

## Chester Zoo history project



### Challenge

We would like you to research the history of Chester Zoo.

George Mottershead founded the zoo in 1931.



What other information can you find out about the history of Chester Zoo and George Mottershead's family?

You can present your information in lots of different ways. You could make a poster, power point, booklet or fact file. Remember to

include photos and illustrations. We look forward to seeing your finished project!

To help you, here are some facts:

- Mottershead was born in [Sale Moor, Manchester](#). His father Albert Mottershead was a botanist and nurseryman. He had two brothers Stanley Saul and Charles Saul, a sister Norah and a half-brother Albert
- Mottershead was taken to [Belle Vue Zoological Gardens](#) in Manchester in 1903, as a childhood treat after the end of the [Second Boer War](#). He disliked seeing the animals confined in cages, and was determined to create a zoo without bars. As a youth, he experimented with aviaries, and tanks and runs for pet lizards and snakes. He left home aged 16 to become a fitness instructor
- After the outbreak of the First World War, George Mottershead joined the [South Lancashire Regiment](#). At least two of his brothers joined the [Manchester Regiment](#), and they all served on the Western Front in [France](#). While on leave, Mottershead married Elizabeth Atkinson at St Mary Magdalen Church, [Ashton-on-Mersey](#), in 1916. They had two daughters, Muriel (born 1917) and June (born 1926)
- With his parents and young family, Mottershead moved to [Shavington](#) in the 1920s, and operated a successful [market garden](#) and florist, later selling pet birds. He started to show his stock of birds and his private collection of animals to the paying public
- The Mottershead family moved to the Oakfield Estate in [Upton by Chester](#) in December 1930, paying £3,500 for a 9 acres (3.6 ha) site including [Oakfield Manor](#), built around 1885 for Benjamin Chafers Roberts and now a [Grade II listed building](#). They acquired two [Himalayan black bears](#) from a wildlife park in [Matlock](#), and added monkeys, chimpanzees, birds, and reptiles. The local residents were concerned about the potential dangers of escaped animals, but, after a public inquiry, the [Ministry of Health](#) granted permission to open the zoo in April 1931, and Chester Zoo opened to the public on 10 June 1931. Mottershead founded the "North of England Zoological Society" in 1934. The zoo continued through the Second World War, accepting its first pair of elephants from a circus in 1941