to where the hunters were stationed.

30. FALLOW DEER. Buck and Doe. Cervus Dama (Linn.) Barbary.
31. KING VULTURE. Sarcorampbus Papa. America.

This beautiful species is a native of the intertropical regions of America, and is seen occasionally in Florida, probably its most northern limit. It tenants the low humid forests bordering rivers and savannahs, where animal life is abundant, and where decomposition rapidly succeeds death.

32. CAPE SHEEP, AND CALCUTTA SHEEP. Ovis Aries.
33. EGYPTIAN SHEEP, Jacob's Flock. Ovis Aries. Egypt.
34. WHITE HEADED EAGLE, (full feather.) Haliaetus Leucocephalus. N. America.
35. PAIR OF TURKEYS. Talegalla Lathami. N. South Wales.

From the cages we retrace our steps a few yards, and pass several exquisitely laid out Jardin beds interspersed with a rich profusion of shrubs, when we arrive at a

Spacious Peacock's Cage,

Containing a beautiful specimens, male and female. Pavo Cristatus. India.

The next object of interest to our right is the

Yew Tree Aviary,

A fine piece of Netted Workmanship containing the following Foreign and British Birds:—

PARTRIDGES, GODWITS, PLOVERS, BLACKBIRDS, CANARIES, AND A VARIETY OF OTHERS.

Contiguous to this are the

9

Stands for Macaws and Cockatoos,

On which are placed in fine weather the various specimens.

With plumage varied as the rainbow's hues,
Here's gay Macaws and chattering Cockatoos;
Their merry screams, and their laughter loud,
Create amusement 'midst the joyous crowd;
Their ready answers ever fresh and new,
Please those who patronize far-famed BELLE VUE!

BLUE AND YELLOW MACCAW. Psittacus Aramanta. West Indies.
SMALLER SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO. Psittacus Sulphureus. N. Holland.
YELLOW AND RED MACCAW. Psittacus Arsenugo. W. Indies.
SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO. Do. Galeritus. N. Holland.
MILITARY MACCAW. Psittacus Militaris. W. Indies.
RED AND BLUE MACCAW. Do. Macao. S. America.
ROSE-CRESTED COCKATOO. Psittacus Roseicus. Moluco Islands.
YELLOW-CRESTED DO. Do. Cristatus. Moluco Islands.
CRIMSON MACCAW. Psittacus Macao. S. America.

The Maccaws and Cockatoos chiefly inhabit Palm Trees, on the fruit of which they principally feed; living in pairs, but associating in vast multitudes; they may be said to hold the same place among Birds, that the Apes and Monkeys occupy among the Mammalia; like these, they are very numerous, imitative, and mischievous. Even among the splendid family of the Parrots, the Maccaws claim a pre-eminent rank for their superior size, and the brilliancy and diversity of their colours: but come let us enter

The Large Aviary with Glass Dome,

And witness the multiplicity of living Birds and Animals for

Is there not fun for the Juveniles here,
To see all the Monkey's fantastic career;
Such chattering and biting, such quarrelsome elves,
Why! these would amuse you alone to themselves;
Whilst numberless Birds and most wonderful Beasts,
Afford to the lovers of nature a feast!

1. AMERICAN MONKEYS. Male & Female. Celidos. N. America.

Dibb resided in Ardwick but was known as the 'Wharfdale Poet' and wrote on local issues. His poem 'Tax an Englishman's loaf! Where's the mortal who dares?' (1852) relates to the Anti Corn League. Manchester Guardian, 29 July 1846 refers to the poem Dibb wrote for the Cobden National Tribute.

The manuscript and archive do not contain any information about the supply of animals. Bostock in Menageries, p.11 and Blunt in Ark in the Park, p.52 confirm George Wombwell as a renowned animal dealer together with William Cross in Liverpool and W & C Jamrach at London Docks but these are assumptions and there is no supportive evidence available. The guidebook from 1919 details donations to the zoological collection.

The Race Ground

"Mr Jennison never liked these rough patrons."

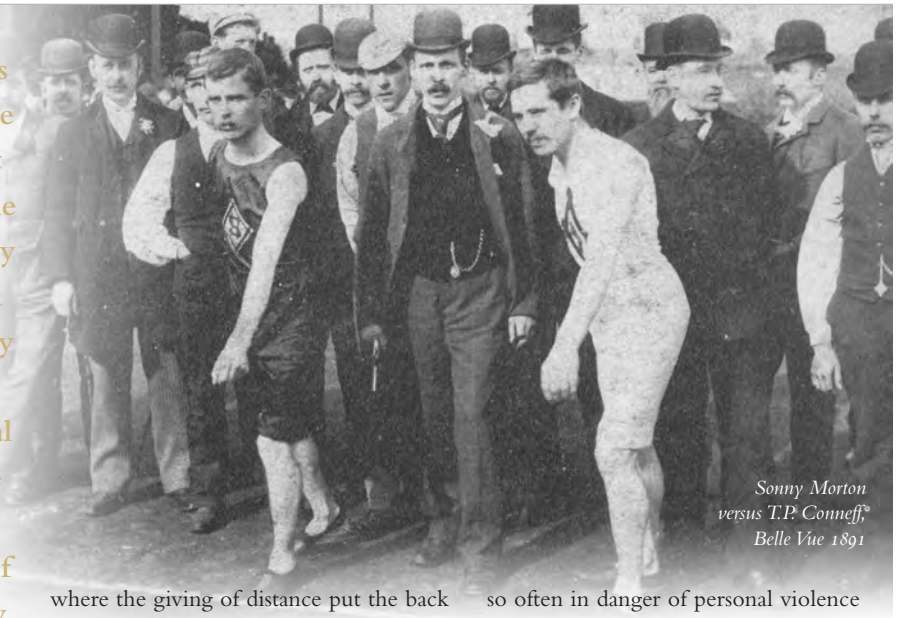
The Race ground was the most valuable part of the Gardens in 1836, and was so improved by Mr. Jennison that it became the recognised spot for the decision of all the most important professional pedestrian Contests in the north of England. The Race Ground was continued for nearly 30 years from necessity rather than inclination. Mr. Jennison never liked these rough patrons and during the whole of that time was making every effort to do without them.[1] The race tracks were finally absorbed in the Gardens, about 1866, though the professional rowing matches and swimming Contests on and in the large Lake continued for some years longer. At the height of its success in 1847-1848 there was a race course three-quarters of a mile round, on which there were trotting matches and pony races. These were not successful and were soon discontinued.


ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, BELLE VUE,
HYDE ROAD, NEAR MANCHESTER.—The SECOND
FLORAL and HORTICULTURAL SHOW, for Carnations, Pic-
Dahlias, &c. &c. will take place on Wednesday, August
—Admission, from twelve to four, 1s.; evening, 6d.—The
Rowers will remain staged the te to following day.—For parti-
culars see schedule, to be had on application to the proprietor,
J. JENNISON.

BELLE VUE HORSE RACES, 1847,
Mr. JAMES BAKE, Judge.
Will take place on FRIDAY and SATURDAY, August 13th and
14th, when the following STAKES will be run for,
The BELLE VUE STAKES of 2 sovs. each, 1 forfeit, with 10
sovs. added.
The STEWARD'S STAKES of 2 sovs. each, 1 forfeit, with 10 sovs. added.
HURDLE RACE of 3 sovs. each, 2 forfeit, with 10 sovs. added.
SECOND DAY, SATURDAY, August 14.
The TRADESMEN'S CUP, of 15 sovs. (in specie), added to a
sweepstakes of 1 sovs. each, £2 10s. forfeit.
The TROTTING SWEEPSTAKES of 5 sovs. each, 2 sovs. forfeit,
with 10 sovs. added, for horses that have never run in a public
match. Gentlemen riders. The horses must be the bona fide
property of gentlemen resident within 20 miles of Manchester.
PONY RACE of 1 sov. each, half forfeit, with 7 sovs. added, for
ponies not exceeding 13 hands high.
All horses to be entered at Mr. Jennison's, Belle Vue, Hyde
Road, near Manchester, not later than Monday, August 9th;
entered by letter, there must be full particulars given therein, and
the amount of the stakes enclosed.—To start at two o'clock each
day.—Matches will be allowed on the course during the two days
To keep the meeting respectable, the admission will be 5d. each
Special trains will leave Longsight Station (1st, 2d, and 3d class
after the race.
Mr. SHIERS, } Stewards.
Mr. HOLDEN, }
Mr. MARK CHADWICK, Clerk of the Course
AMBERGATE, NOTTINGHAM, AN
BOSTON, AND EASTERN JUNCTION RAILWAY.

Manchester Guardian 4 August 1847

The most important, and we may say remarkable features were the pedestrian running tracks which can still be traced at Belle Vue. The tracks are narrow since they were used exclusively for matches of 2 or 3 runners, but they were very well kept and of a size that has never since been approached in the country. There was a 440 yards straight sprint track, the path that runs alongside the present cricket field and continued thence through the site of the camel house and elephant house, with the winning post near the White Tower. A second track that ran into the first with a semi circular bend made a "U" shaped half mile course with only one turn, and a corresponding semi circle at the other end gave a third course of two laps to the mile.[2] On this course Weston did his great walk in 1844, Seward, the American, who was actually an employee at Belle Vue, made his records, and the famous Deerfoot astonished the athletic world with his speed and staying power.[3] The space between the Tracks was used for shooting Contests and Dog Races and rabbit coursing. When an effort was made to stop the last, Belle Vue found a champion whose Statement in Parliament was remembered for seventy years. *"If"*, said he, *"a rich man courses his hares why shouldn't a poor man course his rabbits."* Judging from the records in our possession we cannot call the racers good sports men; more than one event is noted as a barney, and one recalls a particularly unsportsmanlike act at a Dog Handicap,


Sonny Morton versus T.P. Conneff, Belle Vue 1891

where the giving of distance put the back marker behind the usual spot for firing the starting pistol; it is almost impossible to believe, but objection was taken to the starter occupying a position fair to both parties. [4]

The Horse Racing which was intended to give a great uplift was inaugurated on August 12th and 14th 1847. [5]

What a lurid light on the quality of the crowd! The usual admission was three pence.

There were never any amateur Contests and professional events were accompanied naturally by unlimited betting between people who could not trust one another; every member of the family, big or little, was a stake holder on a commission of 6d. in the £. and the crowds were so rough and dangerous that Mr. John Jennison, the eldest son, who was the official judge, was so often in danger of personal violence from infuriated losers that he withheld his decision until he could announce it from a safe place. *"Who's won"*, would be yelled at him by the excited mobs, whilst sticks were raised threateningly over his head. *"Wait a bit, and I'll tell you,"* - and tell them he did, from the top of the White Tower, saying the man on the prison side or the other side as the case might be, was the winner.

1 *D. Brailsford, British Sport, p.54 & p.73 for discussion on Jennison's rationale.*

2 *Jennison Archive F 4.11. 1855 plan of gardens gives an idea of the layout.*

3 *D.Scott & C Bent, Borrowed Time: A social history of running, Salford Harriers 1884-1984, (Moston:Salford Harriers, 1984) p.13*

4 *No evidence in archive but Brailsford, British History confirms incidents such as these as typical of horse racing.*

5 *Manchester Guardian, 4 & 7 August 1847 and Manchester Times, 14 August but not advertised in Bells Life of London.*

"...there were prolonged negotiations for the transfer of the Manchester City Football Club..."

They were all foul mouthed, violent men, and the wealthier section were in addition presumptuously arrogant. Their behaviour led to the worst riot that ever occurred at Belle Vue. It happened at the end of a race day when the whole crowd were crushing for a last drink. Service was too slow to suit one of the *"Swells"*, by which name they went invariably. He stepped inside the bar to draw himself a glass of brandy and when the barman tried to prevent him, struck him with a gold headed cane. The other barmen came to their friend's assistance and the intruder was ejected very roughly. Thereupon his friends joined in the fray and calling in a number of their parasites proceeded to wreck the bar and its surroundings. Mr. Jennison called upon such help as he had available, but it was of little value. He then bethought himself of his friend, the Master Mason, working on the new prison. It was but five minutes across the field and the friend responded nobly. In a body his masons came to the rescue armed with their short heavy mauls. The reinforcements were decisive; victory remained on the side of Justice.

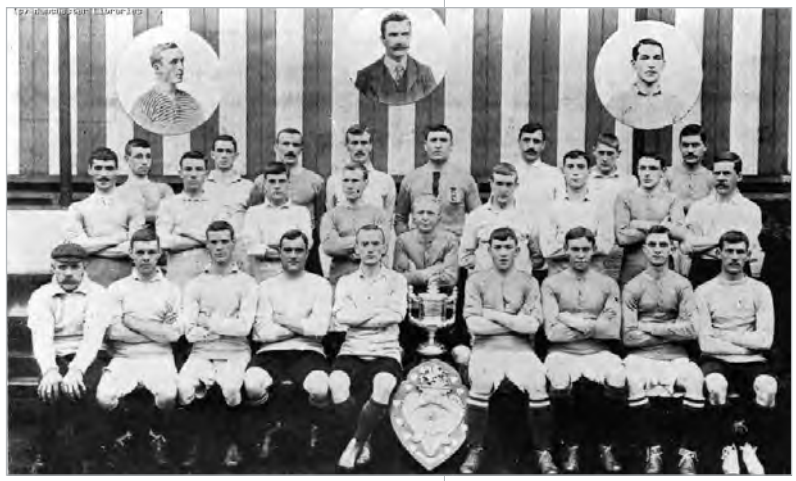
There was a grand supper at Belle Vue on the completion of the jail construction and we have a feeling that the charge for the merry making was more than reasonable. [6]

The diminution of the race ground began with the building of Longsight Entrance in 1851; a path was laid through to Hyde Road which cut off about five acres complete and spoiled the horse race course- which was no loss as it had been a complete failure.[7] In 1854, it was further limited by the erection of a row of cages 200 yards long to the south of the Sprint track and this encroachment was continued to the site of the present Firework shop, which gave 10 more acres to the gardens where they were badly needed. Finally the whole race ground was thrown into Belle Vue and in 1876, the elephant House was built over the most famous running track in the North.[8]

The Salford Harriers

The amateur sports have a ground in the large field of 28 acres which was added to the Western side of Belle Vue in 1872. An amateur meeting was held there in that year on an improvised course. The present course which consists of a four lap track for runners surrounded by a 3 1/2 lap track for cyclists with 120 yards sprint on the grass was formed in 1887 for the first Salford Harriers Sports out of the track of about 400 yds. circuit made for the Lancashire Agricultural Show in 1874. [9] The present tracks which are recognised for championships have been the venue for many interesting amateur Contests. We may mention the famous races between Sid Parry and Sonny Morton and the latter's contest with Conneff and the visit of the American athletes when Queckburner made a record in throwing the weight and the rest of the team scooped nearly all the prizes.[10] This ground is still in use for the Salford Harriers Sports as well as for many private athletic meetings, some of them very largely attended, and it has been the home for 25 years or more of the annual Manchester & Salford School Sports, that bring some 20,000 children to the gardens.[11]

Manchester City Football Club 1904



In 1919-1920 there were prolonged negotiations for the transfer of the Manchester City Football Club to a new ground to be made in this field below the Sports Ground, but they broke down on the point of a fifty years lease or a transfer of the freehold. Both parties probably suffered severely in consequence of the failure.[12]


THE MANCHESTER COURIER, THURSDAY, JULY 1, 1909.

SCHOOL SPORTS AT BELLE VUE

6 *Inscription stone laid 9 October 1849, opened for prisoners in March 1850 and closed in 1886 and subsequently demolished. See M E Bedford,' A history of the Manchester prisons from 1750 - 1880 in the context of penal reform'. Unpublished thesis, Manchester Polytechnic: Department of Economic History, 1990. Manchester Courier, 9 March 1850 reports on the opening of the prison.*

7 *Unable to confirm as earliest accounts evidence in the archive is dated 1859.*

8 *See the 1880 guidebook plan in appendices which shows the location of the elephant house and gives some indication of the location of the racetrack. Earlier guidebooks in the archive do not include a plan.*

9 *1896 Guidebook plan in appendices.*

10 *See D.Scott & C. Bent, Borrowed Time, p.12 -13 discusses the competitions held at Belle Vue and Manchester Examiner & Times, 5 October 1889 con firms the contest. The Times, 3 October 1890 also reports of the Harriers tour of America featuring all the athletes mentioned by Jennison.*

11 *Manchester Guardian, 9 July 1914 confirms 'Manchester and Salford School Sports held their 21st annual sports event at Belle Vue'.*

12 *Jennison Archive F 4.3. 16 (ii) Article from Manchester Evening News, 9 May 1922. See also Inglis, Played in Manchester, p.46. Manchester City went on to build Maine Road Stadium where they played for eighty years before moving to the present site at Eastlands.*

Belle Vue 1847

"The Gardens were making a strong appeal to the best class of working people..."

Three bands were engaged to play for continuous dancing during the two great holidays of the year, Whitsuntide and Gorton Wakes.[1] Gorton must have been very small and unimportant, for this annual holiday which occurred usually on the first four days in September, is always called Belle Vue Wakes.[2]

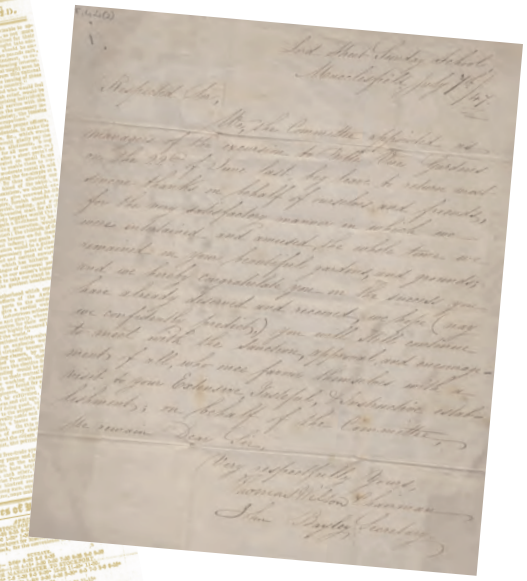
In 1847 a new venture was tried with some success. The space under the grandstand for the Race Ground which could accommodate 1500 spectators was used for Floral and Horticultural Shows, which were continued for many years.[3] In 1850 the Northern Tulip Show was attended by visitors from all over England and Scotland. It is fully reported in the Manchester Guardian, which states that Mr. Jennison, the spirited and liberal proprietor of the Gardens, gave £20 towards the prizes.[4]

These four years were a time of great expansion and development. The Gardens were making a strong appeal to the best class of working people, great numbers of school treats were given, many of them brought by excursion from long distances. We have great pride in printing here a testimonial from a Sunday School in John Jennison's hometown, Macclesfield.[5] It is the first definite date of a railway excursion though there were probably others since; Mr. Jennison certainly arranged a Sunday School excursion from Macclesfield by canal when that water way was the only cheap means of conveyance.[6] Business grew so brisk that the museum on the island became inadequate and the available profits from the years 1847 to 1849 were turned, as they always were turned for the next 30 years, into land purchase or improvements in the Gardens.[7] A new museum was built near the Hyde Road entrance with accommodation underneath it for the horses of the many visitors who came in carts from Ashton, Stalybridge, Hyde and the neighbouring districts generally, and beyond the museum a room about 60 feet long and 25 feet wide between[8] the first Belle Vue Ballroom. It forms today part of the printing office; the band stand still remains with accommodation for nine or ten performers. The floor is 6 inch boards that are not very even now, whatever may have been the case at that time.

1850 presents many other novelties; the old museum was used for the exhibition of a model of Hobart Town, extra and lighter boats were put on the lake, a gymnasium was arranged for the children, an aviary was made and a new Monkey House, with a monster cage 600 cub. feet, where these popular creatures could display themselves to advantage, and the first Firework Spectacle was given. Admission to Belle Vue had now risen to 4d. without refreshments.[11]

This was the first firework display at Belle Vue.[10]


ckport
Advertiser.
AND CHESHIRE, LANCASHIRE, AND DERBYSHIRE WEEKLY JOURNAL.
FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 1848.
Price 4½D.



1 *For a detailed examination of the tradition of the 'wakes' see J.K. Walton and R. Poole, 'The Lancashire Wakes in the nineteenth century', R.D. Storch, (ed.) Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth Century England (London: Croom Helm, 1982) pp. 100-24*

2 *Press advertisements from 1849 onwards refer to Belle Vue Wakes which were held during the first week of September*

3 *Manchester Guardian, 7 August 1847*

4 *Manchester Guardian, 25 May 1850*

5 *Jennison archive F.4.4.4., 7 July 1847*

6 *This is debatable see map of canals in C. Hadfield and G. Biddle, Canals of NW England: Vol 2 (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1970) p.297 The route from Macclesfield to Gorton appears to be some distance and not direct. Nicholls, Belle Vue p.6 concurs with this observation*

7 *See articles Manchester Guardian, 30 March 1850, 25 May 1850 and 26 June 1850*

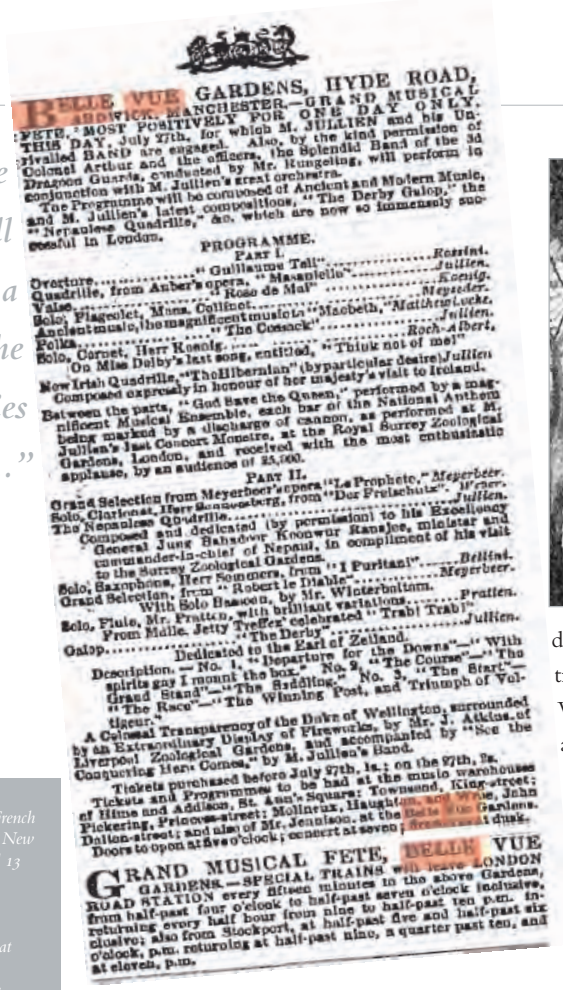
8 *Assume Jennison meant 'became'*

9 *Vauxhall Gardens in London established at the beginning of the eighteenth century and a forerunner for many of the events and spectacles that other commercial gardens replicated. See R.D. Altick, The Shows of London, (London: Harvard University Press, 1978) for comprehensive detail of this venue.*

10 *Stockport Advertiser, 9 June 1848 .*

11 *Manchester Guardian, 18 May 1850*

"...a facade of one large and two small arches which formed a pleasant frame to the sylvan beauties beyond..."



BELLE VUE GARDENS, HYDE ROAD, MANCHESTER.—GRAND MUSICAL FETE, MOST POSITIVELY FOR ONE DAY ONLY, THIS DAY, July 27th, for which M. JULLIEN and his Unrivalled BAND are engaged. Also, by the kind permission of Colonel Arthur and the officers, the Splendid Band of the 3d Dragon Guards, conducted by Mr. Hungerling, will perform in conjunction with M. Jullien's great orchestra.

The Programme will be composed of Ancient and Modern Music, and M. Jullien's latest compositions, "The Derby Galop," the "Nepaulese Quadrille," &c. which are now so immensely successful in London.

PROGRAMME.

PART I.

Overture.....“Guillaume Tell”.....*Rossini.*
Quadrille, from Auber's opera, “Masaniello”.....*Jullien.*
Valse.....“Rose de Mai”.....*Meyerbeer.*
Solo, Flageolet, Mons. Collinet.....*Koenig.*
Ancient music, the magnificent music in “Macbeth,”.....*Matthew Locke.*
Polka.....“The Cossack”.....*Jullien.*
Solo, Cornet, Herr Koenig.....*Koch-Albert.*
“On Miss Dolby's last song, entitled, “Think not of me!”
New Irish Quadrille, “The Hibernian” (by particular desire).....*Jullien.*
Composed expressly in honour of her majesty's visit to Ireland.
Between the parts, “God Save the Queen,” performed by a magnificent Musical Ensemble, each bar of the National Anthem being marked by a discharge of cannon, as performed at M. Jullien's last Concert Monstre, at the Royal Surrey Zoological Gardens, London, and received with the most enthusiastic applause, by an audience of 25,000.

PART II.

Grand Selection from Meyerbeer's opera “Le Prophete,”.....*Meyerbeer.*
Solo, Clarionet, Herr Sonnenburg, from “Der Freischutz”.....*Weber.*
The Nepaulese Quadrille.....*Jullien.*
Composed and dedicated (by permission) to his Excellency General Jung Bahadoor Koonwur Ranajee, minister and commander-in-chief of Nepaul, in compliment of his visit to the Surrey Zoological Gardens.
Solo, Saxophone, Herr Sommers, from “I Puritani”.....*Bellini.*
Grand Selection, from “Robert le Diable”.....*Meyerbeer.*
With Solo Bassoon, by Mr. Winterbottom.
Solo, Flute, Mr. Pratten, with brilliant variations.....*Pratten.*
From Malle. Jetty Treffer's celebrated “Trab! Trab!”
Galop.....“The Derby”.....*Jullien.*
Dedicated to the Earl of Zetland.

Description.—No. 1, “Departure for the Downs”—“The spirits say I mount the box.” No. 2, “The Course”—“The Grand Stand”—“The Saddling.” No. 3, “The Start”—“The Race”—“The Winning Post, and Triumph of Volligeur.”

A Colossal Transparency of the Duke of Wellington, surrounded by an Extraordinary Display of Fireworks, by Mr. J. Atkins, of Liverpool Zoological Gardens, and accompanied by “See the Conquering Hero Comes,” by M. Jullien's Band.

Tickets purchased before July 27th, 1s.; on the 27th, 2s.
Tickets and Programmes to be had at the music warehouses of Hime and Addison, St. Ann's Square; Townsend, King-street; Pickering, Princes-street; Mollineux, Haughton, and Wrige, John Dalton-street; and also of Mr. Jennison, at the Belle Vue Gardens. Doors to open at five o'clock; concert at seven; fireworks and dusk.

GRAND MUSICAL FETE, BELLE VUE GARDENS.—SPECIAL TRAINS will leave LONDON ROAD STATION every fifteen minutes in the above Gardens, from half-past four o'clock to half-past seven o'clock inclusive, returning every half hour from nine to half-past ten p.m. inclusive; also from Stockport, at half-past five and half-past six o'clock, p.m. returning at half-past nine, a quarter past ten, and at eleven, p.m.

On July 27th 1850 the admission was 2/-: or 1/- for tickets bought in advance, but this was an extraordinary occasion. Special trains were run from London Road to Longsight every fifteen minutes. The great Jullien's band[12] very famous in Manchester, gave a concert which was to be punctuated by the firing of cannon.[13] From the proceedings reported in the local press one gathers that the Band was not at full strength and the firing of the guns very ill-timed.[14] The fireworks, which were by Atkins* of Liverpool, are described as pretty fair and the colossal transparency of the Duke of Wellington, 50 feet high, was good and rather striking. Jullien's concert was only repeated once; he was too great a luxury. Madame Jullien *"minded the gate herself and took all the receipts."*

** Atkins, a great showman, the rival of Wombwell, had a pleasure garden of seven acres near Liverpool.*

Thus the gardens progressed until in 1851, the admission became permanently 6d. The floral exhibitions continue and there are many special attractions, provided chiefly by traveling circuses, as, well as an exhibition of a young Manx giant, 22 years of age and 7' 6" tall. The first aquatic tournament, given on September 10th at the end of Belle Vue wakes, was made the occasion of Firework displays on September 8th, 10th, and 13th[15] 1851 was a Red Letter year in the history of Manchester. Queen Victoria visited the city on October 10th, and in honour of the event Belle Vue engaged Guiseppi Leonardini[16] to ascend with his friends in the Cremona Royal Balloon at 4 p.m. and gave a fine display of fireworks by Merriday in the evening, without any increase in admission.[17] The chief structural developments this year were the erection of a fine octagonal Bandstand at the end of the outdoor dancing platform, the provision of a good refreshment Room and the building of Longsight Entrance, which cost £1,000- perhaps one quarter of what would be charged to-day.[18] It consisted of two houses united, above by a large dancing room on brick pillars with a facade of one large and two small arches which formed a pleasant frame to the sylvan beauties beyond. The structure is imposing but severe, which is not to be wondered at; the contractor had just finished Her Majesty's Prison at Hyde Road, and reproduced at Longsight the same type of architecture.[19]

Longsight entrance

12 *ODNB entry for Louis Jullien (1812-1860) French conductor and composer. See also entry in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Vol 13 (London: Macmillan,2001).*

13 *Manchester Guardian, 27 July 1850.*

14 *Manchester Guardian, 31 July 1850 reports that 'due to the unfavourable state of the weather, Jullien's band returns on 3 August' so presume Manchester's fickle weather played its part.*

15 *All confirmed in Manchester Guardian advertisements in September 1851.*

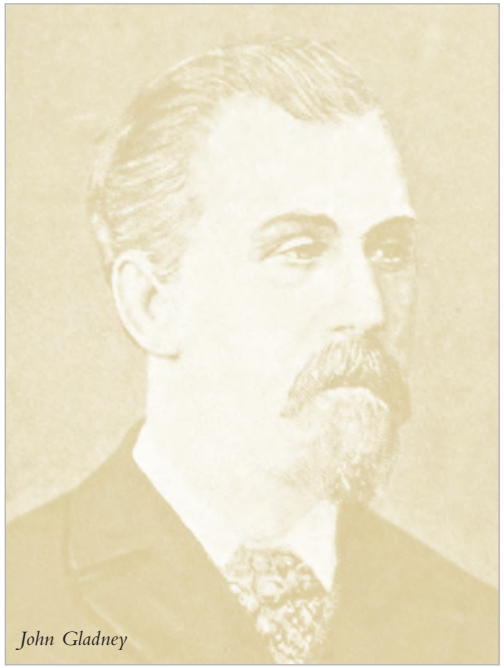
16 *A pseudonym his real name was Arthur Goulston from London. See B R Robinson, Aviation in Manchester: A short history, (Leicester: A B Printers Ltd, 1977) p.10.*

17 *All confirmed in Manchester Guardian, 8 October 1851 including confirmation of Merriday. Also George Jennison's research material (F4.11) has numerous listings in chronological order of all the various events.*

18 *A substantial investment given the financial position in 1842. Converts to £58,530 based on 2005 currency conversion on National Archives website.*

19 *All developments confirmed in lengthy article Manchester Guardian, 6 August 1851.*

Alexander Owen



John Gladney

The Band

Music was an attraction at Belle Vue from the beginning, scratch combinations engaged for special occasions making up in noise what they lacked in harmony. One almost suspects an acid humour in the advertisements that *"a powerful Brass Band will be in attendance."* The permanent Band (at first brass) began about 1847, its members recruited from the Gardens staff or otherwise given other duties when there was no call for their musical services. Thus a man might be found in the Bakehouse in the morning, or plying his trade as a carpenter, who in the afternoon would discourse on the Cornet or Bombardon. This dual occupation ceased in a few years, but for almost half a century the band was expected, and did, turn its hand to anything if there were no visitors. A big party on Saturday often meant the whole Band peeling potatoes on Friday, the quietest afternoon in the week.[20] That the nucleus should be so professional is comprehensible, but one can only marvel that distinguished musicians should submit tamely to such treatment. Prosperity brought a wonderful improvement in that orchestra. Mr. Jennison was as enterprising in that as in his other undertakings.

The Great Exhibition in 1851 brought many foreign musicians to this country. When the first Band Contest was held in 1853 the organiser had the brilliant inspiration to show the enthusiastic but incompetent players of the North how the thing should be done.[21] He engaged Levy, Sommers, German, Medina[22] and others to play exhibition solos and he offered to several of them positions in his Band where many remained for life. In 1855 the bandmaster, Thomas Hough, was replaced by the celebrated Herr Sommers who had played at the Crystal Palace and at Windsor by royal command. He did not stay very long - the account of his departure appears later under anecdotes. Mr. Tom German was in the band for forty years at least. Angelo Medina, a native of Lecco in Italy, and an accomplished cornet player, won the affections of Ann Jennison whom he married in 1860 and became head of the Band and a member of the family until his death in 1869.

His wages were 35/- per week, (not much, but his brothers-in-law got nothing. Editor).[23] Ann, the Aunt Ann of all our early recollections, had not the slightest interest in music and never by any chance went to listen to the Band, but she placed her affections on yet another musician, also a cornet player, a Mr. George Kelsall, a widower with three children, who by her assistance obtained nearly the same position and advantages as Mr. Medina. Fortunately he was an extremely efficient Bandmaster and satisfactorily bridged the period between the orchestra of nonentities and stars and the present one of good general efficiency.

24 The majority of Belle Vue customers were paid their wages on Friday so can assume they had insufficient funds to visit Belle Vue until after they had been paid.

21 Manchester Guardian, 6 July 1853.

22 See J.N. Hampson, Origins, history and achievements of Besses o'th Barn Band, (Northampton, Joseph Rogers, 1892) p.21 Thomas German was the principal trombone for the Halle orchestra and conductor of Besses. Sommers had a troubled relationship with Belle Vue.

23 An incongruous remark within the narrative as there are no other references to the editor.

"When I got my instrument to my lips, the notes flew up to the ceiling."

Most of the stars had to be removed; they were dissatisfied not with their wages but with their work.

They could be relied upon for a most artistic rendering of a classical selection; when they should have been playing the dance music that the populace required, they deserted their posts. Mr. George Jennison dismissed them without offence with the explanation that they were too good for the place. Mr. Kelsall's life is a musical romance.

His father was a farmer in Stretford where there was a band of sorts with a cornet player who took on airs from an idea, always erroneous, that he was indispensable. Kelsall said: *"I'll find you a cornet player"* and young George had to add the cornet as an extra to ploughing. He learned double tongueing from an old Crimean bandsman for nothing and finally he attained to Halle's orchestra in which he played for many years.[24] As a member of the Stretford Band,[25] which was engaged occasionally at the Gardens, his ability was noted and Mr. John Jennison Jr. went over to Stretford to engage him for the Belle Vue Band. He found George weeding turnips and said: *"I want you to come and play in our Band." "Go and see father,"* said George. John proffered his request which had a doubtful reception. Old Mr. Kelsall was a simple non-conformist who had grave misgivings of the effects of Belle Vue on his son. Anyway, he said he could try for a fortnight; *"and the fortnight's not up yet,"* was a standing joke with Mr. Kelsall until his death in 1918. As a cornet player he was superb, and could challenge comparison with any member of the Band, which in its time contained John Gladney, Alexandria Owen, and Oliver Gaggs.[26] During one season at Halle's he had to take the trumpet, owing to the illness of the regular player. He was a nervous man and musicians will sympathise with him in the ordeal of walking to the front of the stage to accompany Mr. Santley in *"The Trumpet shall sound."*
"When I got my instrument to my lips," said he, *"the notes flew up to the ceiling. If I had not known them by heart I should have broken down. I was glad when it was over, and I was proud to feel the pats on the back from the violins as I walked to my seat. The extra pay that year gave me my piano."*

The long and unbroken association of the musicians accounts for the success of the Belle Vue Band. Even the extra band who call themselves the City Royal Band have had the engagement for over seventy years. There is now a third permanent Band for the service of the skating rink.

24 *See M.Kennedy, The Halle Tradition; A Century of Music, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1960) for the origins and growth of the Halle orchestra, a famous Mancunian cultural institution.*

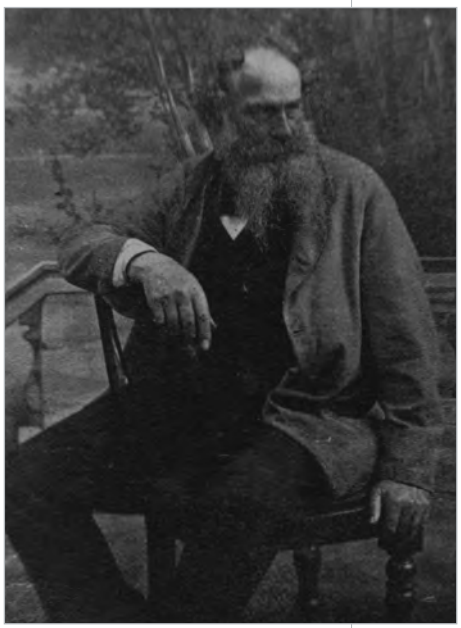
25 *Jennison archive E.4.2.5 account ledger for October 1859 confirms payment to the Stretford Band.*

26 *Groves Vol.9, p.920 verifies John Gladney (1839-1911) and entry also confirms Alexander Owen Hampson, Besses p.17 confirms Oliver Gaggs conducting at funeral of James Melling 17th November 1870.*

The Seeker Finds The Golden Treasure

"I must have something like that."

But if 1851 was a Red Letter Year to Manchester, it was a golden crown of prosperity to Belle Vue. The Queen came to Manchester;[1] John Jennison went to London. It was the year of the Great Exhibition, that was to inaugurate the era of peace and goodwill amongst the nations. Ann, the only daughter, who then attained her majority, was full of the glamour of the young Queen, and the golden era that was to be. Her existing scrapbook consists of little else but court and ceremonial and the Great Exhibition.[2] One likes to think that the visit of Mr. & Mrs. Jennison and their daughter to London was their present to her on attaining her majority, and we can imagine the joy of the great adventure. London was almost unknown; a few years before it hard meant a week's travelling, but things had changed since the wonderful railways came.



George Danson

It was still a hard and tedious journey; covered and windowed carriages marked a luxurious advance, but the compartments were narrow, the seats hard and bare, and the journey took twelve hours for the common people, who were shunted into sidings *"to let their betters pass."* But they arrived, father, mother and Ann, and no doubt enjoyed the wonders of the world and the Tower and the lions of London. And they went to see the Fireworks at the Surrey Gardens.[3] These were no ordinary Fireworks; rockets there were in plenty, and squibs[4] and petards,[5] but there were cannon too and men fighting a mimic battle on a painted battlefield. The ladies saw and wondered. John saw too - saw his chance, and took it. *"I must have something like that"*, he said, and next day he sought out George Danson, who with his two sons, Thomas and Robert, painted and arranged these spectacles.[6]

John Jennison, the enterprising seeker, had found his treasure. Belle Vue was made!

In October of that year, George Danson and the boys came down to investigate; no one knew of their arrival.

The telegraph was in use probably, but it was not in the scheme of things for the general public. The racers were still relying on pigeon post for their results. The Dansons arrived at Ardwick Station, very tired and ill-tempered, found no one to meet them and no conveyance; there they were, on a dark night, in an unknown countryside, without a guide. They made the best of a bad job and sought directions. Ardwick Station was built on a bank which was helpful. *"Do you see that light right over yonder,"* the porter said, *"and that other a lot further on? Well, that's Belle Vue."* And they set out with their bags to trudge along the country road; the distance is about a mile and a quarter but it must have seemed much further to travel to tired men, carrying their baggage, and they arrived at last in an evil temper. The auguries were not auspicious.

But in the sanctity of his own fireside, John Jennison was hospitality itself. He and George Danson became at once as brothers, and the two sons were swallowed up in the Jennison family, and became part and parcel of it, living in the Hotel and using our common room, until Mr. Thomas painted his last picture in 1893.[7]

George Danson was a native of Liverpool. Disowned by his family for marrying a ballet girl, he took a menial position under Ducrot the celebrated scenic artist, kept his family, and taught himself the trade and mystery of scene painting. He was a stern disciplinarian, an autocrat and a strict businessman; even for his friends he could scarcely be persuaded to touch a picture once it had left his hands.

1 *Manchester Guardian, 10 October 1851.*

2 *Jennison Archive F.4.3.16.*

3 *Altick, Shows of London, pp.323-330.*

4 *OED - Small firework that burns with hissing sound before exploding.*

5 *OED - Small bomb made of a metal or wooden box filled with gunpowder.*

6 *Altick, Shows of London, p.325 confirms Danson as the scenic artist.*

7 *www.ancestry.co.uk 1861 census confirm George, Thomas and Robert Danson all living at Belle Vue. George Danson was born in Lancaster and his sons were born in Lambeth. George died 1881 in Clapham, Thomas in 1893 in Wandsworth and Robert in 1917 also in Wandsworth.*

"The middle of a lake is the ideal place for a firework show..."

The whole family were artists to the finger tips; they could work on inches as effectively as on acres of canvas. Robert, incomparably the least skilful, had a picture of a white horse accepted by the Royal Academy; Thomas did many sketches, and George's masterpiece, now in my sister's possession, *"Belle Vue, Whit Sunday, 1860,"* is a perfect gem of brightness and lightness, as well as a topographical treasure.[8]

They were broad-minded serious men, not given to frivolous talk or joking, extremely well informed and very practical and the soul of honour. I never heard, or heard of, a word of dispute during the 40 years the families worked together. And as it was in the end so it began. John Jennison was 61 years of age, George Danson 53. They discussed the question in all its bearings, agreed on £400 as the price of the picture and ratified their contract in solemn form by washing their hands in a basin into which they had spat. That contract was never broken.

The First Picture,

The Bombardment of Algiers

The first picture was painted in the large room over the Longsight Entrance, completed sheets being let down through a trap door in the floor. Mr. Danson came on the 1st December 1851 to put his assistants, Mr. Carroll and Mr. Carroll Jnr., at work. He and his two sons came on the 2nd February, 1852 and were assisted for a short time by another young artist, Mr. Wilson;[9] the whole picture was completed on April 15th, the fireworks were in the hands of Mr. Bruce, who was paid £2 a week for his services, 15/- being allowed for his assistant.[10]

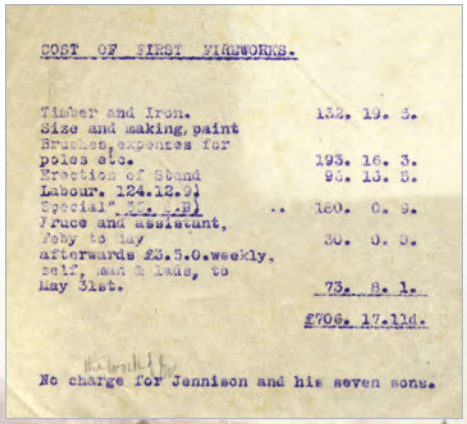
That gives a good idea of the fireworks used in the earliest spectacles at Belle Vue.

There was a perfect site for the new venture.[11] The lake was so near to the boundary that the space behind it could be temporarily closed for the use of the workers on the scene and it was far enough from the dancing Platform for a good crowd of spectators to assemble. The lake was enlarged and the spoil made a sloping bank from which they might see in comfort and without expense if they so desired. For those who wished to pay, a gallery 108 feet long was erected which formed the nucleus of the Refreshment Room, Tea Room and Ballroom of the future. The panorama was erected on the island; the existing bridge chanced to be in a suitable place and the building that had been the Museum became the property room. The total cost of the installation was ludicrously small and the result was perfection.

The Cost of Fireworks [12]

The middle of a lake is the ideal place for a firework show and counted for much in the success of Belle Vue fireworks. The water mirrors and multiplies the lights and fire, keeps the spectators out of danger and forces them to see the spectacle in its proper perspective.

The lake influenced the choice of the first subject. Naval subjects have provided as a rule the least successful of the shows at Belle Vue, a proper perspective of men and battleship inevitably blanked all the rear portion of the island. For many years they have been practically taboo for that reason.



COST OF FIRST FIREWORKS.

Timber and Iron.	132. 19. 3.
Size and making, paint Brushes, expenses for poles etc.	193. 16. 3.
Erection of Stand	96. 13. 5.
Labour. 124.12.9} Special" 35. 7.3} ..	160. 0. 9.
Bruce and assistant, Paby to May afterwards £3.5.0.weekly.	30. 0. 0.
self, and 2 lads, to May 31st.	73. 8. 1.
	£706. 17.11d.

No charge for Jennison and his seven sons.

8 *Royal Academy of Art: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their works 1769-1904 confirms George Danson exhibited at the Academy three times in 1823, 1824 and 1842. Thomas Danson exhibited in 1855 but there is no entry for Robert Danson. 'Belle Vue, Whit Sunday' by George Danson is part of the collections in the Manchester Art Gallery and is illustrated on page three.*

9 *Assume these artists were temporarily employed.*

10 *Manchester Examiner & Times, 29 May 1852, article confirms fireworks from 'Mr. Bruce of London'*

11 *Jennison archive F.4.3 1872 Guidebook plan is the earliest available evidence to confirm the location.*

12 *Jennison archive F 4.2 .1*

Even Zeebrugge had to be abandoned, though the management laboured day after day to overcome the difficulties, not for pecuniary advantage merely, but from a desire to honour worthily our naval heroes of the Great War.[13] The earliest pictures suffered very little from this disability in panorama and action, (very small compared with later achievements) with a personnel of a few men and boys of whom very few came into the limelight. They were almost dioramas[14] with spasmodic action, guns and smoke. Such were the humble beginnings of the Belle Vue spectacles, - Mr. Danson would never permit them to be called fireworks. The picture was ready long before the appointed day, Whit Monday, itself unimportant, but the beginning of the Manchester Wakes which reached its zenith on the Friday and Saturday. On those days and Trinity Monday, were taken about one seventh of the year's receipts.[15] A good impression then was important. Time permitted of a few test shows and the first representation of the first spectacle, *"The Bombardment of Algiers"* took place on Saturday, May 22nd 1852.

It was well advertised at a length that none but millionaires could afford at the present price of newspaper space, and well written too. The editor of the Manchester Guardian did everything for the matter except pay for it.[16]

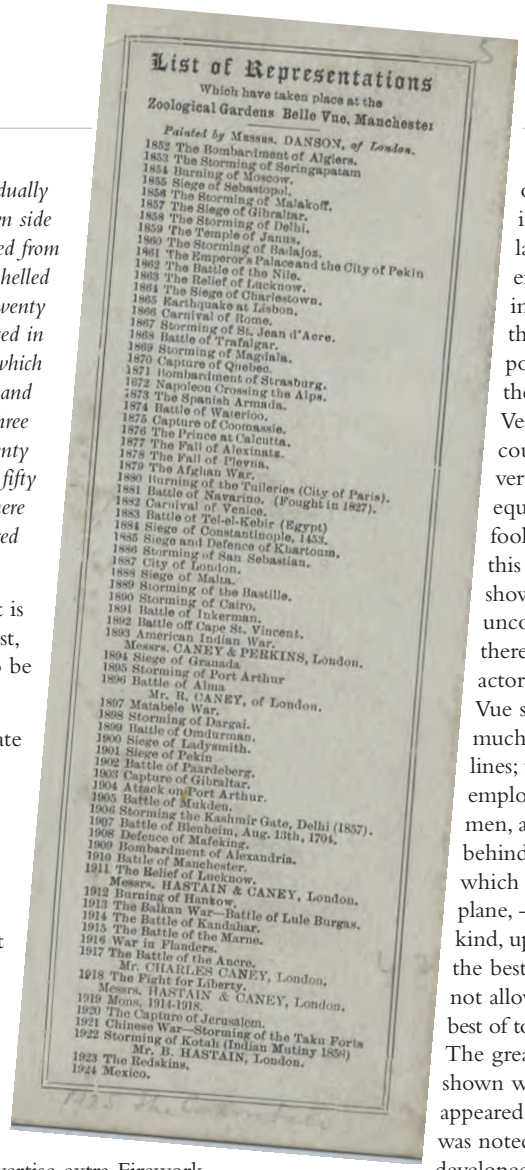
The Manchester papers did not notice the event; they came a fortnight later when the call seemed justified and the arrival, first of the Guardian and then of the Examiner man, caused quite a flutter of excitement in the family.

John Jennison had kept in close touch with his Stockport friends and the Stockport Advertiser devotes a few lines to the first show.

"The scene was gradually lighted from the town side which was bombarded from the big vessels and shelled by the lesser ones. Twenty five men were engaged in the performance in which were used one thousand guns and fireballs, three hundred rockets, twenty five large shells and fifty Roman Candles, There were eighteen hundred persons present."[17]

The last statement is correct and the rest, therefore, likely to be reliable.

It was an immediate and startling success; the gate receipts on the opening day, May 22nd 1852, were £62, but the last three days in Whit Week produced £1193, compared with £889 in 1851,[18] and at the time of Belle Vue Wakes in September, the Gardens could advertise extra Firework days to see the spectacle which had already attracted 100,000 people.[19] There is a wonderful sidelight on its popularity in an advertisement of Pomona Gardens, the great rival, that a Firework Display *"will be produced later"*. At this point it is perhaps worthwhile to consider why the Belle Vue Fireworks were so much more successful than their predecessors of a similar kind at other places in Manchester and elsewhere. It seems to me that these



List of Representations

Which have taken place at the Zoological Gardens Belle Vue, Manchester

Painted by Messrs. DANSON, *of London.*

1852 The Bombardment of Algiers.
1853 The Storming of Seringapatam
1854 Burning of Moscow.
1855 Siege of Sebastopol.
1856 The Storming of Malakoff.
1857 The Siege of Gibraltar.
1858 The Storming of Delhi.
1859 The Temple of Janus.
1860 The Storming of Badajoz.
1861 The Emperor's Palace and the City of Pekin
1862 The Battle of the Nile.
1863 The Relief of Lucknow.
1864 The Siege of Charlestown.
1865 Earthquake at Lisbon.
1866 Carnival of Rome.
1867 Storming of St. Jean d'Acre.
1868 Battle of Trafalgar.
1869 Storming of Magdala.
1870 Capture of Quebec.
1871 Bombardment of Strasburg.
1872 Napoleon Crossing the Alps.
1873 The Spanish Armada.
1874 Battle of Waterloo.
1875 Capture of Coomassie.
1876 The Prince at Calcutta.
1877 The Fall of Alexinatz.
1878 The Fall of Plevna.
1879 The Afghan War.
1880 Burning of the Tuileries (City of Paris).
1881 Battle of Navarino. (Fought in 1827).
1882 Carnival of Venice.
1883 Battle of Tel-el-Kebir (Egypt)
1884 Siege of Constantinople, 1453.
1885 Siege and Defence of Khartoum.
1886 Storming of San Sebastian.
1887 City of London.
1888 Siege of Malta.
1889 Storming of the Bastille.
1890 Storming of Cairo.
1891 Battle of Inkerman.
1892 Battle off Cape St. Vincent.
1893 American Indian War.
Messrs. CANEY & PERKINS, London.
1894 Siege of Granada
1895 Storming of Port Arthur
1896 Battle of Alma
Mr. R. CANEY, of London.
1897 Matabele War.
1898 Storming of Dargai.
1899 Battle of Omdurman.
1900 Siege of Ladysmith.
1901 Siege of Pekin
1902 Battle of Paardeberg.
1903 Capture of Gibraltar.
1904 Attack on Port Arthur.
1905 Battle of Mukden.
1906 Storming the Kashmir Gate, Delhi (1857).
1907 Battle of Blenheim, Aug. 13th, 1704.
1908 Defence of Mafeking.
1909 Bombardment of Alexandria.
1910 Battle of Manchester.
1911 The Relief of Lucknow.
Messrs. HASTAIN & CANEY, London.
1912 Burning of Hankow.
1913 The Balkan War—Battle of Lule Burgas.
1914 The Battle of Kandahar.
1915 The Battle of the Marne.
1916 War in Flanders.
1917 The Battle of the Ancre.
Mr. CHARLES CANEY, London.
1918 The Fight for Liberty.
Messrs. HASTAIN & CANEY, London.
1919 Mons, 1914-1918.
1920 The Capture of Jerusalem.
1921 Chinese War—Storming of the Taku Forts
1922 Storming of Kotah (Indian Mutiny 1858)
Mr. B. HASTAIN, London.
1923 The Redskins.
1924 Mexico.

others were invariably lacking in energy and initiative; almost the only episode portrayed was the Eruption of Vesuvius, which could be made very dramatic and equally easily very foolish.[20] Probably this particular show was very unconvincing and there were no actors. The Belle Vue spectacle began much on the same lines; the first show employed only 25 men, almost all behind the scene, which was on one plane, - the best of its kind, up-to-date, but the best of today was not allowed to be the best of tomorrow. The great interest shown when actors appeared on the scene was noted; action developed year by year. In 1856 the first wings were introduced and the number of supers employed increased continually; in 1863 there were 100 and there are now over 200, irrespective of the Firework Staff. The wisdom of this move is evident from the fact that the only failure in 74 years was the representation of *"The Temple of Janus"*, 1859, which relied on a series of pictures of Roman battles.[21] The Firework display which accompanied and completed the show was not sufficient to retrieve it from disaster. The earliest shows terminated with a long roll of painted picture illuminated from behind - the lancework devices so famous at Belle Vue began in 1863.

13 *See P. Warner, The Zeebrugge Raid, (London: Kimber, 1978).*

14 *OED - Model representing a scene.*

15 *Trinity Monday follows Trinity Sunday, the first Sunday after Pentecost. Pentecost follows seven weeks after Easter Sunday and therefore Trinity Monday falls into the Whitsun holidays and explains the increased number of visitors.*

16 *Detailed articles appear in the Manchester Guardian on 17 April, 16 May and 26 May 1852 together with numerous advertisements. The editor at this date was Jeremiah Garnett see W.H. Mills, Manchester Guardian: A Century of History, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1921) p.91. Minor coverage of the events in Manchester Examiner & Times.*

17 *Stockport Advertiser, 21 May 1852*

18 *Accounts for the dates mentioned are not in the archive but must assume Jennison had sight of financial information to enable him to quote the figures.*

19 *Working on 6d admission and based on the gate receipts of £1193 would confirm over 47,000 people had attended in three days so the total of 100,000 visitors appears to be true.*

20 *Altick, Shows of London, p.323 confirms theme for the Surrey Gardens display in 1837. Manchester Guardian, 9 July 1842 verifies 'Vesuvius' as the focus for the display at the Manchester Zoological Gardens and Pomona Gardens used it in 1850, Manchester Guardian, 1 June 1850 validates.*

21 *Jennison Archive F 4.4.7., George Jennison notes this as the 'one failure - no fighting'*

The island and the lake have been twice extended to meet the necessities of the increased personnel and the extra space permitted larger and larger Firework devices and allowed the introduction of elephants, camels and other animals from the zoological collection when the occasion required.[22] Their presence is very effective but the temptation to show them on unsuitable occasions has always been resisted. Fidelity to fact was meticulous at Belle Vue, even to the fixing and colours of braids and buttons scarcely appreciable on the other side of the water. Another point, possibly of minor importance, is the certainty of the displays; the earlier pyrotechnists used to advertise a second day in case the first were unfavourable: Belle Vue never failed. Our joking reply to the many visitors who asked about the display in bad weather, was, *"nothing short of Noah's flood stops Belle Vue Fireworks."*

Firework Factory

The displays of 1850 were provided from outside. The Firework Factory was another step on the road that finally made Belle Vue the self contained entity which surprises strangers more perhaps than any other fact. The Fireworks for the spectacle in 1852 were made on the establishment of materials supplied by Mr. Jennison, but the maker was an outside contractor.

The first Firework shop was situated near the Longsight entrance. A natural pond on the southern side of the gardens 200 yards from the S.W. corner determined a better site after an explosion and fire in which several persons were injured. [23] The Contractor, Mr. Bruce, made the fireworks for many years and finally came to regard himself as indispensable. In that frame of mind he quarreled with John Jennison, towards the end of the 1862 season; he had vastly overestimated his power. He was got rid of at a moment's notice, the fireworks for the rest of the season were probably very unsatisfactory, but they passed somehow, and Mr. Bruce's loss heralded the most progressive period in the history of the displays. John Jennison told his youngest son, James, that he had to make the Fireworks, and there was no refusing the old man's commands. James had had no technical education, but he was interested in the subject. He was fond of experiments, he took nothing for granted. The refusal to accept the statement of any persons, however learned and well informed they might be on a subject in which James was often totally ignorant, was the worst blemish of a very fine character; but however annoying it might be in the office, it was invaluable in the Firework department; none of the recognised formulae were accepted as final. Accompanied by a friend, a young medical student (Mr. Frank Chorlton[24]), he spent hours upon hours trying all sorts of new ideas in the manufacture of Fireworks until he was rewarded by a general recognition throughout the trade as one of the finest pyrotechnists of the day.[25] The Belle Vue formulae, which are of course, secret, provide some of the finest fireworks known. The great Brock[26] when visiting the factory admitted that our *"Red Fire"* was better than his. This forced and early interest in Firework making, Mr. James Jennison maintained for 50 years. His laboratory was second only to the greenhouse in his pleasures and the private key to the Firework Shop was the open sesame if one wanted to speak to him at 11p.m. or midnight. He was equally keen on the practical side; he rarely missed a display. However important the work in the office, he dropped his pen at the sound of the signal gun and ran, for it was necessary to run, to see that the water fireworks and the rockets were properly fixed.[27] Some of the employees at the Belle Vue Firework Factory have nearly 50 years service. There was a working Foreman responsible for the routine of the shop and the subsequent display, but he and every man in the establishment learned all he knew from Mr. James Jennison.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS,

BELLE VUE

SEASON 1901.

Firework Programme

With a description of the Panorama.

All the Foreign Embassies in **PEKIN** are located in the Tartar City, in a long straggling line abutting on an open space, hence, called by Europeans, Legation Street. It is a wide irregular thoroughfare, dusty in dry weather, muddy in wet, and so full of deep ruts that a mule was quite recently drowned in a hole in front of the British Legation.

The beauties of this charming spot, once a Chinese Temple, and still guarded by a grotesque monster, are well shewn in the picture. It was here that the foreigners rallied when driven from the Embassies nearer the Emperor's residence, the Sacred Forbidden City, which, surmounted by the artificial mound called Prospect Hill, fills the background.

The great wall of Pekin, 26 miles long, which encloses the three cities, passes close to Legation Street. It is 50 feet high, and very broad with battlements, and at every one of its 16 gates, great bastions bristling with cannon, not dangerous, mostly painted wood, a deception for Kuan-Ti, the God of War.

But the broad top of the wall was a deadly coign of vantage for the quick-firing guns the Boxers brought against the Legations.

The space below the walls is full of busy life, booths are erected, where, as in a British Country Fair, all kinds of itinerant traders find a place, and the showman, merchant, and quack doctor range side by side; each advertised by long streamers in curious characters, and all trying to attract custom by gaudy decoration and long strings of lanterns of variegated hue.

A Mandarin in his palanquin passes by, his servants carrying screens to shield him from the vulgar gaze; and crowds of people look at the prisoner in his "Cangue," a heavy wooden collar; or, careless, read the misdeeds written on that cage where one fastened on tip-toe is condemned to die in agonized starvation.

FIRST SIGNAL GUN.

Interval of Five minutes, during which will be despatched, weather permitting, a

Balloon, inflated with Gas,

carrying a vividly brilliant, colour-changing magnesium sun. When almost lost to sight, the balloon bursts into flame and explodes, throwing out a dazzling SHOWER OF MULTICOLOURED STARS.

SECOND SIGNAL GUN.

WATER FIREWORKS. FIREWORK ROCKETS.
SIGNAL MAROONS, or Shells of Magnesium Stars.
INSTANTANEOUS ILLUMINATION OF THE GREAT PICTURE.

Price One Penny.

22 *See comparison of 1848 and 1894 OS maps which demonstrate the expansion of the gardens.*

23 *Manchester Guardian, 2 July 1860 and Manchester Examiner & Times, 7 July 1860.*

24 *Jennison archive F.4.2.8 1875 wages book confirms employment of Chorlton.*

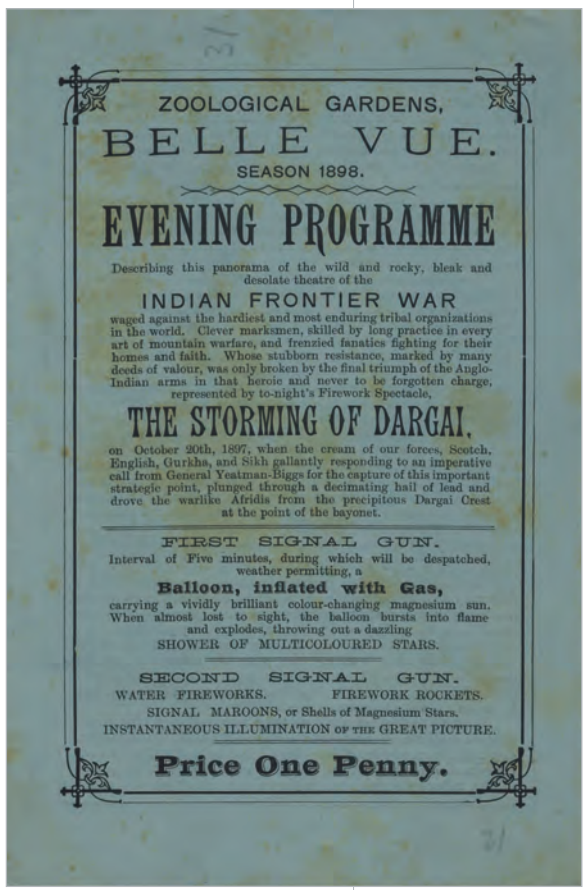
25 *James Jennison's obituary Manchester Guardian, 10 December 1917.*

26 *Brocks Fireworks Limited based in London supplied many of the main commercial pleasure gardens such as Vauxhall and Surrey Gardens; see A.S.H. Brock, A History of Fireworks, (London: George Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1949) for history of the company.*

27 *Jennison archive F.4.3.3. 1896 and 1898 firework programmes details the firework display procedure.*

The Displays.

From the first two years the displays were given only upon picked dates. Money was so scarce that the greatest care was taken not to risk a failure.



ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS,

BELLE VUE.

SEASON 1898.

EVENING PROGRAMME

Describing this panorama of the wild and rocky, bleak and desolate theatre of the

INDIAN FRONTIER WAR

waged against the hardiest and most enduring tribal organizations in the world. Clever marksmen, skilled by long practice in every art of mountain warfare, and frenzied fanatics fighting for their homes and faith. Whose stubborn resistance, marked by many deeds of valour, was only broken by the final triumph of the Anglo-Indian arms in that heroic and never to be forgotten charge, represented by to-night's Firework Spectacle,

THE STORMING OF DARGAI,

on October 20th, 1897, when the cream of our forces, Scotch, English, Gurkhs, and Sikh gallantly responding to an imperative call from General Yeatman-Biggs for the capture of this important strategic point, plunged through a decimating hail of lead and drove the warlike Afridis from the precipitous Dargai Crest at the point of the bayonet.

FIRST SIGNAL GUN.

Interval of Five minutes, during which will be despatched, weather permitting, a

Balloon, inflated with Gas,

carrying a vividly brilliant colour-changing magnesium sun. When almost lost to sight, the balloon bursts into flame and explodes, throwing out a dazzling

SHOWER OF MULTICOLOURED STARS.

SECOND SIGNAL GUN.

WATER FIREWORKS. FIREWORK ROCKETS.

SIGNAL MAROONS, or Shells of Magnesium Stars.

INSTANTANEOUS ILLUMINATION OF THE GREAT PICTURE.

Price One Penny.

Even the Whit week holiday was rationed and in a way that we have not been able to understand. There were shows on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and the next Monday, Whit Saturday, the most important day in the year being omitted – perhaps because the authorities imagined there would be a sufficient attendance without the extra expenses.

Naturally the patrons were annoyed and the error was rectified in 1853 by the commission of an equal futility, as the shows were produced on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday in Whit Week, leaving out Friday, which had been a wonderful success the preceding year.

Why this was done passed the wit of man to understand and luckily the madness was of short duration.

From 1854 onwards they commenced always on Whit Monday, with a display every evening that week and afterwards Monday, Wednesday and Saturday, to November 5th, also Tuesday and Thursday in August, making a total of approximately 80 shows.[28] At first they terminated on Monday, the middle of October, the date of Leek Wakes. In 1855 however, being the anniversary of the Battle of Inkerman[29] and the Birthday of the Prince of Wales, the Corporation of Manchester paid the proprietor a lump sum to throw the gardens open to the public.[30] It was the busiest day of the year, hence it was continued in future years with very great success, being specially remarkable first for the number of half day excursions and secondly as a Dancing Festival.

From 2,500 to 4,000 people paid the extra 6d. for dancing in the Ballroom after the Fireworks. The times of the representations had to follow the daylight to a certain extent; they have been given as late as 9.45, which was too late, and they were finally stereotyped at 9.15 in July and June, 9 o'clock from August Bank Holiday, 8.45 Band Contest and 8.30 from the end of September. The displays were allowed and continued throughout the war – why one cannot say; perhaps a free will offering of eleven barrels of [31] when the country needed it very badly may have made the authorities less inclined to ruin the business. During this period they had to finish within an hour of sunset which entailed fireworks at 5.30 p.m. on November 5th. The Daylight Saving Bill[32] has forced the 9.15 representation until the end of August.

The Firework Island, extended twice, attained finally a length of about 140 yards; the panorama built at first on the flat, in 1856 with two wings, and finally with 5 wings on either side, was composed of 10ft square sheets supported on poles, the largest of which were about 10ins diameter and reached a height of 65 feet. The wings being from 10 to 15 feet apart gave the artist great opportunities in perspective so that the distance attained in so small a space was ever the wonder of the spectators. Between the wings were trucks of various sizes from 2 ft to 12 ft wide capable of carrying what was in effect another wing and in this way the total appearance of the panorama could be changed in a few moments; the central portion of the island could be altered at will; a large water tower behind the scenes permitted the representation of a torrent or waterfall and the series of slopes in the background could be utilized for marching columns, horses, camels and elephants. At the termination of the spectacle proper the central stages were removed, trucks with transparencies of distinguished persons surrounded by Firework Devices, or alternatively allegorical pyrotechnic figures, were brought forward and fired, accompanied by a discharge of rockets and shells as a grande finale.[33] We refer the reader to the Firework Programme printed herewith.[34]

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, BELLE VUE.—OPEN FREE THIS DAY (Monday), November 5, to Commemorate the First Anniversary of the Battle of Inkerman.—Mr. JENNISON, proprietor, announces his intention of providing a FREE ENTERTAINMENT at the Gardens, on the above-named day. The Representation of the Siege of Sebastopol will be presented in the same effective and imposing manner as it has been given during the season, and the fireworks, by Bruce, will be on the same scale of magnificence. Walmsley's (Firs Mills) Band, and the Stretford Brass Band will play alternately during the afternoon, commencing at three o'clock. A huge Bonfire will be lighted in the gardens at five o'clock. The Gallery, Maze, and Museum of Curiosities, will be open at the usual charges. To ensure respectability and order, the proprietor reserves the right of excluding admission to all improper characters, and artisans and operatives will not be admitted in working dress.—The large Ballroom will be open for dancing after the fireworks, and a charge of 6d. each will be made for admission. Refreshments provided.—Fireworks to commence at half-past eight o'clock.

The whole display lasted approximately 20 minutes. What were the best shows it is hard to say, and probably no two persons would agree on the point. According to Mr. James Jennison *"The Storming of Seringapatam"*, 1853, and *"The Capture of Strasburg"*, 1871, were pre-eminent among the earlier displays. Of those I saw, *"The Relief of Ladysmith"* was the best both for appropriateness and variety of incident. I remember a bridge which was blown up during the show, that was so well painted that bets were often made whether it were in one plane or two.

28 Jennison archive F.4.3.3. 1896 Firework guide.

29 Battle in the Crimean War 5 November 1854, see report in The Observer, 27 November 1854.

30 Manchester Guardian, 5 November 1855 advertisement promotes 'free entertainment at the gardens' but does not promote it was courtesy of the local council.

31 Text omitted in original manuscript.

32 Formal name 'Summer Time Act' 1916, see A. Marwick, The Deluge: British Society and the First World War, (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1965) Reissued second edition 2006, p.178.

33 Present day readers must be impressed with the ingenuity of the firework displays.

34 Jennison Archive F.4.3.3. 1896 and 1898 firework programmes.

"The burnt scenery was replaced, repainted or retouched; the show continued..."

It was a flat surface with one end pivoted to fall under the explosion. Other shows that remain in memory are *"Plevna,"* 1877, *"The Charge of the Guards at Telelkebir"*, 1883, while the *"Burning of the Tuilleries"* and *"The Fall of the Bastille"* gave opportunities for conflagrations that were utilised to the full.[35]

The earlier shows usually began with a march of the whole troupe across the scene which was very effective but apt to pall on repetition. Mr. Caney broke through this tradition to a certain extent and Mr. Hastain entirely.[36] His concession was and is more theatrical than that of any of his predecessors and it is hard to recall anything so striking as the Redskin on his mustang in full war paint, alone on the central height, which opened the spectacle in 1923.[37] We may mention one other transcendent display of his art - *"Mons, 1914-1918"*. Mr. Hastain knew the war in all its aspects; he fought in France, 1917-1918, where he received a wound in the foot - fortunately not very serious; he served as a private, not from lack of opportunity or ability to be an officer, but with a desire for demobilisation at the earliest moment, a matter in which we were able to help him. His experience at Belle Vue proved of great value to his country, by the suggestion and production of several new schemes of camouflage. He recalls a very humourous incident near Paschendael. Two brother Tommies who belonged to the Manchester Pals Battalion recognised him. Said one: *"You know that chap don't you? You've seen him many a time in the bar at Belle Vue. That's Hastain. He paints the pictures. Jennison's have sent him out to get ideas for next year."*

The supers engaged on the Fireworks are men of the neighbourhood - preference being given to the poorest - and since the War to those with most medals earned in face of the enemy. The War has made them far less prone to dodge sparks and fire than before, but the work is surprisingly free from serious injury.[38] A first Aid box in the dressing Room, supported by their own contributions, ministers to any little scorching or accident that may occur, but no one was ever seriously hurt and the fund helped by subscriptions from the family could be and was spent in an annual outing for the men. No insurance company could ever be prevailed upon to insure the panorama and the family has gained greatly thereby. The wooden floor, wetted though it is before every performance, takes fire nearly every night, but the service of 30 hydrants extinguishes the flames at once.

There have only been two fires of any importance since the beginning; one on the first Monday in October 1883,[39] which broke out about midnight and destroyed half the picture, and the other in 1917[40] caused by a spark on some uniform in the dressing room, which would have done no damage had it not been for the *"river caves"* over the lake, which acted as a funnel to take the flames to the front, with the result that all the uniforms were destroyed and certain portions of the elephant house end of the picture. One remembers in connection with this how speedily the searchlights round Manchester were quivering over the scene. The fire occurred on Saturday night; on Sunday, by the assistance of Lord Derby, Mr. Hastain, who had just joined up, was granted a fortnight's furlough and returned to his Belle Vue colours.[41] Old uniforms were turned out of store, altered and repaired to place the damage. The show on Monday evening was scarcely up to the standard; some of the men had only a uniform cap, but it went through, and so did its successors.

The burnt scenery was replaced, repainted or retouched; the show continued without a break. On the Sunday evening the engines were at Belle Vue again. One of the small firework sheds took fire, and the event looked like malice, but it was merely coincidence.

The Firework Shop has been as free from serious injury as the Firework Island; since the time of Mr. Bruce there has been only one outbreak in which anyone was seriously hurt - a case of spontaneous combustion. Three men were burnt, but in spite of the great heat of the day they were wearing their flannel overcoats according to regulations, and this prevented any fatalities. Little outbursts occurred from time to time; the shops are isolated and the damage is thereby kept at a minimum, but such an event is always followed by a careful Government investigation.[42] I only remember one exception to this rule; two men had been sweeping the shops; they ought to have put the dust in water. The next thing one heard was an explosion and screams for help. Both men had to go to the Infirmary. Luckily they had told Miss Whitworth, who worked in the factory, that *"they were going to have a blaze;"* this explanation and an intimation that no damage had been done except a brush burnt, satisfied the Home Office. As for the men, they had been punished enough and no comment was made when they returned to work.

35 *Jennison archive F.4.3.15 Complete list of fireworks displays from 1852-1924.*

36 *Caney and Hastain were Danson's successors.*

37 *The show was entitled 'The Redskins'. Manchester Guardian article, 19 May 1925.*

38 *Jennison omitting the events of 10 June 1910 when a fireman was killed at Belle Vue and 5 July 1905 when a firework explosion at Belle Vue injured two firemen. Manchester Guardian confirms.*

39 *Manchester Guardian, 3 October 1883*

40 *Manchester Guardian, 13 August 1917*

41 *17th Earl of Derby was the Secretary of State for War and therefore indirectly responsible for Hastain's leave.*

42 *Explosives Act 1875 appointed an Inspector to investigate explosions and make the necessary recommendations if necessary. See www.legislation.gov.uk.*

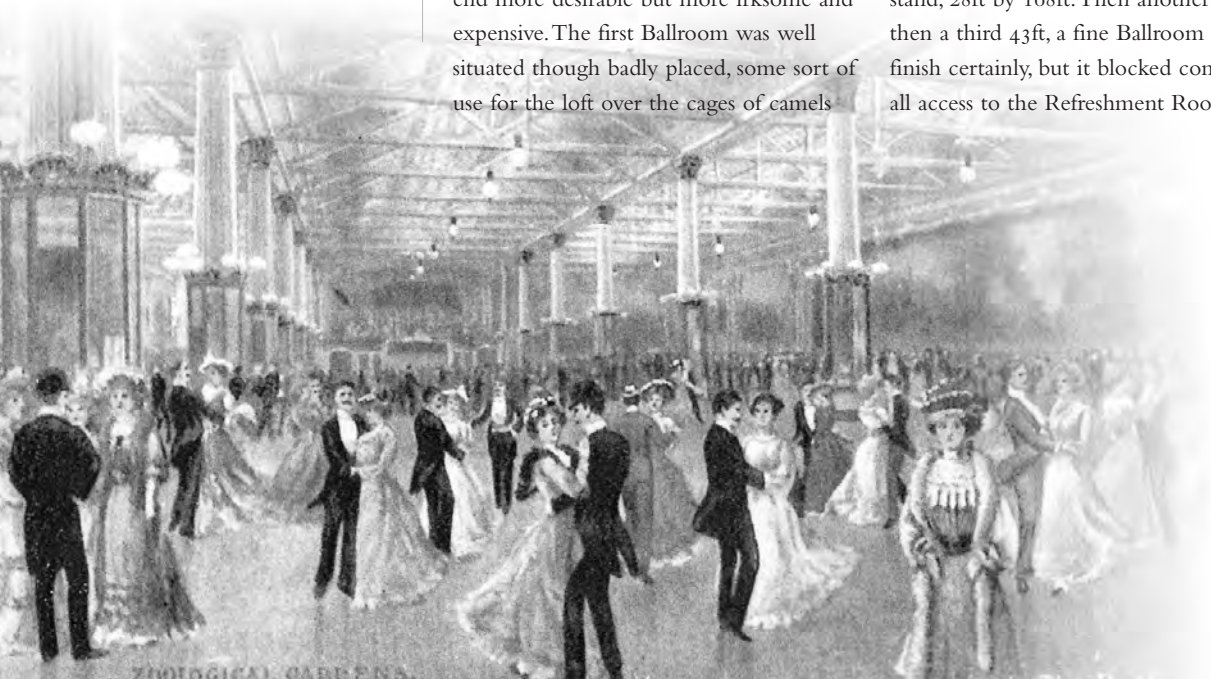
Belle Vue Built in Bits

"The chance work never ceased."

The first Firework Gallery that fixed the position of the great central block of buildings, now 600 feet long, was erected without any real thought for future development. Had the island been made slightly more to the South and the Stand changed in the same manner, it would have removed many difficulties which have cropped up since. The firework spectacle caused the bowling green to disappear leaving a wide and very useful asphalted area in its place. The old bar which had served the visitors there became an obstruction and was removed. What more natural than to place the new one beneath the firework stand? It was a very effective position in full view of incoming visitors and the fact that the frontage to the dancing platform was almost entirely blocked by the service departments was, at that time, no particular disadvantage. They have not been altered even to this day, though great rooms have been erected around and beside them, and a seething crowd of visitors moves between the bakehouses and other stores and the chief consuming centre.

Every room was added bit by bit, as occasion required, and each addition made the removal of the service portion to the opposite end more desirable but more irksome and expensive. The first Ballroom was well situated though badly placed, some sort of use for the loft over the cages of camels or hyenas or even a rhinoceros, it is the printing office today, and was the only tearoom in 1854. The Firework Stand made the next; a bay was added to the stand, 28ft by 168ft: Then another 34ft, then a third 43ft, a fine Ballroom at the finish certainly, but it blocked completely all access to the Refreshment Room, and every corner had to crush through the dancers to get to it. Troublesome, ugly and unwise, a very little length of view would have saved it all, and saved besides the curious need to carry all the provisions across the in and out going stream of 10,000 people in the famous 1/- tea room.

The chance work never ceased. The outside bandstand very suitable for the Bowling Green was quite wrong for the new outdoor platform because of the prevailing wind - yet the new one in 1850 was placed on the same spot. The first entrance to the Ballroom was from the west end and suitable to Longsight, the chief carriage entrance. It was closed in favour of a new one that gave easier access to the Tea and Refreshment Rooms. On the site a Bar and Refreshment Room were made. A new bar was valuable and the stand a good nucleus for it but the alteration came when gas was introduced, so the Refreshment Room below was left low and dark to accommodate a plumbers' shop above, and there it remained for 50 years, difficult of access, dangerous and inconvenient (it almost caused a fire catastrophe in 1884) - a monument to inertia - with the workmen going in and out through the dense crowds. Cheapness was its only merit at anytime but in the beginning that necessity was paramount. George Smith, a building foreman,[1] whom I knew well told me that he had once said to my father, *"Mr. George, I am surprised you put such rough timber in your buildings." "If they had not been built of rough stuff, they could not have been built at all,"* was the reply. Uncle John was a capable bricklayer; George, my father, excelled as a slater and builder, and had a good scheming eye. He was wont to buy old mills and dismantle them, and their rough, tough old timbers are the skeleton of that which is best in Belle Vue today.

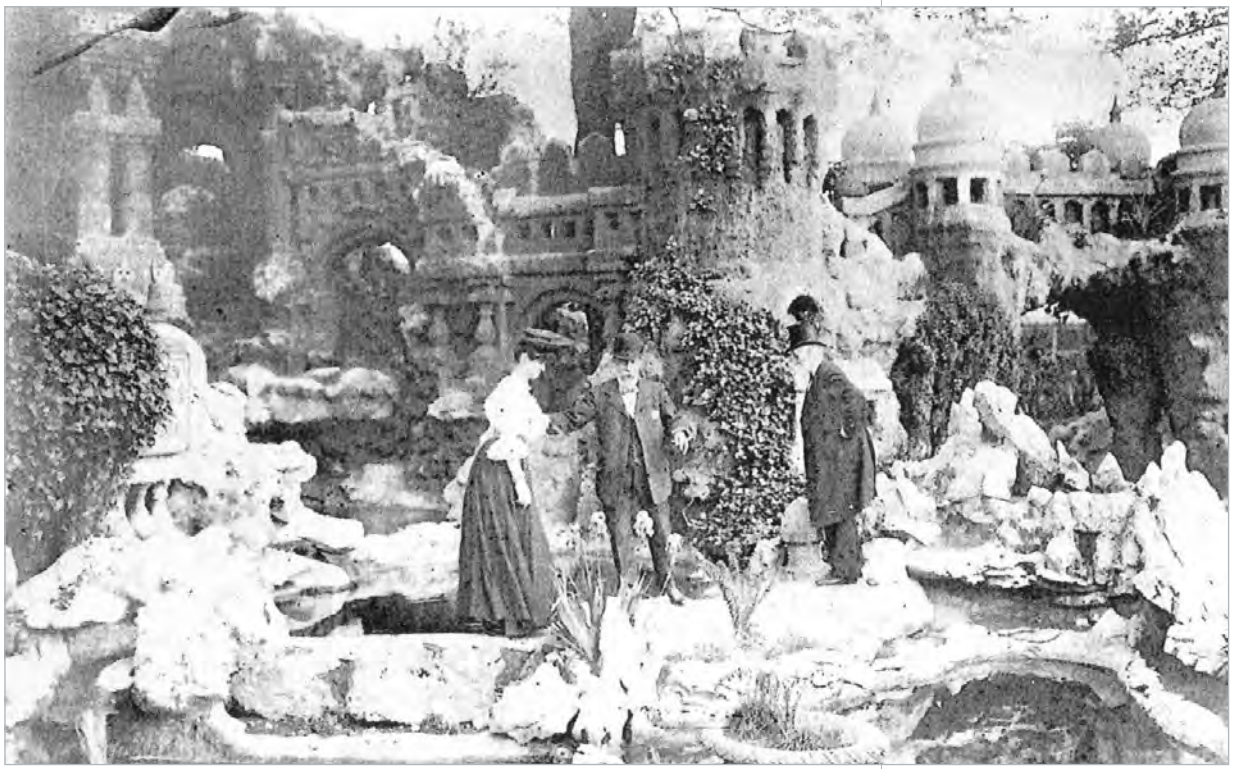


1 *Jennison archive F.4.2.3. Wages sheets 11 April 1863 confirms George Smith.*

"...it may crack from the weakness of long wear, but no sap mark has ever disfigured it."

When the first Ballroom was made it was long, narrow, very inconvenient and sloped with the ground, evidently erected in this way because of the stand which formed one side and with a desire to accommodate as many people as possible. In 1853 the proprietors advertised shelter for 6,000 people but that was not room enough for dancing. In that year a second bay was added, 34ft wide, the first having been 28ft only, then it was obviously necessary to make a third bay 39ft in order to put the Band in the middle, away from the pillars. Thus was the Belle Vue Ballroom constructed in bits and the Refreshment Rooms effectively cut off from the most crowded portions of the Gardens. As more accommodation became necessary for the Fireworks, the Ballroom was extended to form a second Tea Room, to make when required one huge hall 300ft in length, finally extended to 400ft to accommodate some of the monster Tea parties which were held at Belle Vue. When one notes the warped edges and gaping cracks on and between the 6" boards in the present printing office, dancing would appear a difficulty, yet there was waltzing at Belle Vue in 1847.[2]

The new Ballroom, 1853-1855, improved on the old by using 5" boards, and very good they were; they stayed flat to the end, in-deed a yard width of them may be examined today on either side of the room. They were unworn and, as a base for seats, as good as ever and so were left; the one failing is the nicks. How many hundred pins I gathered from those nicks as a child! I kept my mother supplied with them. They represented drying in, and the last floor was to be free of them, and it is. Not a nick has developed in its long life;[3] Mr. James Jennison was always meticulous and in this matter he put himself on his mettle. All the timber merchants were asked to quote 4" x 1" Pitch Pine boards, free from knots or shakes or sap, dry and perfect. All accepted the terms, quoted and got orders, not one reached the standard required. I remember the daily calls, the assertions of the travellers, the refutation by Mr. James personally. Some took back their goods, others had them picked over and took a lower price for the rejects. That floor took some collecting - seven standards to procure one, but it was worthwhile. It is wearing thin now, it may crack from the weakness of long wear, but no sap mark has ever disfigured it, nor a nick; founded on brick walls, it is as perfect below as above and never needs repair. One cannot say as much for the roof. Manchester acid rots the zinc, snow clogs gutters from time to time, condensation and dust do their part; they are little hurtful to the general structure but fearfully severe on the pictures.



John Jennison and family in the Ornamental Gardens

2 *Manchester Guardian 27 March 1847 confirms 'Brass Bands attend daily playing a variety of the most favourite music of the day'.*

3 *Meaning of this passage is unclear. OED for 'nick' - small cut or notch.*

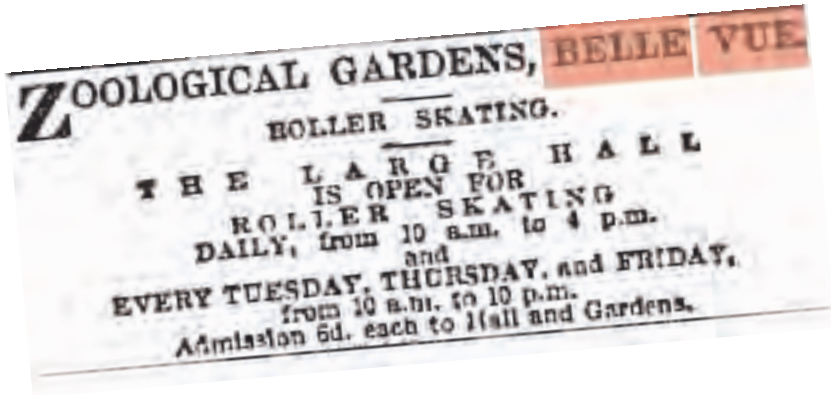
Mr. Danson and his sons were the first artists: In 1853 they adorned the roof and walls with subjects allegorical or historical, their sole connection the presence of animals in the picture, and continuing the paintings as the hall extended.[4] Three have made a lasting impression, one, Lion Hunting in Morocco appealed no doubt from the subject; it kept my childish gaze for hours. The second George Danson's masterpiece, Mount Olympus, (where Jove convened the senate of the skies) attracted by sheer beauty - just a river with peasants and a water cart ox-drawn and behind the all-dominating mountain - it was a triumph of art. I wished to save it when this room was redecorated, but that could not be. Mr. Thomas Danson, I have heard, was of the same opinion. He might have had his will, perhaps, but death removed him when one bay of the roof had been renewed.

Adjoining it was the Marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne, a very florid painting but over the exit was the third picture of which I spoke *("Cybele imploring the Return of the Sun")*. In its youth, no doubt, this had been very pleasant to behold, but time had dealt hardly with it; a leaky gutter sent an ever widening swamp of dirty water down its face where the swirling dust found a perfect resting place. The caustic humour would have made a cartoonist's fortune. With uplifted arms Cybele implored the sun that never came, and she did this for years, until some of us preferred the long walk round the building to the short cut through it.

Entreaty was of no avail, even this terrible example would not move the ruling powers. Thus it stood for years and the irony of it all, they were years of great prosperity. The redecoration was at last agreed and begun by Mr. Thomas Danson, to be finished by Robert Caney who achieved a notable success, with his large mural paintings of animals in their native haunts. That was about 1900.[5] In 1924 the grandsons of the founder attacked the ballroom as part of the general scheme of decoration and restoration after the war. Mr. Hastain, who had long been associated with Mr. R. Caney as artist, succeeded to the post upon his decease. He renovated the cafe, made the Japanese Room a worthy pendant to the Chinese Tea Room, and was given a free hand in the Ballroom. The worn and tarnished structure of earlier days made way for a teak panelled band-stand, a scheme of decoration - green and gold on teak polished panels - succeeded the canvas walls of other days, the supporting pillars were transformed and comfortable cane sofa seats replaced the hard and ancient benches. Steam heating in the roof completed the work, the cold and tawdry became beautiful and comfortable.[6] The public were not slow in appreciating the change; in a few weeks the attendance rose by 50% and is still rising.

The Skating Rink

A family lives by a series of impulses. John, George and James each gave their mighty push; to me they are mostly


ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, BELLE VUE.
ROLLER SKATING.
THE LARGE HALL
IS OPEN FOR
ROLLER SKATING
DAILY, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
and
EVERY TUESDAY, THURSDAY, and FRIDAY,
from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Admission 6d. each to Hall and Gardens.

records, though I remember in boyhood the extensions by James, and even faintly some by my father. Indeed those of James were in the main the continuation of his ideas. I remember the digging of the great cellar from the House to the Gallery Bar. Then there was the Elephant House, Monkey House, Camel House, in rapid succession followed by the extension of tea rooms to meet the demands of Trade Union Parties; and after that prosperity and stagnation.[7] For years nothing moved. Entreaties were of no avail, lessened receipts were deplored, and no effort made to counteract them. For years another room was talked of by Mr. James, as an insurance against fire. It ended always in talk.

4 *Jennison Archive F.4.3.3. 1872 Abel Heywood Belle Vue guidebook describes the paintings and quotes 'still in perfect condition at this time'.*

5 *Manchester Guardian article 2 June 1900.*

6 *Jennison archive F.4.3.3. 1926 guidebook confirms the renovations.*

7 *A.E.Musson, Trade Union & Social History, (London:Frank Cass, 1974) discusses the origins and growth of the Trades Union Congress, established in 1868 and the culture of holding large meetings of their members. J.K.Walton, Blackpool, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p.111 confirms the TUC first official congress conference in Blackpool which corresponds with Jennison's comments on developing the business further.*

The old had done and it ought to do. The roller skating craze was our salvation. Some of us *"youngsters"* (we averaged about 35 years of age) to test the new craze begged for the use of the Ballroom when there was no dancing, and we got it finally without enthusiasm.[8] We were not allowed to buy a pair of skates or hire, we got them at our own risk. I had to back my opinion at £6 to nothing, but it won. Skating only lasted a fortnight in the Ballroom; it chipped the pitch pine boards. We closed down saying we would re-open in the Autumn; the cynics smiled![9]

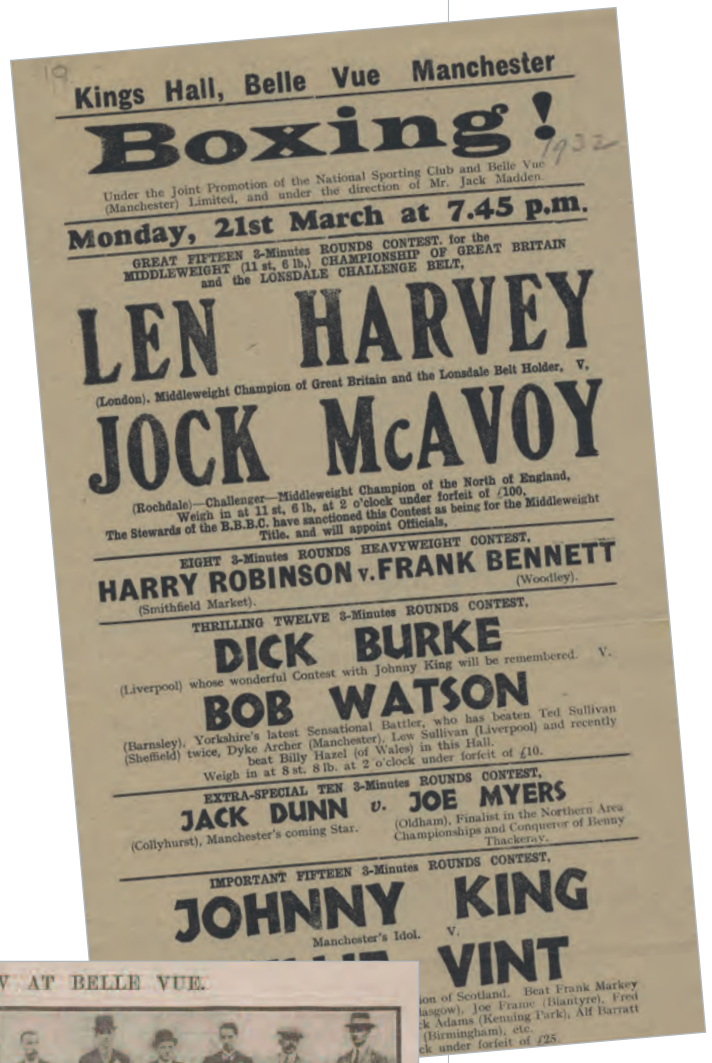
By November 1910 the second Tea Room (200ft long) was floored with maple on a sound deadening material, cheaper and better than any other. Skaters stood in queues; they added the extra little that makes big profits and prosperity, and they gave us the Kings Hall. Skating paid, a Hot Water Room was necessary, a new room desirable. The skaters amalgamated the necessary and desirable. This extra room was agreed upon and when it was done it was done handsomely.

The Kings Hall - 200ft by 120ft - was then built. It commemorates Edward VII and George V. Both reigned in the short six weeks occupied in its erection.[10] Skating is still popular at Belle Vue, now the only rink in Manchester. The Kings Hall is prepared for the next flood of favour, it is now floored cross-wise. In a few weeks one could lay a maple floor, 200ft long, forming the finest rink in the North, properly heated, complete with all the necessary adjuncts.[11]

Tearooms: Demonstrations: Shows:

The Kings Hall, meanwhile, is not idle. In Spring it forms a perfect Paint Room for the big picture;[12] it has been used as a circus[13] without much luck and is becoming known as a venue for boxing contests.[14]

Many fine exhibitions were held in it immediately after the War, and the Manchester Dog Show[15] and the Manchester Pigeon Societies, also the National Fruit Shows,[16] occupied it for their yearly shows with great success until they moved into the more commodious Exhibition Hall.[17] The great Band Contest which had long outgrown the ancient Ballroom, finds in it greater but still insufficient space. On the first Monday in September it is packed to the limit, and yet almost as many musical enthusiasts perforce must listen from without the walls.[18] But all these are incidentals.


Kings Hall, Belle Vue Manchester

Boxing!

1932

Under the Joint Promotion of the National Sporting Club and Belle Vue (Manchester) Limited, and under the direction of Mr. Jack Madden.

Monday, 21st March at 7.45 p.m.

GREAT FIFTEEN 3-Minutes ROUNDS CONTEST for the MIDDLEWEIGHT (11 st, 6 lb.) CHAMPIONSHIP OF GREAT BRITAIN and the LONSDALE CHALLENGE BELT,

LEN HARVEY

(London). Middleweight Champion of Great Britain and the Lonsdale Belt Holder, V.

JOCK McAVOY

(Rochdale)—Challenger—Middleweight Champion of the North of England, Weigh in at 11 st, 6 lb, at 2 o'clock under forfeit of £100. The Stewards of the B.B.B.C. have sanctioned this Contest as being for the Middleweight Title, and will appoint Officials,

EIGHT 3-Minutes ROUNDS HEAVYWEIGHT CONTEST,

HARRY ROBINSON (Smithfield Market). v. FRANK BENNETT (Woodley).

THRILLING TWELVE 3-Minutes ROUNDS CONTEST,

DICK BURKE (Liverpool) whose wonderful Contest with Johnny King will be remembered. V.

BOB WATSON (Barnsley), Yorkshire's latest Sensational Battler, who has beaten Ted Sullivan (Sheffield) twice, Dyke Archer (Manchester), Lew Sullivan (Liverpool) and recently beat Billy Hazel (of Wales) in this Hall. Weigh in at 8 st. 8 lb. at 2 o'clock under forfeit of £10.

EXTRA-SPECIAL TEN 3-Minutes ROUNDS CONTEST,

JACK DUNN (Collyhurst), Manchester's coming Star. v. JOE MYERS (Oldham), Finalist in the Northern Area Championships and Conqueror of Benny Thackeray.

IMPORTANT FIFTEEN 3-Minutes ROUNDS CONTEST,

JOHNNY KING Manchester's Idol. V. VINT

ion of Scotland. Beat Frank Markey lasgow), Joe Franc (Blantyre), Fred k Adams (Kenning Park), Alf Barratt (Birmingham), etc.

ck under forfeit of £25.


THE POULTRY SHOW AT BELLE VUE.

Manchester Courier 1914

8 See Inglis, Played in Manchester, for background on roller skating, p.94

9 'Roller Skating at Belle Vue', Manchester Guardian, 8 March 1909.

10 Edward VII died 6 May 1910.

11 Jennison archive F.4.3.3. 1917 Guidebook (first in archive after 1909) details the skating rink on the 'perfect maple floor'

12 For the firework display.

13 Manchester Guardian, 24 December 1921. However the circus was to gain much popularity in subsequent years. The Belle Vue archive has many circus programmes (F.4.3.3)

14 Belle Vue became a main venue for boxing contests in the inter-war years; 1925 was the first year advertised in the Manchester Guardian. Archive F.4.3.3. Handbills from 1930 and 1932 promote boxing contests.

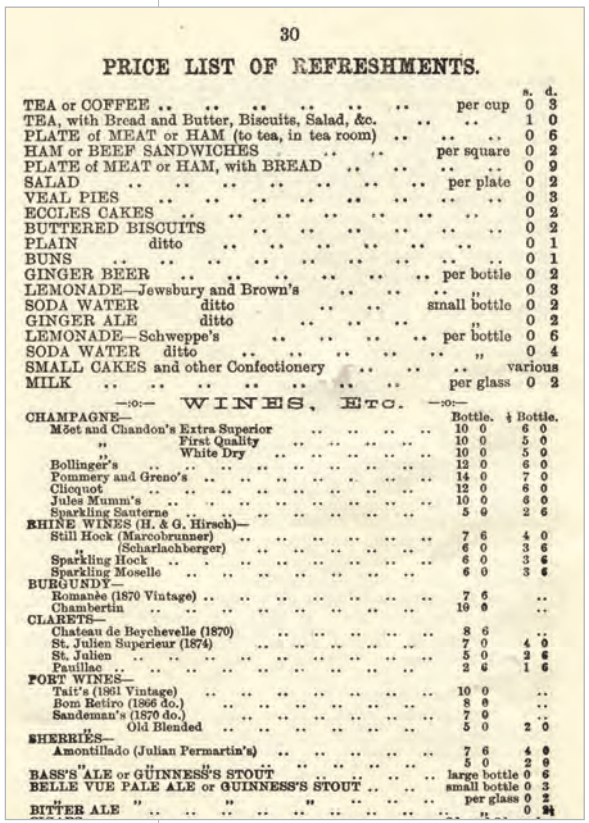
15 Manchester Guardian, 16 March 1921

16 Manchester Guardian, 25 October 1923

17 Initially erected in 1915 for manufacture of munitions and after WW1 became an exhibition hall in November 1919, see Nicholls, Belle Vue, pp.28-29.

18 The occasion of the annual Brass Band contest.

The Kings Hall is also a Tea Room of a distinctive kind.[19] The finest Tea Room in the gardens reserved for the poorest customers who bring their own food, - *"Th 'ot wayter room"* in the vernacular! Belle Vue always catered for its most needy clients - the poor were helped in every way. No effort was ever made to force them to expense. The 1/- Tea that was a slogan for half a century for its quality and cheapness, was a follower, not a forerunner. The twopenny Tea Room (it is 3d now), was never a big profit making concern, but that millions have found of it the only way to a full holiday, let numbers attest. In the ordinary way of business over 10,000 one shilling teas have been served in a day, but 15,000 have passed through the more humble portals. These have always been well catered for - ever demanding and obtaining added space. They grew from odd spots in odd corners, first to an upstairs room and thence to the largest ground floor space available. From that they grew again to re-absorb additionally their earlier home and now, more comfortable and contented than ever in this airy palace, they threaten in their pleasure to push out its spacious walls. A threat not unforeseen and consequently can be met at little cost.



30

PRICE LIST OF REFRESHMENTS.

		s.	d.
TEA or COFFEE	per cup	0	3
TEA, with Bread and Butter, Biscuits, Salad, &c.		1	0
PLATE of MEAT or HAM (to tea, in tea room)		0	6
HAM or BEEF SANDWICHES	per square	0	2
PLATE of MEAT or HAM, with BREAD		0	9
SALAD	per plate	0	2
VEAL PIES		0	3
ECCLES CAKES		0	2
BUTTERED BISCUITS		0	2
PLAIN ditto		0	1
BUNS		0	1
GINGER BEER	per bottle	0	2
LEMONADE—Jewsbury and Brown's	,,	0	3
SODA WATER ditto	small bottle	0	2
GINGER ALE ditto	,,	0	2
LEMONADE—Schweppe's	per bottle	0	6
SODA WATER ditto	,,	0	4
SMALL CAKES and other Confectionery	various		
MILK	per glass	0	2

—:o:— WINES, Etc. —:o:—

	Bottle.	½ Bottle.
CHAMPAGNE—		
Möet and Chandon's Extra Superior	10 0	6 0
,, First Quality	10 0	5 0
,, White Dry	10 0	5 0
Bollinger's	12 0	6 0
Pommery and Greno's	14 0	7 0
Clicquot	12 0	6 0
Jules Mumm's	10 0	6 0
Sparkling Sauterne	5 9	2 6
RHINE WINES (H. & G. Hirsch)—		
Still Hock (Marcobrunner)	7 6	4 0
,, (Scharlachberger)	6 0	3 6
Sparkling Hock	6 0	3 6
Sparkling Moselle	6 0	3 6
BURGUNDY—		
Romanée (1870 Vintage)	7 6	..
Chambertin	10 0	..
CLARETS—		
Chateau de Beychevelle (1870)	8 6	..
St. Julien Superieur (1874)	7 0	4 0
St. Julien	5 0	2 6
Pauillac	2 6	1 6
PORT WINES—		
Tait's (1861 Vintage)	10 0	..
Bom Retiro (1866 do.)	8 0	..
Sandeman's (1870 do.)	7 0	..
Old Blended	5 0	2 0
SHERRIES—		
Amontillado (Julian Fermartin's)	7 6	4 0
,,	5 0	2 6
BASS'S ALE or GUINNESS'S STOUT	large bottle	0 6
BELLE VUE PALE ALE or GUINNESS'S STOUT	small bottle	0 3
,, ,, ,,	per glass	0 2
BITTER ALE		0 3½

The only difference between this and the dearer room was the decoration. The tea trade was a late slow growth. In the rough early days little but beer and spirits were sold, except on Sundays. Cups of tea were not to be had before the fifties and my mother was in at the fixing of the price. 3d was chosen and has remained constant through all the variations in the cost of materials. Such steadiness should imply some sound basic principle; as a fact the figure chosen was a pure fluke - the cost of a casual cup of tea bought in Manchester. These cups of tea were to be had at every bar. The fine tea rooms are a monument to a greater ideal, - a fixed charge meal of the highest quality at a reasonable price. The whole idea was well conceived. The menu - tea, bread and butter, biscuits, currant cake, salads, - was varied, unlimited and appetising; the charge reasonable and catchy; the *"Belle Vue 'bob' tea"*[20] became renowned through the north and possibly further, the expansion of demand was remarkable and gratifying. The receipts grew from one sixth to one half of the money taken at the gates.

The first 1/- tea room was a tent, next year it became a room of double the size. In the third, the rush at Easter, (at that time an almost negligible holiday) was so great that the proprietors got scared about the great Whitsuntide holiday, and doubled the accommodation in six weeks. It was a great feat and one can understand the pride of success.

These two rooms are the Chinese Tea Rooms, the solid foundation of Belle Vue's renown for catering and the sheet anchor of finance. Both were always in the hands of a member of the family.

The charge of the Hyde Road Entrance was a stepping stone to the management. Perhaps those who arranged trips were best fitted to deal with trippers. George had it when visitors were so few that he could play in his pigeon cote and attend the gate as well. James followed for over 20 years and the writer did nearly 26. The 1/- Tea Room fell to the wives and daughters, aided by the men in exceptional moments.

Safety was always to the fore - the family was by nature conservative, keeping its hand on its own money to the limit of possibility. The 1/- Tea Room reached the height of popularity in the late seventies. The record of over £500 was reached on Whit Saturday 1878,[21] but crowds of 6000 and 8000 were common enough. The walls of the private office, bear witness to the struggle for service, *"doors closed"*, *"people standing all about the rooms"*, every chair had its waiting soul, - a mute appeal that hurried the tea drinking bodies and helped business, but must have been very unpleasant.

19 Jennison archive F.4.3.3. 1917 Guidebook.

20 Jennison archive F.4.3.3 Earliest guidebook in the archive is 1847 but no listing for refreshments. The next available is from 1878 confirms prices of 1s.

21 Based on a calculation of 500 x 20 , total of 10,000 people served.

"A party list of 4000 was not uncommon any summer Saturday..."

Extensions were made in the space available; the Aviary tearoom reduced the main artery of the Gardens to the minimum and being still too narrow, was made in two stories. The third tearoom (now the Cafe) was added last.

It meant pulling down the monkey house or it would have been done sooner. The demand for the 1/- teas was already on the wane - the enthusiastic comments on value received became fewer and fewer as the era of cheapness spread over England and the opening of Tea shops created a demand for a more varied meal and individual choice. Jam was included as an extra inducement, and the 1/- tea which had to go to 1/6 during the war and is still 1/3s continues to command public favour. Probably it would be still more popular if the jam were removed and the old 1/- together with the old menu re-established, but it will never be its old self. Change of fashion has condemned it and fashion must be followed. A first move in that direction was made in 1887, an idea of Mr. Richard Jennison, and today the First Class room (what an awful name) and the cafe are more important than the tearooms.[22] Indeed by the irony of fate, the earliest tearoom has often to be handed over to meet their demands for space. Such transfers are not difficult and are made in every sense to meet the demands for large parties and in extreme cases the ballroom is commandeered.

Tea Parties

Catering for societies has been a prominent feature of the Belle Vue business for over 80 years; what an old time flavour hangs over a record of this sort. In 1852, a party of Sheffield Chartists ...[23]

The fireworks and the ferment among the working men for the recognition of their rights gave it a greater impetus. The credit for the extension of business in this direction is due directly to Mr. John, the eldest son. He was bold in making contracts that he was too timid to tackle. *"I've taken 'em"*, he would say and when the day arrived he would be off to Manchester, leaving his brothers to do the work. But he established the trade.

A great deal of Trade Union solidarity in Manchester has been laid by the processions to Belle Vue, and cemented over the teacups. Nearly every Saturday in the season these great processions marched through the gates to their plain but ample banquet; the last extension of tearooms, the old 2d. tea room was due entirely to them - a compact room with seating for 500 and possibilities of extension to almost as many more and therefore very suitable for their purpose. A party list of 4000 was not uncommon any summer Saturday on the top of the ordinary business. The writer remembers one party of 16,000 taken in the middle of summer when the Gardens were in full activity. That event took all hands and brought every room, chair and table into service. It was the gathering of the Manchester and Salford Co-operative Society who got their success with the slogan *"A ticket to Belle Vue and a Belle Vue 1/- Tea for a shilling."*[24] Belle Vue got the profit of the 6 pennies of admission. The Trade Union and Works Parties took generally the meat tea, at 2/6 including admission. It was the shilling tea with cold beef, ham, tongue and veal pies ad libitum, all of the highest quality and the participants came to it hungry. 2/- per head left nothing over for the proprietors, but such a tea produced a happy frame of mind and amusements benefitted accordingly, and those who came, came again, even to the second and third generation of those that loved us. It is a great satisfaction to know how our cheapness was appreciated. The Trade Union Local Branches used to say that they could not do without us, and there is at least one very important socialist club, the Clarion, that has not missed its Belle Vue meeting for 20 years or more.[25]

22 *Jennison archive E.4.3.3 Belle Vue Guidebook 1901 confirms.*

23 *Sentence incomplete in original manuscript.*

24 *Manchester & Salford Co-operative Society had their own company publication called 'The Herald' however the first edition in 1889 and reports the Society will no longer be holding the annual party for employees and they will received a fixed sum and an extra half day holiday instead.*

25 *The Clarion was a socialist newspaper set up by Robert Blatchford and inspired a whole social movement of societies and clubs. See biography of Blatchford, L. Thompson, Robert Blatchford: Portrait of an Englishman, (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1951) and entry for The Clarion in Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism, p.122. The Working Class Movement Library in Salford contains archive material on many aspects of the Clarion societies www.wcml.org.uk*

These big tea parties were at least expected to pay for themselves which is more than the Peace Celebrations gatherings accomplished. Belle Vue is proud of its war work; every one, old and young did his share. In the Peace celebration we accepted 6d per head less for soldiers' parties than for ordinary gatherings, and we gave a proportionate reduction to the School children of Manchester, when entertained by the Manchester Corporation.[26] We were very proud of that treat; we hold that no children in the country had anything approaching such an outing. Free amusements, finishing with a magnificent firework display solely for their benefit and an excellent tea with cakes and jam; and that was where we guessed wrong. Jam was very dear, and likely enough, very scarce at home. At that tea it was ad libitum and the consumption was inordinate. The loss was about 3d per child, and 6d the adults. Not much on two people but when one recalls that at those treats there were over 100,000 children and 20,000 adults, very simple arithmetic will show that the loss was not to be despised. But I never heard any of ours grumble; it was passed with a laugh. When prices became even comparatively reasonable, Belle Vue returned to its old customs, no profits on teas, and the gardens accepted even the pre-war admission fee (6d) in order to save the visitor from the government tax[27] but it takes time to get back to old habits and tea parties have not yet reached their former level. Two points in particular have surprised us: one, the lack of political teas from successful candidates; they used to be common. In the last ten years there have been practically none. The other is the absence of corps and other such meetings of men who fought in the Great War. One can anticipate many of these in the future, the present is evidently still too close to prevent sorrow treading on the heels of mirth.

Outside Catering

The catering renown of Belle Vue naturally opened up a new avenue of business which entailed great expense for stock and much harder work for the management, but John Jennison had seven stalwart sons and his watchword was ever 'forward'. New mills were rising all over Lancashire and Jennisons were called upon to cater at the house warming; their tables were spread sometimes in empty weaving sheds, and at others among the looms. The opening of Platts Works at Oldham[28] and the new locomotive works in Crewe are good examples.[29] At the latter George Jennison caught the chill which brought about his premature death. These entertainments for the operatives meant a banquet for the Directors and their friends; the possibilities of new business were only limited by the capacity of the contractors and that was illimitable. Jennisons were in nightly demand all through the winter for Ball suppers, and in the summer for all kinds of al fresco entertainments at weddings and coming of age celebrations for all classes of the community, attaining the height of success when they provided in 1868 the banquet to the Prince and Princess of Wales, at Carnarvon Castle.[30] The whole of the arrangements for these gatherings and the whole of the entertainments were provided by Belle Vue - from the erection of the marquees and the laying of the dance floor to the provision of the banquet for the chief persons and the tea for tenants and the whole of the amusements. The Band was theirs, the Fireworks were made at the Gardens and fired by Belle Vue staff, and the children enjoyed in various parts of Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire a ride on the Belle Vue elephants.

26 Manchester Guardian articles published covering these events 7 May, 3 July & 26 August 1919.

27 See S.G. Jones, Workers at Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure 1918-1939, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986) p.99 on the entertainment tax.

28 See D.G. Roach, unpublished Masters Dissertation. 'John Jennison - A study in Manchester Entrereneurship'. MMU, Department of History & Economic History, September 2005, p.141 confirms private party for Mather & Platt in January 1880. Belle Vue maintained strong commercial relationships with prominent Manchester businesses. In the biography of Sir William Mather, the creation of the partnership with William Platt in 1863 was 'celebrated by 300 employees at Belle Vue Gardens'. L.E. Mather, Rt. Hon Sir William Mather 1838-1920, (London: Richard Cobden-Sanderson, 1926) p.14

29 See B Reed, Crewe Locomotive Works and its men, (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1987) details the origins and expansion of this company. Roach, pp. 141-2 confirms various private catering contracts for the railway companies.

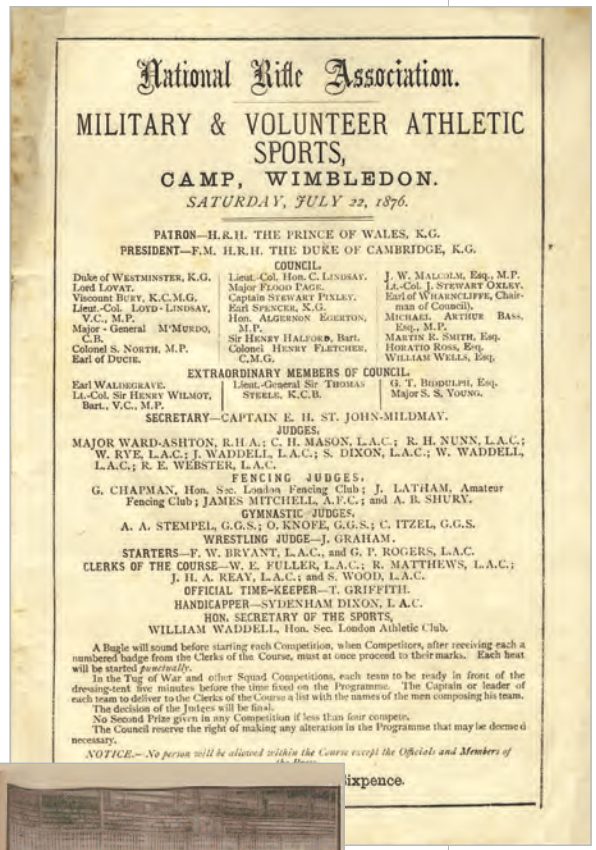
30 Full report of the event in Manchester Guardian, 27 April 1868, however no information on the catering provision.

"It gained the Gardens a reputation which has not yet disappeared..."

There is scarcely a nobleman of middle age in this district whose coming of age entertainment was not provided by Belle Vue. During this same period the Lancashire Agricultural Society held two of their Annual Shows at the Gardens.[31] Dog Shows and Pigeon Shows had been taken up as a winter extra some time before, and from this nucleus, the catering for agricultural shows became a prominent feature; Mr. Jennison purchased the timber that enclosed the Show Ground and made the framework of the exhibition sheds which he covered with his own canvas. He erected the Refreshment Rooms and did all the catering in a manner far above the average. The walls of the Refreshment Rooms and some of the Show Tents were formed of shutters 10ft high each containing four windows which rendered them both light and airy; probably the profit was not very great for no present day contractors imitate the practice.[32] From the Agricultural Shows sprang the greatest catering undertaking, - The National Rifle Association's Annual Meeting at Wimbledon. That entailed erection of tents, Bakehouses and Cooking Ranges and the provision of sleeping accommodation for the staff. It provided a glorious holiday for the younger members of the family.[33] At Wimbledon Belle Vue received a compliment from MR. PUNCH. The editor (Burnand) took the l/ 6d lunch: *"There was no glass and glitter but oh! what a dinner for eighteen pence."*[34]

Mr. George Jennison had complete control over the whole of this very detailed branch of the business which was almost entirely given up after his death. It gained the Gardens a reputation which has not yet disappeared but whether it was a good paying concern is open to doubt. The surviving brothers took the negative view and gradually discontinued it. Certainly from that time the profits grew larger but it is more than likely that the cause of this lay chiefly in the fruition of the efforts made by Mr. George Jennison to provide all that was necessary for the attractiveness of Belle Vue.

The removal of our chief competitor was also extremely opportune.



National Rifle Association.

MILITARY & VOLUNTEER ATHLETIC SPORTS,

CAMP, WIMBLEDON.

SATURDAY, JULY 22, 1876.

PATRON—H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES, K.G.

PRESIDENT—F.M. H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE, K.G.

COUNCIL.

Duke of Westminster, K.G.
Lord Lovat.
Viscount Bury, K.C.M.G.
Lieut.-Col. Loyd-Lindsay, V.C., M.P.
Major-General M'Murdo, C.B.
Colonel S. North, M.P.
Earl of Ducie.
Lieut.-Col. Hon. C. Lindsay.
Major Flood Page.
Captain Stewart Pixley.
Earl Spencer, K.G.
Hon. Algernon Egerton, M.P.
Sir Henry Halford, Bart.
Colonel Henry Fletcher, C.M.G.
J. W. Malcolm, Esq., M.P.
Lt.-Col. J. Stewart Oxley.
Earl of Wharncliffe, Chairman of Council).
Michael Arthur Bass, Esq., M.P.
Martin R. Smith, Esq.
Horatio Ross, Esq.
William Wells, Esq.

EXTRAORDINARY MEMBERS OF COUNCIL.

Earl Waldegrave.
Lt.-Col. Sir Henry Wilmot, Bart., V.C., M.P.
Lieut.-General Sir Thomas Steele, K.C.B.
G. T. Bridgman, Esq.
Major S. S. Young.

SECRETARY—CAPTAIN E. H. ST. JOHN-MILDMAY.

JUDGES.

MAJOR WARD-ASHTON, R.H.A.; C. H. MASON, L.A.C.; R. H. NUNN, L.A.C.; W. RYE, L.A.C.; J. WADDELL, L.A.C.; S. DIXON, L.A.C.; W. WADDELL, L.A.C.; R. E. WEBSTER, L.A.C.

FENCING JUDGES.

G. CHAPMAN, Hon. Sec. London Fencing Club; J. LATHAM, Amateur Fencing Club; JAMES MITCHELL, A.F.C.; and A. B. SHURY.

GYMNASTIC JUDGES.

A. A. STEMPEL, G.G.S.; O. KNOFE, G.G.S.; C. ITZEL, G.G.S.

WRESTLING JUDGE—J. GRAHAM.

STARTERS—F. W. BRYANT, L.A.C., and G. P. ROGERS, L.A.C.

CLERKS OF THE COURSE—W. E. FULLER, L.A.C.; R. MATTHEWS, L.A.C.; J. H. A. REAY, L.A.C.; and S. WOOD, L.A.C.

OFFICIAL TIME-KEEPER—T. GRIFFITH.

HANDICAPPER—SYDENHAM DIXON, L.A.C.

HON. SECRETARY OF THE SPORTS,
WILLIAM WADDELL, Hon. Sec. London Athletic Club.

A Bugle will sound before starting each Competition, when Competitors, after receiving each a numbered badge from the Clerks of the Course, must at once proceed to their marks. Each heat will be started *punctually*.

In the Tug of War and other Squad Competitions, each team to be ready in front of the dressing-tent five minutes before the time fixed on the Programme. The Captain or leader of each team to deliver to the Clerks of the Course a list with the names of the men composing his team.

The decision of the Judges will be final.

No Second Prize given in any Competition if less than four compete.

The Council reserve the right of making any alteration in the Programme that may be deemed necessary.

NOTICE.—No person will be allowed within the Course except the Officials and Members of

ixpence.

31 *Manchester Guardian, 5 September 1879.*

32 *See Roach, appendices section, for detailed analysis of many of the outside catering contracts however as the account information is limited he has been unable to confirm if the operations were profitable.*

33 *Jennison archive F.4.7 for details of this outside catering venture. See also S. Cornfield, The Queen's Prize, the Story of the National Rifle Association (London: Pelham, 1987)p.29 confirms Jennison as the caterers for the event for a number of years.*

34 *ODNB - Sir Francis Cowley Burnand (1836-1917) playwright and humourist. Belle Vue not featured in Punch magazine but Cornfield, Queen's Prize, p.38-40 confirms Mr. Punch's attendance at Wimbledon.*

Pomona Gardens, Clough Hall, The White City

"I'll take Pomona, and set up in opposition."

Pomona - destined to be the most serious competitors to Belle Vue - was opened on May 27th 1846. Situated in Cornbrook, Hulme, it extended for nearly a mile along the bank of the pleasant Irwell, and the steamship *"President"* from Water Street, helped the omnibuses to carry the crowds from Manchester and Salford.[1]

The first attractions were a bowling green and gymnasium and a band on special occasions for which, as at Belle Vue, there was a charge of 1d. in addition to the 6d. admission. The odd penny was imposed at Pomona for several years (whereas Belle Vue only tried it for one season) even on firework days. In these they ante-dated Belle Vue, and 1848-49 excepted, there was always a painted background of some topical subject.

The first, given in 1847, was The Temple of Honan and Feast of Lanterns, produced by the Vauxhall Gardens, London;[2] the last , in 1867, The Town of Luxembourg.[3] In 1855 they and Belle Vue had the same picture, Sevastopol, but there the resemblance ends.[4] Belle Vue was developing actions, increasing its stage army year by year; Pomona merely illuminated the picture with coloured fire and added a display of fireworks.

It was a radical error that eased the situation considerably for Belle Vue. The popularity of Pomona was on the wane, the fire of opposition almost extinguished when it was fanned to its fiercest and most dangerous heat by none other than Mr. Jennison. For some reason, good or bad, a certain Mr. J. Reilly was refused admission to the Belle Vue ballroom in the select period after the fireworks. The circumstances annoyed him so much that he said, *"I'll take Pomona, and set up in opposition,"* and he kept his word. Mr. Reilly was a man of great energy, with business instincts much in advance of his opponents.[5] Belle Vue developed solely out of profits; Mr. Reilly borrowed money to perfect his establishment which possessed very soon buildings larger and better than those at Belle Vue. He had the full appreciation of the value of cheapness, the only failure in that respect being the great tea parties which he refused, *"because they ate too much"*, otherwise his admissions were always low and his attractions excellent. He had amusements like Belle Vue, cricket and archery grounds, and boating.

Dancing was a paying proposition all the year round, whereas Belle Vue was dead in the winter. He had a winter garden and an evergreen promenade. The musical festivals and tournaments were on a larger scale and he held sports long before Belle Vue which had given up its professional course and Contests had built an Athletic Ground for amateur sports. He also provided special attractions of the highest order; a visit of the great Blondin almost emptied Belle Vue one day in 1861, when he earned in his turn the homage of flattery.[6] The Gardens responded in the same year with three days of the female Blondin.[7] It was under cover however that he made his greatest and most successful hit. He built an Agricultural Hall, of normous extent, 80 yards long and 132 yards wide, where he held horse shows, cattle shows, dog and poultry shows, botanical exhibitions and machinery displays. It was the venue of trade Union Demonstrations and of one of the greatest and most important Political Demonstrations of the time, the visit of the prime minister, Mr. Disraeli.[8] His success was so great that even this accommodation was not sufficient.

In 1875, another hall was added 100 yards long, about the same in width. It had a great central transept 72ft. wide and three bays each side 36ft wide, - the whole almost twice the length of the Belle Vue ballroom, and very much wider. Here were held the great Xmas Fairs, which I remember well as a child.[9]

1 *1848 OS Map (surveyed in 1845) Pomona site not shown only the fruit orchard from which it took its name and the 1909 OS Map shows the 'Pomona Docks' .*

2 *Manchester Guardian, 15 May 1847. Altick, Shows, p.321 confirms the display at Vauxhall Gardens in 1834.*

3 *Manchester Guardian,10 June 1867.*

4 *Manchester Guardian, 4 September 1855 confirms both venues' displays.*

5 *See G.Anderson & B.Ferguson, 'James Reilly: An artisan manufacturer in Victorian England', Manchester Region History Review, Vol 8 (1994) pp.93-5. For history of Pomona see T.Wyke, 'Pomona Gardens: A Victorian Theatre of Dreams' , pp.29-50. TLCAS, Vol.107 (Manchester: Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society, 2011)*

6 *Manchester Guardian article, 14 October 1861 estimates 6000 people present.*

7 *Manchester Guardian, 12 October 1861.*

8 *Full report in Manchester Guardian, 3 April 1872.*

9 *Manchester Guardian, 26 December 1876.*

The whole room was tastefully decorated with an enormous Xmas Tree, the central delight for the children.[10] Part of the building became later a chair factory – also under Mr. Reilly's management. The whole property was required for the construction of the Ship Canal, and Mr. Reilly retired as a very wealthy man, himself satisfied and giving very great satisfaction to Belle Vue. [11]

In 1867 when the first hall was built he discontinued the fireworks and he did not exhibit animals; otherwise his competition would have been still more serious. How seriously it was felt can be seen from the extension of the Firework Island at Belle Vue, the improvement of the spectacle, and the great increase in the animal collection. These additions kept the gardens popular and prosperous. The disappearance of the competitor practically doubled the profits.[12] Belle Vue became a household word all over the North of England and Wales. For years no one dared to attack its pre-eminence; indeed there was no competition of any sort with the exception of Sale Moor Gardens with Tea Room and Athletic Ground, which was more a source of amusement than anxiety. [13]

Clough Hall

During this time, Clough Hall, Staffordshire, was started with Mr. Chesters Thompson as its chief mover. *"It should be"*, said he, *"not a second but a first Belle Vue."* It had fireworks arranged by a Mr. B. Firth who had worked at Belle Vue,[14] a Lake, Dancing, indoor and outdoor, and a zoological collection which were no doubt appreciated by the inhabitants of the five towns. It was too far from the great centres of population to last. [15]

The White City

The White City might have been a more serious opponent; it was within easy distance of town, on the site of the late Botanical Gardens at Old Trafford.[16] Under the superintendence of Mr. Calvin Brown, an American, a very good Ballroom was built, excellent bands were engaged to play in the gardens which were laid out very prettily and attracted a large number of Manchester Residents of a rather higher class than Belle Vue visitors. A great number of side shows were to be the chief profit makers; so far the venture had been carried out well and very efficient advertising gave serious cause for apprehension, but *"those whom the Gods wish to destroy, they first drive mad."* The management attempted to collect 6d. from each couple for every dance, in face of Belle Vue with a better band and no charge. His first customer, 20 minutes after arrival, left for Belle Vue, and was followed by so many others as to make the gardens exceptionally busy. The extortionate charges raised a storm of protest in the Press.

The dancing price was halved next day and disappeared within a week, but too late, the place was damned by the comparison.[17] It held on for a couple of years, steadily deteriorating; then Mr. Brown returned to America after trying to extort from Belle Vue a sum of money as a price of shutting down the opposition; he got nothing and was told that Belle Vue would take the risk.[18] Mr. Brown was also interested in a brake for motor cars, and showed his inventions at a Motor Show at Belle Vue Gardens.[19] He was very enthusiastic about his patent. *"Do you know,"* said he, *"I shall make as much out of this as out of the White City."* *"Yes,"* I replied, *"I wouldn't be a bit surprised."*

10 *See A & P Miall, The Victorian Christmas Book, (London: Dent, 1978) for detail of Victorian Christmas traditions.*

11 *See John Heywood & Sons, Guide to Pomona Gardens and Palace (Manchester: John Heywood, 1875) includes diagram and map detailing all the attractions. Also Anderson & Ferguson, 'James Reilly' confirms compensation paid to Reilly in 1888 from the Manchester Ship Canal Company of £70,352 (equates to £3.4m in 2005 calculated by National Archives currency convertor.)*

12 *Pomona was a serious competitor to Belle Vue and there are numerous references to their attractions in the ledgers which impacted on the gate receipts. Would only be able to confirm this data by analysis of the ledgers for the year when Pomona closed.*

13 *Manchester Guardian, 1 May 1875 advertisement for Moorfield Gardens at Sale.*

14 *Jennison archive 4.2.3 wage sheets 8 May 1880 con firms employment of B.Firth.*

15 *Manchester Guardian article 'Clough Hall Park Failure' 20 February 1894. Chesters-Thompson was both an Alderman and J.P. see article in Manchester Faces & Places, Vol. 2, 10 June 1891, pp.129-31 and the subsequent court case caused a scandal as he was implicated for fraud. See Manchester Guardian 11 May 1894. He subsequently became a bankrupt and a full disclosure of his debts are revealed in the Manchester Guardian, 5 June 1894.*

16 *Brooks, Veritable Eden, p.147 confirms the Gardens had been leased to White City and opened to the public on 20 May 1907, the admission was 6d. and 32,972 were admitted, p.144. The Manchester Botanical Gardens had not been a serious competitor to Belle Vue as it catered for mainly for the upper middle classes and Brooks in A Veritable Eden explores its history and demise. See OS Map 1909 site still surveyed as 'Royal Botanical Gardens'.*

17 *Manchester Courier, May 25 1908 reports of over 50,000 visitors a day so the venue appears to have remained popular.*

18 *Brooks, Veritable Eden, p.147 confirms White City Co. Ltd., went bankrupt in 1912.*

19 *Motor shows were regularly held at Belle Vue; Manchester Guardian, 21 February 1908, 20 February 1909 and 18 February 1910.*

Road Transport

"Sixpences and half crowns won't mix."

The expensive Bands and special entertainments were often thought of and as regularly rejected. Belle Vue was the playground of the poor, and the dictum, *"sixpences and half crowns won't mix"*, which was always impressed on us by our elders, I have reason to believe to be correct.

Baedeker's guide calls Belle Vue *"a popular resort much frequented by the working class."*[1] That is perfectly true and one would not have it otherwise. It has existed long enough to see transport revolutionised; stage coaches ran regularly at its birth, but they never transported Belle Vue customers.[2] A bus from Manchester ran occasionally, but nearly all the racing men walked; so did the Sunday visitors - indeed the pleasant stroll through the beautiful country was an attraction in itself. As its renown spread, conveyances began; great heavy carts, borrowed most likely from some kind employer. In 1847, the earliest time of which the records remain, there are up to one dozen carts recorded.[3] They were charged 2/6d. each for stabling. This soon passed away and the driver's entrance 6d. covered the vehicle; even that charge disappeared later when public weekly visits were paid by waggonettes from all the mews for 15 miles around.[4] One of them called, *"Comptonian"*,[5] must have visited the Gardens twenty times each season for as many years. For their accommodation stables were added continually, culminating in the big stables that would hold 500 horses. The greatest number stabled in one day was about 800, after which a temporary lean-to was made so that all might be under cover, but it was never used. The motor car had begun and the greater accommodation and speed of the Charabanc soon drove the horse vehicle from the road.[6] The autumn is the chief time for vehicular traffic, when the cold days have made a country journey unpleasant, while an extra half holiday is desired after the pleasures at the sea.

From September to the end of October, every Saturday has from 100 to 200 of these large vehicles, as well as motor cars and side cars, which are increasing in number continually.[7] Charabancs come regularly from great distances, Chesterfield, Nottingham, on the one side, Wrexham, N. Lancashire on the other, and almost all parts of Yorkshire, giving an alternate service to the railways. How serious a competitor they are will be understood when we mention that there were 360 large charabancs with over 9,000 people, at the Brass Band contest in 1919 when excursion fares were in abeyance.[8] The charges for parties were not heavy and the visitors coming in bulk, as it were, were admitted to the gardens at 6d. each. The wealthy with their conveyances were never numerous; half a dozen carriages were a subject of comment and a carriage and pair almost a miracle.

The advent of the Motor car has increased the numbers of such visitors on ordinary occasions manifold, and on special occasions, such as the Dog Show, there would be 100 or more; standing space was unlimited and there was no garage fee. The car was often cheaper than the train. Sometimes the occupants of private cars were allowed to drive through the big gates, but all charabancs and waggonettes unloaded at the entrance; it was a precaution for sobriety. As years went by Belle Vue became less and less rough, but drinking is often part of a jolly day. Occasionally an odd person had taken too much, or a load of merrymakers came dressed in all kinds of comical hats; neither the one nor the other could be permitted. Anyone who was suspected of having had too much drink was refused admission, and the others too, unless they removed their comical apparel. There was never any difficulty. It could always be done with a laugh and a joke, and it was always done by Mr. Jennison himself.

1 *Baedekers guide states 'a popular resort much fre quented by the lower class'. K. Baedeker, Great Britain Handbooks for Travellers, (Leipsic, Karl Baedecker Publishers, 1894) p.333.*

2 *Pigot & Son's Commercial Directory 1829 confirms stage coach routes to Stockport and Sheffield which would pass Belle Vue. Pigot & Slater's Commercial Directory 1843 confirms coach and omnibus routes along Hyde Road and Stockport Road and also has railway timetables to Longsight station.*

3 *Jennison may have had access to these records when writing his manuscript but they are not included in the archive.*

4 *For an insight into coach and tram expansion see T.Gray, ' The three John Greenwoods of Pendleton and their contribution to public transport provision in nineteenth-century Manchester' in D.Brumhead & T.Wyke (eds) Moving Manchester, (Manchester: Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society,2004) pp.159-77.*

5 *Unable to source evidence.*

6 *OED -Early form of motor bus used typically for pleasure trips.*

7 *Jennison archive F.4.3.3.1931 Guidebook map showing charabanc car park at Longsight entrance - see appendices.*

8 *V & G Brand, Brass Bands in the 20th Century, (Letchworth: Egon Publishers, 1979), p.78 confirming the increase in visitors by charabanc and the cessation of railway excursions. The reduction was also due to the shortage of rolling stock as a result of the war.*

Belle Vue Tram Route 1910

The Charm of Belle Vue

"...the notice, 'Keep off the Grass' did not exist."

This was the charm of Belle Vue. From the moment a visitor arrived he felt himself one of the family. Mr. Jennison met him at every gate, and could be spoken to if necessary. It was the same all over the gardens. In every important place there was one of the family, and if a dispute or a quarrel or any unseemly behaviour arose, it was 1000 to 1 that there would be a Jennison on the scene either to pacify or to act.

Belle Vue was a place for the enjoyment of the whole family. In the earliest days the patrons had been rough men; it took many years to raise the standard to the height it finally reached. It was done by gentleness and persuasion, never by force, by the provision of healthful and interesting amusements and good catering until it became the resort of the children and consequently of the whole family. There is a common idea that Belle Vue was a gigantic public house; certainly the licence covers a larger area than perhaps anywhere in Great Britain, but a big licence does not mean much drinking. The cost of licences is based on the relative sales of intoxicants and other food; Belle Vue pays the lowest possible fee and would only pay one third of that if the relative proportions were observed.[1] Consequently, there is little overdrinking and very few squabbles. 18 or 20 policemen only were required on the busiest day, to deal with 30,000 or 50,000 people, and they were employed almost entirely with the regulation of the crowds.[2] The family spirit had much to do with this; anyone aggrieved would go to Mr. Jennison at once and get satisfaction. It was the same with private parties; however humble the promoters might be and whatever hour of the day or evening they called at Belle Vue, they saw Mr. Jennison and talked it over in his private office, a privilege very highly appreciated. Again there were no unnecessary restrictions on amusement. Men or women might dance together to their hearts content and there was no formality of introduction in finding partners. Visitors might play any sort of game in the gardens unless they were annoying someone else, even football. Those exuberant youths who tried it on the dancing boards whilst the band played were stopped, naturally, and a more suitable place pointed out to them.

In Belle Vue the notice, *"Keep off the Grass"*, did not exist, nor were there any advertisements, either in the gardens or the Guide Book, or on any handbill issued from the establishment. This denial cost hundreds of pounds each year but it made the place different and more homelike.[3] In the same way no visitor was pressed to spend a single penny; not a single megaphone was heard; not a man touted for any amusement in the gardens. It was neither desirable nor necessary; no space concessions were granted, everything in the gardens belonged to Belle Vue and all the receipts therefrom. Nothing surprised strangers more than the amplitude of the activities of the proprietors. A huge bakehouse provided everything required upon the busiest day; its big ovens cooked the meat killed in its own butchery; sweets were produced on the spot; and for very many years a farm at Warford in Cheshire both bred the cows and provided the milk. There was a factory for the manufacture of ginger beer and a large brewery for the production of ale, which, along with Bass and other proprietary brands was bottled on the establishment. Ice was collected in the winter and supplied the Gardens and Manchester. Belle Vue employed its own blacksmiths, wheelwrights and joiners, boatbuilders, painters and plumbers. It made its own paths and roads and it could and did build almost all the halls and houses on the establishment, usually in winter, and none of them were less perfect on that account. Its own printing office produced all the bills required and the guide books which were written by some member of the family.[4]

1 *For a detailed examination of the licensing system see G.B. Wilson, Alcohol and the Nation, (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1940) pp.93-115.*

2 *Jennison Archive F.4.4 Order Book 1871. Request for the services of police constables from the station at Old Trafford.*

3 *Assume in maintenance and repair costs.*

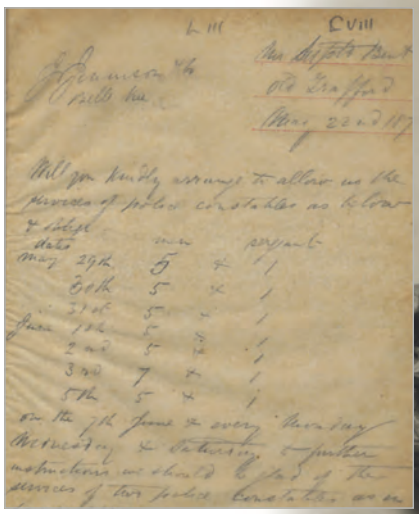
4 *Jennison archive F.4.3.3. Belle Vue guidebook 1878 states 'large confectionery, bakery, brewery, gas works, printing office, firework factory and other places of interest to view with special permission'.*

"...twenty years service is common, and several passed fifty years with the firm."

The gas works was erected in 1852, because Mr. Jennison thought Manchester would never bring its gas so far out; it has two small holders, which were afterwards supplemented by a larger one. They supplied not only the gardens but a great many houses erected by the firm, and also some public lamps.[5] Belle Vue had almost the first electric light in Manchester. It was erected over the bandstand, subject of very great interest. The machines, one for each light, were placed upstairs near the elephants; they occupied finally a new building, with steam engines of 250 H.P. to work them.

The Firework Shop, one of the oldest in Great Britain, was the only department to which visitors could not gain access.

The workmen were almost as much an institution as the proprietors; twenty years service is common, and several passed fifty years with the firm. A job at Belle Vue on the permanent staff was looked on as a certainty for life. For ninety years there was scarcely a labour trouble and never a strike. When the War broke out every man who left Belle Vue was promised his job on his return, and got it – whether maimed or not. The firm stood high on the King's Roll of Honour, and in the harsh times that followed the Peace, when unemployment was rife everywhere, and Belle Vue suffered like other businesses from decreasing trade, the Gardens did not shed a man. The old soldiers, when represented at the Thanksgiving Ceremonies on November 11th in Manchester, paraded under the command of one of the Military Members of the family; and there is a last resting place for them subscribed by the employees and the family, in Gorton Cemetery. We have pleasure in reproducing the photograph of this memorial, with its heraldic and allegorical suggestion of the activities of the Gardens. It is the work of F.V. Blundstone Esq., a distinguished Sculptor of London, a Gold Medallist of the Academy, but a native of Whaley Bridge, who studied at the Gardens in his early youth, and never forgot the slight favours he then received. His generosity in designing and executing this noble monument has the heartfelt gratitude of all those who were concerned in its erection.[6]



1871 order for police constables at the Gardens

5 *Jennison archive F.4.11 1855 map shows gas plant.*

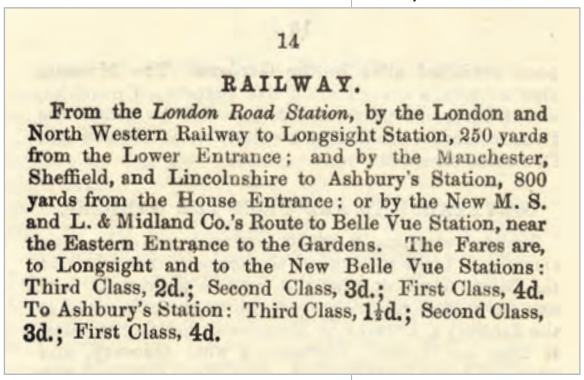
6 *Jennison archive F.4.4.6 full detail. Also see T.Wyke & H.Cocks, Public Sculpture of Greater Manchester, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004) for biographical notes on Blundstone which do not concur with Jennison's comments, p.438*

Excursions to Belle Vue

"Manchester... I know, that's the place near Belle Vue."

Belle Vue has been made by excursion traffic.[1] This is only a natural consequence of the aim to cater for the poorest people, at the lowest possible price. As we mentioned previously, the first excursion to Belle Vue came by canal boat, probably the earliest thing of its kind ever arranged. The railway excursions began at some date unknown. The companies themselves were running cheap trains out of Manchester in 1844, but Belle Vue was not attractive enough for the proprietor to take the risk of guaranteeing 300 passengers, with the result that Sunday Schools and School parties generally were the first to have the advantage of cheap fares and admission to the gardens. There is certain evidence of such a train in 1847,[2] and we have a detailed list of the trips of 1851, which carried some 16,000 school children and others, from 20 miles around.[3]

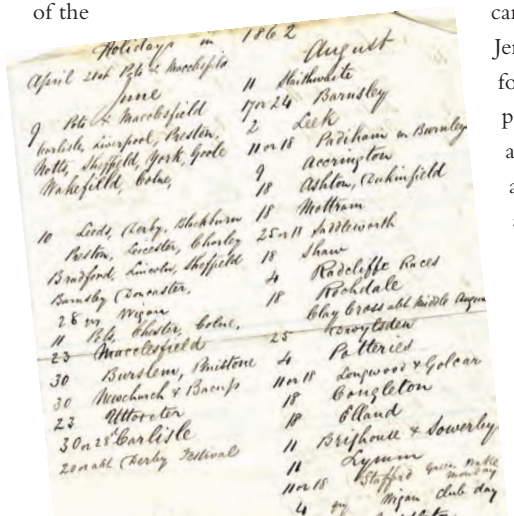
The firework display in 1852 with its enormous success, gave an immediate fillip to the excursions. All the old promoters were keen to profit by the added attraction; they did their own advertising and received 1 1/2 d per passenger - half the admission fee - from the management, and do not seem to have had any failures.[4] Mr. Jennison then saw the great possibilities in excursions arranged by himself. The firm's account books, which were diaries also, have many references to visits by John Jennison, the eldest son, and his brother, George, to the Railway officials between Colne on the one side and Stoke on the other.[5] Like all other individual promoters, they had to guarantee the trains and in addition to issue advertisements, but they went further, they dispatched the Belle Vue Band to the starting point and it played selections of music at all the chief stations while the passengers were loading. This seems rather a humorous idea and suggests a very leisurely system of railway management; but it paid the promoter very well. The number of excursionists passed 32,000 in the year. Many of the trains carried over 1,000 passengers, and in some cases over 2,000; of the moneys received Belle Vue at first accepted 4d. as their proportion, which was soon raised to and remained at 6d., except for the favoured railway servants who travelled at half the usual excursion rate, and paid 4d. to Belle Vue. In the first year, 1852, there was only one slight failure. Such a success was a natural encouragement to go further. The date of all the Wakes, Fairs and Feasts were carefully noted with a view to the initiation of trains.[6] Their organisation came into the hands of Mr. George Jennison Senr, with whom it remained for over 25 years. At first the bills were printed in Manchester by Messrs. Cave and Sever,[7] but there are so many alterations necessary in these matters at a moment's notice that the printer recognised the impossibility of doing the work efficiently for a client residing in the country, and very good naturedly suggested that Mr. George Jennison should set up his own printing plant; told him what machines to buy and where to get his workmen. The advice was taken and the first Ballroom became the printing office. The bills of 1856 bear the imprint *"Printed at Belle Vue Press."* The Printing Office, subsequently doubled in size, with a room beyond for the storage of paper, is still in use at the gardens for the production of posters and handbill for excursions, tickets, for parties, and all the misce llaneous printing that so large an establishment demands. It has employed 14 printers. The Belle Vue bills ranged in size from a mammoth sheet 160" x 50" down to the ordinary D.R., [8] but they have been of one uniform colour during the whole time, an arsenical green, - one of the most expensive papers put upon the walls, and now known through the trade as the Belle Vue Green.[9]



14

RAILWAY.

From the *London Road Station*, by the London and North Western Railway to Longsight Station, 250 yards from the Lower Entrance; and by the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire to Ashbury's Station, 800 yards from the House Entrance: or by the New M. S. and L. & Midland Co.'s Route to Belle Vue Station, near the Eastern Entrance to the Gardens. The Fares are, to Longsight and to the New Belle Vue Stations: Third Class, 2d.; Second Class, 3d.; First Class, 4d. To Ashbury's Station: Third Class, 1½d.; Second Class, 3d.; First Class, 4d.



1 *For an analysis of the train excursions to Belle Vue see Roach, pp.32-45.*

2 *Manchester Guardian, 27 March 1847 - 'Belle Vue can be reached by train to Longsight station fare 2d'.*

3 *No trace of this information in the archive.*

4 *Manchester Guardian article, 28 August 1852 confirms special trains bringing numerous parties to Belle Vue from Preston, Wigan, Chorley, Accrington, Liverpool and Bury.*

5 *Jennison Archive F.4.2 1853 Diary/Account book which confirms commissions paid to the various railway companies.*

6 *Jennison archive F.4.7.(i)*

7 *Jennison archive F.4.3.25. 1854 Handbill states printed by Cave & Sever. Slater's Directory 1852 confirms the business at Palatine Buildings, Hunts Bank, Manchester.*

8 *Refers to paper size -7.8" x 5.4"*

9 *Jennison archive F.4.3.1. Handbills from 1894 and 1900 in 'Belle Vue Green'.*

It is a coated paper which was manufactured for many years on the premises, and is now generally provided by Messrs. Olive & Partington, or Messrs. Makin.[10]

At the beginning, the gardens not only coated their own paper and printed the bills, but in many cases posted them. The billposter was a clever, rather eccentric, character, by name, Cooper, who troubled very little about railway permits; many a time he was detained by porters for travelling without a ticket. *"Alright"*, he would say, *"but as long as I am here you might as well let me stick the bills up,"* and he proceeded to post them on the station. In a short time the Station master would hear the complaint, and say, *"It's only old Cooper, let him alone."*[11] With the expansion of the Billposting trade the town posting passed into the hands of the Billposting Companies, and the Railways, mindful of the advantage to themselves, posted on the stations. The excursion business pushed by incessant attention on the part of Jennisons and helped by the lack of enterprise in the railway companies, reached enormous proportions. It would be hard to estimate how many people saw Belle Vue owing to the opportunity of visiting Manchester at a cheap rate; nevertheless there is a great deal of truth in the story of the Manchester man who mentioned his native city in the wilder parts of Wales. *"Manchester,"* said the native, *"I know that's the place near Belle Vue."* The Welsh trips which are oftenest referred to by strangers, had a most remarkable success.

They were run generally at the end of the season, in September or October, at a time when the drapers and haberdashers were buying the next season's cotton goods. The opportunity to examine them in bulk in the Manchester warehouses gave an excellent excuse for an outing for the family, and there was the added advantage of meeting the daughters who had gone into service in the great city.[12]

A big Welsh trip could make the servant question acute for one afternoon over the whole residential neighbourhood. These trips ran from as far off as Milford Haven through Cardiff to Manchester, and took twelve or fourteen hours on the journey each way, but the fare was so low, only 6/6d. that the numbers were maintained, year after year, and the habit of visiting Belle Vue became so ingrained in the Welsh people that the Railway Companies themselves scarcely dared to run a train without including admission to the Gardens. Many a time the first intimation the Gardens had of a well-filled trip from the principality was a demand from a passenger for admission. Naturally, as this was not on the Belle Vue official list, he was told that there was no excursion to the Gardens; he would vehemently protest the contrary with all the excitement of his Welsh nature. The next question, *"Have you got a Handbill?"* and the bill would be triumphantly produced, and on it in the smallest of small print, *"including admission to Belle Vue Gardens."* Of course the tickets were duly honoured and the railway company never made any demur about the payment of the usual 6d. Considering the distance traversed, the numbers were extraordinary. The first trip from Neath had over 2,000 passengers, rolling stock had to be gathered from everywhere and the Station Master said, *"Will they never stop coming?"* But this is not the largest that has run to the gardens.


MIDLAND RAILWAY.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS,

BELLE VUE

MANCHESTER.

(Season 1900).

OPEN EVERY DAY FROM TEN A.M.

Frequent Excursion Trains are run from this Station, and Guaranteed Excursions, or small Excursions, or Pic-Nic Parties, may be arranged upon most favourable terms from all Stations on the above Railway, or Railway Co.'s running in connection therewith, upon application to Messrs. JOHN JENNISON & CO., Belle Vue, Manchester.

Parties holding Belle Vue Excursion Tickets may visit the various attractions in Manchester, and will afterwards be admitted to the Gardens Free any time during the day upon shewing their Excursion Tickets.

ATTRACTIONS OF THE GARDENS!

EVERY MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND SATURDAY

Until the Fifth of November, and every

TUESDAY AND THURSDAY ALSO DURING AUGUST,

SIEGE OF LADYSMITH

With the final and successful struggle that drove the Boers northward.

THE ENTRY OF LOR

LORD ROBERTS, and

POR QUE

ZOOLOGI

PLEASUR

Band

PIC-NIC OR PLEASURE PARTY TICKETS

At about a Single Fare for the Double Journey, with 6d. additional for Admission to the Gardens,

Will be issued from the principal Stations on the Midland, Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire, and Cheshire Lines Railways, not less than twelve miles distant, to Ashbury's or Belle Vue Station, near the Gardens, to Parties of not less than Six 1st Class, or Ten 2nd or 3rd Class Passengers desirous of visiting the Gardens.

To obtain these Tickets application must be made at any of the Stations from which the Party wish to proceed, not less than Three Days before the Excursion, stating the following particulars, viz :—

That it is exclusively a Pleasure Party; the Stations from and to which the Tickets are required; for what Class of Carriage, the date of the proposed Excursion, and the probable number of the party.

Pleasure Party Tickets will be available for return the SAME DAY ONLY, and Parties can only proceed and return by the Trains which stop at the Stations where they wish to join and leave the Railway, and having that Class of Carriage attached for which they have taken Tickets.

Promoters of Excursions to Belle Vue, will, after making final arrangements with the Railway Company, be supplied, if required, with a few Posters and Handbills for distribution amongst the workmen and their friends, announcing the Trip, the time of Departure and return of the Train, with the attractions of the Gardens and places where Tickets may be obtained.

GUIDE

TO THE

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS,

BELLE VUE, MANCHESTER. 1893.

As many changes are made in the Gardens, old Guides will not be found correct.

For cash and omnibus fares see page 14.

THE Gardens are situated between the Hyde and Stockport turnpike roads, and have three main Entrances, one at each extremity, and one about the centre of the Grounds. The Hyde Road Entrance, which is the most central, is on the North side of the Gardens on the Hyde Road, and is approached from Manchester, either by that Road, or by the Ashton Road. The distance from the Manchester Infirmary is about 2¼ miles, and the Manchester Carriage Company's omnibuses and tram cars pass this entrance every few minutes. The Ashbury's Station, on the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway, is near this entrance, also the New Belle Vue Station.

The Longsight or Western Entrance, is near the Longsight Station, on the London and North Western Railway. Omnibuses and tram cars also run from Market Street every three minutes during the day to this Entrance or near to it. This road is also about 2¼ miles from the Infirmary; it is used chiefly by visitors from the southern parts of the city, and by those arriving from stations on the London and North Western Railway.

The Gorton, or Eastern Entrance and Hotel (opened in the year 1876), is situated on the Hyde Road, and is near the New Belle Vue Station on the Midland Railway. This is the most convenient Entrance for passengers arriving by the Midland Railway, and for parties in conveyances from Ashton-under-Lyne, Hyde, and the surrounding districts. Commodious stables have been

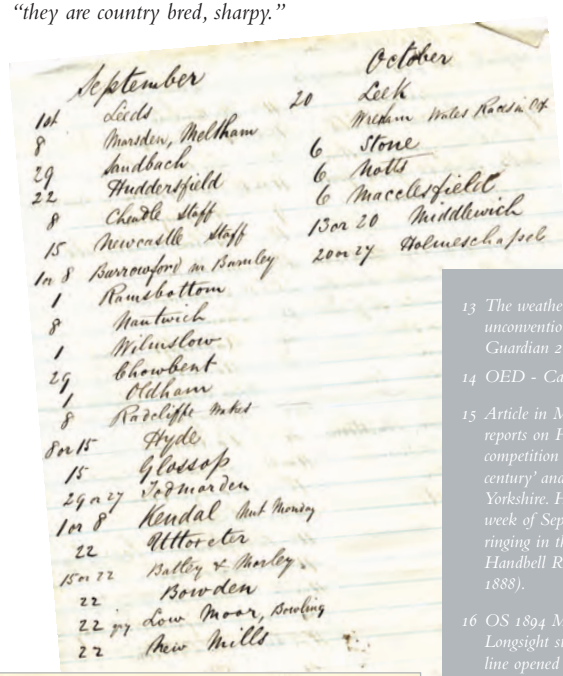
10 *Slater's Commercial Directory 1920 entries for Olive & Partington at New Market Lane, Lower Broughton and Makin at Mount Street, Albert Square, Manchester.*

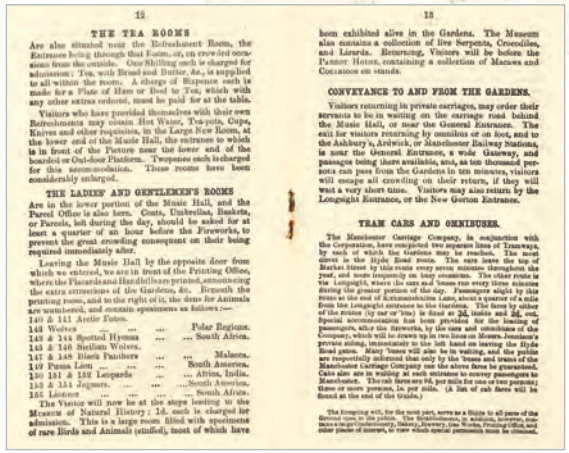
11 *Jennison archive F.4.2.5 account ledger dated 22 April 1859 confirms wages paid to 'Cooper bill poster'.*

12 *See Thompson, Rise of respectable society, pp.72-4.*

The record belongs to a train from Kirkburton, near Huddersfield, to Longsight, at the September Band Contest in 1919.[13] The old custom has been broken by the War and Belle Vue had to guarantee their trains just like any one else. As this implied a bet of 14 to 1 against one's self, I, Mr. George Jennison's son, was naturally a little chary[14] about guaranteeing more trains than were necessary. Luckily the local railway officials, friends of earlier days, recognised the hardships under which we laboured and put on a train on their own account, from Leeds, with the intention to take the surplus passengers, *"if there were any"*; that train saved the situation. It was advertised by the company and arrived almost empty at Huddersfield where it was filled like herrings in a barrel. The railway company paid commission to Messrs. Jennison's train on 3,843 passengers, and several hundred were left on Mossley and Saddleworth stations from the sheer impossibility of carrying them. The high water record of excursionists with admission to Belle Vue was over 325,000 in the year. It is difficult to say what is the largest number to any one station, but Longsight collected over £48 in excess fares of 2d. each to Manchester, on the occasion of a Handbell Ringing Contest on Honley Feast Monday, the great Yorkshire Holiday.[15] The Belle Vue Excursion traffic is directly responsible for the building of three railway stations and the enlargement of a fourth, Hyde Road Station; the last built has not survived.[16]

The others still rely almost entirely on Belle Vue traffic and Longsight Station has or had the longest excursion platform in the country. Ashbury's Station which serves the local traffic from Oldham, Ashton and Stalybridge especially, and the stations on the former Great Central Railway, was built during the life time of Mr John Jennison, who was greatly aggrieved that it was not called Belle Vue Station, an error that was later repaired by the Midland Railway Company when they, built, near the Eastern end of the Gardens, the Belle Vue Station for the accommodation of their trains from the Midlands.[17] The excursion traffic continued without a break until the Great War, trains were run by mutual consent of Messrs. Jennison and the railways concerned under the agreement that the Gardens should do all the advertising and accept 6d.per passenger as admission to the Gardens in lieu of commission. The North Eastern Railway alone stood out of this arrangement. The only trains run from that Company's system were ordinary guaranteed excursions of private individuals really[18] backed by Mr. Jennison. Finally even they were brought into the fold. This great triumph was really due to the novelist, Conan Doyle – an idea suggested by one of the Sherlock Holmes stories. My readers may remember the incident. Holmes wished to know the place of origin of a couple of geese and was doubtful of getting satisfaction from the shopkeeper. *"Fine geese, those,"* said Holmes. *"They are town bred, I'd bet a sovereign."* *"No, they aren't,"* said the shopkeeper, producing his books, *"they are country bred, sharpy."*





THE TEA ROOMS

Are also situated near the Refreshment Room, the Entrance being through that Room, or, on crowded occasions from the outside. One Shilling each is charged for admission: Tea, with Bread and Butter &c., is supplied to all within the room. A charge of Sixpence each is made for a Plate of Ham or Beef to Tea, which with any other extras ordered, must be paid for at the table.

Visitors who have provided themselves with their own Refreshments may obtain Hot Water, Tea-pots, Cups, Knives and other requisites, in the Large New Room, at the lower end of the Music Hall, the entrance to which is in front of the Picture near the lower end of the boarded or Out-door Platform. Twopence each is charged for this accommodation. These rooms have been considerably enlarged.

THE LADIES' AND GENTLEMEN'S ROOMS

Are in the lower portion of the Music Hall, and the Parcel Office is also here. Coats, Umbrellas, Baskets, or Parcels, left during the day, should be asked for at least a quarter of an hour before the Fireworks, to prevent the great crowding consequent on their being required immediately after.

Leaving the Music Hall by the opposite door from which we entered, we are in front of the Printing Office, where the Plans and Handbills are printed, commencing the extra extensions of the Gardens, &c. Beneath the printing room, and to the right of it, the dens for Animals are constructed, and contain specimens as follows:—

140 & 141 Arctic Foxes.
148 Wolves ... ... Polar Regions.
142 & 144 Spotted Hyænas ... ... South Africa.
143 & 146 Sicilian Wolves.
147 & 148 Black Panthers ... ... Malacca.
149 Puma Lion ... ... South America.
150 151 & 152 Leopards ... ... Africa, India.
153 & 154 Jaguars. ... ... South America.
155 Lioness ... ... South Africa.

The Visitor will now be at the steps leading to the Museum of Natural History; 1d. each is charged for admission. This is a large room filled with specimens of rare Birds and Animals (stuffed), most of which have been exhibited alive in the Gardens. The Museum also contains a collection of live Serpents, Crocodiles, and Lizards. Returning, Visitors will be before the Pannier House, containing a collection of Macaws and Cockatoos on stands.

CONVEYANCE TO AND FROM THE GARDENS.

Visitors returning in private carriages, may order their servants to be in waiting on the carriage road behind the Music Hall, or near the General Entrance. The exit for visitors returning by omnibus or on foot, and to the Ashbury's, Ardwick, or Manchester Railway Stations, is near the General Entrance, a wide Gateway, and passages being there available, and, as ten thousand persons can pass from the Gardens in ten minutes, visitors will escape all crowding on their return, if they will wait a very short time. Visitors may also return by the Longsight Entrance, or the New Gorton Entrance.

TRAM CARS AND OMNIBUSES.

The Manchester Carriage Company, in conjunction with the Corporation, have completed two separate lines of Tramways, by each of which the Gardens may be reached. The most direct is the Hyde Road route. The cars leave the top of Market Street by this route every seven minutes throughout the year, and more frequently on busy occasions. The other route is via Longsight, where the cars and busses run every three minutes during the greater portion of the day. Passengers might by this route as the end of Kirkmanshulme Lane, about a quarter of a mile from the Longsight entrance to the Gardens. The fares by either of the routes (by car or 'bus) is fixed at 2d. inside and 3d. out. Special accommodation has been provided for the leaving of passengers, after the fireworks, by the cars and omnibuses of the Company, which will be drawn up in two lines on Messrs. Jennison's private siding, immediately to the left hand on leaving the Hyde Road gates. Many busses will also be in waiting, and the public are respectfully informed that only by the busses and trams of the Manchester Carriage Company can the above fares be guaranteed. Cabs also are in waiting at each entrance to convey passengers to Manchester. The cab fares are 9d. per mile for one or two persons; three or more persons, 1s. per mile. (A list of cab fares will be found at the end of the Guide.)

The foregoing will, for the most part, serve as a Guide to all parts of the Gardens open to the public. The Establishments, in addition, however, comprise a large Confectionary, Dairy, Brewery, Gas Works, Printing Office, and other places of interest, to view which special permission must be obtained.

Holmes replied, *"Sorry, here's your sovereign,"* and turning away, he remarked to Watson: *"Doctor, when you see a man with a copy of the Pink 'un in his pocket, you can always get him with a bet."*[19]

13 *The weather in September 1919 was not kind, for an unconventional report of the contest see Manchester Guardian 2 September 1919.*

14 *OED - Cautious; reluctant to do something.*

15 *Article in Manchester Guardian, 24 September 1907 reports on Handbell Ringing contest and confirms competition held at Belle Vue for 'over half a century' and the majority of the competitors are from Yorkshire. Honley Feast Monday is in the third week of September. For information on handbell ringing in the nineteenth century see C.W. Fletcher, Handbell Ringing, (London: J.Curren & Sons, 1888).*

16 *OS 1894 Map for location. See Roach, pp.32-45. Longsight station on the Manchester & Birmingham line opened 4 June 1840, Gorton station on the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire railway opened on 17 November 1841 and Ashburys station on the same line in 1855. Belle Vue station on the Sheffield & Midland railway opened on 17 May 1875. Other stations with the locality of the Gardens include Ardwick opened in 1841 and Hyde Road in 1892.*

17 *Jennison archive F.4.3. Guidebooks from 1878, 1882 and 1901 for example, provide details of railway access.*

18 *Should read 'rarely' .*

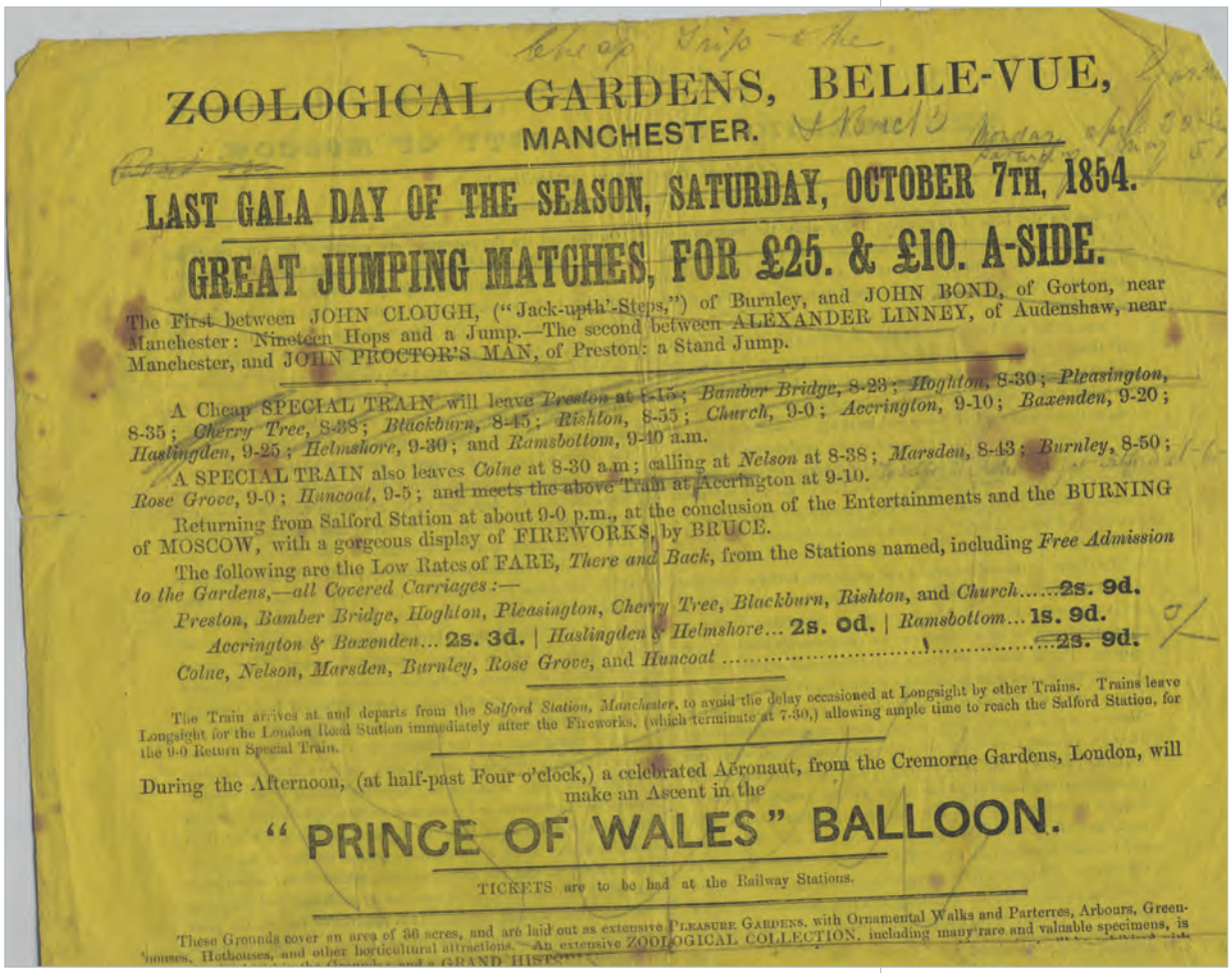
19 *The story is 'The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle' (1892). The Sporting Times (1865-1932) was a weekly newspaper dedicated to sport and particularly horse racing. It was informally known as the 'Pink 'un' as it was printed on pink paper. See J. B. Booth, Old Pink 'Un Days, (London: Grant Richards, 1924) for a whimsical commentary on the development of the publication.*

"The Great War put an end to the old system of excursions and left the gardens with a grievance."

Well, it struck me that a Yorkshireman might be got at in the same manner. I did not offer to bet him £5 or £10 that the train would succeed, but I told him that if we did not double the normal number of passengers on his usual excursion we would waive our right to our commission. Mr. James Jennison did not like the spirit of the arrangement, but I laughingly remarked that it was the difference between the age of 30 and 60, and the result was satisfactory.

The North Eastern railway had the monopoly of that district and wasted no money on advertising. A handbill on the approach at the Station was the only intimation of an excursion. Belle Vue placarded Newcastle, Middlesboro', Stockton, and other suitable places with their largest bills, 13ft 4ins high, 4ft 2ins. wide. The inhabitants responded accordingly; that excursion had 18 coaches with passengers standing in the corridors all the way to Manchester and the only difficulty afterwards was to persuade the Company not to run too often.

The Great War put an end to the old system of excursions and left the gardens with a grievance. Messrs. Jennison had done their share and more than their share in the big fight, for which they have the written thanks of the Army, the Navy, and the Ministry of Munitions,[20] and they found themselves not only comparatively, but actually, worse off than before, because the Railway Companies commenced running excursions to Seaside places and refused those to Belle Vue.[21] However, the official attitude was tempered by a great deal of sympathetic consideration when guaranteed excursions were permitted the following year. Losses were not treated harshly in view of the successes attained, - the trains averaged, good and bad together, over 600 passengers - and from that the old system may return. Many special trains have been run at single fare with a special reduction of admission to passengers to Belle Vue, with great advantage to both parties, and it is to be hoped that the old system of combined rail and admission tickets will soon be renewed on the joint ground of sentiment and sound business.



ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, BELLE-VUE,
MANCHESTER.

LAST GALA DAY OF THE SEASON, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7TH, 1854.

GREAT JUMPING MATCHES, FOR £25. & £10. A-SIDE.

The First between JOHN CLOUGH, ("Jack-upth'-Steps,") of Burnley, and JOHN BOND, of Gorton, near Manchester: Nineteen Hops and a Jump.—The second between ALEXANDER LINNEY, of Audenshaw, near Manchester, and JOHN PROCTOR'S MAN, of Preston: a Stand Jump.

A Cheap SPECIAL TRAIN will leave *Preston* at 8-15; *Bamber Bridge*, 8-23; *Hoghton*, 8-30; *Pleasington*, 8-35; *Cherry Tree*, 8-38; *Blackburn*, 8-45; *Rishton*, 8-55; *Church*, 9-0; *Accrington*, 9-10; *Baxenden*, 9-20; *Haslingden*, 9-25; *Helmshore*, 9-30; and *Ramsbottom*, 9-40 a.m.

A SPECIAL TRAIN also leaves *Colne* at 8-30 a.m; calling at *Nelson* at 8-38; *Marsden*, 8-43; *Burnley*, 8-50; *Rose Grove*, 9-0; *Huncoat*, 9-5; and meets the above Train at Accrington at 9-10.

Returning from Salford Station at about 9-0 p.m., at the conclusion of the Entertainments and the BURNING of MOSCOW, with a gorgeous display of FIREWORKS, by BRUCE.

The following are the Low Rates of FARE, *There and Back*, from the Stations named, including *Free Admission to the Gardens,—all Covered Carriages:—*

Preston, Bamber Bridge, Hoghton, Pleasington, Cherry Tree, Blackburn, Rishton, and *Church*.....2s. 9d.
Accrington & Baxenden... 2s. 3d. | *Haslingden & Helmshore*... 2s. 0d. | *Ramsbottom*... 1s. 9d.
Colne, Nelson, Marsden, Burnley, Rose Grove, and *Huncoat*.....2s. 9d.

The Train arrives at and departs from the *Salford Station, Manchester*, to avoid the delay occasioned at Longsight by other Trains. Trains leave Longsight for the London Road Station immediately after the Fireworks, (which terminate at 7-30,) allowing ample time to reach the Salford Station, for the 9-0 Return Special Train.

During the Afternoon, (at half-past Four o'clock,) a celebrated Aëronaut, from the Cremorne Gardens, London, will make an Ascent in the

"PRINCE OF WALES" BALLOON.

TICKETS are to be had at the Railway Stations.

These Grounds cover an area of 36 acres, and are laid out as extensive PLEASURE GARDENS, with Ornamental Walks and Parterres, Arbours, Green-houses, Hothouses, and other horticultural attractions. An extensive ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTION, including many rare and valuable specimens, is

20 *Letters not part of the archive.*

21 *Trips to Belle Vue no longer as profitable as excursions to the seaside and there were limits on excursion trains; see Walton, Blackpool, for detailed discussion.*

The Championship Brass Band Contest

"...almost as famous as Belle Vue itself."

There is no doubt that to these Contests is due that taste for good music which is marked among the working people of this part of the country.[1] A line drawn thirty miles north of Manchester and ten miles south of it comprises an area in which even yet one will find nine tenths of the finest Brass Bands in the Country, and perhaps some of the best in the world. The Contests inaugurated in 1853[2] continued right through the War and the only failure took place in 1859 when there were but three entries and no contest was held.[3] Their inception was due to Mr. Melling, a Manchester musician who had attended a Brass Band Contest near Hull in 1845, and was so impressed that finally he persuaded Mr. Jennison to try one. The venture was beset with difficulties, the musicians were poor and their instruments bad in quality and number. The very names of the bands were unknown; all through the winter the family used their spare moments sending letters to the towns and villages, addressed to the conductor of any Brass Band, Fife and Drum Band, or the leader of any set of Handbell Ringers.

NOVEL MUSICAL CONTEST AT THE BELLE VUE GARDENS.
The contest between eight juvenile drum and fife bands, for four prizes, took place at the Belle Vue Gardens, Hyde Road, on Monday afternoon last, in the presence of about 6,000 persons. Each band was required to play four tunes of their own selection; and before the commencement of the playing, Mr. John Jennison, jun. intimated that if any member of a band to which a prize might be awarded should be ascertained to be above the prescribed age (20 years), such prize would be withheld. The judges were Drum-major Bacon, of the 33d or Duke of Wellington's Regiment, stationed here; and Mr. Thornhill, of Leeds. To prevent the possibility of their knowing the band that played any particular tune, canvass was affixed to the front of the orchestra in which the judges sat; and the bands played in accordance with the order settled by lots, instead of in the order in which they were entered. After the eight bands had played their four tunes each, the judges directed that two bands (which happened to be both from Preston) should each play a tune differing from any they had before played; and this having been done, the prizes were awarded as follows:—First, St. Mary's flute and drum band, Preston, 20 performers, £7; second, Preston temperance drum and fife band, 26 performers, £3. 10s.; third, Oldham borough drum and fife band, 21 performers, £2; fourth, Ashton-under-Lyne temperance band of hope, 28 performers, £1. The other bands were from Stalybridge, Haslaw Moor, Hulme (Wilmot-street), and Royton; to each, 5s. were given. The playing occupied from three o'clock until seven.—There were special trips from Preston, Burnley, Huddersfield, and Leeds; the one from Preston and Burnley consisting of 40 carriages, drawn by two engines. The excursionists were enabled to remain until after the display of the Siege of Seringapatam.

James Alfreed Melling

The Handbell Contest, 1853, suspended during the war, was given up in 1927. The Concertina Band Contest, Military Band Contest, established 1921, Choral Contest, established 1901, are also held.[4] The Fife and Drum Contest held on Whit Tuesday from 1853, had a life of 25 years. It was the first held and its success in June 1853, gained the permission to try a Brass Band Contest. The problematical success of the first venture, 1853, fixed the date, the first Monday in September, which is now known as Belle Vue Monday throughout the Brass Band world. That Monday falls in Gorton Wakes, and was chosen so that there would be at least an appearance of success; for the first Contest eight Bands entered and the results surpassed the wildest dreams of the promoters. There were 10,000 people present. The Contest, which should have commenced at 2p.m. had to be delayed because the Excursions were so heavy from the Huddersfield district that the trains arrived two hours

Manchester Courier 1914

1 *On the importance of Belle Vue in the history of the brass band movement see A R Taylor, Brass Bands, (St.Albans: Granada Publishing Limited, 1979), pp.37-9 and 60-1 and D.Russell, Popular Music in England 1840-1914: A social history second edition, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997) pp.205-43 Also George Jennison's research material contains various correspondence relating to the Brass Band competition and includes reprints from 'Musical Opinions and Music Trade Review' by Enderby Jackson which refer to both John Jennison and Mr Melling .Jennison archive reference F.4.11*

2 *Manchester Guardian article 13 July 1853 reports the 'Novel Brass Band Contest' and advertisement 6 July 1853 confirms the competition.*

3 *No advertisements in Manchester Guardian for brass band competition in 1859.*

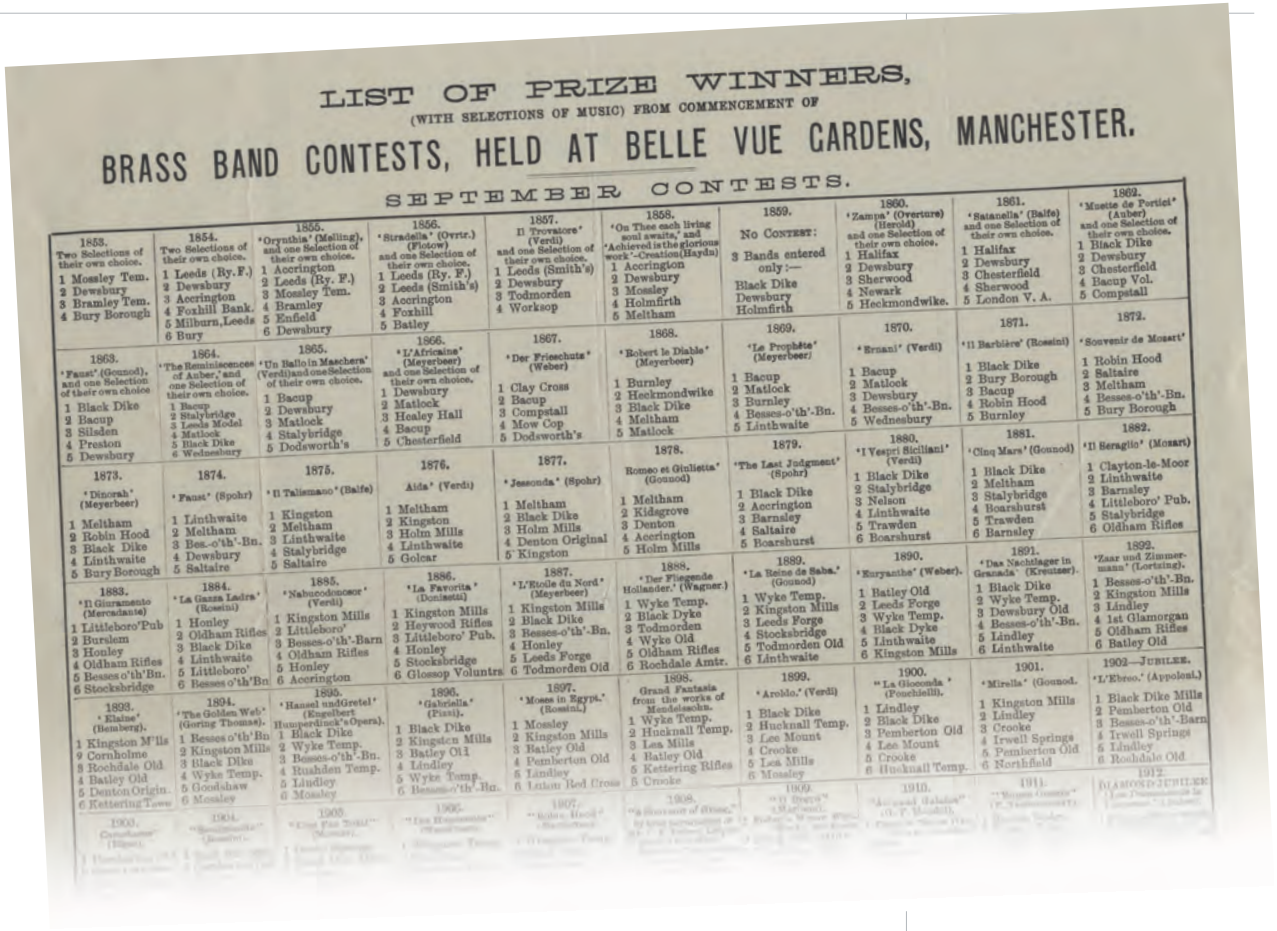
4 *All competitions are advertised in press and dates confirmed. Jennison archive F.4.3.25 various notices of brass band contests.*

"The entries are invariably so numerous that the list is closed in advance..."

later, (c.f. the record excursion for 1919 from the same district). The winning Band, Mossley, came by the train and were allowed to play last instead of in the position drawn for them.[5] The prizes were the entry fees plus £20, given by Mr. Jennison. On the completion of the Contest there were clamours for its repetition in the following year, 1854, to which Mr. Jennison acceded with the greatest willingness with a considerable increase of the prize money.

The Manchester papers comment on the remarkable number of 14 bands entered and quote an attendance of 20,000 people, which our records of receipts prove to be correct.[6] There were 15 entries in 1855; strangely enough for the next 13 years there was a considerable drop - the entries very often less than ten.[7] The reason is to be found perhaps in the bad trade after the Crimean War and during the Civil War in America.[8]

The great definite success came from 1866 onwards. In 1877 there were 36 entries which had risen in 1885 to 45 bands, most of whom played. It was the best contest, and competitors were carried free. The Contest that year began at 11a.m. and continued until 9.30. The judges complained that it was impossible to do justice to such a number of competitors, consequently the management decided to limit the playing bands to 20 and they instituted the junior or July contest, in which the lesser known bands might win their spurs before selection for the



LIST OF PRIZE WINNERS,

(WITH SELECTIONS OF MUSIC) FROM COMMENCEMENT OF

BRASS BAND CONTESTS, HELD AT BELLE VUE GARDENS, MANCHESTER.

SEPTEMBER CONTESTS.

1853. Two Selections of their own choice.	1854. Two Selections of their own choice.	1855. 'Orynthia' (Melling), and one Selection of their own choice.	1856. 'Stradella' (Ovrtr.) (Flotow) and one Selection of their own choice.	1857. Il Trovatore' (Verdi) and one Selection of their own choice.	1858. 'On Thee each living soul awaits,' and 'Achieved is the glorious work'-Creation(Haydn)	1859. No Contest:	1860. 'Zampa' (Overture) (Herold) and one Selection of their own choice.	1861. 'Satanella' (Balfe) and one Selection of their own choice.	1862. 'Musette de Portici' (Auber) and one Selection of their own choice.
1 Mossley Tem.	1 Leeds (Ry. F.)	1 Accrington	1 Leeds (Ry. F.)	1 Leeds (Smith's)	1 Accrington	3 Bands entered only :—	1 Halifax	1 Halifax	1 Black Dike
2 Dewsbury	2 Dewsbury	2 Leeds (Ry. F.)	2 Leeds (Smith's)	2 Dewsbury	2 Dewsbury	Black Dike	2 Dewsbury	2 Dewsbury	2 Dewsbury
3 Bramley Tem.	3 Accrington	3 Mossley Tem.	3 Accrington	3 Todmorden	3 Mossley	Dewsbury	3 Sherwood	3 Chesterfield	3 Chesterfield
4 Bury Borough	4 Foxhill Bank.	4 Bramley	4 Foxhill	4 Worksop	4 Holmfirth	Holmfirth	4 Newark	4 Sherwood	4 Bacup Vol.
	5 Milburn,Leeds	5 Enfield	5 Batley		5 Meltham		5 Heckmondwike.	5 London V. A.	5 Compstall
	6 Bury	6 Dewsbury							

1863. 'Faust' (Gounod), and one Selection of their own choice	1864. 'The Reminiscences of Auber,' and one Selection of their own choice.	1865. 'Un Ballo in Maschera' (Verdi) and one Selection of their own choice.	1866. 'L'Africaine' (Meyerbeer) and one Selection of their own choice.	1867. 'Der Freischute' (Weber)	1868. 'Robert le Diable' (Meyerbeer)	1869. 'Le Prophète' (Meyerbeer)	1870. 'Ernani' (Verdi)	1871. 'Il Barbière' (Rossini)	1872. 'Souvenir de Mozart'
1 Black Dike	1 Bacup	1 Bacup	1 Dewsbury	1 Clay Cross	1 Burnley	1 Bacup	1 Bacup	1 Black Dike	1 Robin Hood
2 Bacup	2 Stalybridge	2 Dewsbury	2 Matlock	2 Bacup	2 Heckmondwike	2 Matlock	2 Matlock	2 Bury Borough	2 Saltaire
3 Silsden	3 Leeds Model	3 Matlock	3 Healey Hall	3 Compstall	3 Black Dike	3 Burnley	3 Dewsbury	3 Bacup	3 Meltham
4 Preston	4 Matlock	4 Stalybridge	4 Bacup	4 Mow Cop	4 Meltham	4 Besses-o'th'-Bn.	4 Besses-o'th'-Bn.	4 Robin Hood	4 Besses-o'th'-Bn.
5 Dewsbury	5 Black Dike	5 Dodsworth's	5 Chesterfield	5 Dodsworth's	5 Matlock	5 Linthwaite	5 Wednesbury	5 Burnley	5 Bury Borough
	6 Wednesbury								

1873. 'Dinorah' (Meyerbeer)	1874. 'Faust' (Spohr)	1875. 'Il Talismano' (Balfe)	1876. Aida' (Verdi)	1877. 'Jessonda' (Spohr)	1878. Romeo et Giulietta' (Gounod)	1879. 'The Last Judgment' (Spohr)	1880. 'I Vespri Siciliani' (Verdi)	1881. 'Cinq Mars' (Gounod)	1882. 'Il Seraglio' (Mozart)
1 Meltham	1 Linthwaite	1 Kingston	1 Meltham	1 Meltham	1 Meltham	1 Black Dike	1 Black Dike	1 Black Dike	1 Clayton-le-Moor
2 Robin Hood	2 Meltham	2 Meltham	2 Kingston	2 Black Dike	2 Kidsgrove	2 Accrington	2 Stalybridge	2 Meltham	2 Linthwaite
3 Black Dike	3 Bes.-o'th'-Bn.	3 Linthwaite	3 Holm Mills	3 Holm Mills	3 Denton	3 Barnsley	3 Nelson	3 Stalybridge	3 Barnsley
4 Linthwaite	4 Dewsbury	4 Stalybridge	4 Linthwaite	4 Denton Original	4 Accrington	4 Saltaire	4 Linthwaite	4 Boarshurst	4 Littleboro' Pub.
5 Bury Borough	5 Saltaire	5 Saltaire	5 Golcar	5 Kingston	5 Holm Mills	5 Boarshurst	5 Trawden	5 Trawden	5 Stalybridge
							6 Boarshurst	6 Barnsley	6 Oldham Rifles

1883. 'Il Giuramento (Mercadante)	1884. 'La Gazza Ladra' (Rossini)	1885. 'Nabucodonosor' (Verdi)	1886. 'La Favorita' (Donizetti)	1887. 'L'Etoile du Nord' (Meyerbeer)	1888. 'Der Fliegende Holander.' (Wagner.)	1889. 'La Reine de Saba.' (Gounod)	1890. 'Euryanthe' (Weber).	1891. 'Das Nachtlager in Granada' (Kreutzer).	1892. 'Zaar und Zimmermann' (Lortzing).
1 Littleboro'Pub	1 Honley	1 Kingston Mills	1 Kingston Mills	1 Kingston Mills	1 Wyke Temp.	1 Wyke Temp.	1 Batley Old	1 Black Dike	1 Besses-o'th'-Bn.
2 Burslem	2 Oldham Rifles	2 Littleboro'	2 Heywood Rifles	2 Black Dike	2 Black Dyke	2 Kingston Mills	2 Leeds Forge	2 Wyke Temp.	2 Kingston Mills
3 Honley	3 Black Dike	3 Besses-o'th'-Barn	3 Littleboro' Pub.	3 Besses-o'th'-Bn.	3 Todmorden	3 Leeds Forge	3 Wyke Temp.	3 Dewsbury Old	3 Lindley
4 Oldham Rifles	4 Linthwaite	4 Oldham Rifles	4 Honley	4 Honley	4 Wyke Old	4 Stockbridge	4 Black Dyke	4 Besses-o'th'-Bn.	4 1st Glamorgan
5 Besses o'th'Bn.	5 Littleboro'	5 Honley	5 Stockbridge	5 Leeds Forge	5 Oldham Rifles	5 Todmorden Old	5 Linthwaite	5 Lindley	5 Oldham Rifles
6 Stockbridge	6 Besses o'th'Bn	6 Accrington	6 Glossop Voluntrs	6 Todmorden Old	6 Rochdale Amtr.	6 Linthwaite	6 Kingston Mills	6 Batley Old	6 Batley Old

1893. 'Elaine' (Isenberg).	1894. 'The Golden Web' (Goring Thomas).	1895. 'Hansel undGretel' (Engelbert Humperdinck's Opera).	1896. 'Gabriella' (Piasi).	1897. 'Moses in Egypt.' (Rossini.)	1898. Grand Fantasia from the works of Mendelssohn.	1899. 'Arobio.' (Verdi)	1900. 'La Gioconda' (Ponchielli).	1901. 'Mirella' (Gounod.	1902—Jubilee. 'L'Ebreo.' (Appolosi.)
1 Kingston M'lls	1 Besses o'th'Bn	1 Black Dike	1 Black Dike	1 Mossley	1 Wyke Temp.	1 Black Dike	1 Lindley	1 Kingston Mills	1 Black Dike Mills
2 Cornholme	2 Kingston Mills	2 Wyke Temp.	2 Kingston Mills	2 Kingston Mills	2 Hucknall Temp.	2 Hucknall Temp.	2 Black Dike	2 Lindley	2 Pemberton Old
3 Rochdale Old	3 Black Dike	3 Besses-o'th'-Bn.	3 Batley Old	3 Batley Old	3 Lee Mills	3 Lee Mount	3 Pemberton Old	3 Crooke	3 Besses-o'th'-Barn
4 Batley Old	4 Wyke Temp.	4 Rushden Temp.	4 Lindley	4 Pemberton Old	4 Batley Old	4 Crooke	4 Lee Mount	4 Irwell Springs	4 Irwell Springs
5 Denton Origin.	5 Goodshaw	5 Lindley	5 Wyke Temp.	5 Lindley	5 Kettering Rifles	5 Lea Mills	5 Crooke	5 Pemberton Old	5 Lindley
6 Kettering Town	6 Mossley	6 Mossley	6 Besses-o'th'-Bn.	6 Luton Red Cross	5 Crooke	6 Mossley	6 Hucknall Temp.	6 Northfield	6 Rochdale Old

1903. 1904. 1905. 1906. 1907. 1908. 1909. 1910. 1911. 1912.

September Contest. All the prize winners at the July Contest were assured of acceptance if they entered for the September Contest and on one historical occasion, 1891, Batley Old Band won the first prize in each section.[9]

The July Contest in its turn became equally unwieldy and was divided into two sections which played on the same day, the first in the second section being guaranteed acceptance for the championship contest. As giving some idea of the marked predominance of Brass Bands in the North, the best London Band which entered for one of these contests finished last in the second section. During the War that sub-division was abolished and has not been renewed. In its place a new Contest was instituted rigourously limited to beginners, and in order to encourage practice in winter the music was forwarded very early in the year.

5 *Brand, Brass Bands pp.73-91. This publication is well recognised as a reputable source for the history of the brass band movement as both Geoffrey & Violet Brand were editors of the British Bandsman; the international brass band magazine established in 1887 and celebrating its 125th anniversary.*

6 *Manchester Courier, 9 September 1854 states the attendance as between 19,000 and 20,000.*

7 *No information available in the archive for 1855 however assume Jennison had sight of the ledgers as the figures are precise.*

8 *Crimean War 1853-1856. American Civil War 1861-1865.*

9 *See Brand, Brass Bands, p74.*

Belle Vue Champion Silver Challenge Cup

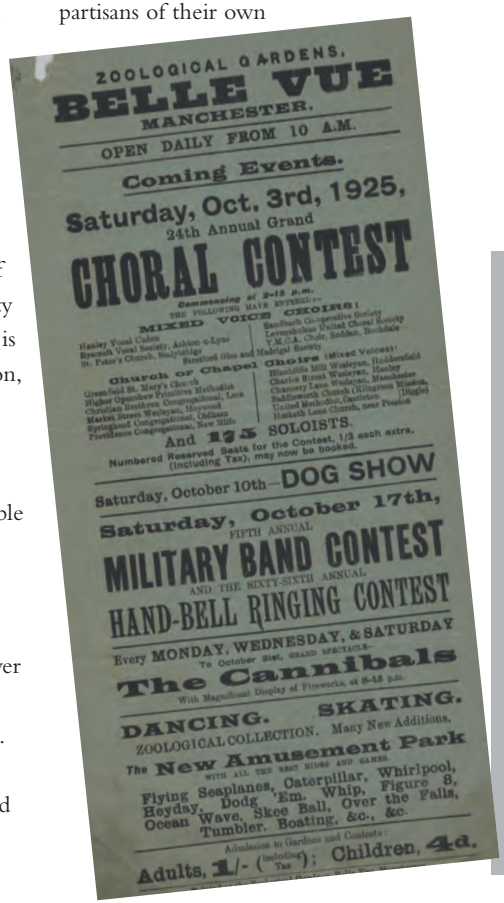
This Contest takes place on the first Saturday in May and Bands of exceptional merit now have the opportunity of passing forward through the two junior Contests to the great Championship in September in the same year. The entries are invariably so numerous that the list is closed in advance as provided for in the regulations. The cash prizes in May are £ entry fee 10/- ; in July £ entry fee £1.0.0.,[10] and in both of these there are always a number of extra prizes given by instrument makers who are allowed a free exhibition of their goods on the Contest days. It is a far cry from the beginning of the September Contest to what is now the championship of the world.

In 1853 the total prizes were £28, of which Messrs. Jennison gave £20. In 1854 the list shows £44 with the first special prize a ten guinea instrument given by Mr. J. Higham, a musical instrument maker of Manchester, whose munificence in that and subsequent years did much for the Contest.[11] There was another rise to £50 in the next year, the total remaining at that figure until it was increased in 1863 to £58, 1864 to £75.

In 1870 a gold medal was added for the winning Band and in 1873 silver medals to the other winners. In 1879 all the winners received a gold medal and a special gold medal was given to each member of a band that won in three successive years. The fifty guinea Challenge bowl which becomes the property of a band winning three years in succession was first presented in 18 .[12] On its pedestal there are shields of winners unique in the contesting world. During this period, the number of special prizes given by instrument makers desiring a show at the Contest increased enormously, being only limited by the accommodation available at the gardens, and the prizes were equally augmented, reaching in 1925 the large total of £300 in cash prizes, the fifty guinea challenge cup, and a solid gold shield, value £2,000, which is held for one year. (See handbill).[13]

The Belle Vue Contest has had many competitors who have tried by offers of huge prizes to undermine the popularity of Belle Vue. The only one still existing is that held at the Crystal Palace in London, where the 1,000 guineas trophy is the chief attraction, but none of the competitors has ever reached the total given at Belle Vue and none has been able to affect its pre-eminence.[14]

The earliest contests were held in the open air; in 1861 the Ballroom of the Gardens became the venue, but was never large enough for the enthusiasts who desired to attend. The King's Hall, 200ft. by 120ft., - in which the contests now take place is still insufficient. Every Band Contest Monday it is crowded to suffocation. Thousands now stand outside its wooden walls, and in 1924 when the management called the latest discoveries of science to their aid, the ballroom, the scene of so many earlier struggles, was crowded with an overflow audience listening to the bands by broadcast.[15] It is a wonderful sight to watch this great working-class gathering at the contests, to note how attentively they follow the music, to see 3,000 conductor's copies turning simultaneously and to appreciate the fine sportsmanship of men who are partisans of their own bands to their very finger tips. The numbered programmes of the contests (1d., Post War 2d.) and results (1d.) were printed and sold at the Gardens as soon as known. The prizes were paid in cash the same evening. Every effort was made to assure fairness in deciding the relative merits of the bands, and contestants who have grumbled as competitors, have often afterwards, as judges, admitted the error of their complaints.


ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS,
BELLE VUE
MANCHESTER.
OPEN DAILY FROM 10 A.M.
Coming Events.
Saturday, Oct. 3rd, 1925,
24th Annual Grand
CHORAL CONTEST
Saturday, October 10th—DOG SHOW
Saturday, October 17th,
FIFTH ANNUAL
MILITARY BAND CONTEST
AND THE SIXTY-SIXTH ANNUAL
HAND-BELL RINGING CONTEST
Every MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, & SATURDAY
The Cannibals
DANCING. SKATING.
ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTION. Many New Additions.
The New Amusement Park
Flying Seaplanes, Caterpillar, Whirlpool, Heyday, Dodg 'Em. Whip, Figure 8, Ocean Wave, Skee Ball, Over the Falls, Tumbler, Boating, &c., &c.
Adults, 1/- ; Children, 4d.

10 *Jennison omitted the information in the manuscript and presumably he intended to include it when he checked his sources.*

11 *Slater's Commercial Directory 1855 entry: Joseph Higham 2 Victoria Terrace, Victoria Bridge, Manchester. See www.manchesterhistory.net for section on the history of the company. Joseph Higham was extremely well respected and renowned band instrument manufacturer and their instruments are considered valuable collector's pieces today.*

12 *Omitted by Jennison however see Brand, Brass Bands, p.74 confirms Challenge Cup was first awarded to the Wyke Temperance Band in 1889.*

13 *Jennison archive F.4.4 List of all the Brass Band prizewinners from 1853 to 1925. F.4.3.1 1925 Handbill*

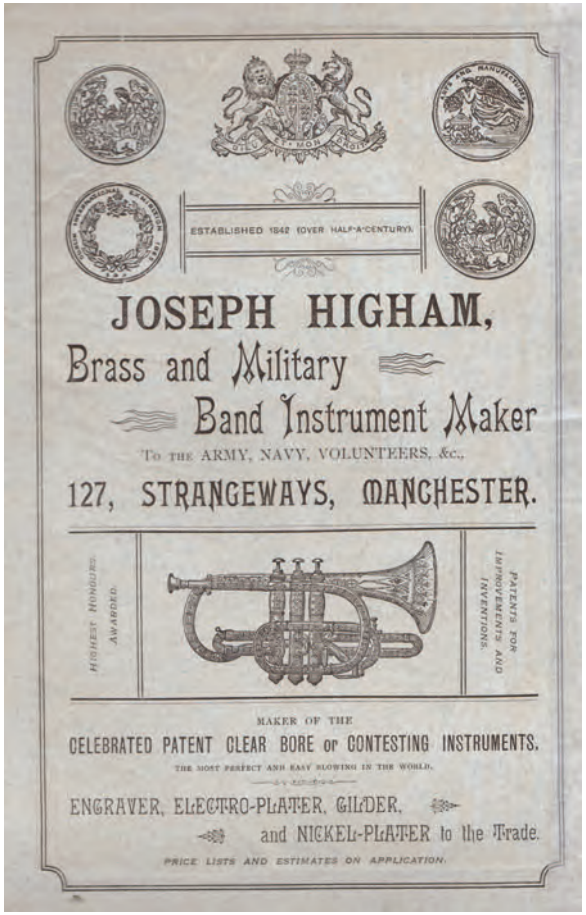
14 *Crystal Palace contest organised by Enderby Jackson commenced in 1860, see Russell, Popular Music, p.207. The contests ran from 1860-63 and were revived in 1900 by John Henry Iles who eventually headed up the business syndicate that bought Belle Vue in 1925; see Brand, Brass Bands, p.79.*

15 *Manchester Guardian, 2 September 1924.*

"A lot of good players no more make a band than good colours a picture."

The procedure was always the same. The judges assembled early at the Gardens; they were taken to their private room in charge of one of the family, who conducted them after lunch by a private way to the judging box so that they knew nothing either of the order of playing or actually what Bands might have dropped out, nor were they ever informed until their signed adjudication had been handed to Mr. Jennison. For many years the judges gave a public criticism from the Contest stage. From that arose the only disturbance of that has ever marred the proceedings. The supporters of a very famous band of the time became annoyed at the low position of their favourite and attempted to mob the judge and so offended Mr. Charles Godfrey that he refused to officiate in future, a determination which he sustained for twenty years.[16] It was a stupid ebulition of feeling for which its authors were no doubt heartily ashamed. That band's failure was summed up by Mr. Samuel Hughes in a sentence; he was an old man then and a judge for the last time. I was sent with him to Longsight Station as a boy, and we spoke of the incident: *"A lot of good players,"* said he, *"no more make a band than good colours a picture."*

In the sixties or earlier, great soloists such as Tom German, A. J. Phasey, and the celebrated cornetist, Mr. Levy, were engaged to give exhibitions of their skill and teach emulation to the enthusiastic bandsmen and for many years special prizes were given to soloists, a custom dropped by desire of the judges who found it too difficult to do justice to so many special points. Today the bands contain the finest soloists in the country, and it has often been hinted - probably with truth - that specialists were engaged for the chief instruments; if so, the fault lay with the bands. The list of competing bands with the name of every player and his instrument was circulated to each a fortnight before the event and every objection was carefully examined. Bands and players have been disqualified many times, - the earliest in 1855, the last in 1924; some of them dramatically on the platform, but far more at a private interview beforehand. The winners of the Contest were often comparatively unknown but it is surprising how regularly the well known names have maintained their place in the prize list. The Black Dyke Mills, Queensbury, holds the place of honour; other bands we may mention are the 4th Volunteer Battalion, Bacup, pre-eminent in its time; Besses o' th' Barn; Fodens Motor Waggon Works, Sandbach; Kingston Mills, Hyde; Meltham Mills, Huddersfield; all of them close to Manchester. One of them, Besses o' th' Barn Band, made a world's tour to teach the English speaking races in our great colonies.[17] In 1924 the Newcastle Steel Works Band, Australia, came to challenge our best. They challenged and they won; their performance was masterly, their success a bitter blow to insular prejudice; probably it will be an incentive to greater effort, a milestone on the road to progress.[18]



16 *New Groves Dictionary, Vol 10, p.72, entry for Charles Godfrey (1839-1919) Bandmaster of the Royal Horse Guards and notes that for '16 years adjudicated at Belle Vue band contests in Manchester. Russell, Popular Music, p.227 describes this event which occurred in 1888.*

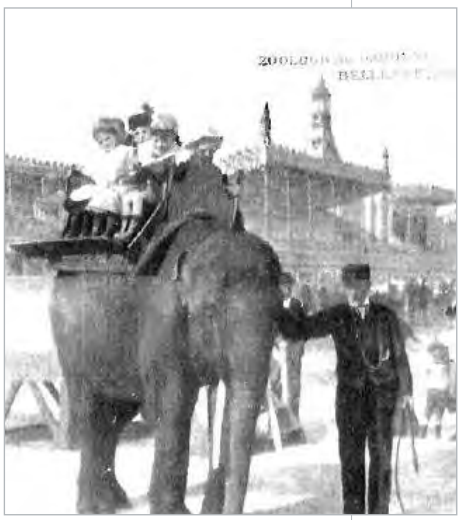
17 *For the history of the band see Hampson, Origins, History & Achievements of the Besses o'th' Barn Band.*

18 *Manchester Guardian, 2 September 1924.*

Zoological Collection

"Of the many elephants, Maharajah was the chief."

The Zoological Collection with which Belle Vue is so intimately connected, has been traced already from its small beginnings to the comparative profusion of 1847.[1] With the possible exception of the brown bear chained to a pole among the trees and approached through a cave, they were housed without any regard for beauty clustered in a range of sheds to the right of Hyde Road Entrance, and on the left in a brick building with wooden front, crowded with cages, small rectangular boxes as ornamental as the pens in a dealer's yard. This building, about 60ft long and 40ft wide, divided by a wall pierced at its front edge by a large doorway, contained all kinds of creatures, birds of prey round the top, parakeets and other bright plumaged birds on the next stage, and below them small animals in two tiers of very mean cages. These were along the back wall.



The lowest cages were twice the height of the back cages and also twice the length, and in these the peaceful animals of a larger size were shown. This arrangement can be examined today as the house is still in use. The highest cages are left empty and. most of the others have been enlarged to twice or four times their original size. In the open space in the centre of the first compartment, macaws on stands were and are still kept. In 1847 the compartments were similar and in the centre of the second stood the first large monkey cage, a circular one, not more than eight feet in diameter. On the removal of the monkeys to new quarters in 1851, an indoor aviary, probably the finest in Europe, was arranged in that portion of the building.

The value of the collection in 1847 would be about £200 and it is interesting to note how large a proportion were South American creatures, some of them, like the Spider Monkeys, both rare and expensive. Macaws always make a good show and live well; some may date from the beginning as the arrival of many of them was beyond the recollection of anyone in the Gardens in 1896 when George Jennison took a census of the Collection still living, apparently untouched by age.

The Collection interested greatly the more thoughtful classes in the neighbourhood, and was a strong incentive for further development. The Museum of Natural History, chiefly stuffed specimens of animals, made a far larger appeal than one would imagine probable and the Management thought it would be still more remunerative (there was 1d. admission) if placed nearer the centre. This was done in 1850 and marked the beginning also of a great zoological development. The Museum 75ft long, 25ft wide and 21ft high, was built on the site of the small cages on the right of the Hyde Road Entrance. A Monkey House, 25ft wide, containing a cage 30ft by 20ft, was tacked to the end of it and faced the entrance to the Gardens. The Museum occupied the upper floor, the lower was made into stabling 13ft wide, the remaining 12 became a house for large carnivora and animal cages.

Monkey House

1 *See appendices for the various plans of the Gardens available in the archive that indicate the locations of the animals at different time periods.*

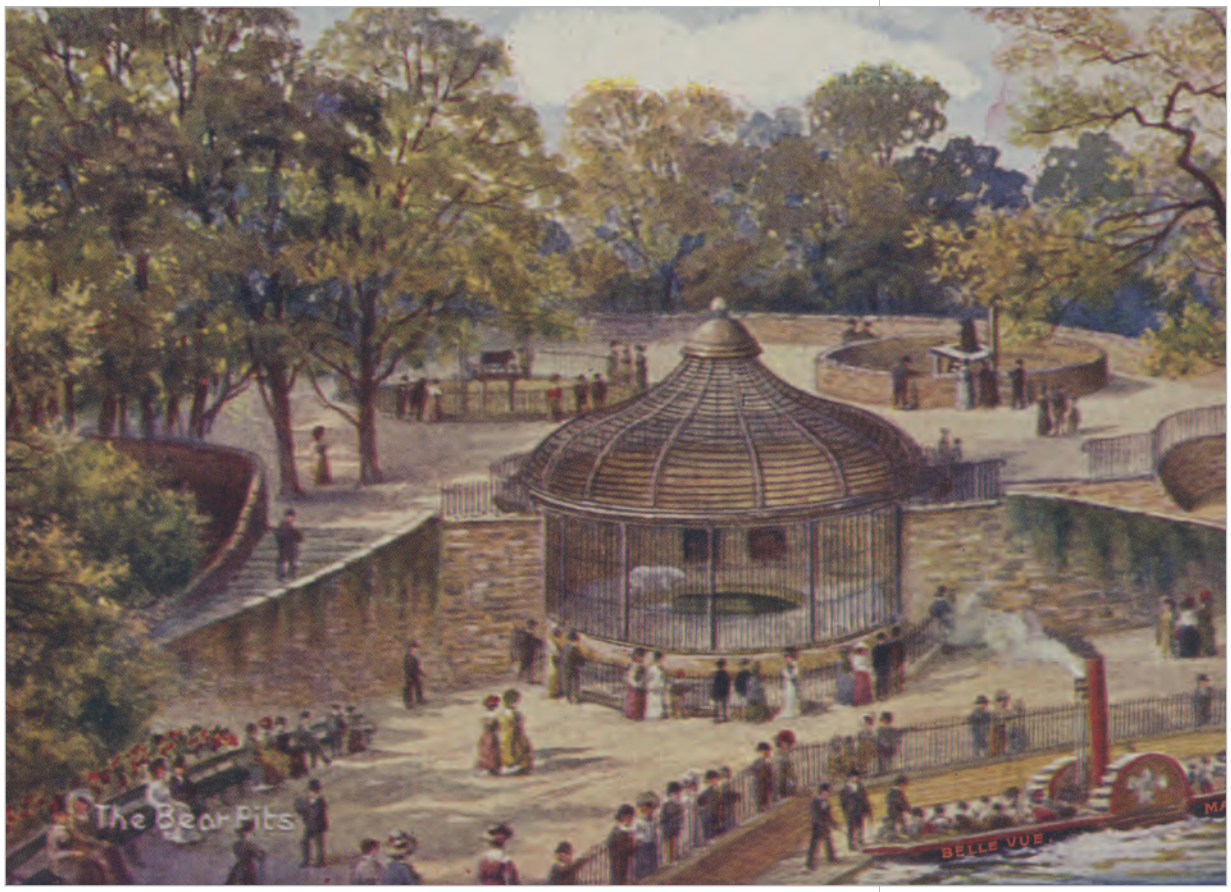
"A Jaguar was the most important tenant in 1852."

These cages were too small, being only about 6 feet square; most of them have since been doubled in size, but were always the best in the gardens and the most economical to work. Even after an additional 15 foot promenade for visitors had been added, the atmosphere was rather strong and it is hard to imagine what it must have been like with only a six foot passage for visitors who were crowded against the double barred cage fronts, but the animals always lived better and have bred better there than in the more airy and hygienic Lion House, which in its turn is more successful than similar buildings in other gardens.

Leopards were housed there at once and bred in the collection in 1851.[2]

A Jaguar was the most important tenant in 1852, followed in 1853 by four lions, probably cubs which cost £150.[3] When the building was extended in 1852, the space underneath the dancing room was utilised for graminiverous and herbivorous animals; here were shown the first camel, rhinoceros and elephant, the last named purchased in 1860 at a cost of £270. It did not live many years, dying from disease of the feet, which entailed slinging. It was probably not a good specimen.

In 1852 a long range of cages on the southern edge of the Race track marked the first extension of the Gardens that would finally absorb the whole available space. They were built to accommodate a number of rarities - yaks, kangaroos, porcupines - bought at the dispersal of the Earl of Derby's collection in 1851.[4] The Fireworks and Boating on the lakes, having made that water unsuitable for water fowl, two of the ponds west of the firework lake were arranged for their accommodation.



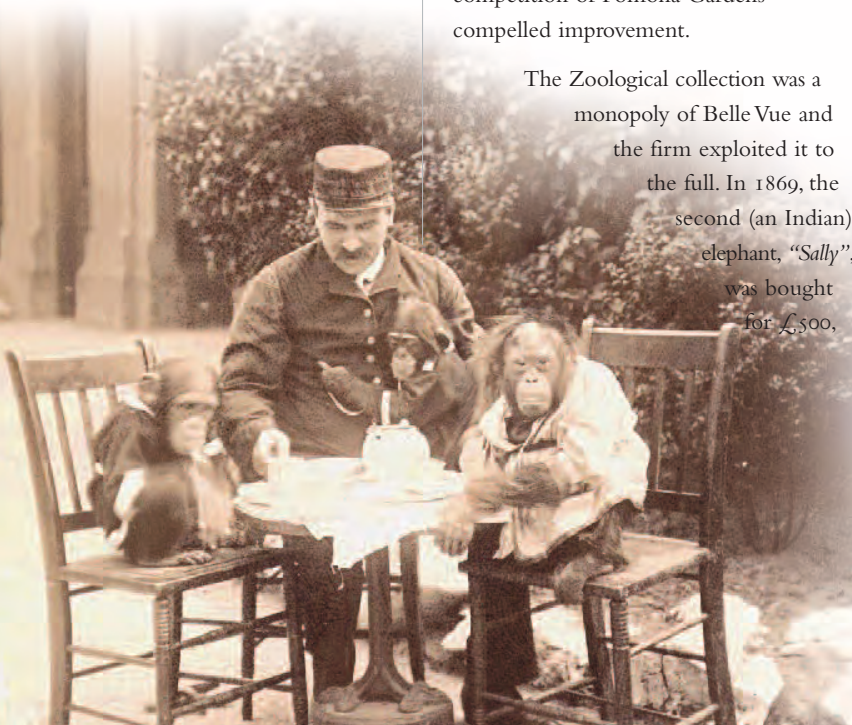
It will be noticed that these cages are all on the outskirts of the Gardens, a policy systematically pursued with the Zoological collection. In accordance with this plan, the Bear pits were built in 1855, on the edge of the wood where the bear had been chained. There are three pits, circular brick structures, built on the flat and surrounded by an artificial mound, as the opinion of that day considered pits were necessary for bears. Fortunately, Polar bears were voted an exception; their home was finished with a circular iron front and an artistic barred dome that made it the best and most artistic cage in the Gardens.

2 *Manchester Guardian, 6 August 1851 advertisement promoting the leopards.*

3 *Manchester Guardian, 24 June 1854 advertisement for the lion collection.*

4 *Manchester Guardian, October 1851 confirms auction of the late Earl of Derby's Zoological Collection.*

This, the Zoological collection of 1856 or 1857, remained almost unchanged for 12 years: The only buildings of importance being 3 lion cages in 1858 and in 1863, opposite the Museum; the octagonal Monkey House, which consisted of a large cage in the centre and eight small ones; and a very beautiful and very expensive Indian kiosk, from designs by Mr. Danson, erected near Longsight entrance, for emus and similar birds. The American Civil War brought bad trade to Belle Vue from 1863 to 1866 and development was delayed.[5] In 1867, the Zoological collection was only worth £1,000. At the end of that decade began the great expansion which brought the Zoological collection almost to its zenith. Trade was improving and the keen competition of Pomona Gardens compelled improvement.



The Zoological collection was a monopoly of Belle Vue and the firm exploited it to the full. In 1869, the second (an Indian) elephant, *"Sally"*, was bought for £500, although very little more than a calf.[6] In 1872, the finest and most courageous purchase was made when Mr. James Jennison bought the performing elephant, *"Maharajah"*, for £840, at the disposal of Wombwell's collection at Edinburgh.[7] In 1874 four giraffes were bought in Hamburg for £750, in 1876 a rhinoceros and hippopotamus for £1000 each.[8] The 3 cages for lions and tigers were extended to eight in 1876. The visitor can still see the limits of the old house in the three cage fronts whose bars are so thick and close together, far stronger than was required. The error made in one direction in the Lion House was repeated in the other in a new glass roofed house erected near the firework lake for elephants. It is still in use for the sale of refreshments; the bars were of iron - perhaps strong enough for a small female elephant but inadequate for the big male. A new brick elephant house was built in 1876 with accommodation for two elephants, a rhinoceros and hippopotamus and a glass structure was put up for the giraffes; in 1888 the Camel House was built, similar to that for the elephant house. These were all big building schemes; in addition there was a long brick building for zebras and deer on one side and birds on the other, and the Sea Lion House, 1884, with a very fine tank in which the earliest sealion performances were given;[9] and finally we must mention the Monkey House 1882 built from designs of Mr. B. Firth, an employee of the Gardens, contained a great central cage with nine cages twelve feet square along the eastern side, which, both in space for the animals and visitors and fittings of the cages, is unequalled in Europe.[10]

The zoological collection was probably almost, if not quite, as valuable in 1876 as it ever became. In 1900 which was the high water mark, during the time that the author kept an exact record, the animals as shown by the attached list were worth approximately £6,500 of which the Elephant house counted for £2890.[11] A very cursory examination shows that 1876 must have run it very close; Maharajah £840, Sally £500, the rhinoceros and Hippopotamus £1000 each, represent £3340 at cost price, to say nothing of the birds and small animals in the row of cages opposite the elephant or in the temporary Monkey cage, thirty feet long, that adjoined them. From this time there was very little serious addition for the accommodation of animals; a Penguin house with a large glass tank, 1887, a large cage for snakes, 1903, and a number of open-air cages 12 feet square of wooden or wire construction for birds and animals, 1897.[12] The cages in the Leopard house and Aviary were reduced in numbers and increased in size. The Monkey house was made more hygienic by the removal of the windows at one end, thus permitting fresh air and the provision of access to outdoor cages for all the monkeys in the house, - quite minor matters, but they increased the life of the monkeys at least six fold.

1896 Guidebook

5 *For general discussion on the effect on the cotton trade see W.O. Henderson, The Lancashire Cotton Famine 1861-65, (Manchester: Manchester University Press,1969)*

6 *Manchester Guardian, 25 March 1869 confirms the purchase.*

7 *See D. Barnaby, The Elephant who walked to Manchester, (Plymouth: Basset Publications, 1988) p.14 and for an account of Maharajah's subsequent life at Belle Vue.*

8 *Manchester Guardian reports confirms all purchases on dates specified.*

9 *Manchester Guardian article, 31 May 1884.*

10 *Detailed report in Manchester Guardian, 27 May 27 1882.*

11 *Jennison archive F.4.11 Valuation of animal collection dated 1900 - £6440 (£367,000 at 2005 rates of con versio).*

12 *Full report in Manchester Guardian editions for the dates specified in the manuscript.*

"There were good specimens of lions, tigers, leopards and other carnivora..."

A house for anthropoid apes was built in 1912; the lighting received special attention and the animals showed very effectively in their 3 roving cages and they lived better than in the cages in the monkey house, but certainly not better than in the test cages, which consisted of a glass-fronted box kept very hot and free access to an open fronted cage.[13]

The zoological collection has always been a great feature at Belle Vue; the gardens aimed at the fine and strange rather than the merely rare, which would not have appealed to their customers. There were, as a rule, good specimens of lions, tigers, leopards, and other carnivora, Elephants, Rhinoceros, Hippopotamus, Bison, Zebra and camels, occasionally a Giraffe, usually Chimpanzees and Orangs, and always a fine show of monkeys. The gardens was always noted for its Sea Lion performances

arid the very fine snake cage which like the rest of the collection was lit up in the evening on gala days. A great many animals are nocturnal and many never lose the habit; but Belle Vue is practically the only Zoological Gardens that has its occupants on view after dark.

Zoological Notes

The most curious and lovely animal is the giraffe, and no creature has varied so greatly in price. In 1874 £750 was paid for four animals; in 1876 they were a drug on the market at £60 each. Then they went to famine prices. Their place was not refilled for nearly 30 years. The power of the Mahdi in the Sudan cut off all supplies.[14] The next specimen of this beautiful creature El Zarifa (Arabic - the lovely), cost £500 and aroused much interest. Of the many elephants Maharajah was the chief. It lived 10 years in the gardens where it rode thousands of children and gave a very fine performance, in addition to forming the central incident in the *"Prince at Calcutta"*, the Firework Spectacle of 1876. That was my first conscious connection with elephants. The keeper took me one night on the show, the Prince at Calcutta. I was 4 1/2 years old. I have a vivid memory of pulling on his hat as my only uniform and of being told to hold tight when the elephant knelt down for the Prince to descend. I also remember Cousin Albert, six months my senior, and very jealous of my luck, saying that I should get well whacked and I thought so too, but as a matter of fact nothing happened. Maharajah and Sally were the recognised leaders in the May Day procession. In Manchester their loads were hams from Broadys in Shudehill, and we little chaps, dressed in Firework overalls, sat on the top of the load on the return journey. A shining 6d. from Mr. Broady is still a happy memory,[15] Maharajah attended many of the great fetes for which the Gardens catered at that time. It died in its prime as a result of an accident. One of the planks on the bridge across the Lake broke beneath its weight and the fall splintered a tusk so badly that it had to be sawn off, with great loss of blood. Maharajah lived for some considerable time, but was never the same animal afterwards.[16]

Sally died in July, 1901, with every mark of old age, after 32 years in the gardens. Elephants do not live as long as is supposed. On the other hand that they have good memories and quick perception is shown by the following incident. Sally was so small that she was taken into the kitchen and petted and fed on her arrival at the Gardens. At night she was placed in a stable. Some noise frightened her; she burst open the door, crashed through a second door of glass and rushed on until she found herself once more on the spot where she had been well treated.

13 *Manchester Guardian, 4 November 1903.*

14 *See ODNB entry for General Gordon (1833-1885) army officer and the detail of the 'Siege of Khartoum' in the Sudan which caused the supply of giraffes to come to an end.*

15 *Slater's Commercial Directory 1872 confirms Thomas & Robert Broady as bacon and ham purveyors.*

16 *See article in Manchester Guardian written by George Jennison 12 October 1911.*

Keeper Craythorne and the Snake Cages

She was also timid and the first year or two of riding was an anxious time for the keeper, but nothing serious happened. Some 20 years later she had a little quarrel of her own with Dinah; fortunately they were not carrying passengers.[17] Sally charged her antagonist broadside and knocked her flat. There was a stout iron form to break the fall; it looked like a concertina after the accident!

According to travellers there is mutual antagonism between an elephant and a rhinoceros, leading them to attack one another at sight; but this does not hold in a zoological garden, if the animals are brought together carefully. London records a case of a really continued friendship between these two animals, and Belle Vue for a time gave a delightful picture of two young ones as playmates, in the open air, a chance which increased the lives of these beasts, and made them much more amusing to the public. They had a draught-proof sleeping place and were near enough for the visitors to pat their rough noses and feed them. While the open air added to their life they enjoyed the tit bits from the people without any ill effects although they were rather careless of what they took. A practical joker from the Firework Department once fed the rhinoceros with a pound of pins which the beast managed to get rid of without serious consequence, a fate which fortunately the perpetrator did not avoid.

Sometimes animals are lost by stupidity; an ostrich, for instance, died from the irritation caused by a fork which had got amongst its watercress, and - far more serious - the hippopotamus that had lived 30 years in the gardens died from swallowing a rubber ball, kicked, no doubt by accident, into its tank. The rhinoceros and hippopotamus in a zoological garden have a greater chance of life than an elephant, because they are usually captured young. The African two-horned rhinoceros usually costing about £600, strangely enough is more expensive than its Indian brother, its expectation of life being far shorter for reasons that zoologists have not yet fathomed. When perfect they are more curious than others, as they have two horns, both much longer than on the Indian variety; but they rarely allow themselves to retain these adornments, breaking them very often in their rough gambols about the cage or actually refusing to let them grow. Many of our readers will remember the flat bone-like protuberance on the Indian Rhinoceros that lived in Belle Vue from 1876 to 1904. He rubbed it down against the iron bars of his cage with a friction that made the iron too hot to touch. Like most rhinoceroses he was rough and vicious and as a baby banged himself about the cage. Visitors used to rush to say that he was killing himself, but it never did him the least harm. He could swim like a cork; the bath delighted him exceedingly, but he would not find the steps and could not get out of it. On Whit Sunday, 1876, (I remember the excitement of the occasion) all the carts of the establishment were requisitioned to bring bricks to fill up the hole, and release the young captive. The family were helping at the work. Charlie and I were sent by Mr. Richard, his father, for an old pair of gloves to save his hands. All rhinocerii like wallowing, but there are exceptions to their roughness; this one's predecessor was as tame as a sheep, and allowed to wander about the gardens, where he only damaged linen hanging out to dry. The Lake was his favourite resort; boatmen had to whack him with oars to get him on exhibition on busy days.

17 *Assume Dinah is part of the elephant collection.*

"There was a chocolate machine opposite its cage which it worked without instruction."

The carnivora, lions, tigers, and leopards, have always been a good show at the gardens, and lived longer than is usual in menageries in Europe. The finest lion could reach 9ft 6ins from the floor with his extended paw; among the tigers the most famous was the King of Ode's fighting tiger, Joungler, obtained after the Indian Mutiny. It is mentioned in the poem written in 1861, - *"The King of Ode' s Tiger, for fighting so famous."*[18] Many lions were bred in the establishment, chiefly when Mr. Davy was head keeper also several tigers.[19] There was never much success with either leopards or bears. Young ones of both kinds were born. A litter of arctic foxes is worth mentioning, now that fox farming is so great an industry. In Prince Edward Island, quietness is considered so essential that no one may pass near a fox farm, yet 500,000 people passed in front of the cage where these were born; the four young were healthy and active, with one defect, the cause of which I have never fathomed - they were not just blind, they had no eyes.

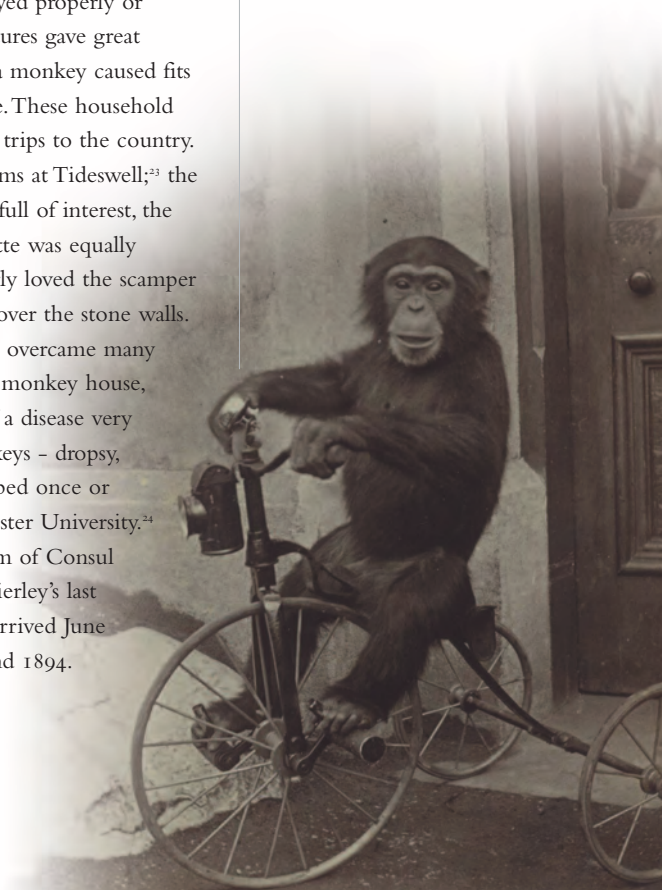
The only other animals requiring special mention are the apes - the great Orang-Utan with a stretch of 7ft 4ins caused an absolute furor in 1899.[20] It was caged in the Lion House, and six police were necessary to regulate the crowd on Whit Saturday; the animal cost £150 and paid for itself with interest, though it only lived for six weeks. It died from no organic defect, simply from depression. Its traveling box had been placed in the cage; there it always retired to rest, curled up


IN MEMORY OF
"CONSUL,"
The Belle Vue Chimpanzee, who died Nov. 24th, 1894,
AGED ABOUT 8 YEARS.
ONE PENNY.
OLDHAM:
Published by W. E. CLEGG, 85, Market Place and Peter Street, and sold by all Newsagents.

almost out of sight of the public. As there was suitable accommodation elsewhere, the box was removed, and from that moment the animal declined. The box was replaced but it was too late. Experience is a hard and very often expensive teacher.

A baby gorilla had a still shorter life, and chimpanzees in the early days never lived many months. The two *"Consuls"*, whose united skill and intelligence are the originators of all the monkey shows that have been on the Music Halls for the past 30 years,[21] would have probably shared the same fate, had not Mr. James Jennison made personal pets of them. Consul the 1st was probably the more intelligent of the two, but lacked the striking bicycle and tricycle riding of the other. There was a chocolate machine opposite its cage which it worked without instruction. It could find the proper key from a bunch, open the door and come out, and very likely made keys of its own, for it was found on more than one occasion outside the monkey house at night, and no one knew how it got there.[22]

Mr. Jennison took it out continually. Consul knew the treat in store, and would pop into the carrying box and close the door for the journey to the hotel, but always fought hard to avoid the return journey. The piano was a source of great interest, whether played properly or banged by itself. Pictures gave great pleasure but one of a monkey caused fits of ungovernable rage. These household visits were varied by trips to the country. Mr. Jennison had farms at Tideswell;[23] the railway journey was full of interest, the ride in the waggonette was equally attractive, and it dearly loved the scamper along the fields and over the stone walls. Fresh air and change overcame many of the defects of the monkey house, and it died finally of a disease very uncommon in monkeys - dropsy, for which it was tapped once or twice at the Manchester University.[24] The uncanny wisdom of Consul I moved old Ben Brierley's last verses.[25] Consul 1st arrived June 1893, died Novr. 22nd 1894.



18 Unable to source evidence.

19 Barnaby, Elephant, p.38 discusses Davy and Jennison archive F4.2.3 wages account for 3 July 1875 lists his employment.

20 Advertisement in Manchester Guardian, 13 May 1899 names the orang-utan the 'Wild Man of the Woods'. See detailed article in Manchester Weekly Times, 26 May 1899.

21 Presumably a music hall act.

22 Both chimpanzees were extensively photographed and received significant press coverage.

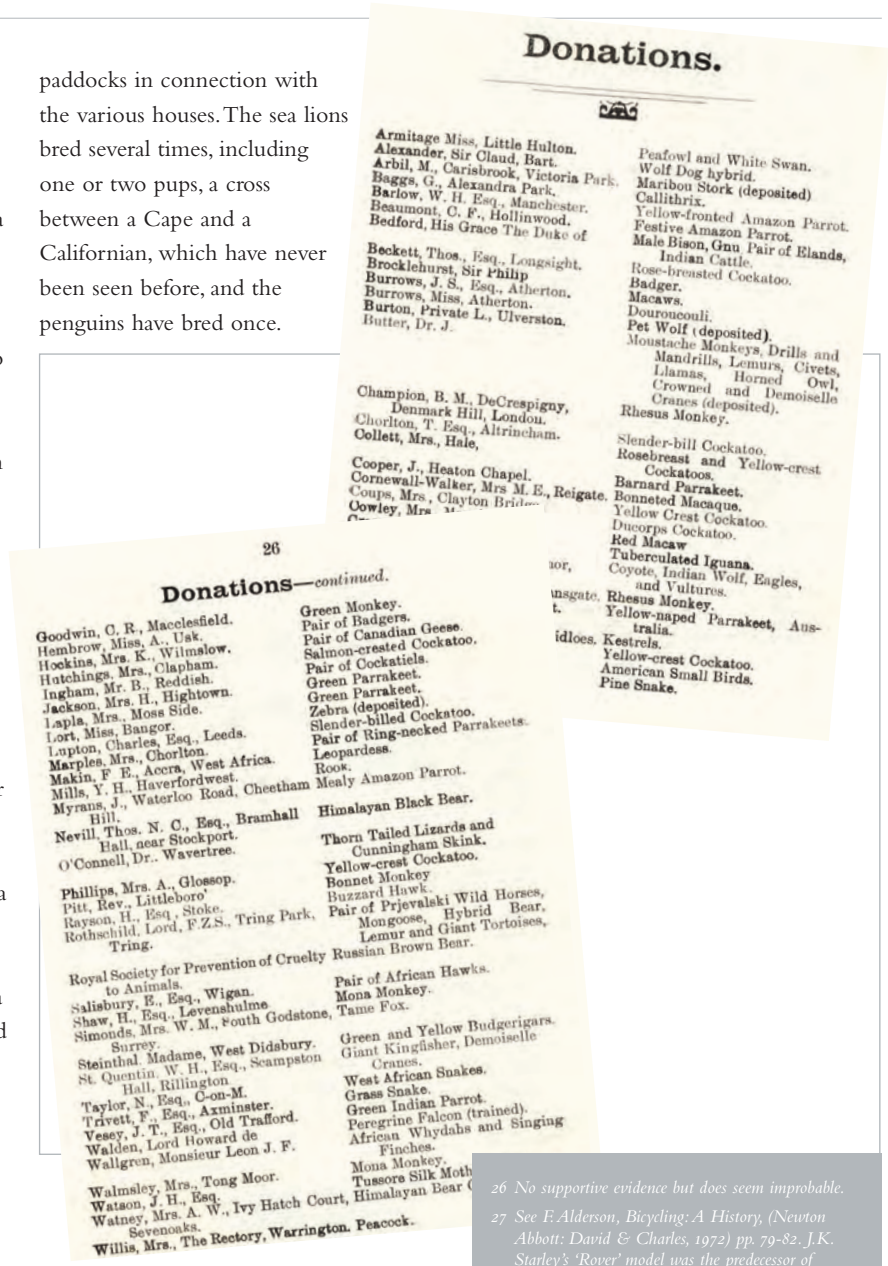
23 No evidence in archive; Tideswell is a small village in rural Derbyshire.

24 Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary. p.1854; 'tap' - drain off fluid.

25 ODNB Benjamin Brierley (1825-1896) writer. Unable to trace any reference to the chimpanzees in any of Brierley's published works.

The second Consul followed soon after. This animal made a key for itself without instruction and opened its own door.[26] Monkeys have their likes and dislikes. This one took great interest in an invalid, in a bath chair, helped to push it, and would bite anyone but the keeper who dared to interfere. Our friend was always accompanied by his little grand-daughter on a toy tricycle, and someone had the idea to put the monkey on it. There was no difficulty in holding his feet on the pedals, and he soon learned to continue moving his legs round, and thus made the tricycle go. The trick gave him such pleasure that he would push the little girl off and finally she always ran away when he came, but she enjoyed the fun as much as anyone. This tricycle riding was a great attraction; the monkey could steer and was allowed to ride up and down the big cage for the amusement of visitors. Mr. James, full of enthusiasm for his pet, accepted the idea of a bicycle with avidity. *"The Safety"*, as it was then called, had just been introduced, and one or two of the old high wheels were still lying about.[27] The small wheels formed the nucleus of Consul's bicycle. The pedals had a small tube on the top that Consul gripped with his big toe, otherwise it was like an ordinary bicycle and in less than a week he had learned to ride it. His extreme activity made him an easy pupil. When he lost his balance he could always jump off and keep the bicycle from falling. He loved this machine more than the tricycle, was very fond of ringing the bell and could steer through a doorway. Miss Ellen Terry and Sir Henry Irving, who always visited the Gardens when in Manchester, were wonderfully interested in the performance, and gave the keeper a tip of a sovereign.[28] The idea of Music Hall performances was too novel for Mr. James, and the monkey cage was beyond the chimpanzee's power on the bicycle, so that very few people saw him ride. The performance had to be limited to quiet times. He was advertised for 11 o'clock in the morning; of course no one came. I tried my best to get him on to the stage, but without success; what a fortune was lost in it!

Something of the same kind happened with the sea lions; they were very early taught to perform and had a great tank specially constructed to show their swimming and diving powers. All summer they were a great attraction. The winters might easily have been spent most lucratively on the Halls. This tank was in a building, and like most of the other animals, the sea lions had no access to the open air. The first effort to alter this was a small barred balcony which they occupied at once. An open air tank followed the same winter with wonderful effects. The keenest frosts cannot keep them out of their bath. They will swim for hours to prevent ice forming on it and they have since lived, on the average, at least thrice as long. The effect on the monkeys was still more marked, and the length of the lives of the animals in general was greatly increased by the provision of outdoor paddocks in connection with the various houses. The sea lions bred several times, including one or two pups, a cross between a Cape and a Californian, which have never been seen before, and the penguins have bred once.



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Rose-breasted Cockatoo.
Badger.
Macaws.
Douroucouli.
Pet Wolf (deposited).
Moustache Monkeys, Drills and Mandrills, Lemurs, Civets, Llamas, Horned Owl, Crowned and Demoiselle Cranes (deposited).
Rhesus Monkey.
Slender-bill Cockatoo.
Rosebreast and Yellow-crest Cockatoos.
Barnard Parrakeet.
Bonneted Macaque.
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Rhesus Monkey.
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Kestrels.
Yellow-crest Cockatoo.
American Small Birds.
Pine Snake.

26

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Green Monkey.
Pair of Badgers.
Pair of Canadian Geese.
Salmon-crested Cockatoo.
Pair of Cockatiels.
Green Parrakeet.
Green Parrakeet.
Zebra (deposited).
Slender-billed Cockatoo.
Pair of Ring-necked Parrakeets.
Leopardess.
Rook.
Mealy Amazon Parrot.
Himalayan Black Bear.
Thorn Tailed Lizards and Cunningham Skink.
Yellow-crest Cockatoo.
Bonnet Monkey
Buzzard Hawk.
Pair of Prjevalski Wild Horses, Mongoose, Hybrid Bear, Lemur and Giant Tortoises,
Russian Brown Bear.
Pair of African Hawks.
Mona Monkey.
Tame Fox.
Green and Yellow Budgerigars.
Giant Kingfisher, Demoiselle Cranes.
West African Snakes.
Grass Snake.
Green Indian Parrot.
Peregrine Falcon (trained).
African Whydahs and Singing Finches.
Mona Monkey.
Tussore Silk Moth
Himalayan Bear
Peacock.

26 *No supportive evidence but does seem improbable.*

27 *See F. Alderson, Bicycling: A History, (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1972) pp. 79-82. J.K. Starley's 'Rover' model was the predecessor of modern safety bicycles.*

28 *Renowned actors of the period. See ODNB entries, Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905) Dame Ellen Terry (1847-1928).*

"The great enemy of the animals in Manchester is the fog of November..."

1901 Guidebook

The open air treatment requires careful superintendence. A rough wind or a rather exposed situation may be fatal to creatures that would thrive under slightly better conditions. The Penguins for instance, with an open pond adjoining the great glass tank in which they showed their wonderful swimming powers, where their comical trot to the bath always caused such roars of laughter, never lived long; yet they survived for years in a cage open only to the south; and the Spider monkeys that could not support a winter in an open-fronted cage did quite well when the front was almost entirely closed with glass shutters. The great enemy of the animals in Manchester is the fog of November, and the bitter east winds of March are little less serious. There are two likely reasons why fresh air means longer life, even to tropical animals; firstly it is less contaminated and if not too cold is an acute tonic;- the second is a more obscure and more potent reason.

Every animal brings its own parasites, internal and external. The English weather is quickly fatal to them and the host is freed from a terrible handicap in fighting adverse conditions. The bears seem a contradiction to what we have just said. Almost everywhere they are kept in the open air. They thrive well in the English atmosphere, although it is warmer than their home country. In England bears hibernate less long and less soundly; the Polar bear feels the cold and refuses his bath from the end of Autumn until the beginning of Spring, and their parasites are as incapable of supporting the changed conditions as the others. Where the climatic conditions remain the same, captivity is quickly fatal to the host. English wild creatures, animals or birds, rarely live long in captivity here, yet the zoological gardens in Cairo numbers them amongst the oldest inhabitants.[29]

29 *Zoological Society of London confirms George Jennison was a fellow from 1918 until his death in 1938. Zoological Society of London, (Suffolk, Richard Clay & Co.Ltd.,1938)*

Animals at Large

"Tigress and Peacock live together."

Every Zoological Garden has the occasional excitement of an animal hunt; those at Belle Vue have been few and in general more a matter of amusement than of fear. In the early days when nothing but a paling marked the boundary and the paddocks were little better, deer hunts often gave a delightful change of occupation to the workmen. Gorton was a district famous for its love of sport and the chase, and both were to be had in it.[1] The stag with a graceful bound o'erleapt the fence to feed in the fresh green meadows, the whole countryside roused at the sight, pulsating with the instincts of the hunter, measuring their craft against his speed. Capture was impossible, driving easy enough; a cordon once formed the animal could be headed as they would, and the animal returned the way he went and so easily to his own pen. A glass of beer and a night of glorious boasting rewarded the captors.

Birds get loose from time to time, fly off, and disappear less often than one could expect; captivity changes their natures, and unaccustomed exercise tires unused muscles. Only a few years ago a hawk flashed past the keeper in the open door, and remained quite near the gardens - a truculent sort of nighthawk that dashed from a hedge at a policeman and was recaptured under his helmet.

Flamingoes have risen from their pond, circled round and returned again. They had lost all fear of man in a few months' captivity. One found its way to Gorton reservoir,thoroughly enjoying the better quarters; there it stayed for a week, tame but diffident, easy to shoot but impossible to capture, and so was given up only to be taken quite easily in the end in a cottager's shed where it went to feed.

A toucan was more easily taken. They are birds with a beak half the length of their body - curious inquisitive creatures, much admired as pets in their S. American home. The bird flew straight through the glass of a window, high into the tree tops. It was free of the world but its habits were known. Capture was worth trying, and succeeded, - a piece of banana on a wall, the keeper standing ready; within two hours the toucan alighted between his hands and was retaken.

A pelican got on the wing, frightened by a sea lion, its cage mates. They are lumbering birds that rise with difficulty, flapping heavily along the ground. How different when in the air! For some time it flew at a great height over the gardens, pursued by a multitude of small birds, twittering excitedly; a decoy was pegged out in the sports field, but in vain. Finally it flew away and was not heard of more.

Sea lions have escaped from time to time, but the big wall prevents them from wandering far. The most enterprising was caught in the entrance turn-gate: others, more humorous, were found one on the roof of its house, another in the ginger-beer factory, and the remaining three or four on a bar counter, clamouring, as it were, for a drink. The incident of the three jackals was very curious. They left their cage at Longsight, traversed the whole length of the gardens, passed through the Lake-exit turngate - half a mile away - and were found playing by a pond outside; one, headed off by a party of boys, lost its companions and was recaptured in Stockport; the other two returned to their cage by the long twisting route over which they had gone. To escaped beasts liberty is strange and terrible: they are glad to find the shelter of their accustomed home. In the early 'fifties, Mrs. Jennison, finding a leopard out of its cage, shoo'ed it in again with her apron, as though it had been a hen with chickens. Over sixty years elapsed before another escaped; the result was different. The keeper on his morning round, found every cage padded with excited footprints, and at last one empty; a ferocious panther, i.e. Black Leopard, was at large somewhere. He acted wisely; had he searched, he might have caught the wild beast's eye, with serious consequences. Whatever the value in the wilds, the human eye is useless on captive beasts; they can stare almost as long as us and generally charge when tired. He walked out quietly, closed the door, looked through the peep hole, and saw the animal crouching some little distance beyond where he had turned, and near a wooden partition that divided the house from the museum pay box. In this partition a small hole was bored, the leopard sprang at the spot to be shot dead with a gun that is always ready for an emergency.[2]

1 *Higson, Gorton Historical, p.15 discusses the area's sporting pursuits.*

2 *This incident was not recorded in the leading Manchester newspaper publications.*

"One gets some very pretty climbing when monkeys escape..."

From the same house a lioness escaped in 1874 (a junior keeper was suspected of leaving the cage door open). She jumped through a window and wandered about for a while, frightened a cat that took to a tree, and a watchman who took to his heels. The keeper, Thomas Davy was an old performer at Wombwells, a quiet God-fearing man, - most animal tamers are, the others die early - loving his animals and devoid of fear. He found the lioness lying near our private office, some fifty yards from her den. Taking her two cubs in his arms, he approached the beast and spoke softly to her; she smelled about the little ones, rose to her feet and walking quietly beside the keeper, re-entered the den. The only fatality occurred in 1868. Keeper Scott was killed

SAVAGE ATTACK BY A BEAR AT BELLE VUE GARDENS.

On Saturday morning one of the bears at Belle Vue Gardens contrived to effect its escape from its den, and made a most savage attack upon the head keeper, whose name is Henry Scott. The animal is a fine specimen of the black bear, and is kept in a cage on the margin of the lower lake. The door of the cage slides upwards, and was placed underneath the door, leaving room for a rake to be put under it. A son of Scott's, named Walter, a boy about 14 years of age, was engaged in this operation when the animal with the above exemplary raised the door and escaped. The boy made an alarm, and Scott, who was now at hand, called out to him to run to an adjoining greenhouse. This he immediately did, but the door, Scott, to save the boy, gallantly seized the animal, which immediately turned upon him and caught him by the thigh, biting him in a savage manner, and frightfully lacerating him with its claws. The conflict was seen by some of the workmen, who immediately ran to the rescue. They telegraphed for the keeper with the guns, but before the weapons arrived one of the men released the animal by a desperate blow on the head with a spade. Whilst this rendered harmless the bear was placed in a cage and much worse. Scott was removed to the Royal Infirmary, where he died on Saturday night from the effects of the injuries he sustained. Mr. Herford, the city coroner, held an inquiry into the circumstances of the case on Monday, but no additional facts transpired, and the jury returned a verdict in accordance with the evidence,—

by a bear.[3] He had put half a brick under the door to facilitate cleaning - the bear lifted the gate with its nose, escaped and bit the keeper, who died on the following day. The animal was shot by Mr. Richard Jennison. Mr. Charles Jennison testified to the excitement of the occasion: *"I was up at the top of the picture"*, said he *"and watched from there"*; It was a good stand and quite safe, but very little use in the hunt.

The Polar Bears had also one short period of liberty ignominiously ended by the keepers and their sweeping brooms.

One gets some very pretty climbing when monkeys escape; they swim the Lake with ease and the forest of poles and scantlings on the Firework Island is like home to them. They have to be run down by numbers of men, until they are fatigued. Luckily the monkey house is easily shut or the Simians would cause greater excitement; if a door is left open for a moment, the whole crowd rush out as one monkey, chattering excitedly in their new-found liberty. Sometimes they are driven back by the keepers. Usually they have to be caught one by one in corners. In the days of Consul the Chimpanzee, the work was easier. He was an efficient monkey policeman and thoroughly enjoyed the chase.

In 1910 a huge Bengal Tiger occupied two cages which communicated by a sliding door. The under-keeper - a rather weedy youth - and evidently not too careful, one day entered an apparently empty cage to sweep it. He was unconcernedly going about his work when the Head Keeper with great self control ordered him sternly but quietly to come out and fasten the door. When he had done so, he was shown that he had not pushed the slide shutting off the next cage. *"I would have made a fight for it with the broom"*, he said, a rather hopeless contest in the eyes of the management. He was transferred promptly to the Pheasant Aviary where the odds were not so great.

The Tame Bear

This small brown bear was the only animal of which we ever made a pet. It gave us great joy; we had it on a collar and chain. It never attempted to bite but gave us an enormous amount of fun and healthy exercise. With it we ran all through the gardens and the shops. Most of the men did not mind in the least but the wheelwrights had the strongest objection, Ned Froggatt especially, who, pale with fear jumped on his bench with an axe ready to defend himself. [4]

Mr. James Jennison who was very staid in old age, but a very lively youth, caused absolute terror by a similar trick in a more theatrical setting. *"One night,"* said he, *"when the men were sitting quietly round the fire in the bottom kitchen, I crawled in with a bear skin over me; my word, the men were frightened, and didn't I get whacked for it by my father."*

3 *Manchester Courier, 7 November 1868 confirms the tragedy.*

4 *Jennison archive F.4.2.3 wages ledger 31 January 1863 confirms Froggatt on the payroll.*

In the early forties, a rhesus monkey escaped from its cage and bit Mr. Richard Jennison so severely on the cheek that he carried the mark until his death. His big brother John, shot the animal and Mr. Richard remembered seventy years after that they took him to see it hanging dead from a tree.

Animals escaped very rarely, but the fear of meeting some ravenous beast was always present in strangers traversing the Gardens after dark. The policeman permanently employed at Belle Vue, rushed into the gas man's cabin one night in a state of complete exhaustion. *"Half way up the Avenue,"* said he, *"I saw a wild beast crouching ready to spring."* Fear and fancy had done their work; it was only a stone boar.

The fable that the swan sings before its death is at least 2,000 years old. No one has heard the song and cynics have ever scoffed at it. Possibly I have a unique experience in this matter. It was in the morning (which excludes imagination) and a credible witness - my half cousin Mr. George Jennison - was with me when we heard this mute swan sing, if the screeching noises it made could be called a song. This extraordinary rare occurrence took me at once to the pond where the bird continued its mournful call. The body of its mate was floating upon the water; I think the noise was a sign of grief; it ceased when the dead body was removed. The singer did not die, he lived happy ever afterwards.

Monkeys generally use their teeth for attack and defence. In this the Anthropoid Apes show a marked advance upon them and so do the Langurs of India, which throw stones at an intruder. Chimpanzees will throw stones and have an idea of using a stick as a weapon, or even their hands; they strike with a swinging motion without doubling the fist; Once I umpired a fight between Consul II and a large Baboon in the big cage at Belle Vue. It was an even match, for what the Baboon lacked in weight was more than made up in activity, but the Chimpanzee would certainly have won from superior strategy had the fight gone to a finish; the baboon bit when he came to close quarters, the chimpanzee hit out with a round swing of his arm, but he added science to his attack, retreating between my legs when hotly pressed and dashing out again on a favourable opportunity, in which I naturally interfered before there was any damage done. One must love animals to keep them successfully and I have certainly never hurt an animal nor permitted any keeper to do so.

Some keepers have a wonderful influence over their charges. It is ever the mark of a quiet and kindly disposition. Mr. Albert Mallender the Junior Monkey Keeper, was one of this sort. Into whatever cage he went, his charges flocked round him and were literally all over him.[5]

Thomas Davy, the Lion Keeper, whose most exciting experiences are recounted elsewhere, was equally at home with his beasts. The dog in the lion cage, which causes such wonder, was quite a commonplace with him; he used to leave his dogs there as in a kennel, taking them out for a run whenever he wished, removing them only at feeding time.

The third example of animal sympathy is Mrs. Lambert, of whom there are three interesting anecdotes. Charles Lambert[6] who was a keeper for over 40 years succeeded Davy in the Lion House; his junior keeper being called to the colours in 1914, Mrs. Lambert was allowed to fill the vacant place. One saw very soon that *"the Grey Mare was the better horse"*. Mrs. Lambert was allowed to remain in her post at the termination of the War, and succeeded her husband as Head Keeper on his death in 1923. Mrs. Lambert was with men very rough and short tempered; her sympathy with animals and her power over them was remarkable. It became noticeable during the illness of a young Sloth bear.

5 *1911 Census confirms Albert Mallender, aged 30, animal keeper Belle Vue Gardens.*

6 *Births, Marriages & Deaths at Ancestry.co.uk con firms death of Charles Lambert, resident Norman Street, West Gorton, in July 1924.*

"they were punished with a look or a stern reproof; they were rewarded with a smile or a lively word."

The animal fell to the last extreme of weakness, but Mrs. Lambert sat with it for hours in the day and at night, petted it and soothed it as one might a sick child, until it was restored to perfect health. It would come to her at a word and when it grew so large that it had to be taken to the Bear pits, the writer is sure that the transfer would have caused its death had not Mrs. Lambert, with her sympathy, interested it until the novelty of the change had worn away. Mrs. Lambert never struck her animals; they were punished with a look or a stern reproof; they were rewarded with a smile or a lively word. Upon her command any animal would give its call; relying on this we guaranteed the wireless people that she should broadcast the laughing hyena, which performed according to promise. Listeners-in got in addition the squeaks of the American Black Bear and the excited whine of the Cape Hunting Dog. The writer was once interested in a very pleasing display of her power. It was necessary to move the big African Leopard, Beauty, two cages lower down. The slide doors were open but animals do not easily leave their accustomed place. Charles Lambert was trying to frighten the beast with an iron bar; Mrs. Lambert was standing by him. For a few moments she said nothing, then came, in a sharp tone, *"Get out of the way."* Charles obeyed with alacrity. Mrs. Lambert spoke to the Leopard in a soothing tone: *"Come along, Beauty, that's a good girl. No one is going to hurt you,"* and in two minutes Beauty was in the next cage. Mrs. Lambert could easily have pushed the slide door and kept her there, but she saw Beauty was nervous, and indeed the animal walked back almost at once. She then repeated her calls. The leopard went where she was wanted and remained perfectly quiet and contented, nor showed the least nervousness when the slide was finally pushed home.

Radio broadcast from Belle Vue 1925

This great power over animals which Mrs. Lambert herself did not appreciate, led me to an experiment which would otherwise have been very risky. It was done in a month without the slightest misadventure. Mrs. Lambert accomplished a feat of which, so far as the writer is aware, the world, has no parallel. She made a TIGRESS AND PEACOCK LIVE TOGETHER.

When the idea was mentioned she had great forebodings. *"But the tigress will kill the peacock,"* she said. *"Oh, no, it won't,"* I replied. *"When you see the tigress ready to spring on the peacock, you will say, 'Go back', and you will find she will obey you."*

The keeper therefore agreed to do what she was told. For a week or two the peacock was kept in a back den until it got used to the sight of its natural enemy; the tigress, in her turn was then fastened in a back den of the adjoining cage until the peacock grew accustomed to feed anywhere in either cage. The last and most exciting step was then taken. Food was placed on the step to the den in which the tigress lived; next, and this in the early morning, with Mrs. Lambert and Mr. Hastain alone present, the den was opened and the corn placed almost under the tiger's nose. Thus the tigress and the peacock became friends and remained so throughout the summer, to the wonder of thousands of visitors attracted by advertisement of the fact.[7] Many a friend asked me, laughingly, *"whether I had insured that peacock."*

The parting came on the other side, the tigress dying in the succeeding spring.

Peacock and Ostrich

The peacock, which is still living (1928), made a new and, in its way, an equally remarkable friendship - this time of its own accord. After the tigress's death, the peacock was turned loose in the Gardens, to which it was a great ornament. On quiet days it would feed from the hands of visitors. When the crowds were too large it took refuge in a tree. When and why it changed the accustomed routine is not known; probably it was in July when some 20,000 children swarmed into the gardens for the Annual School Sports. Anyway it discovered, perhaps by a process of trial and error, that there was one safe place, large and quiet in the most turbulent times. On the southern side of the big Lake was the pen of a male ostrich, so fierce that even the keeper could only approach with care. Anyone else was driven out ignominiously. Here the peacock found safety and the ostrich found a friend. All animals love companionship and this is only one more to the many curious friendships that have been made. The love of these two soon became mutual; the birds walked and fed together, and the peacock would sometimes display all its glories mounted on the ostrich's back. (See illustration of this unique sight).

7 *Manchester Guardian,13 October 1922. However on a serious note Mrs Lambert was subsequently killed by a tiger; report in Manchester Guardian, 9 November 1925.*

"I gave up in disgust, went out and slammed the door, and as I left the sea lion rang the bell twice."

The Joking Sea Lion

Many of my readers may have seen performing sea lions but few can have any idea of the difficulty in training them; punishment is no help and it is obviously useless to try to starve an animal that can on occasions do without food for a month or more. The only help is their intelligence. The following incident has always struck me as very comical and the laugh was certainly on the side of the sea lion. I had spent the whole morning trying to make one of these creatures pull a rope to ring a bell. It was a quiet animal - came on the chair beside me without attempting to bite and put its nose to the rope, but no inducement could make it pull. Every means I could think of was tried in vain. Finally I gave up in disgust, went out and slammed the door, and as I left the sea lion rang the bell twice.

The Rhinoceros Horn Bill has a beak about eight ins. long and two inches in thickness; it lives chiefly on fruits, and though it will eat a little meat occasionally, is not dangerous. The keeper one day, sweeping out the cage, bent down to pick something from the floor. There was a small hole in the seat of his trousers. The next moment he jumped out with a yell, and said: *"I thought a pick-axe had hit me."*

Once in the middle of the busy season the snake keeper announced that he had lost a big seba Python. I was in a quandary. An immediate decision was necessary. I decided that the snake would soon die in the cold or remain near the hot water pipes under the museum floor. The two of us therefore kept our information strictly private. The snake, which must have captured many rats as food reappeared about a year afterwards in the finest condition and with a little trouble was captured and replaced in its cage without anyone being the wiser.

The big Seba Python escaped at Belle Vue. Jimmy Craythorne,[8] most anxious, asked, *"What shall I do?"* Quick as a flash came the Master's reply, *"Keep your mouth shut, we'll catch it, you and I,"* and with a wink full of slyness and stealth, *"if you open your mouth, you'll catch it yourself."*

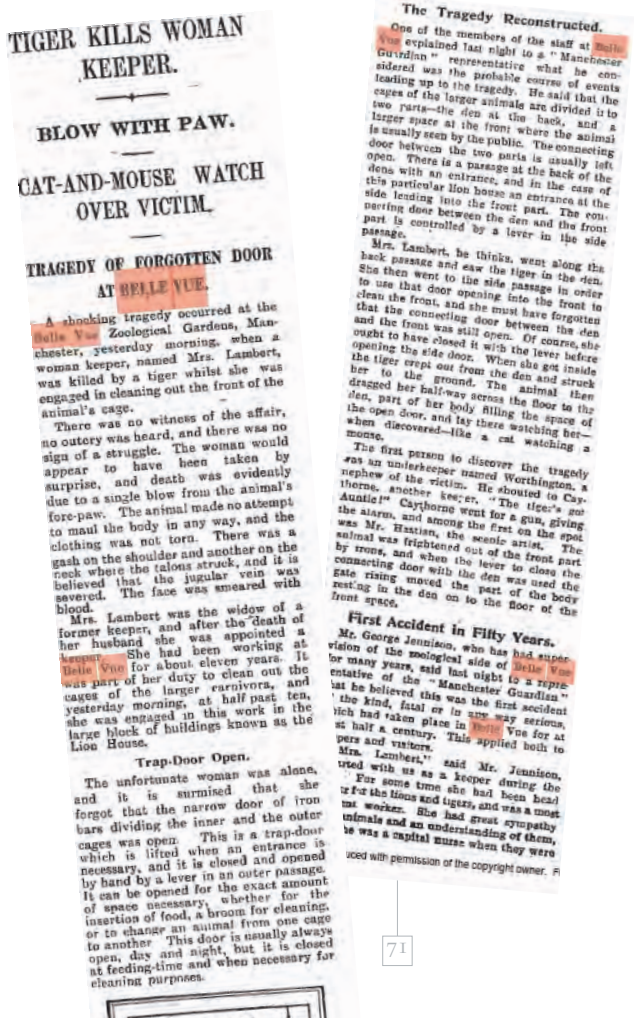
The Thinking Mangabey

Chimpanzees are credited with the most intelligence amongst monkeys, but this little animal showed the nearest approach to humanity that I have ever known. One day in the middle of the wet summer of 1924, a group of monkeys, including this mangabey and a dog faced baboon, were placed in the open monkey cage near the Firework scenery. The Baboon fell ill during the evening and was tended with the greatest care by the little mangabey which clasped him to her bosom, but she was not strong enough to carry so great a weight, thereupon she took two small slabs of cement about one inch thick, which had broken from the wall, put one on the other, placed a handful of watercress on the top and then pushed and pulled her sick friend until she got its head on the pillow.

The other monkeys which are very prone to attack one that is sick, left them alone. The little mangabey lay down beside her friend with arms clasped round the body to keep it warm, and in that position I found them next morning.

The little creature had a head to think which is common in a greater or less degree to all animals, but she had also a heart to feel and what has man more than that?

Manchester Guardian 9 November 1925



TIGER KILLS WOMAN KEEPER.

BLOW WITH PAW.

CAT-AND-MOUSE WATCH OVER VICTIM.

TRAGEDY OF FORGOTTEN DOOR AT BELLE VUE.

A shocking tragedy occurred at the Belle Vue Zoological Gardens, Manchester, yesterday morning, when a woman keeper, named Mrs. Lambert, was killed by a tiger whilst she was engaged in cleaning out the front of the animal's cage.

There was no witness of the affair, no outcry was heard, and there was no sign of a struggle. The woman would appear to have been taken by surprise, and death was evidently due to a single blow from the animal's fore-paw. The animal made no attempt to maul the body in any way, and the clothing was not torn. There was a gash on the shoulder and another on the neck where the talons struck, and it is believed that the jugular vein was severed. The face was smeared with blood.

Mrs. Lambert was the widow of a former keeper, and after the death of her husband she was appointed a keeper at Belle Vue for about eleven years. It was part of her duty to clean out the cages of the larger carnivora, and yesterday morning, at half past ten, she was engaged in this work in the large block of buildings known as the Lion House.

Trap-Door Open.

The unfortunate woman was alone, and it is surmised that she forgot that the narrow door of iron bars dividing the inner and the outer cages was open. This is a trap-door which is lifted when an entrance is necessary, and it is closed and opened by hand by a lever in an outer passage. It can be opened for the exact amount of space necessary, whether for the insertion of food, a broom for cleaning, or to change an animal from one cage to another. This door is usually always open, day and night, but it is closed at feeding-time and when necessary for cleaning purposes.

The Tragedy Reconstructed.

One of the members of the staff at Belle Vue explained last night to a "Manchester Guardian" representative what he considered was the probable course of events leading up to the tragedy. He said that the cages of the larger animals are divided into two parts—the den at the back, and a larger space at the front where the animal is usually seen by the public. The connecting door between the two parts is usually left open. There is a passage at the back of the dens with an entrance, and in the case of this particular lion house an entrance at the side leading into the front part. The connecting door between the den and the front part is controlled by a lever in the side passage.

Mrs. Lambert, he thinks, went along the back passage and saw the tiger in the den. She then went to the side passage in order to use that door opening into the front to clean the front, and she must have forgotten that the connecting door between the den and the front was still open. Of course, she ought to have closed it with the lever before opening the side door. When she got inside the tiger crept out from the den and struck her to the ground. The animal then dragged her half-way across the floor to the den, part of her body filling the space of the open door, and lay there watching her—when discovered—like a cat watching a mouse.

The first person to discover the tragedy was an underkeeper named Worthington, a nephew of the victim. He shouted to Caythorne, another keeper, "The tiger's got Auntie!" Caythorne went for a gun, giving the alarm, and among the first on the spot was Mr. Hastian, the scenic artist. The animal was frightened out of the front part by irons, and when the lever to close the connecting door with the den was used the gate rising moved the part of the body resting in the den on to the floor of the front space.

First Accident in Fifty Years.

Mr. George Jennison, who has had supervision of the zoological side of Belle Vue for many years, said last night to a representative of the "Manchester Guardian" that he believed this was the first accident of the kind, fatal or in any way serious, which had taken place in Belle Vue for at least half a century. This applied both to keepers and visitors.

Mrs. Lambert," said Mr. Jennison, "started with us as a keeper during the war. For some time she had been head attendant for the lions and tigers, and was a most excellent worker. She had great sympathy with animals and an understanding of them, and he was a capital nurse when they were

8 1901 Census confirms Jas. Craythorne, aged 28, keeper at pleasure gardens.

Anecdotes

"Eawr Annie an her bill, eawr Bill an her annie."

Belle Vue, from time to time, has had various entertainments on its lakes. Captain Boynton[1] has given exhibitions and for many years the Manchester Life Boat Demonstration went to Belle Vue.[2] Among the attractions on one of these occasions was J.B. Johnson, the great swimmer, who dived from the top of the scenery.[3] As he only required two feet of water he was assured that the depth was quite satisfactory and the dive was carried out amid the plaudits of the crowd, but J.B. evidently went a shade deeper than usual and he came up swearing horribly. He had travelled through two feet of mud!

In early times it was customary to give hand bills of the gardens as visitors were leaving. One evening when Mr. Charles (afterwards Alderman Jennison) was engaged in the distribution, an excited Oldhamer accosted him thus: *"Eawr Annie an her bill, eawr Bill an her annay."* (You will find this more difficult to understand spoken than written).

The next and last was the favourite anecdote of Dick Howell of the Sporting Chronicle, and one time Conservative Candidate in Manchester.[4]

Jack: *Where'st tha been?*
Tom: *I bin to Belle Vue.*
Jack: *Tha's seen rhinoceros.*
Tom: *Naw. I canna welly mind seeing rhinoperos.*
Jack: *Any road tha's seen hippopotamus.*
Tom: *Naw. I did na see th' hipperotapus nor th' rhinoperos, but tha knows I never went amongst flowers.*

For many years we were much annoyed by a printer who pirated our guide to the gardens. Finally a trap was laid. Numbers were put on the cages just before Whit Week as usual, and the pirated guide duly appeared. The numbers were a spoof and the results as a consequence delightfully humorous. As a correspondent said: *"We can pass an elephant being called a hippopotamus, but it is too much to find the camels labelled love birds."* This letter was duly sent to the offending printer, with a few caustic comments, and the nuisance ceased.

Belle Vue was a delightful playground for the young Jennisons. Its interests were so varied that they could amuse themselves for months without leaving the grounds. One of them thought of elephant training as a hobby, - just a casual occupation from time to time. He proceeded so well while the keeper was present that he thought he was the animal's master. He entered the cage alone; the elephant had not the least respect for him, swung up her trunk intending to knock off his head, and actually sent his hat flying.

This meant punishment - duly administered, meekly accepted, in the keeper's presence - but the next time she saw the young gentleman in the Gardens she rushed at him incontinently and so regularly in the future that he had to keep out of her sight.

The results of the race were sent by pigeon post. My father was a great pigeon fancier and as he made a point of putting up his flock at the termination of a race, he got various more or less valuable *"strags."*

He did a bit of flying himself - actually got a bird back from Paris; it took 3 weeks, certainly, but having had no intermediate toss, the wonder is that it returned at all.[5]

It was the famous white eyed cock - we fancy of the Dragoon breed. It came to a sad end. Corn was grown in the field opposite the house and Mr. Ball, the farmer used his gun on the predatory pigeons. The white-eyed cock fell a victim. It was mourned as a child, its memory lingered far longer - sixty years afterwards the tragic tale was told and re-told without a smile.

1 *Paul Boyton(1848-1924) showman and designer of a life saving swimming suit wrote his autobiography, The Story of Paul Boyton: Voyages on the great rivers of the world, (London, G. Routledge & Sons, 1893)*

2 *Manchester Guardian, 3 October 1892 and 10 October 1898.*

3 *No trace of this event in press but Manchester Courier, 2 October 1876 details swimming championships of England in which J B Johnson competed.*

4 *Manchester Guardian, 30 June 1911 obituary of Mr. H.E. Howell - 'well known Conservative candidate and previously a journalist on the Manchester Evening Chronicle'.*

5 *For history of pigeon fancying see M.Jones, 'Pigeon racing and working class culture in Britain, c. 1870-1950', Cultural and Social History Vol.4, Iss 3, (2007) pp.361-83.*

"...Jennison was the only one who had the pluck to handle the lively, vicious creature."

Aunt Ann died in 1913, aged 84 years. Born at Adswood, she had experienced the first joys of comfort, had lived through the anxieties and troubles, rejoiced in unexampled and unexpected wealth. The only surviving daughter, she had been petted, feted, and had travelled much and far.

What was her most wonderful experience? She herself had no doubt about it. Seeing poor little children spelling out the names on shop fronts![6]

The Mongoose and Mengeese

Ratting was one of our favourite amusements, which, as a useful pursuit, received the encouragement of our elders.[7] We could borrow men to dig, or if the ground were suitable for flooding, the Garden fire-hose was at our disposal. The ferrets naturally could be got for the asking and were often used, and finally some one struck the brilliant idea of the mongoose. Who it was I do not know, but Mr. William Jennison was the only one who had the pluck to handle the lively, vicious creature. Luckily, he was the keenest of hunters and always available, and the results were marvellous.

This experience became of almost national importance. In the spring of 1895, the Sunday Chronicle[8] offered a prize of £20 for the best method of clearing rats from warehouses; a competitor who had experience of their value in the West Indies suggested the mongoose and Messrs. Hulton wrote for Belle Vue's opinion on the matter. Having just come down from Oxford the reply was placed in my hands - it was my first literary effort. The Competitor won his £20 and it created such a demand that Mr. Cross wired to Bombay for four hundred of the little beasts. The animal is still used very largely in England and in the most unlikely places. One of these was the laboratory of Messrs. Crace Calvert & Thomson, where my cousin George was at that time working.[9] Their animal did its work well - the rats took refuge at the Athenaeum next door. They, too, got a couple of mongoose that for a time were equally successful, until, from much feeding and petting by the members, they got lazy. Thereupon the committee put up a notice. *"Members are requested not to feed the mongooses."* A lapse of grammar in such an institution could not pass unnoticed. The Manchester Guardian printed a long and learned correspondence on the subject that came to a sudden end by the writer's true story which ran somewhat as follows:

One evening the snake keeper at Belle Vue received an urgent call to the Prince's Theatre.[10] Luckily he was at liberty to obey it, for the ladies of the ballet absolutely refused to dress in the presence of two mengeese.[11]

Herr Sommer, the German conductor of the band in 1855, lived in a cottage on the estate at Longsight. He is the subject of an interesting incident. A quarrel arose between him and the Proprietor which resulted in his discharge, but he absolutely refused to give up the music. The Gardens were in rather a difficult position; they got a new conductor but had no music. Drastic measures were necessary. John Jennison, the eldest son, entered the house and took away the music from the front bedroom where Mrs. Sommer was in bed; a writ was issued for his arrest; some kind friend informed him what was in the air, and he promptly disappeared from the Gardens, returning home on Sundays only, when the writ could not be executed. The matter was finally arranged by payment, and Herr Sommer got various engagements in Manchester, at Pomona Gardens, e.g., in October of the same year, where his advertisements contain a slight dig at Belle Vue Gardens.

6 *The meaning of this statement is uncertain.*

7 *Ike Matthews, Full revelations of a professional rat-catcher: after 25 years experience, (Manchester: Friendly Societies' Printing Co., 1898) gives detail of rat catching in Manchester in the nineteenth century.*

8 *Sunday Chronicle was one of the Hulton Group newspaper titles printed at Withy Grove. See ODNB entry Edward Hulton (1869-1925) newspaper proprietor. Also see entry in Dictionary of nineteenth century journalism, p.296*

9 *See R H Kargon, Science in Victorian Manchester, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977) p.122 confirms Crace Calvert & Thomson as a major manufacturer of carbolic acid and disinfectant products.*

10 *See T.J.Wyke & N. Rudyard, Manchester Theatres, (Manchester: Bibliography of North West England, 1994) pp.47-8 for history of this theatre.*

11 *Correspondence in Manchester Guardian, 6 November 1906 confirms.*

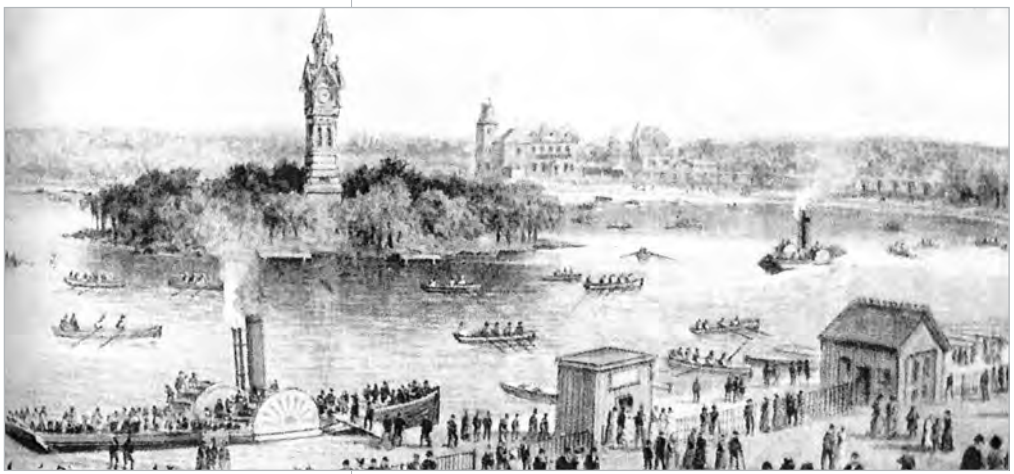
The Building Boom

"...property, property, property."

John Jennison had a very deep regard for tangible assets and the success of his fireworks gave full scope to his building mania. The tea rooms mentioned in the last chapter were a concession to his children in general, to George in particular. His own ideas were all property, property, property. Every winter he travelled with his carriage and pair to the South - Torquay, Dawlish, or Brighton - ever on the lookout to indulge his whim. He would have made expensive purchases in Brighton but for an urgent remonstrance from George who pleaded the paramount necessity of cash to develop Belle Vue. At home nothing could keep him in check; he bought Kirkmanshulme House, an expensive high-class residence adjoining the Gardens.[1] The highbrow tenant left rather than pay rent to the upstart publican. He filled Newton Abbey and the adjoining land with high class houses, and built several rows of cottages on the Gorton side of the Gardens.[2] He doubled his own residence, making it an imposing, if not impressive gateway to the Gardens. The Longsight entrance evidently pleased him for the new one was almost identical - two long low buildings with a room above the main and small subsidiary arches.

He built greenhouses in numbers which provided table decorations and a small revenue in cut flowers, but they were not a business proposition - just a rich man's hobby. As a poor man he loved flowers; in the days of his wealth he delighted to show his horticultural treasures, to share with his friends his luscious grapes and succulent peaches.

The Great Lake 1876



They and the rest were the direct and fortunate cause of a great business advance. Bricks were wanted in millions for his own work,[3] and the thousands of houses required for the workmen employed at the thriving engineering works of Messrs. Beyer Peacock & Co.[4]

He prospected for clay and found it on his own land, on the plot rented in 1841 and purchased in 1858, *"where the breezes blew cool over the seven ponds."*[5] The seven sisters[6] had a rough awakening; the land became a brick field, most of Belle Vue was built of home-made bricks and the profits from the residue paid almost the whole expense. The resultant pit impounded all the ponds, became the big Lake, the most prominent and agreeable feature of the Gardens and a very considerable addition to their earning power. First used in 1858, it received small enlargements from time to time, became circular and finally in 1876, the present pear shaped stretch of water 5 1/2 acres in extent.[7] There is a circular island with a clock tower for timing the half hours of the fifty heavy rowboats and the two steamers, Little Eastern and Little Britain, which are still in commission. It is a far cry to the Great Eastern just home from her wonderful feat of cable laying to America and it is hard to believe that there were experts in those days who solemnly declared that these iron hauled craft would not float. But so it was![8] The Lake was gay in summer; in winter on the rare occasions that frost held sway it was still more fairylike. Belle Vue had the earliest electricity in the North, and there was no prettier or safer skating pond, nor ice so swept and tended.[9] A good skating Saturday brought about 8,000 patrons: the evenings in mid week probably 3,000.

1 *See OS 1893 Map*

2 *See OS 1894 map*

3 *Jennison archive F.4.2.7 - Small account book listing bricks supplied. F.4.1.23 (a-d) documentation detailing the purchase of Brickfield land in 1872.*

4 *See R.L. Hills, Beyer Peacock, Locomotive Builders of Gorton (Manchester: Manchester Museum, 1968) for history of this company.*

5 *Assume there were a number of ponds on the land.*

6 *Assume Jennison referring to the ponds.*

7 *Jennison archive F.4.3.3. 1872 Guidebook shows circular lake and guidebook from 1881 (this is the next available guidebook in the archive) shows the pear shape discussed. 1894 OS Map shows clear survey of the site.*

8 *SS Great Eastern designed by Brunel and landed in 1858. See L.T.C. Rolt's biography, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, London: Longmans Green & Co. Ltd, 1957) pp.304-07*

9 *Advertisement in Manchester Guardian, 7 June 1878 confirming electricity at Belle Vue. This would pre-date Blackpool's illuminations by some time as they were not introduced until 1912, see J.K. Walton, Blackpool, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998) p.80. Another example of Jennison innovation and originality that would attract the visitors.*

"He used the guile of Ulysses; if there were no money, no one could have it."

Thus far a visitor saw but there is more than meets the eye. Belle Vue drops by gradual slope from end to end some seven and twenty feet. The big Lake is a storage reservoir; its surplus waters leaping forth in a small cascade flow on to meet each pond and common water tap throughout the Gardens, and the cost is negligible. A small permanent supply was bought from the canal, enough to prevent stagnation.[10] For the rest, John Jennison Jnr., and afterwards his brother Charles, were honorary surveyors to the Gorton Local Board;[11] they saw how the land lay and every new street in the fast expanding township sent its surface water to the Belle Vue Lake.

Water was nearly free and there was a surplus sufficient to feed the dams of certain works behind the Gardens and to fill in winter another lake whose only function was making ice for storage.

Artificial production was unknown and the monopoly was worth £800 to £1000 a year.[12]

This pit, called Twiggs from the farmer vendor, was another brickfield bought as a continuation of the Building Boom.[13]

The Building Boom Continues

John Jennison, the founder, died in 1869; the building took on an added frenzy.

Filial respect was excessive and one would like to imagine

"John Brown's body lies a-moulding in the grave.

But his soul goes marching on."

The real reason was prosaic and pagan. The autocratic dictator was no more, the strong hand had gone when wealth was pouring in; the numerous sons were eager to have gold and luxury and as George truly foresaw, with these would come idleness. He used the guile of Ulysses; if there were no money, no one could have it. After a brilliant season he distributed £275 each in dividends and that included wages. The rest of the profit went in paying off John, dismissed by his father, and Samuel who took to idleness and drink; in buying land, (the present Sports field) 29 acres bought in 1872 which completed the gardens, an area of 68 acres; and in building a solid airy stable stalled for 500 horses and room as well for the garden herd of milch cattle, a fine new brewery with a capacity of 5,000 barrels and a well to supply it and the gardens with excellent water, and a perfect honeycomb of cellarage from Hyde Road Entrance to the central Refreshment

Rooms. He extended the lion house and constructed a solid home for elephants; he built the Lake Hotel[14] which has been worth a mint of money from that day to this, and he left a crowning glory - the wall, one and a half miles long, that surrounds the Gardens. It is twelve feet high and buttressed every fourteen feet, with nine inch pillars. The cost must have been stupendous, but it was all paid out of revenue and was probably worth the expense. The old and inner wall was weak and low - about 8ft high - an obstruction scarcely noticed by the would-be free-list visitors. A little army of police were needed permanently to make them respect it. The Lake Hotel, and with it the wall, were just finished when George died in September 1878, aged 46, but happy in an almost completed work.

10 *See 1894 OS map for location of the Stockport/Ashton canal.*

11 *Gorton did not become part of Manchester until 1908 and before this was governed by a Local Board, see France, A History, pp. 51-2.*

12 *G.Iles, 'At home in the zoo' (London: W.H. Allen, 1960) p.15 mentions the underground ice storage.*

13 *Unable to source any evidence to verify this statement.*

14 *Jennison archive F.4.3. 1882 guidebook confirms Lake Hotel opened in 1876. Nicholls, Belle Vue, p.14 discusses how the Hotel was built to take full advantage of the opening of the Belle Vue station in 1875.*

George Jennison Snr

James Jennison -1897

He worked in all weathers like the famous Bess of Hardwick,[15] and accomplished more for his business than she with life as her gage.[16] James, his youngest brother, finished what little remained to do. The family had but to reap what he had sown.

Prosperity & Wealth

Mr. George Jennison just lived to see the flood tide of success. He had struggled from extreme poverty into a position of comfort. Years before he had said to my mother: *"Some day, we shall be worth £20,000"*, and as she said, *"I laughed in his face."* In his diary beginning 1876 there is a record of profits (over £10,000)[17] mostly paid in redeeming mortgages that had been left on purchases, but admitting of the first fair dividend of £600 to each beneficiary in the family. It is written with an air of triumph, but it was the worst result attained for a great many years. In the next 40 years, dividends were never lacking. One member of the family left £225,000 and another who had not far short of that had spent far more than the difference in his country house. This gentleman, Mr. James Jennison, the youngest of the brothers, took the reins when there were no other hands strong enough to hold them. He had learned what he could from his brother George and my first recollection of him, (I must have known him all my life), dates from September 1878. I was taken to see my father as he lay dying; James was writing at his desk and when a great paroxysm of coughing seized the sufferer, I remember vividly how James ran to support him. Thirty years later, it was I who sat at the feet of James to learn what I could about the working of Belle Vue; I might have learned more, but fortunately attained the essentials before he died in 1917 - stricken down in his office as dramatically as though he had been taken, as so many were, in the streets, in the influenza epidemic of that year.[18] He was a self centred man and too proud to ask assistance from any one, but he never refused to accept any offers from volunteers. Offers of work for the good of the place were the surest way to his appreciation, I know that he had a high opinion of my character, but feel sure that I was by no means the first in his affections - maybe from being too independent, or perhaps from our continuous discussions on politics, on which we disagreed very strongly, though we could and very often did rise from the most heated argument on this point to turn to placid and hearty co-operation on the other. His great failing was timidity. He was always afraid that every suggestion - particularly as to railway excursions - would raise some question or other, and it never did. He died as fortunate as he had lived, leaving Belle Vue more prosperous than it had ever been.

His life was clouded by obsessions, in spite of all the family efforts to remove them. He was an old man who had suffered many things, most of which never happened. His greatest virtue was a passion for hard work; in that he shamed us all; of a very retiring disposition, fond of his experiments in chemistry and botany and spending his little leisure in study of the poets, of whom Shakespeare and Pope were the favourites. He hated the limelight and his brother Charles used to get much of the credit that was entirely his. Twenty years earlier, such a character would have held back development enormously.

Coming when he did, he was perfect for his position. He added the animal houses mentioned above and the zoological garden became complete. Nothing more was necessary for the next 30 years than careful management of the place and of profits. The dividends were enough to satisfy anybody and he aimed to provide a reserve fund that would continue them at the same level when the lease lapsed in 1935, and I have no doubt that he would have succeeded in his object.

Fortunately this was not necessary. The Dean and Canons of Manchester took a very reasonable attitude on the question of selling the Freehold which was purchased in 1915 for cash, £35,000,[19] leaving a still very fine surplus of accumulated reserve. The best years of this prosperous time were 1891, 1899 and 1900;[20] but a new and very serious competitor - the sea - had arisen. Cheap trips to Blackpool, and other coast towns, captured many past customers. This opposition became serious.[21] The success of 1899 was largely effected by the exhibition of the great Orangutan, and the celerity with which Mr. Caney prepared his model and provided the picture for the *"Relief of Ladysmith"* in 1900, the most popular title, and, as it chanced, probably the best show of its kind in Belle Vue, made the year 1900 the most successful in the history of the gardens.

15 *Bess was Elizabeth Talbot; Lady Cavendish (1527-1608) ODNB suggests that she had an 'unrelenting acquisition of property and worldly goods'.*

16 *OED - A pledge, a guarantee of good faith.*

17 *No trace in archive of this diary but assume George Jennison had it in his possession. £10,000 worth £457,000 based on conversion rates in 2005 from the National Archives currency convertor.*

18 *Report in Manchester Guardian, 2 February 1917 of the outbreak of the epidemic.*

19 *Manchester Cathedral Archives, Reference Mancath/2/A/7/2/5.*

20 *Ledgers in the archive are incomplete so unable to confirm. Suggest Jennison had access to figures to enable him to offer the analysis.*

21 *See J K Walton, The English Seaside Resort: A Social History 1750-1914, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983) for growth and development of Blackpool.*

For several years later there was a pronounced slump, which is always very marked in a business such as Belle Vue where expenses have so little relation to receipts. The wages bill in 1901 for instance, was higher than the year before. It was in this period that timidity had its worse effects. James was very wealthy and everyone else was well off, and he did not care to draw capital for development. From 1876 to 1905 the Ocean Wave, 1894, was the only new amusement and he was once heard to say that he wished he had never seen the damned thing, a very strong expression on the part of a man whom I only heard swear twice. The Figure Eight was adopted owing to its success at the White City (1905), and Mr. John Jennison who attended to the catering department and for whom Mr. James had the highest regard was responsible for its introduction, but many other suggestions fell upon deaf ears. It was a heart-breaking work that fell to my lot, for no one else troubled about it. Mr. Wm. Jennison, who was full of ideas, but of a very excitable temperament, admitted that he had not the patience to fight with it and wondered how I managed to continue the tedious struggle. However, as the French proverb says, *"Patience and length of time do more than strength and courage."* Like my father before me, I was a Pigeon Fancier and joined the Manchester Columbarian Society and to please me they were allowed to hold their annual show in the gardens.[22] From that came the first move; the Manchester Poultry and Pigeon Society sought my help to get their show transferred to the gardens. The reward was worth the struggle; a new era was opened and for the first time for 60 years strangers were allowed to take money in the gardens. This show was the forerunner of the Manchester Dog Show[23] and of the many exhibitions held since, - not very important in themselves, but all bringing a new class of patrons to the garden. The other great innovation arose from politics. All the Jennison family had been conservatives for three generations; I was an active liberal, and Belle Vue seemed an excellent place to celebrate the great victories of 1906.[24]

This meeting was finally arranged, I think because Mr. James recognised the advantage of the family being identified with both sides and favouring no one; certainly the year before, a refusal had been given to a political section because he did not like their politics. The natural result followed; the Liberals having had their demonstration,[25] the Conservatives said, *"Mr. Jennison, you cannot refuse us."*[26] Accordingly the same year saw the Church remonstrance against the Education Bill,[27] with a procession of 30,000 people,[28] and the Roman Catholics a fortnight later with 35,000.[29] Nearly 100,000 extra people in three days, a marked addition to the attendance which showed itself in the dividend. There have been many political demonstrations since, attended by the highest members of the Cabinet; it was at Belle Vue that Mr. Balfour gave his famous half sheet of notepaper speech,[30] and in 1924 three Prime Ministers, past or present, addressed audiences in the Gardens.[31] These political gatherings are successful because of the extreme cheapness. The usual admission before the war was £100 for 10,000 people, and after that 2 1/2d each (it is now 3d. with £100 minimum), a sum very satisfactory to the agents, who were sure of a good audience and could generally rely on making receipts cover expenses.

THE CATHOLIC FEDERATION.

Bishop's House, Salford.
14th September, 1902.

It is proposed to hold, on SATURDAY, the 13th OCTOBER, 1902, a

GRAND CATHOLIC DEMONSTRATION

AT BELLE VUE GARDENS, MANCHESTER,

chiefly to protest against the present iniquitous Education Bill. It is my earnest desire to make this Demonstration representative of every Mission in the Diocese. As a preliminary, may I ask you to announce this at all the Masses on Sunday, the 18th September, and to take steps for the formation of a Parochial Committee to deal with the matter? Further information will follow.

✠ LOUIS CHARLES, Bishop of Salford.

Mr. James Jennison, fortunate in most things, was very unfortunate in that his only son, James Leonard, a distinguished mathematician and scholar designate, of Trinity College, Cambridge, was killed in action at the beginning of 1917, which no doubt hastened his father's end; but in material matters he was lucky even here - his nature could not have stood the reverses of the early part of 1918 and he would have been worried to death by the post-war problems of management.[32]

22 *Manchester Guardian, 1 December 1897 and Manchester Courier, 16 December 1897 report on the shows.*

23 *Manchester Guardian, 24 March 1909*

24 *For more information see A K Russell, Liberal Landslide - The General Election of 1906. (Newton Abbott: David & Charles,1973)*

25 *Manchester Guardian article 25 June 1906.*

26 *Manchester Courier, 15 October 1906.*

27 *For historical background on the demonstrations opposing the Education Bill see D.Brooks, The Age of Upheaval: Edwardian Politics 1899-1914, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) pp 97-9.*

28 *Manchester Guardian article 5 October 1906.*

29 *Manchester Guardian, 15 October 1906.*

30 *Report in Manchester Guardian, 28 January 1905 discusses political implications of Balfour's speech.*

31 *Manchester Guardian: David Lloyd George 9 June, Stanley Baldwin 28 July and Ramsay McDonald 16 October 1924.*

32 *Manchester Guardian, 10 December 1917 obituary of James Jennison.*

Amusements of the Family

"Now then, you lads, what are you doing?"

The Jennison family in every generation has had a strong taste for athletics, dancing and other such amusements. John Jennison himself was very fond of dancing, chiefly the Lancashire step dancing. His children preferred the ordinary Ballroom dancing, which formed nearly the only pleasure and relaxation in the early years. The dances they attended were not very numerous, but they got full value for such as there were. Whatever time they began, usually 8.30 or 9, the finishing hour never varied - 5.30a.m. These were usually the Licensed Victuallers Balls, and an occasional public dance given at the gardens.[1] The grandchildren kept up the dancing tradition but were more particular in their choice; the only public dances which they attended were the two Constabulary Balls given every winter at the Gardens, in the Chinese Tea Rooms. We made a private party and often invited our cousins of the old stock at Bullwell, near Nottingham; as wealth grew private balls became almost an annual event, usually preceded by theatricals.

There was enough histrionic talent in the family to furnish all the characters. The other interests of the family were athletic. Mr. Richard Jennison, for instance, was a great horseman, and one of the first mounted volunteers in Manchester.[2] Mr. William was noted for his fast trotters and daring driving; he married one of the three very beautiful daughters of Mr. Chadwick of The Waggon & Horses Inn, at Gorton, of which he became the owner when his father-in-law died, thereby becoming probably the wealthiest of the sons, as he had both his share of the Garden profits and his own very lucrative business. Mrs. William was very well aware of her position, and with feminine vanity often stopped at the Hyde Road Entrance on her way to town that her sisters-in-law might envy her expensive dresses.[3]

Belle Vue was still on the edge of open country, and the family kept several saddle horses for their children. To men of this athletic temperament, living on a property that gave great scope for practise, the bicycle made a strong appeal. One of them discovered the old bone shaker at the Paris Exhibition in 1868. He purchased the machine for £8.15.0., brought it home, took it as a pattern into the smith's and Wheelwright's Shop, and supplied not only the whole family but sold a certain number outside. They were almost the first bicycles in Manchester, and the firm might possibly have made more money in developing that business than in the one they were building.[4] Anyway they got a great deal of amusement out of it - races round the gardens, and the inevitable accidents. Mr. Kelsall, for instance, doing a half mile against time from the White Tower and back, came across a very rough spot, half way on the course; his machine jumped out of control and he was shot head foremost over the railings into a duck pond.

A great journey to Buxton and back was remembered for years.[5] It is nothing now but it must have been something of an undertaking on those heavy machines, but probably it was recalled more from the accidents and the excitement of the journey than for any other reason. James, the youngest brother, was the best cyclist. They also took a certain amount of interest in shooting. James was fairly good - the others not of much account. The story used to run that my father had three shots at a hare coming gently towards him, without success. Fishing was very much more popular. In this they all had a great deal of experience in the fishing Contests held in the large Lake at Belle Vue, and their names often appear amongst the prizewinners. James, who had infinite patience, was the best with rod and line, but he was too subject to sickness to be any good at deep sea fishing.

1 *Manchester Courier, 14 January 14 1860. See Roach, p.122 confirms the contract for the private function in 1870.*

2 *Reports of the First Lancashire Rifle Volunteers, Manchester Courier, 5 May 1860 and 7 July 1860.*

3 *Refer to family tree and Higson, Gorton Historical, has numerous references to the 'Waggon & Horses' as a popular venue. The pub still exists today.*

4 *Other Manchester businessmen also missed this business opportunity; see N. Clayton, 'Bicycle Manufacturing in Manchester 1880-1900' in D. Brumhead and T. Wyke, eds., Moving Manchester: Aspects of the History of Transport in the City and Region since 1700 (Manchester: Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society, 2004) pp.178-93. For a sense of the impact of the bicycle in the late nineteenth century, see D. Rubenstein, 'Cycling in the 1890s', Victorian Studies, Vol.2 (1977) pp.47-71.*

5 *Buxton in Derbyshire approximately 25 miles from Belle Vue.*

In that William was distinguished, and Charles, who kept his interest to the end. He purchased The Hut, at Port Erin, Isle of Man, as a country House, and he loved nothing more than a day in his boat outside Bradda Head.[6] He used to say that it kept him alive and this is probably true. He never suffered from sea sickness, but sometimes he was ill from other causes. Crossing from Liverpool, one very stormy day, a sailor, seeing him leaning over the rail, said: *"Mr. Jennison, are you sick?" "No"*, he replied, *"I wish to heaven I could be."*

The fishing trips to Poynton Pool and Sir Bromley Davenport's Lake at Capesthorne were annual events on which we youngsters looked with longing eyes, and great was our triumph when we were allowed to join them.[7] It had all the excitement of an adventure and all the pleasure of a picnic. Two pair horse carriages left the gardens before dawn and did not return until after dark. The coachman was our cook, and the memory of the beefsteaks and onions he fried on the lake side remains to this day. A light cart with two or three of the largest vessels used in the catering business, accompanied the party. These were for the catch which was brought home alive and turned into the large lake, where they throve and gave exceedingly good fishing, long after the Fishing Contests had been abandoned. Thousands - chiefly dace and roach - were caught at the siphons used in emptying the Lake for cleansing in 1889. Many were returned to the water, but they never throve afterwards. Dace and roach were the chief catch but Angelo, fishing from the paddle box of the steamer, once caught a bream, 5lbs weight, which Mr. Charles who was passing, landed in a tundish[8] used for filling the boilers, for lack of a better net. It is a wonder Angelo ever got that fish - he was so frightened by Mr. Charles, whose natural gruffness was sharpened by the excitement of the fisherman. Mr. Charles' bark was a great deal worse than his bite. He never boxed our ears, although he scarcely ever met us without saying: *"now then, you lads, what are you doing?"*

Port Erin Isle of Man c.1905

Skating and Curling

Naturally the great opportunity made skaters and curlers of the whole family but none of us attained very great skill in the pastimes. The grandchildren, with the advantages of school life, were generally fair footballers. I was good enough for my college team at Oxford but not clever enough for the first team of the Club we ran for a short time at the gardens. Mr Williams' sons were all excellent - the youngest, Albert, probably worth a place in an England team. He was better, certainly, than an old schoolfellow who attained that honour.

Our generation chiefly excelled in football - a game not played in the time of our elders.[9] Nearly all of us were in our school team; most reached the captaincy - a position attained in lacrosse by the sons of John, two great grandsons of the founder, at a school in Harrogate.[10]

Golf came with the third generation. Richard, the son and grandson of a Richard, is a scratch man, and won the Amateur Championship of Lancashire.

6 *Now known as Bradda Glen Restaurant. www.isleofman.com*

7 *See C. Hartwell, Cheshire, (London, Yale University Press, 2011) pp.201-3 for Capesthorne Hall and also www.capesthorne.com. For detail on history of Poynton see G. Longden, Looking back at East Cheshire, (Timperley, Willow Publishing, 1989).*

8 *OED - Broad open container or large funnel.*

9 *On the increasing popularity of football at this time see J. Walvin, The People's Game: The History of Football Revisited, (Manchester: Mainstream Publishing 2000).*

10 *For history of lacrosse in the North West, see Inglis, Played in Manchester, pp 90-3.*

The Great War

It was on these great grandchildren that the chief burden of War service fell.[11] James Leonard was the only grandson, and he was younger than the next generation. Every one of them bore himself as a credit to the family. All five volunteered for service - mostly as privates. All attained commissions and two paid the great sacrifice. James Leonard captured a gun and was killed later in 1917 (near Paschendale). Richard became a Lieutenant and was wounded; Hubert, now captain of the West Yorks. Regiment, earned the Military Cross, and was mentioned in Dispatches for brilliant work with his machine guns, stemming the German push in 1918. Sydney Angelo was one of Kitchener's 2,000 officers, - a brilliant soldier. He was accepted at 17, and commended for his attainments, but was given no opportunity for distinction on the field. He is now Captain and Adjutant of the ( )in India.[12] Lastly, his elder brother, Norman: he had been a captain in his Territorial Corps at Shrewsbury and had reverted to the ranks after leaving school, saying that it was not seemly that so young a lad should give orders to grown men. As a private he joined up at the outbreak of War; he received the Military Medal and was mentioned in Dispatches for services on the Western Front, and was thence transferred to Italy, where he was in charge of the British artillery. He died at Genoa of influenza, a few days after the Armistice.[13] The older members of the family were not wanting in their efforts for the good of England.

In the early days the Belle Vue Firework Show filled a great need in the provision of red fire, and the Gardens were put at the disposal of the Military Authorities in all ways and without payment. There the first two battalions of Pals got their preliminary training, and later drafts were put through the same mill; the Sports Field became a great depot for shell examination.[14] Mr. Geo. Jennison served as a foreman, in addition to acting first as Local representative on the Derby Scheme, and afterwards as Military Service officer.[15] Also his zoological knowledge was requisitioned by the Admiralty, and when the King's Hall became an aeroplane factory the family had the unique pleasure of receiving the written thanks of every Department of the Services for their gratuitous help.[16]

Public Works

Such public service was an old tradition. John Jennison, the eldest son, was honorary surveyor in Kirkmanshulme in the '50s - a post in which he was followed by his brother Charles, who served on the Gorton Local Board and the Prestwich Board of Guardians, of which he became chairman, and also on the Board of Overseers in North Manchester. He was the first member for Gorton on the Institution of County Councils of which body he became an Alderman; this position he attained also in the Manchester City Council where he would have been undoubtedly Lord Mayor but for the absence of a suitable Lady Mayoress.[17] His services are still commemorated on a locomotive at the Gas Works, Rochdale Road. Angelo Jennison also served on the Manchester City Council, and was nearing the Aldermanic bench when illness caused his retirement. George served for short periods on the Gorton Council and the Manchester City Council, and twice fought as a Liberal the Lancashire Parliamentary Division of Mossley, which he only lost in 1923 by a few hundred having reduced his opponent's majority by 4,000.[18] On the next occasion, however, he was at the bottom of the poll, in the general debacle of the Liberal Party which followed the publication of the Zinovieff letter.[19]

Arts and Science

In these branches the Jennison family were not eminent. James might have been a possible exception had he made public his deep researches in botany and pyrotechnics.

Charles, son of Richard, was interested in music and to a small extent a composer. Angelo, the second son of William, was a moderate performer on the piano and violin and an excellent judge of music and musicians. He financed and introduced to English audiences the great German pianist Herr Wilhelm Backhaus.[20]

11 *See family tree*

12 *Original manuscript contains this omission.*

13 *J.M. Barry, The Great Influenza: the epic story of the deadliest plague in history, (New York: Penguin, 2005) for general history of the pandemic. www.forces-war-records.co.uk James Leonard Jennison, 2nd Lieutenant, West Yorkshire Regiment, died 3 May 1917. Richard Jennison, Lieutenant, York & Lancaster Regiment, awarded the Military Cross. Hubert Jennison, Captain, West Yorkshire Regiment, awarded the Military Cross. Sydney Angelo Jennison, lieutenant serving with British army in India. Norman Jennison, Captain, Manchester Regiment, awarded the Military Cross, died 30 October 1919.*

14 *See M.Steadman, Manchester Pals: A History of the Two Manchester Brigades (London: Leo Cooper, 1994) p.46 confirms the training at Belle Vue.*

15 *Voluntary recruitment scheme; predecessor of conscription. See 'A Nation in Arms', I.F.W. Beckett & K. Simpson, (eds.) (Londaon: Tom Donovan, 1990).*

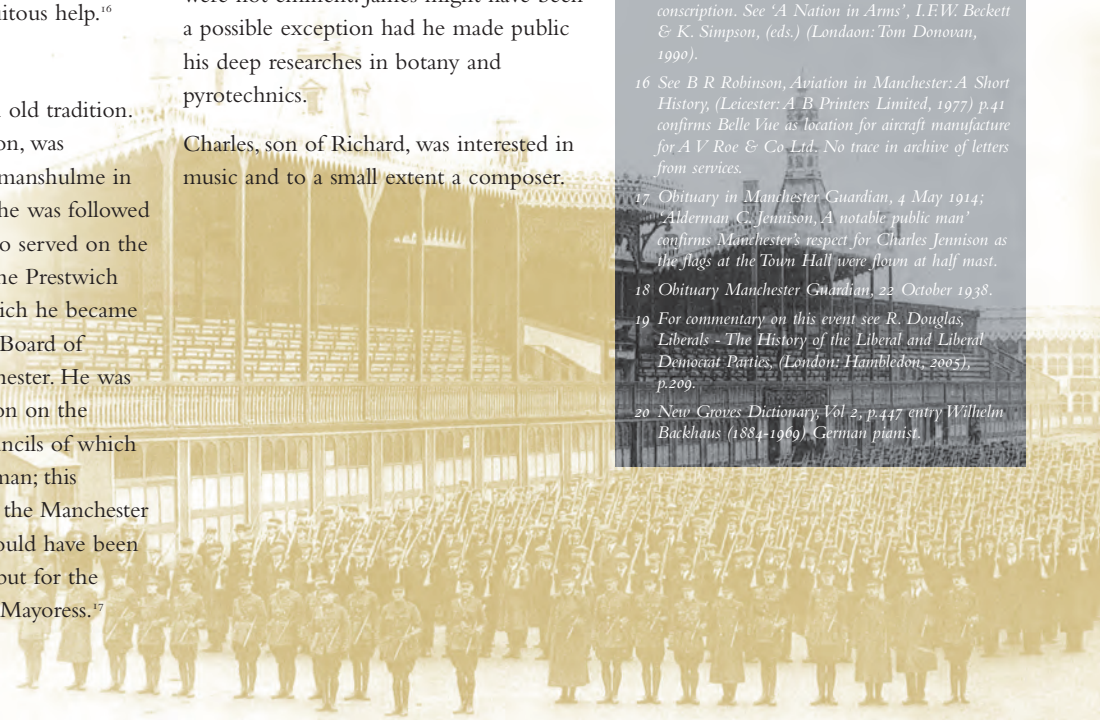
16 *See B R Robinson, Aviation in Manchester: A Short History, (Leicester: A B Printers Limited, 1977) p.41 confirms Belle Vue as location for aircraft manufacture for A V Roe & Co Ltd. No trace in archive of letters from services.*

17 *Obituary in Manchester Guardian, 4 May 1914; 'Alderman C. Jennison, A notable public man' confirms Manchester's respect for Charles Jennison as the flags at the Town Hall were flown at half mast.*

18 *Obituary Manchester Guardian, 22 October 1938.*

19 *For commentary on this event see R. Douglas, Liberals - The History of the Liberal and Liberal Democrat Parties, (London: Hambledon, 2005), p.209.*

20 *New Groves Dictionary, Vol 2, p.447 entry Wilhelm Backhaus (1884-1969) German pianist.*



"...the disease attacked his nose, which was cut off in a vain attempt to save his life."

George, the writer of this book, devoted much time to literature, wrote certain books on natural history,[21] and was for many years a contributor to the Manchester Guardian and reviewer of zoological books for that distinguished journal. We append his earliest effort, as the subject is of interest.

"The history of the London Zoological Society during most of the period covered by this work."

(Reprint this from the Guardian.)[22]

Family Jars

John Jennison died of cancer; the disease attacked his nose, which was cut off in a vain attempt to save his life. This disfigurement must be disagreeable to any man and he was incensed to fury by the ill-timed laughter of Margaret, the wife of his eldest son. Against him he had no complaint and, owner as he was of everything at the Gardens, he drove out the family with ruthless severity, but at the same time he paid out his son with such lavishness that from the monetary point of view he was more than content.

At the beginning of 1843 the Gardens were worth nothing but goodwill; in 1865 George Jennison made a memorandum of the property belonging to his father to the last detail, including the eight foot wall round the original thirty-six acres, which is estimated to be worth £1,000.

The total estimate is:

Property £67,670
Stock £13,930
£81,600[23]

This sum was taken as the basis of value when John was paid out on October 24th 1867. His father had eight children whom he put on an equal footing, even making his daughter Ann a member of the Board of Control on an equality with her brothers. A half share was allowed to John, the son of his daughter Elizabeth. John, allowing nothing for himself, paid his son John the equivalent (it became cash) of £10,000 which was rather over his full proportion.

24th October, 1867.

J. J. and J. J. Jr.

In consideration of services and giving up the lodge and premises and giving up all claims and demands. J. J. gives 12135 yards of land and buildings and makes over 43069 sq. yds. (land from old wall towards Gorton - Top lake). Also £1,000 cash £2,000 promissory note Also £4,000 as substitute for the Freehold. All paid off October 14 1870.

Beneficiaries

Ann, G. J., C.J., R.J., William, James, Samuel, John **(1/2) = 7 1/2**
Samuel, March 1873: £520 a year £3,500 on death or £312 a year to wife on death of wife surviving.[24]

The security was the most essential part of the Gardens.

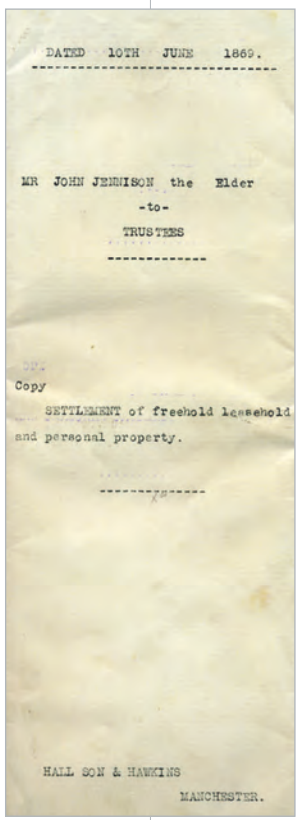
John Jennison died in September 1869 penniless, having transferred his whole fortune to the remaining seven children and grandson.

The children paid off John before the end of 1870.

Ann having married again and her husband being looked upon as an undesirable pryer into the family affairs, she was persuaded to retire on an annuity of £400 a year plus £1,000 at death.

In March, 1873 Samuel, one of the family who took to drinking and did no work, was allowed to get into difficulties and worked his own retirement on £520 a year, plus £3,500 on death, or £312 a year to himself or wife and £2,500 on the death of the survivor. This curious provision was occasioned by Samuel's ill-health. He died in April, 1873 and his wife survived but a few months.

The last two arrangements were accordingly very lucrative to the 5 1/2 shares surviving. The whole debt, except Mrs. Kelsall's unity, was cleared off out of profits in two years.


DATED 10TH JUNE 1869.

MR JOHN JENNISON the Elder
-to-
TRUSTEES

Copy
SETTLEMENT of freehold leasehold and personal property.

HALL SON & HAWKINS
MANCHESTER.

21 *Animals: an illustrated who's who of the animal world (London: A & C Black, 1927). Animals for show and pleasure in ancient Rome, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1937). The life story of a horse, (London: A & C Black, 1926). Noah's cargo; some curious chapters of natural history, (London: A & C Black, 1928).*

22 *Cannot trace in the Manchester Guardian.*

23 *Value based on 2005 currency conversion from National Archives would be £3.52m*

24 *Information taken from document - 'Settlement of freehold & Leasehold property' dated 10 June 1869 - Jennison archive F.4.1.25.*

Amusements

"The Jennison family had provided the cheapest day's amusement in the British Isles."

Belle Vue never forgot the penurious times in which it started and the extreme poverty of those for whom it catered; they were content to make the whole of their slender profit on the admission to the Gardens and the catering which might be required for the multitude who were forced to remain within the gates for at least 5 hours if they wished to obtain the necessary 6d. admission, and very few paid more. In the most successful years there were only about five occasions annually on which 2,000 people paid the shilling admission.

The two charges seem at first sight a brilliant idea but experience proved them to be false and hurtful. The error was discovered only in 1913 when as a test the Tuesdays and Thursdays in August were made 6d. days for the benefit of school children. The result was astonishing; the numbers before 4p.m. did not decrease as was to be expected; they increased and there was a second rush in the evening in which over 3,000 people became quite common. The early increase was accounted for by visits of children who could have their father's company in the evening. The later rush was made up of the said parents and of young people who could spare 6d. for a dance.

The brilliant idea that ruled from 1852 to 1913 must have cost the Gardens thousands of pounds and it entailed many hours of sheer boredom on visitors who had to hang about waiting for the great attraction - the fireworks. The enthusiastic dancers had no cause for complaint; there was an excellent band. The others when they had seen the gardens and animals had nothing to do for there were practically no amusements.
In the early days they might spend 1d. each for the museum and another for the maze and a third to be rowed round the lake. Or they might take a boat for half an hour, or have a ride on the elephant or camel.

When the daguerreotype photograph[1] was new, there was a studio in the Gardens and with that is the sum of the expenses. Later visitors could pay for the firework gallery.

The new lake in 1858 brought a steamer, which later became three, for they paid excellently. In 1863 a set of steam horses was introduced, in 1874 Velocipedes - a most rackety roundabout but always very popular; in 1870 a second maze was added. A gallery for the sealion performance from 1883 when the fast swimming in the large tank was a novelty was worth £300 to £400 a year for a long time but these were the total extraneous amusements until the time of the grandchildren.

The Ocean Wave (1894) was the first expensive novelty and that was followed by a Shooting Jungle, Helter Skelter, the Figure Eight and lastly the *"Over the Falls"*.[2]

This neglect of opportunities was not parsimony or lack of funds, for from the year 1859 when John Jennison opened a banking account in the name of his son George, there was never an overdraft until the private company John Jennison & Co. Limited had to borrow temporarily to pay out certain members of the family.[3]

It arose entirely from fear; the management were afraid that the opportunities to pay extra pennies would frighten visitors or at any rate divert into several channels what could be collected at less expense in one; certainly old amusements were affected though not disastrously by new ones, but the extra attractions always tended to increase the attendance. The Skating Rink was a notable instance of this and it paid well in skate hire although it was otherwise free to visitors. And the more costly the amusement, the bigger percentage it paid invariably:

That the amusements were advantageous and never excessive is proved by the fact that though visitors spent 2/- inside the grounds for every 1/- at the Gates (a sum which rose to 3/6 per 1/- on the special 6d days) the inside receipts on Bank Holidays when all charges were increased were only about 1/6 to 1/9 per l/-.

The money stream was clogged by the management. The usual charges were Museums, Mazes, Steamers, Steam Horses, Velocipedes, Helter Skelter 1d each. The last 1/2d. was for children.

Shooting Jungle	1d a shot
Ocean Wave	2d and 1d
Over the Falls	2d and 1d
Figure 8	3d and 1d

1 *OED - Early photographic process invented in 1839.*
2 *Jennison archive F.4.3.3. Guidebooks confirm the addition of these various amusement rides signifying the rise of the funfair at Belle Vue.*
3 *Jennison archive F.4.11. Correspondence from District Bank, Spring Gardens, Manchester, dated November 1925.*

"Now you will have to get rich."

An extra penny was the usual additional charge on very busy days. Elephant rides were 1d. but might be 3d. when demand was altogether beyond the animal's capacity.

The firework galleries were 3d, 6d and 1/- increased to 4d, 6d. 1/- or possibly to 6d for the end galleries and 1/- for the central ones but this happened very rarely, and 15,000 got a good view for nothing. A guide to the Gardens was always 1d. The firework programme 1d.[4]

The greatly increased expenses after the war necessitated the 1d amusements becoming permanently 2d and the others rose in a slightly lesser degree. The charges for refreshments were moderate and did not vary and it is certain that through the century from Adswood 1825 to the sale of Belle Vue in 1925, the Jennison family had provided the cheapest day's amusement in the British Isles.

Sundays

Belle Vue was closed only twice in its long existence - the funeral days of Victoria and Edward VII.[5] The first happened in winter and had no pecuniary importance; the other on Whit Friday meant a loss of about two thousand pounds. This loyal gesture had few imitators.

Sundays had a very checkered career. In the earlier days they were the mainstay of the establishment, on account of the cheapness of the entertainment - all the admission money being returned in refreshments.

Then the proprietor killed the goose that laid the golden eggs. The refreshment check was discontinued from 1855 to 1875, in which year an action won by the Lord's Day Observance Society against an amusement centre in the South caused it to be replaced in a hurry.

John Jennison had been paid out of the firm a few years earlier, but he remained friendly with, his brothers and it was he who brought the news and added, *"Now you will have to get rich."* It was a far seeing remark. Sundays grew popular. The check was worth 6d. worth of refreshments, food or non-alcoholic drink, as cheap as could be bought outside; and it might be carried away. Many a time small boys have told us that uncle had given them 6d. for the visit to see the animals, to get a bottle of ginger beer and a bun for themselves, and with the other 3d. to bring back one of Belle Vue's famous veal pies. They were all veal and warmed up made an excellent supper. That forced move was worth about £2,000 profit per annum. There would be 2d. at least as profit on the check and the full sixpence if the 1/- tea were taken as it usually was. Then there were amusements, Museum, Maze, boats and steamers. Sunday was a popular skating day and no check was given; we salved our conscience by saying the money went in ice sweeping - a thin poor salve, or perhaps no conscience.

The furore for the great Orangutan in 1899 brought about 6,000 persons on each of four consecutive Sundays, but that

Belle Vue 1900

was an exceptional cause and Sundays had already begun the falling off that took them almost to nothing. The attractions were the same but an opposition had arisen against which we could not fight. Fine bands were installed in the public parks and Belle Vue was not allowed to compete. Given the opportunity the Gardens would have *"faced the music"* with serene confidence. Facts prove it; music was not allowed but the authorities winked at the loan of the ballroom one Sunday morning a month for a rehearsal by the Gorton Philharmonic Society , and there were usually 1,000 paying auditors in addition to the subscribers. From that evidence a 5,000 guess for a good band in the afternoon would not err on the side of rashness.[6]

4 *Jennison must have had full sight of the account ledgers as his figures are very accurate.*

5 *Queen Victoria's funeral on Saturday 2 February 1901 and King Edward VII's on Friday 20 May 1910.*

6 *For information see Gorton Philharmonic Society Centenary Catalogue 1854-1954 for detail of their connection with Belle Vue.*

Cash Takers

"...gathered all the money, counted it in their bedroom, and kept it in a bowl under the bed."

Amusement Caterers who draw large sums of money in short periods at long intervals which render it uneconomical to employ highly paid cashiers, are very subject to theft by their employees and Belle Vue was no exception to the rule. Efforts were made by tickets and other checks to mitigate the evil, but perverted ingenuity very often overcame the safeguards. As old Mr. Jennison used to say, *"It's a great temptation."* One heard of syndicates formed to exploit their opportunities; the trouble lasted to the end and existed from the beginning. One hears that some of the relatives-in-law were not immune from the disease and others had it badly. A public house having been opened opposite to the entrance at Belle Vue, about 1868, a friend condoled with Mr. Jennison, remarking that it would do him a lot of harm. *"Man,"* he replied, *"I am robbed of more every year than that chap will draw."* Recognition of the evil did much to reduce it; wherever there were large receipts a Jennison was there to receive them; at the rush hour between three and four, all the heads of the catering went over to assist at the Gate. The biggest bag was Easter Monday 1919, - 53,300 people - but anything over 30,000 was very busy.

During this rush hour tickets were sold at a box and collected at the Gate, but after that time the ordinary Entrance office was used and as the family did not give tickets, one, or at most two were sufficient to cope with the demand. On test I admitted 1,680 people in an hour, and there were others who did better. This managerial habit led to rather an amusing incident; a large Northern City which was suffering greatly from peculation[1] at a seaside resort in which they were interested, sent a deputation round the country to study the control at similar places. They paid their sixpences at the Belle Vue gate, saw them flicked to one side and were told to move forward. They paid for their 1/- tea and received an un-numbered ticket which was passed back openly to the vendor by the door-keeper as they left the room, and the climax came when the collector at the 6d. gallery, who preferred to stand at the door and chat to his friends while doing the work, found his pocket the most convenient cash receptacle. Mr. Jennison had taken the money at the Gate, Miss Jennison at the tearoom, and an uncle managed the 6d. gallery! The deputation reported the occurrence to the management, were thanked with a smile and were enlightened on the whole question. That committee reported at length on the many checking con-trivances they had seen on their travels and the simple one in use at Belle Vue. They were unanimously in favour of the latter.

Minding even the most important gate in quiet times was very monotonous. Mr. James read; his tastes were very curious, ranging from Shakespeare, Pope and Sterne, to the Family Herald supplement. Mr. Charles Junr., at Longsight, where there was little to do, spent his time on fretwork and the writing of music. Mr. William painted a little; the only possible subject - a very ugly public house - very soon palled. Luckily for him he was the eldest of three brothers and soon passed the irksome work to the next. When my turn came, I made a study of dialects, for which the material was perfect. It was easy to make the visitor speak and thus get the material for an opinion which could be checked by the excursion ticket. One very quickly learned to recognize almost anywhere in England; in many cases neighbouring towns, Darwen and Blackburn, for instance, or Oldham and Rochdale, could be separated without trouble. Wales appears very simple and can be distinguished from most places, but I erred oftenest in interchanging Cumberland and South Wales. It is hardly credible how little intonation has changed in the many hundreds of years since Wales was separated from Strathclyde. These occupations were for many hours a month merely methods of killing time and our energies might have been available for more valuable work with a little better management. To what heights of fortune could the family have attained had the heads been proud of their position in the amusement world and resolute to extend it. In 1890, when Belle Vue was at the height of fame, there were eight young men nearly all of them keen to advance and competent for leadership. Belle Vue might have established its counterpart in Glasgow and Cardiff and would have made a success in both places. Actually every spark of initiative was trampled on with contempt - sometimes with insult.[2]

1 *OED- Embezzle or theft.*

2 *Jennison archive F.4.11 Document written by George Jennison to be given to James Jennison. This includes a full report on the problems of Belle Vue and George's ideas for expansion and modernisation. However James Jennison died before George could discuss his plans with him.*

A Casual Cash System

The family spirit which covered the whole undertaking at the beginning, continued in the Cash Department to the end. None but members of the family handled the money for eighty years and nothing but absolute necessity permitted the assistance of two or three confidential servants during the short life of the private company. In the time of wealth a regular afternoon was given to the work, and for very many years that afternoon was Sunday, and all members of the family were expected to be present.[3]

A very large proportion of the receipts was silver which was divided into various coins by a riddle or cradle invented at the gardens, and was sent to the Bank wrapped in £5 rolls and then again in brown paper packets of £50, tied with string. These packets were very popular in the city and it was a common custom for wage payers to specify Jennison's silver. The money counting was rather a boring business and mistakes and mixing of two or three different departments were not unknown, adjustment in such cases being merely a guess. That system of guess could not be properly described as the permanent system of Belle Vue bookkeeping, but it was very crude and depended entirely on family honesty. Such system as there was grew very slowly.

The Founder and his wife gathered all the money, counted it in their bedroom, and kept it in a bowl under the bed. No account was taken of receipts or expenditure. As the children grew, they took part in collecting but not in counting the money.

The first account book dates from 1850, when Mr. George Jennison was 18 and he held the office of book-keeper to his death. For a long time it was an account of receipts only, expenses being disregarded, the only exception of the rule occurring at the end of 1851 and the beginning of 1852 when curiosity provoked careful examination of the cost of Mr. Danson's first firework display and enables us to give information correct to the last penny, but the money was still kept under the bed, not a very dangerous custom, for very little was allowed to remain for any length of time; it all went in development and at once. John Jennison could read little and could write nothing but his own name; perhaps this may explain the delay in opening a banking account.

That occurred in 1859 at the Lloyd Entwistle, afterwards the Manchester and Liverpool District Bank, where it remained to the end and was never overdrawn. The family had a great horror of debts and must have lost thousands of pounds by the neglect of borrowed capital. The account was in the name of George Jennison, the second son, who was both a good writer and a good economist. He alone could draw upon it. The opening of the Bank account dates the beginning of book-keeping. Expenses were noted as well as receipts, but no effort was made to distinguish ordinary and capital expenditure and as a result some of the most successful years in the business appear in the books as losses to the extent of £20 to £500. The Accounts were merely simple entry depending entirely on human memory acting very often in excitement and hurry; omissions on one side or the other were quite frequent and showed an unexpected profit or loss as the case might be. If the balance was too glaringly false, efforts were made to remember omissions; those on the receipt side were found as a rule easily enough.

According to the day, the proprietor knew the likely amusements and refreshment rooms and services, and if a total was wanting to any of them a probable amount was guessed and inserted. The omission of payment for a big entertainment, a ball or coming-of-age or some such *"stir"*, as it was commonly called, was more difficult to trace, and the cost of 20 standards of timber was equally hard to find. Why not look at the cheque book counterfoil is an obvious question, but it does not hold. In the earliest times, cash had been paid for goods and, for almost sixty years after the opening of the Bank account, Mr. Jennison took his carriage round Manchester with a thousand pounds or so in silver and gold to liquidate the accounts which were generally paid before they were due and occasionally before the goods arrived.

3 *M. Powell & T. Wyke, 'Counting the Coppers: John Jenison & the Belle Vue Zoological Gardens' in J. Wolff & M. Savage (eds.) Culture in Manchester (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013)*

It says much for the family honesty and care that there were never any serious discrepancies. There was never an exact balance; that was impossible, for copper was never counted, always weighed or measured, 10/- to the half pint or 4 /- to the 1b., which was about 9d. wrong in the £, as the writer found on test when the system had been in force for 50 years, and the following fact adds the last touch to this comic opera system of bookkeeping.

It does not concern reconciliation of bank balances - such a refinement was never thought of; in good years all bills on hand, whether due or not, were paid in December; in bad years all stood over to January and fluctuations of profits were modified accordingly. It is a matter of balances and deficits. The writer is unaware how deficits were dealt with in the time of George, but James, who succeeded him and was treasurer for nearly forty years, never failed to balance his books. He was always wrong from £50 to £500, presumed he had spent it himself, and carried the whole burden of the loss. Every rule has its exceptions. For a short period his luck changed - the discrepancies became a credit which soon grew so large that it could not be overlooked. The error was discovered. The bank balance was always large and interest on it had never been taken into account. The discovery brought the normal result and the usual cure.

Thus the man who did three times as much work for the Gardens as any one else most certainly spent all his salary and something over for the pleasure of doing so.

Remonstrance were quite useless, even a wish to let us all bear the cost was of no avail; of course it did him very little harm. He was for a long time a bachelor with few expenses, and though he subsequently married and used a lot of money, he had £185,000 when he died.

But we must not be unjust to his memory; the worm did turn once; the accounts looked somewhere near balanced, when a credit of £300 come to light. *"Say nothing about it,"* said James to Richard Jr., who was helping him; he kept silent and the accounts were duly accepted. There was no auditor.

The writer, who followed, was neither so rich nor so foolish in this matter; the errors remained though they were fortunately not very large, but every beneficiary had to take his share of the loss. Under this treasurer the system of Cash payments disappeared to be replaced with cheques with counterfoil properly completed. The system was gradually improving, but it was a long way from perfection when the Gardens were sold.

The Jennison Family c. 1860

Sale of Bell Vue

"BELLE VUE (MANCHESTER) LTD."

Belle Vue looked to outsiders as if it might go on indefinitely; there were always men sufficient in number and capable of carrying on the work. They had all the pride of possession and love of their property; the interruption came from the spreading into more distant branches with the consequent lack of command in the ruling director. John Jennison, the founder, was an autocrat whose will was law; no inconvenience or expense turned him from his desires, a single incident may be given as an illustration. Kirkmanshulme Lane, running for nearly three quarters of a mile alongside his property, was repairable by the adjoining owners, himself and another. By agreement Mr. Jennison did the work for which the other refused to pay his share. *"You are no gentleman"*, said John; *"No, we none of us are, we're only working men"*, he replied - thinking the matter would end there. It did not, every bit of that road on both sides was pulled up rather than he would allow himself to be swindled.

This little freak, in the sequel, had quite serious financial consequences. The road was naturally in a deplorable state; meanwhile Belle Vue had bought the other side and became responsible for repairing the whole of it which cost about £3,000 some 40 years later, but John Jennison had his way as he always had. He had the sternness of a Roman Senator. He suffered in his last years from a rodent ulcer that attacked his nose. The wife of his eldest son laughed at his disfigurement, immediately he got rid of her and his son also, paying him the full value of his share in the estate. Against a man of that calibre mutiny was impossible; everybody had to work, and for nothing. If they wished a holiday they asked for the money and got it generously. All the activities of John and George were approved by him; those who worked in lesser positions were kept equally hard at it.

At dinner-time he would ask: *"What are thee going to do?"* and no one dared say *"nothing."*

Dissensions broke out almost immediately after his death. Richard, who had very possibly the best brain in the family, turned to frivolous pursuits. Mr. George records in his diary one of these quarrels, where he was accused of ruining the place and called a liar. He thought that the speaker could not live long, but he survived his father almost 50 years, and did less and less work as time went on. There was only one means to overcome his obstruction which was to say *"Do the work yourself."*

His action made the work of James much more difficult; the peace of the gardens was complicated. The shares of Mr. William and Mr. George (my father) of which William and I were the representatives had no representation on the management. For almost 25 years from 1895 there was continual bickering joined with a long drawn out but abortive attempt to turn the family trust into a private company; probably nothing but the hard work of Mr. James and Mr. John and our great devotion to Mr. James who was a trustee under the will of both William and George, prevented the matter from coming before the courts. Upon the death of Richard in 1919, the matter was very soon amicably arranged. Mr. John, the sole remaining trustee raised no difficulties; the preliminaries, a settlement of a price and the legal formalities fell into my hands and a private company was formed with a capital of £253,000 to take over the estate including the bank balance and investments - some £63,000. Most of Richard's family preferred to retire, abdicating their power rather than being thrust from it. Mr. James' share was taken as debentures owing to a flaw in his will; as promoter, I and my sister, took our proportion in ordinary shares, the others had ordinaries and 6% debentures.

The Directorate consisted of George Jennison, Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Joint Managing Director; John Jennison Jnr. The great grandson, Joint Managing Director; John Jennison, his father, William Jennison, Angelo Jennison and Richard Jennison, who took up just enough shares to qualify, were directors. It was a very happy Board with very few meetings, and an entire absence of quarrels. Almost all the work fell on Mr. John Jennison Jnr and myself. Mr. William and his wife Maria Jennison who represented directly or indirectly about one third of the shares, had been living at Eastbourne for many years. Mr. Richard took no interest, Mr. Angelo was ill and Mr. John too old. Myself, blessed with very good health, was married to a French lady who has never taken any interest in the gardens and our three daughters had no brother to whom the business might have been handed on. Mr. Charles' share was in the hands of his grandchildren, whom we scarcely knew, for his daughters had not done any work in their youth and consequently were ostracised by the rest of us.

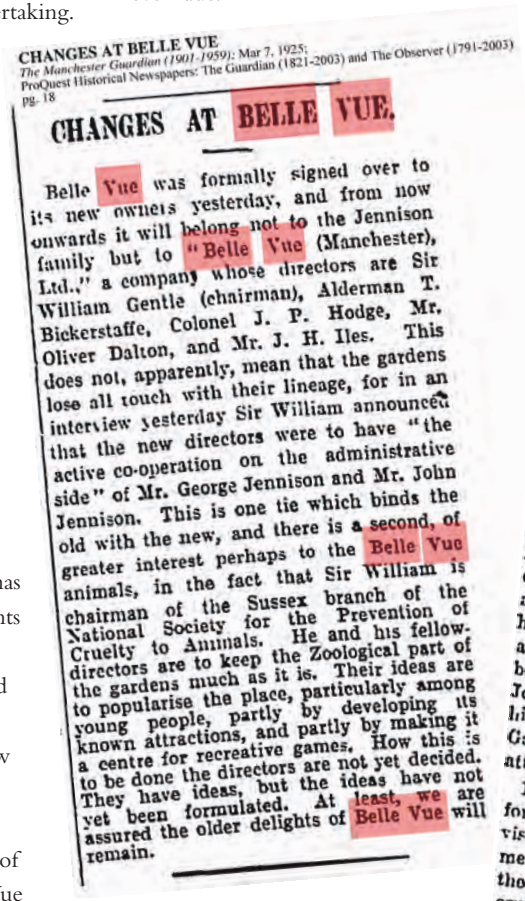
"He set an example to all his descendants and left a memory that will never fade."

Obviously it was a matter of time before I should have to sell out, therefore it seemed preferable to do so whilst still young enough to enjoy life or even take up other activities. The family had gone to seed: Had one family bought the estate it might have had another century of success, as a private concern. Richard's children alone had the necessary money and men to carry it on but lacked inclination. John Jennison Jnr, who had two boys, the great, great grandchildren, could not have financed the undertaking.

The Gardens and the whole estate was sold for £251,000 as and from the 1st January 1925 to a Public Company under the chairmanship of Sir William Gentle Kt. It was floated as *"BELLE VUE (MANCHESTER) LTD"* with £150,000 6% debentures, 150,000 preferred ordinary shares 10% and 50,000 Deferred Ordinary Shares, Mr. George Jennison being retained for £1,000 as adviser during the first year.[1]

The only change of importance has been the installation of amusements on sharing terms and the use of touting megaphones which would have been anathema to the old management. New blood and new ideas always bring both good and evil; we trust that the good may predominate and that the people of Lancashire may appreciate Belle Vue Gardens in the future as highly as in the past. John Jennison, Silk Weaver, Gardener, and Publican, a man with no capital but his own indomitable energy, of these bare fields made a garden known throughout the world.

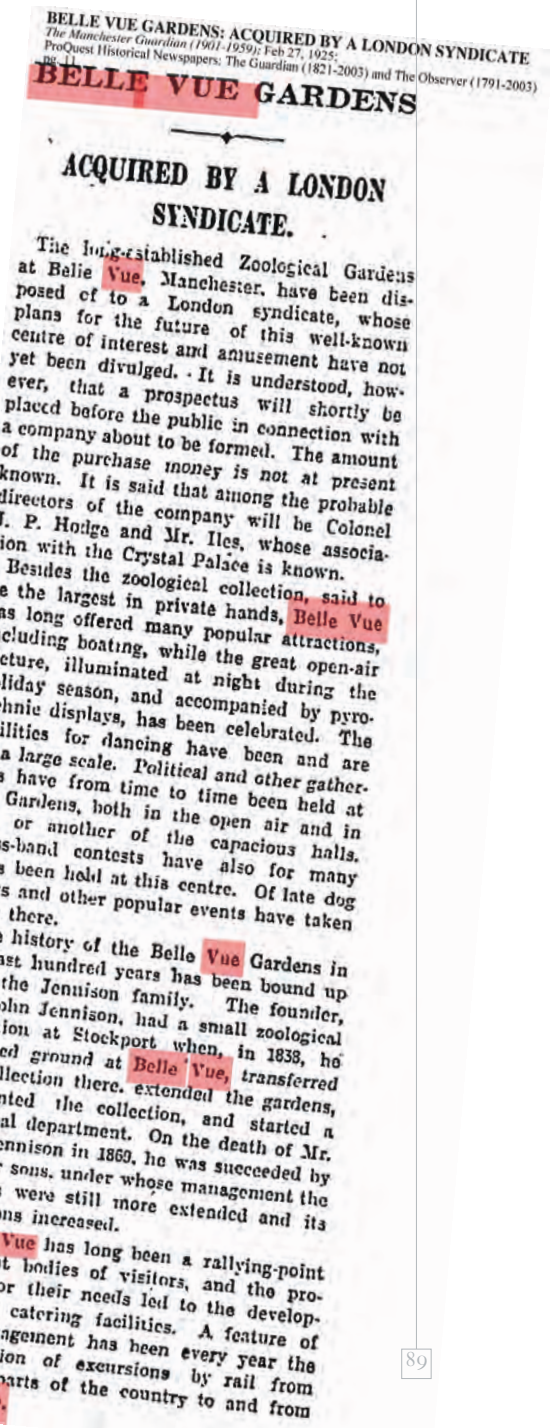
He educated his children beyond their time and station and gave them wealth to enjoy the higher walk of life to which they attained. He set an example to all his descendants and left a memory that will never fade.



CHANGES AT BELLE VUE
The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959); Mar 7, 1925;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian (1821-2003) and The Observer (1791-2003)
pg. 18

CHANGES AT BELLE VUE.

Belle Vue was formally signed over to its new owners yesterday, and from now onwards it will belong not to the Jennison family but to "Belle Vue (Manchester), Ltd.," a company whose directors are Sir William Gentle (chairman), Alderman T. Bickerstaffe, Colonel J. P. Hodge, Mr. Oliver Dalton, and Mr. J. H. Iles. This does not, apparently, mean that the gardens lose all touch with their lineage, for in an interview yesterday Sir William announced that the new directors were to have "the active co-operation on the administrative side" of Mr. George Jennison and Mr. John Jennison. This is one tie which binds the old with the new, and there is a second, of greater interest perhaps to the Belle Vue animals, in the fact that Sir William is chairman of the Sussex branch of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He and his fellow-directors are to keep the Zoological part of the gardens much as it is. Their ideas are to popularise the place, particularly among young people, partly by developing its known attractions, and partly by making it a centre for recreative games. How this is to be done the directors are not yet decided. They have ideas, but the ideas have not yet been formulated. At least, we are assured the older delights of Belle Vue will remain.



BELLE VUE GARDENS: ACQUIRED BY A LONDON SYNDICATE
The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959); Feb 27, 1925;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian (1821-2003) and The Observer (1791-2003)
pg. 11

BELLE VUE GARDENS

ACQUIRED BY A LONDON SYNDICATE.

The long-established Zoological Gardens at Belle Vue, Manchester, have been disposed of to a London syndicate, whose plans for the future of this well-known centre of interest and amusement have not yet been divulged. It is understood, however, that a prospectus will shortly be placed before the public in connection with a company about to be formed. The amount of the purchase money is not at present known. It is said that among the probable directors of the company will be Colonel J. P. Hodge and Mr. Iles, whose association with the Crystal Palace is known.

Besides the zoological collection, said to be the largest in private hands, Belle Vue has long offered many popular attractions, including boating, while the great open-air picture, illuminated at night during the holiday season, and accompanied by pyrotechnic displays, has been celebrated. The facilities for dancing have been and are on a large scale. Political and other gatherings have from time to time been held at the Gardens, both in the open air and in one or another of the capacious halls. Brass-band contests have also for many years been held at this centre. Of late dog shows and other popular events have taken place there.

The history of the Belle Vue Gardens in the last hundred years has been bound up with the Jennison family. The founder, Mr. John Jennison, had a small zoological collection at Stockport when, in 1838, he acquired ground at Belle Vue, transferred his collection there, extended the gardens, augmented the collection, and started a botanical department. On the death of Mr. John Jennison in 1869, he was succeeded by his four sons, under whose management the Gardens were still more extended and its attractions increased.

Belle Vue has long been a rallying-point for great bodies of visitors, and the provision for their needs led to the development of catering facilities. A feature of the management has been every year the organisation of excursions by rail from various parts of the country to and from Belle Vue.

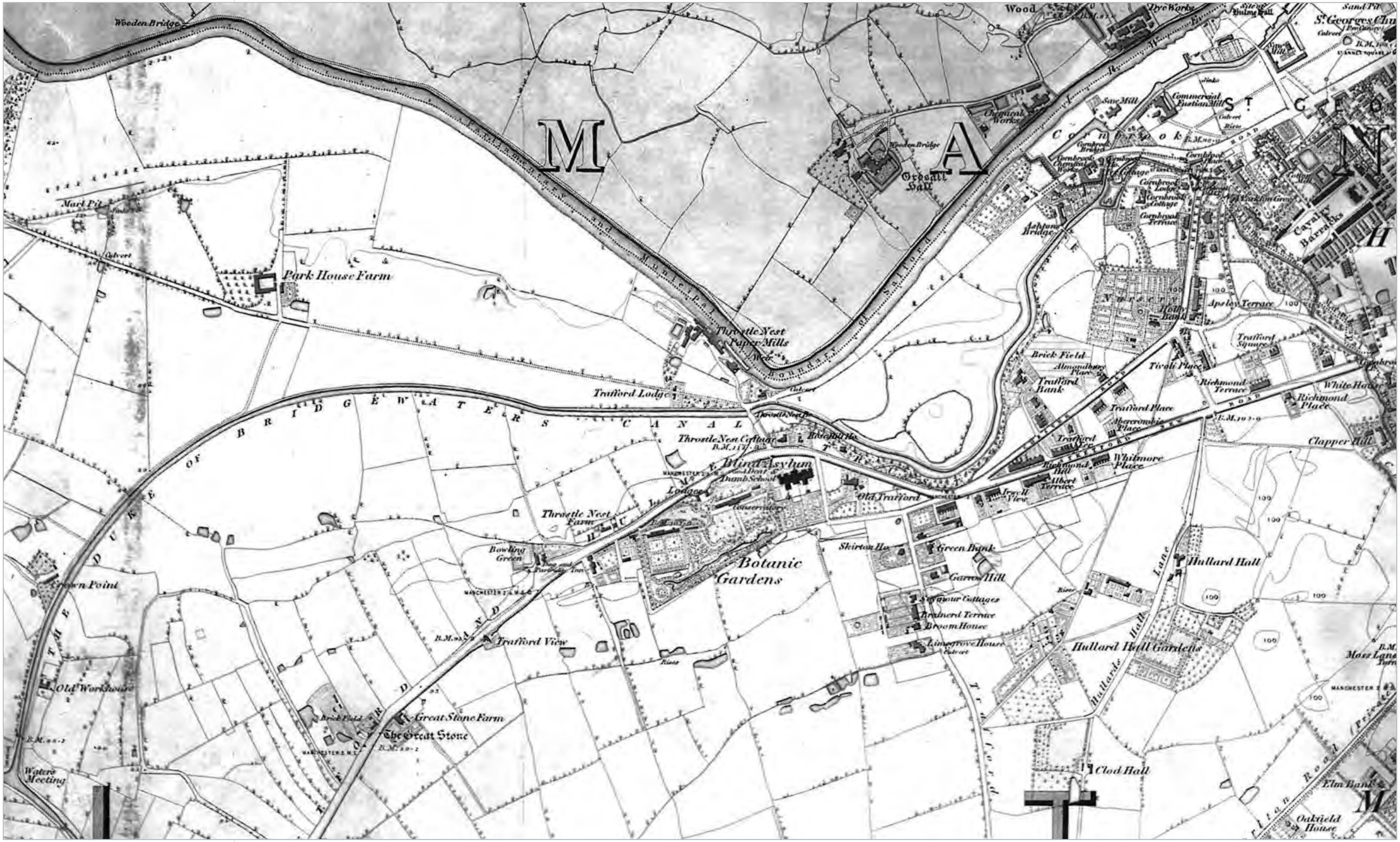
1 *See G. Iles, At home in the Zoo (London: W. H. Allen, 1960) Iles's uncle; J H Iles became the Managing Director of Belle Vue and this book describes the subsequent history of the zoo. Nicholls, Belle Vue for extensive detail on Belle Vue in the years after the Jennison family sold the business in 1925. Sir William Gentle promoted greyhound racing in the UK and Belle Vue opened the first track in 1926, see his obituary in Manchester Guardian, 3 September 1948.*

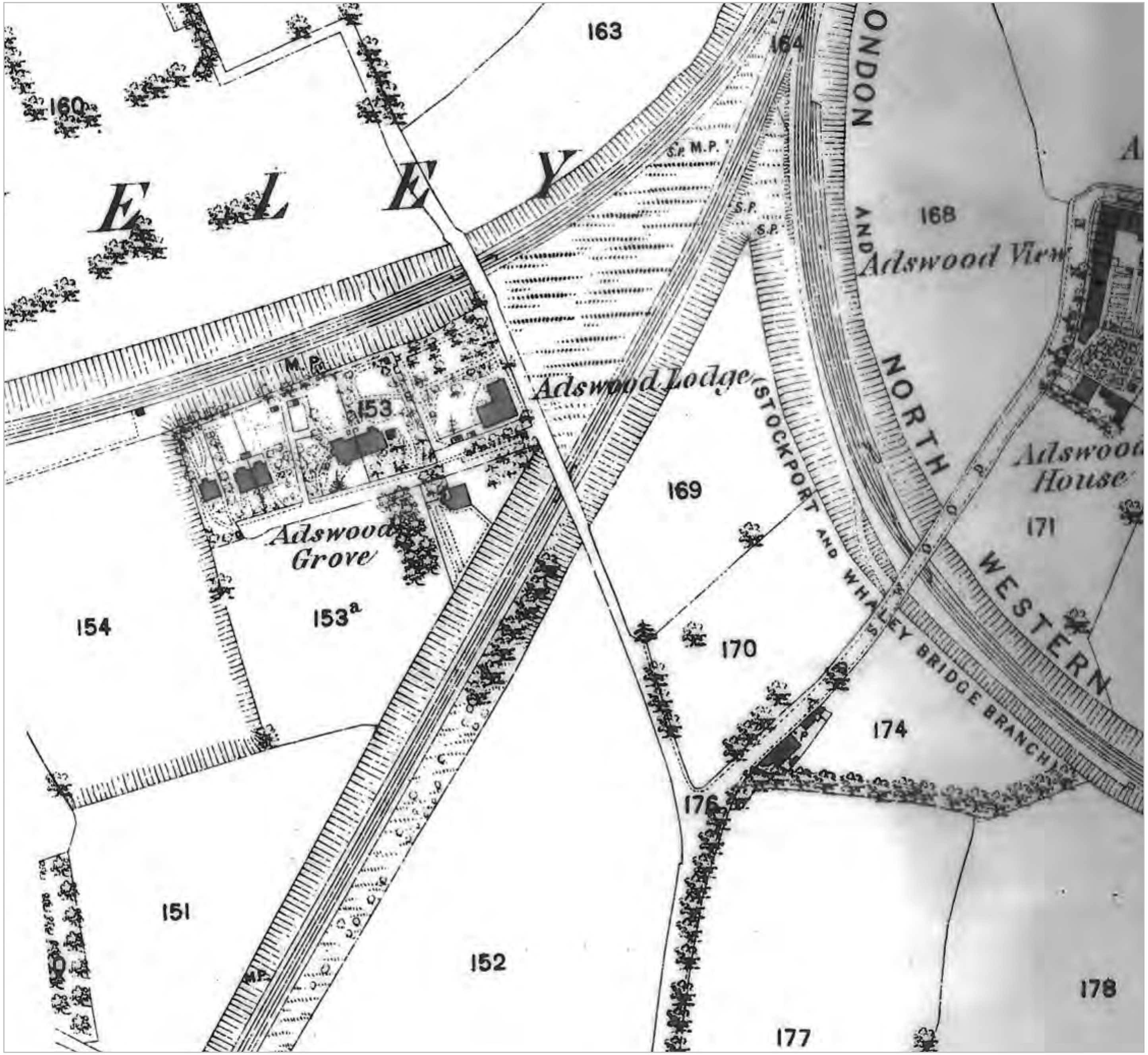
Appendices Contents

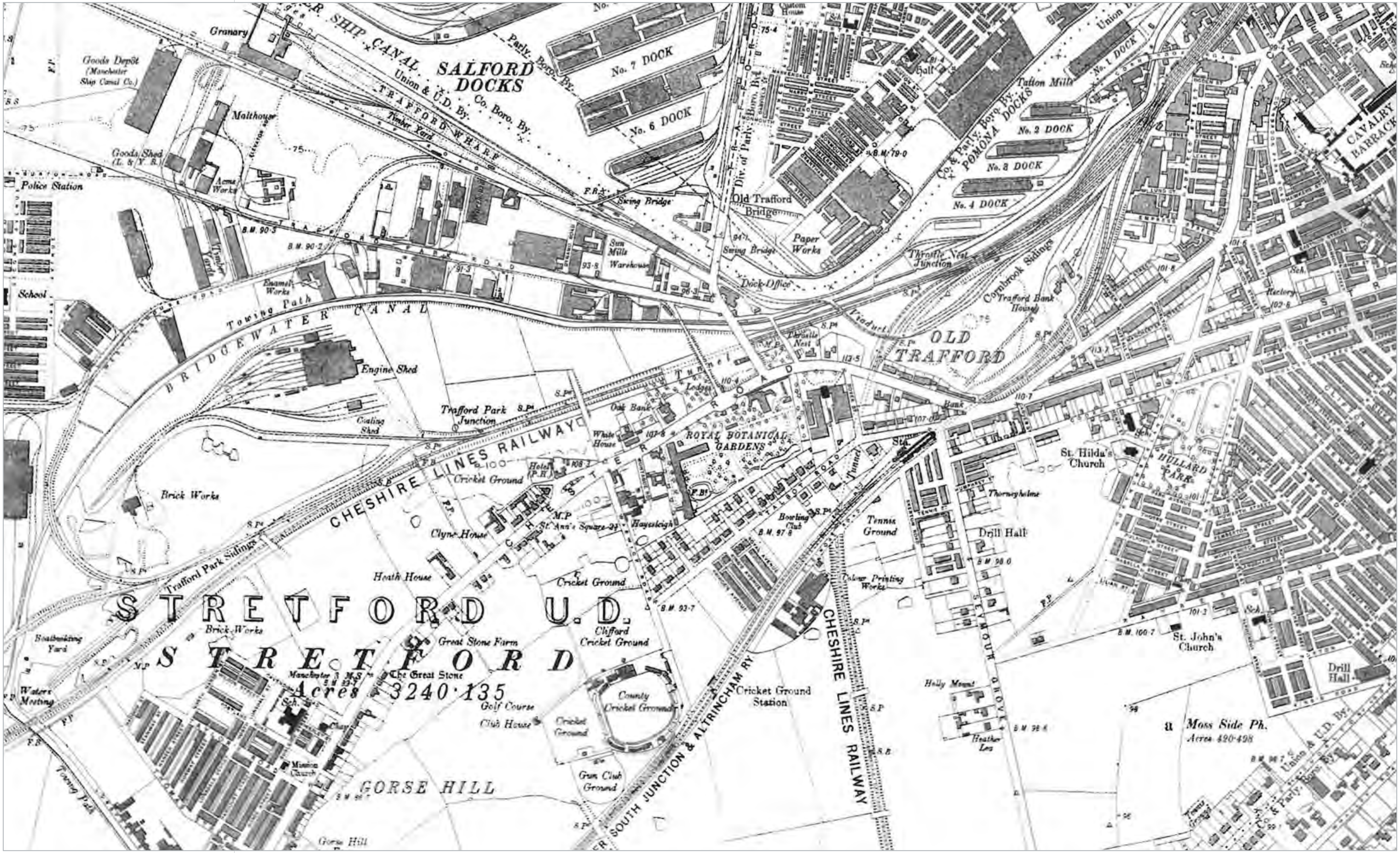

ARDWICK
ARDWICK
WARD
MANCHESTER AND SHEFFIELD RAILWAY
St. Silas Church
St. Barnabas Church
Steels Buildings
Providence Place
Ardwick Station
Burgess Villa
Ardwick Chemical Works
Gorton Brook Potteries
Gorton Brook Ho.
Bottom of Gorton
Bleach Green
Bankfield Cottage
Yew Tree Farm
Smiths Buildings
Poplar Grove
Gorton Field Cottage
Hope Farm
St. Thomas Church
Chapel Houses
Grove Place
Longsight Crescent
Rose Cottage
Hunters Cottage
Belle Vue
Belle Vue Gardens
Higher Gateknowl
Lower Gateknowl
Gorton
Carriage & Engine Depot
Longsight Terrace
Plymouth Grove
Grindlow Marsh Farm
Kirkmanshulme House
Newton Cottage
Sunny Brow
Knutsford Vale House
Knutsford Vale Print & Bleach Works
Whitley Cottage
Whitley Farm
MANCHESTER
NEWTON
NEWTON
(Detached)
Longsight
St. Johns Church
HULME
MOSS SIDE
(Detached)
VICTORIA PARK
Birch View
Birch Villa
Rushford Bridge
Rushford Farm
Race Course
Rusholme
Rusholme Park
Rusholme Ho.
Brookside House
York Ho.
Park Place
Birch Cottage
Shrubbery Bank
Cringleford Cotton Mill
MEDLOCK
ARDWICK
WEST
GORTON
DENTON

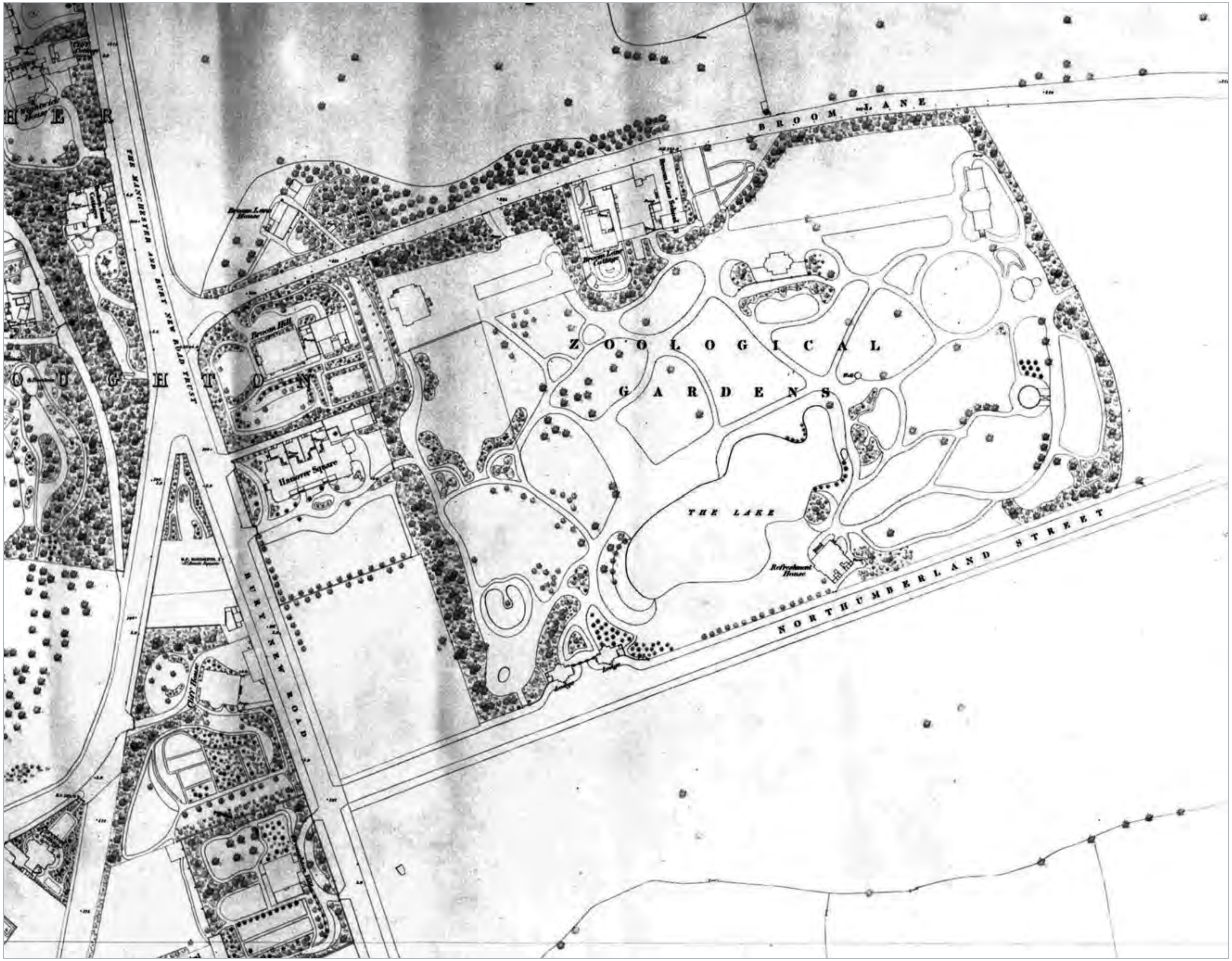

Brick Field
Coal & Mineral Depot
Goods Shed
Reservoirs
Church
Brick Wks
O P E N S H A W
O P E N S H A W
Engineering Works
Gorton Yard
Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Ry
Pottery
Brick Field
Chemical Works
Chemical Wks
West Gorton Mill
Foundry
Boiler Works
St. Benedict's Church
Engine Shed
Gorton Foundry
Hotel
Gorton Station
Engineering Wks
Rectory Church
Hall
Chap.
Iron Wks
Hope Farm
Field Farm
St. James's Church
Rectory
H. M. PRISON
(Disused)
Engine Shed
Brewery
Hunter's Cottage
Gasometer
BELLE VUE
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS
L. B. Offices
Chatsworth Mills
Belle Vue Station
G O R T O N
G O R T O N L. B. D.
Maiden's Bridge
Rider Brow
G O R T O N
Acres 1488.715
Nutsford Vale
Chemical Wks
Dye Works
Mount Farm
Iron Works
Club
Sta.
Sheffield & Midland Joint Ry

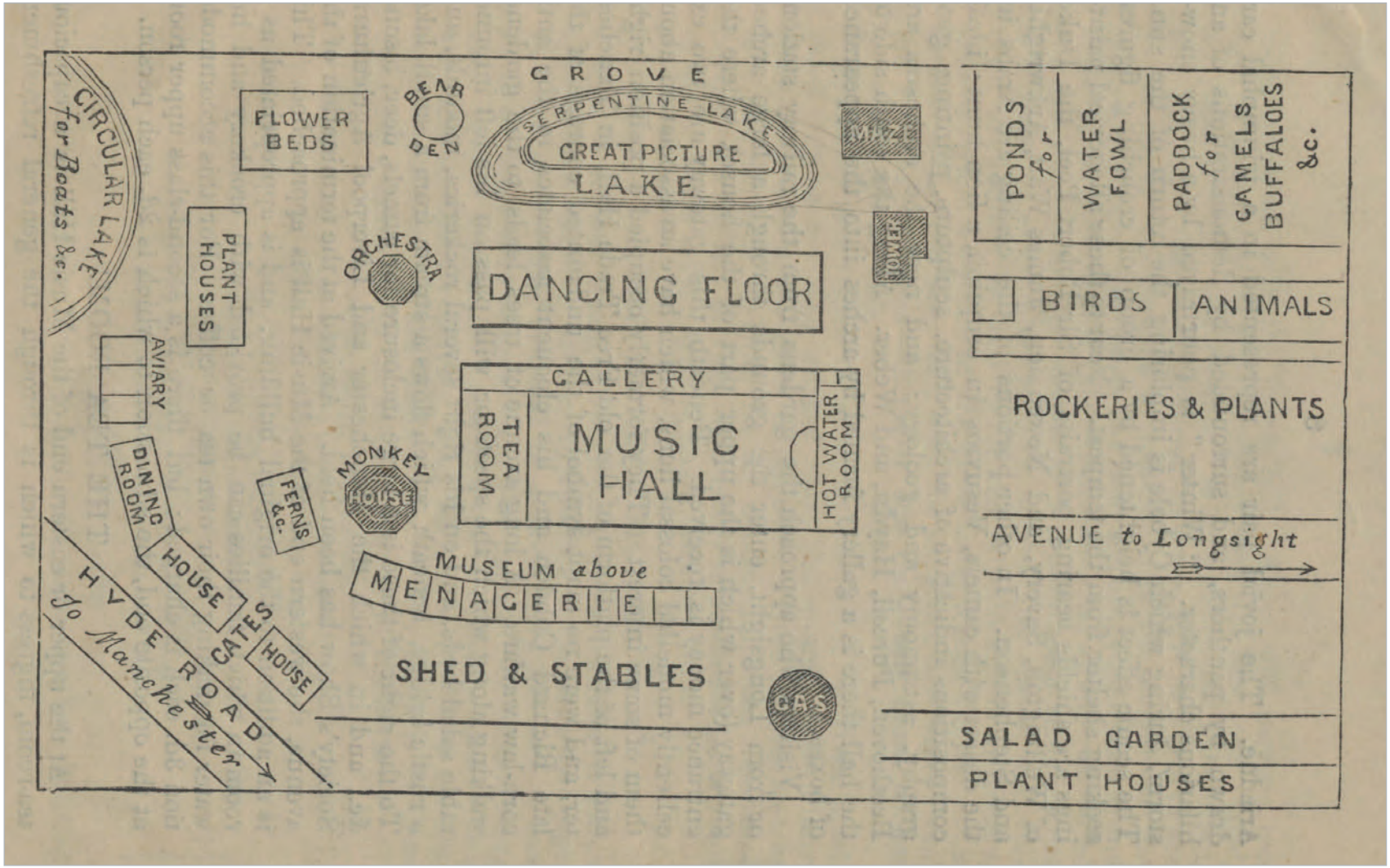

WEST GORTON
Baptist Chapel
Imperial Brewery
Iron Works
Bowling Green
Crown Iron Works
Conservative Club
Hope Farm
Ward Bdy.
HER MAJESTY'S PRISON
(Disused)
Running Track
Brewery
Hunter's Cottage
Gasometer
BELLE VUE
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS
Fountain
Longsight Entrance
Midland Hotel
Higher Catsknowl
Lower Catsknowl
Kirkmanshulme House
LONGSIGHT WARD
Bowling Green
Cricket Club
Cricket Ground
Nutsford Vale House
Nutsford Vale
Rope, Twine & Tarpaulin Works

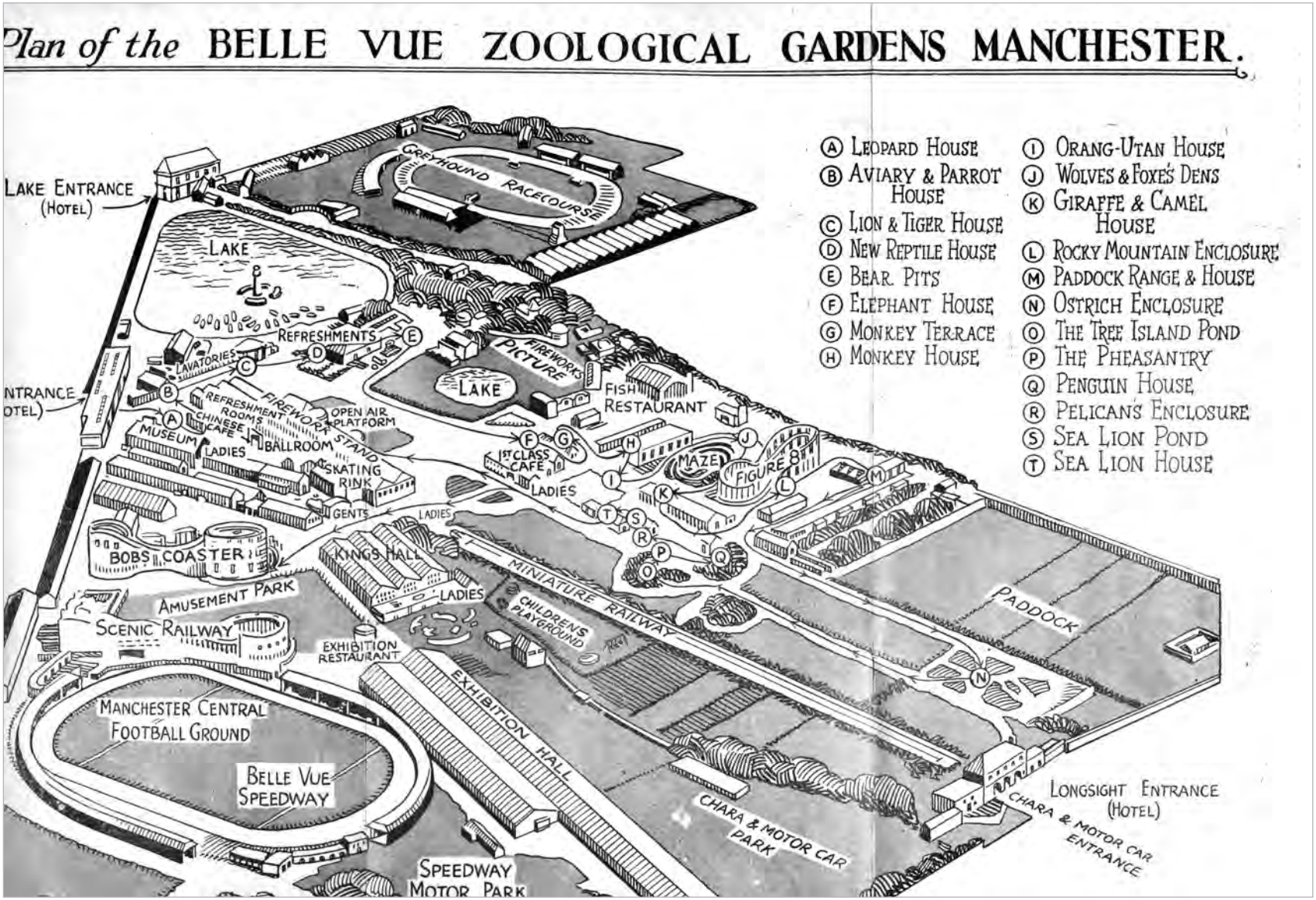

Wooden Bridge
Wood
Dye Works
St. Georges Chu
Marl Pit
Park House Farm
M
A
Ordsall Hall
Chemical Works
Commercial Fustian Mill
Saw Mill
Cornbrook
Cavalry Barracks
Throstle Nest Paper Mills
Weir
Boundary
Trafford Lodge
Brick Field
Trafford Bank
Tivoli Place
Apsley Terrace
Trafford Square
Richmond Terrace
Richmond Place
White Hall
Trafford Place
Clapper Hill
Whitmore Place
Albert Terrace
Duke of Bridgewaters Canal
Throstle Nest Cottage
Blind Asylum
Deaf & Dumb School
Old Trafford
Throstle Nest Farm
Bowling Green
Botanic Gardens
Skirton Ho
Green Bank
Garrow Hill
Hullard Hall
Crown Point
Trafford View
Seymour Cottages
Brainerd Terrace
Broom House
Limegrove House
Hullard Hall Gardens
Hullards Hall Lane
Old Workhouse
Great Stone Farm
The Great Stone
Brick Field
Waters Meeting
Clod Hall
Elm Bank
Oakfield House
Moss Lane
T

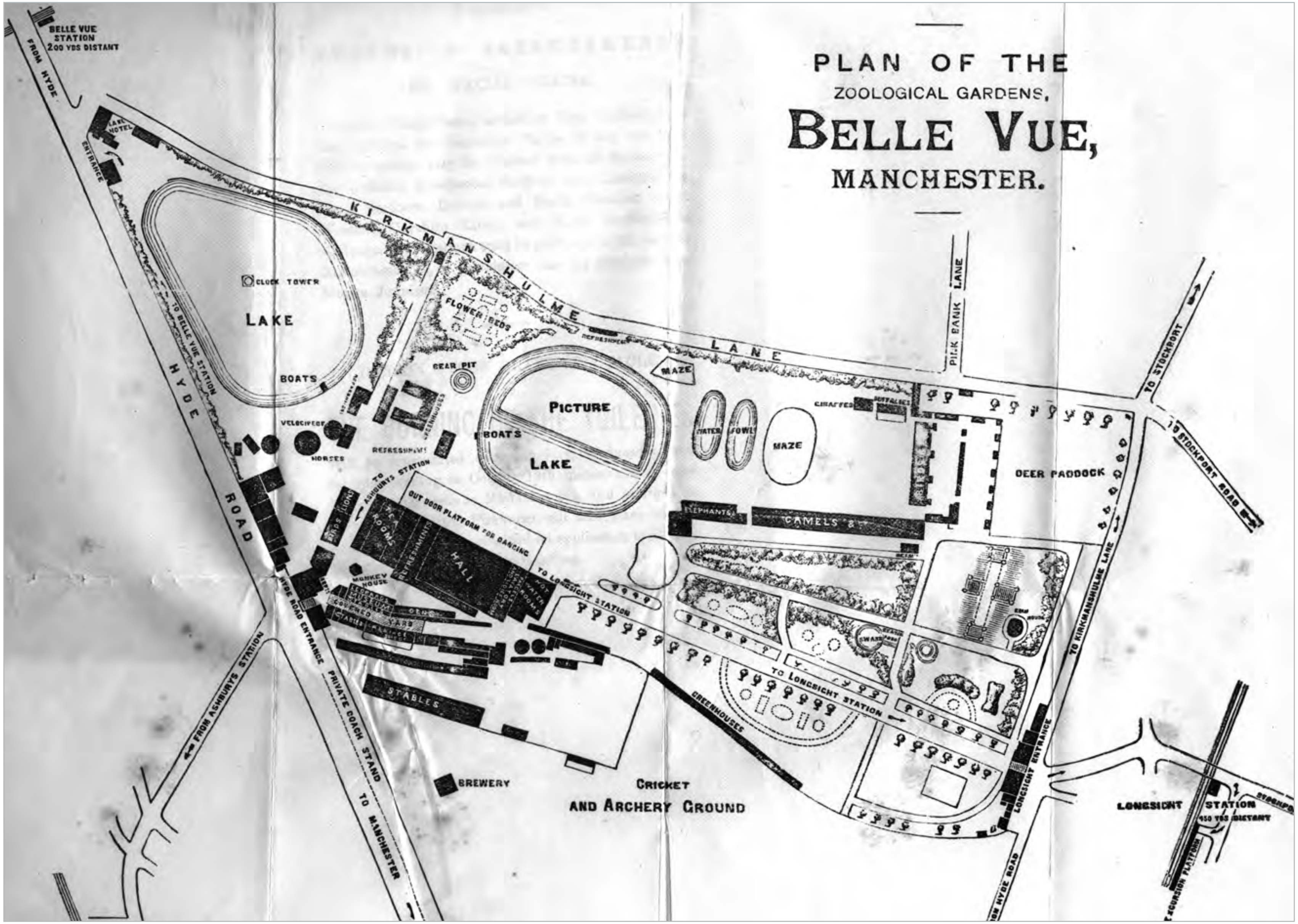

163
164
160
E L E Y
S.P. M.P.
S.P.
S.P.
LONDON
AND
168
Adswood View
NORTH
WESTERN
M.P.
153
Adswood Lodge
STOCKPORT AND WHALEY BRIDGE BRANCH
Adswood House
169
171
Adswood Grove
154
153a
170
174
176
151
152
M.P.
178
177

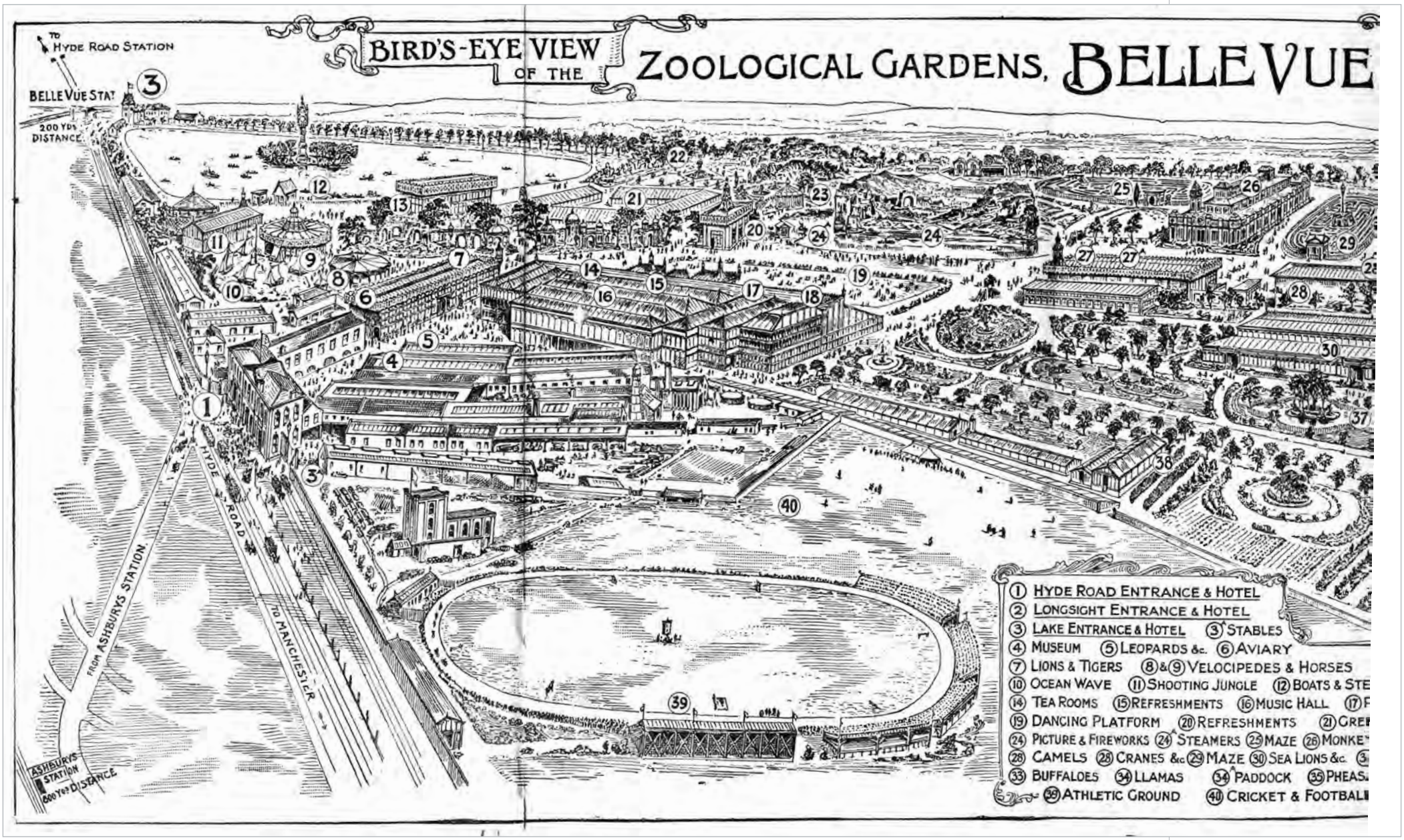

SALFORD DOCKS
No. 7 DOCK
No. 6 DOCK
No. 1 DOCK
No. 2 DOCK
No. 3 DOCK
No. 4 DOCK
POMONA DOCKS
Granary
Goods Depôt (Manchester Ship Canal Co.)
Malthouse
Goods Shed (L. & Y. R.)
Police Station
School
Acme Works
Trafford Wharf
Timber Yard
Swing Bridge
Old Trafford Bridge
Paper Works
Sun Mills
Warehouse
Dock Office
Throstle Nest Junction
Cornbrook Sidings
Trafford Bank House
Tatton Mills
CAVALRY BARRACKS
BRIDGEWATER CANAL
Towing Path
Enamel Works
Engine Shed
Coaling Shed
Trafford Park Junction
OLD TRAFFORD
Throstle Nest
Viaduct
Tunnel
Lodge
Oak Bank
White House
ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS
CHESHIRE LINES RAILWAY
Cricket Ground
Brick Works
Clyne House
St. Ann's Square
Hayesleigh
Bowling Club
Tennis Ground
St. Hilda's Church
HULLARD PARK
Thorneyholme
Drill Hall
Colour Printing Works
Trafford Park Sidings
Heath House
Cricket Ground
STRETFORD U.D.
STRETFORD
Acres 3240·135
Brick Works
Boatbuilding Yard
Waters Meeting
Great Stone Farm
The Great Stone
Clifford Cricket Ground
Golf Course
Club House
Cricket Ground
County Cricket Ground
Gun Club Ground
GORSE HILL
Gorse Hill
Mission Church
Towing Path
SOUTH JUNCTION & ALTRINCHAM RY
Cricket Ground Station
CHESHIRE LINES RAILWAY
Holly Mount
Heather Lea
St. John's Church
Moss Side Ph.
Acres 420·498
Drill Hall


BROOM LANE
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS
THE LAKE
Refreshment House
NORTHUMBERLAND STREET
BURY NEW ROAD
THE MANCHESTER AND BURY NEW ROAD TRUST
Hanover Square
Broom Hill


GROVE
CIRCULAR LAKE for Boats &c.
FLOWER BEDS
BEAR DEN
SERPENTINE LAKE
GREAT PICTURE LAKE
MAZE
PONDS for WATER FOWL
PADDOCK for CAMELS BUFFALOES &c.
PLANT HOUSES
ORCHESTRA
DANCING FLOOR
TOWER
BIRDS
ANIMALS
AVIARY
GALLERY
TEA ROOM
MUSIC HALL
HOT WATER ROOM
ROCKERIES & PLANTS
DINING ROOM
MONKEY HOUSE
FERNS &c.
AVENUE to Longsight
MUSEUM above
MENAGERIE
HOUSE
GATES
HOUSE
HYDE ROAD
To Manchester
SHED & STABLES
GAS
SALAD GARDEN
PLANT HOUSES

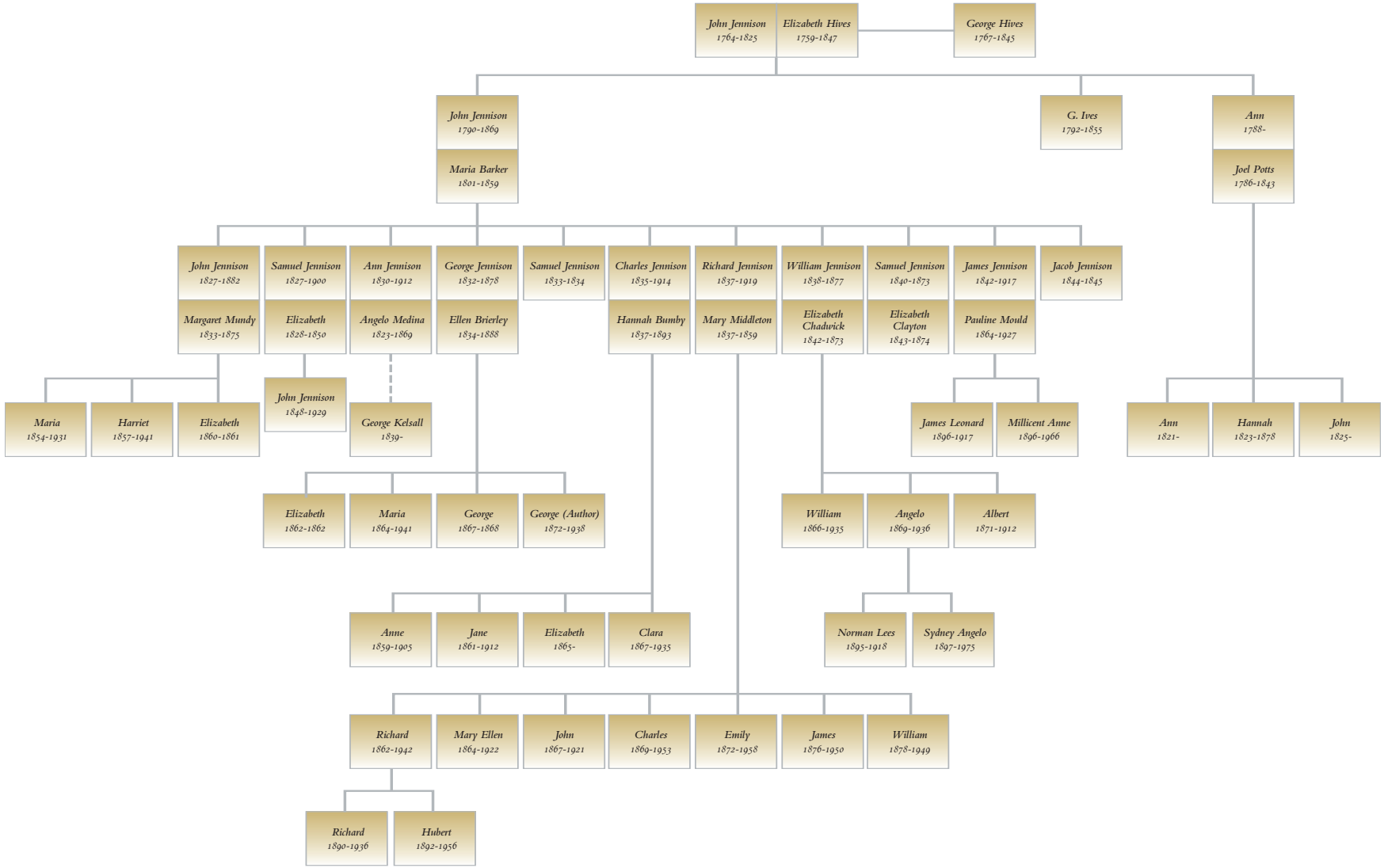

Plan of the BELLE VUE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS MANCHESTER.
LAKE ENTRANCE (HOTEL)
GREYHOUND RACECOURSE
LAKE
REFRESHMENTS
LAVATORIES
FIREWORKS PICTURE
LAKE
FISH RESTAURANT
NTRANCE OTEL)
REFRESHMENT ROOMS
CHINESE CAFE
FIREWORKS STAND
OPEN AIR PLATFORM
MUSEUM
LADIES
BALLROOM
SKATING RINK
1ST CLASS CAFE
LADIES
MAZE
FIGURE 8
GENTS
LADIES
BOBS COASTER
KINGS HALL
MINIATURE RAILWAY
LADIES
CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND
PADDOCK
AMUSEMENT PARK
SCENIC RAILWAY
EXHIBITION RESTAURANT
EXHIBITION HALL
MANCHESTER CENTRAL FOOTBALL GROUND
BELLE VUE SPEEDWAY
CHARA & MOTOR CAR PARK
LONGSIGHT ENTRANCE (HOTEL)
CHARA & MOTOR CAR ENTRANCE
SPEEDWAY MOTOR PARK
(A) LEOPARD HOUSE
(B) AVIARY & PARROT HOUSE
(C) LION & TIGER HOUSE
(D) NEW REPTILE HOUSE
(E) BEAR PITS
(F) ELEPHANT HOUSE
(G) MONKEY TERRACE
(H) MONKEY HOUSE
(I) ORANG-UTAN HOUSE
(J) WOLVES & FOXES DENS
(K) GIRAFFE & CAMEL HOUSE
(L) ROCKY MOUNTAIN ENCLOSURE
(M) PADDOCK RANGE & HOUSE
(N) OSTRICH ENCLOSURE
(O) THE TREE ISLAND POND
(P) THE PHEASANTRY
(Q) PENGUIN HOUSE
(R) PELICANS ENCLOSURE
(S) SEA LION POND
(T) SEA LION HOUSE


PLAN OF THE
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS,
BELLE VUE,
MANCHESTER.
BELLE VUE STATION 200 YDS DISTANT
FROM HYDE
KIRKMANSHULME LANE
CLOCK TOWER
LAKE
BOATS
HYDE ROAD
FLOWER BEDS
BEAR PIT
MAZE
PICTURE
BOATS
LAKE
MAZE
GIRAFFES
PINK BANK LANE
TO STOCKPORT
TO STOCKPORT ROAD
DEER PADDOCK
ELEPHANTS
CAMELS
OUT DOOR PLATFORM FOR DANCING
HALL
TO LONGSIGHT STATION
MONKEY HOUSE
HYDE ROAD ENTRANCE
STABLES
FROM ASHBURYS STATION
PRIVATE COACH STAND
TO MANCHESTER
BREWERY
CRICKET
AND ARCHERY GROUND
GREENHOUSES
TO KIRKMANSHULME LANE
LONGSIGHT ENTRANCE
LONGSIGHT
STATION


BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, BELLEVUE
TO HYDE ROAD STATION
BELLEVUE STAT
200 YDS DISTANCE
FROM ASHBURYS STATION
HYDE ROAD
TO MANCHESTER
ASHBURYS STATION
600 YDS DISTANCE
1 HYDE ROAD ENTRANCE & HOTEL
2 LONGSIGHT ENTRANCE & HOTEL
3 LAKE ENTRANCE & HOTEL
3 STABLES
4 MUSEUM
5 LEOPARDS &c.
6 AVIARY
7 LIONS & TIGERS
8 & 9 VELOCIPEDES & HORSES
10 OCEAN WAVE
11 SHOOTING JUNGLE
12 BOATS & STE
14 TEA ROOMS
15 REFRESHMENTS
16 MUSIC HALL
17 P
19 DANCING PLATFORM
20 REFRESHMENTS
21 GRE
24 PICTURE & FIREWORKS
24 STEAMERS
25 MAZE
26 MONKE
28 CAMELS
28 CRANES &c
29 MAZE
30 SEA LIONS &c.
33 BUFFALOES
34 LLAMAS
34 PADDOCK
35 PHEAS
39 ATHLETIC GROUND
40 CRICKET & FOOTBALL


ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, BELLEVUE MANCHESTER.
1 HYDE ROAD ENTRANCE & HOTEL
2 LONGSIGHT ENTRANCE & HOTEL
3 LAKE ENTRANCE & HOTEL 3 STABLES
4 MUSEUM 5 LEOPARDS &c. 6 AVIARY
7 LIONS & TIGERS 8 & 9 VELOCIPEDES & HORSES
10 OCEAN WAVE 11 SHOOTING JUNGLE 12 BOATS & STEAMERS 13 REFRESHMENTS
14 TEA ROOMS 15 REFRESHMENTS 16 MUSIC HALL 17 PARCELS 18 HOT WATER ROOM
19 DANCING PLATFORM 20 REFRESHMENTS 21 GREENHOUSES 22 FLOWER GARDEN 23 BEAR PITS
24 PICTURE & FIREWORKS 24 STEAMERS 25 MAZE 26 MONKEY HOUSE 27 ELEPHANTS &c. 27 KANGAROOS
28 CAMELS 28 CRANES &c 29 MAZE 30 SEA LIONS &c. 31 PENGUINS &c 31 EAGLES 32 ANTELOPES, ZEBRAS, &c
33 BUFFALOES 34 LLAMAS 34 PADDOCK 35 PHEASANTS 36 EMU HOUSE 37 SWANS 38 GREENHOUSES
39 ATHLETIC GROUND 40 CRICKET & FOOTBALL GROUND 41 TENNIS & CROQUET LAWN.
TO KIRKMANSHULME LANE
TO STOCKPORT
LONGSIGHT STATION
1,200 YDS. DISTANCE
EXCURSION
G. FALKNER & SONS, MANCHESTER

Jennison Family Tree



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Stockport Advertiser

The Jennison Archive/Bell Vue Archive at Chetham's Library

Salford Diocese Archive at St. Augustine Catholic Church

Manchester Cathedral Archives

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1 Belle Vue OS Map 6 inches to 1 mile. Surveyed 1845. Published 1848.

2 Belle Vue OS Map 6 inches to 1 mile. Surveyed 1888-89. Published 1894.

3 Belle Vue OS Map 25 inches to 1 mile. Surveyed 1889-90. Published 1893.

4 Pomona OS Map 6 inches to 1 mile. Surveyed 1845. Published 1848.

5 Stockport OS Map 25 inches to 1 mile. Surveyed 1872. Published 1875.

6 Pomona OS Map 6 inches to 1 mile. Published 1909.

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