



BEDE'S

ZOO

OFFICIAL GUIDEBOOK

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I have always been obsessed by animals, and by zoos. I believe, unequivocally, with absolute certainty, that we are improved as people if we have contact with, and appreciation of, animals. It is, therefore, the culmination of a personal dream to see the development of a small zoo at Bede's.

Having a zoo at Bede's is, I think, the apotheosis of what this school is all about. Bede's is a school which thrives on doing things differently, on focusing on things that might not be obvious, and allowing them to flourish.

It is important, of course, to get the mainstream things right – we wouldn't be much of a school if our English Department was poor, or our cricket side didn't take things seriously – but it is equally important to allow the possibly esoteric, the apparently marginal, to flourish. Because, of course, what is marginal or esoteric to most will be central and fundamental to some.

For those who undertake Ceramics as a GCSE or A Level course, for example, their work with clay will possibly shape their future lives (and in a number

of cases it has done just that); women's football may not receive the attention which is given to that played by men, but our girls team have shown that their sport is every bit as important as that played by our boys. And the investment and attention we have given to the Legat School has allowed many, many girls and boys to flourish in ways that would not have been possible at schools where there was no such commitment to dance.

And our school zoo, in which a small but significant number of pupils study and a greater number come in order to benefit from being able to spend time with animals, is the embodiment of our belief that all pupils should be given the opportunity to find their niche, to find the areas in which they can excel, and feel at home. As a school, we are enormously lucky to have such a facility in our midst.

John Tuson
Academic Deputy Head

MAMMALS

We aim to keep a varied cross-section of mammal species, providing pupils with different husbandry challenges whilst also presenting an attractive and interesting collection.

KINKAJOU *Potos flavus*

This South and Central American relative of the Raccoon is well-adapted for a life in the trees: it is an excellent climber (thanks in large part to its prehensile tail) and eats a diet composed mainly of fruit (figs are a favourite). The Kinkajou is primarily active in the evening, and, in the wild, its time is split between eating, resting and moving from tree to tree.

Why do we keep Kinkajous? Because they are beautiful, interesting and charismatic animals, which provide us with various challenges – how best to keep an animal which is asleep for much of the day? How to stimulate such intelligent animals, keeping them active and engaged?

Kinkajous at Bede's Our three Kinkajous – one male, two females – came to us from a private collection, in 2014. They are quite old animals, and so it is unlikely they will breed; however, plentiful environmental enrichment means that they are kept constantly busy.

COMMON SQUIRREL MONKEY *Saimiri sciureus*

The large head of this small monkey is indicative of its intelligence: squirrel monkeys are inquisitive, adaptable animals, which has enabled them to flourish in a variety of environments. Small groups have established themselves in Florida – a long way from their natural home, in the Amazon Basin.

Why do we keep Squirrel Monkeys? Busy, intelligent, active – Squirrel Monkeys are excellent animals to be able to care for, and also to observe. Our animals present constant challenge to those who care for them, who must strive to make sure that the monkeys' life is stimulating and ever-changing.

Squirrel Monkeys at Bede's Our monkeys are an all-male group; they came to us in the summer of 2018, from Bristol Zoo, where they had been bred and where there was a need to reduce the size of the group maintained. They have settled in to their home in Sussex quite brilliantly and are constantly active and busy.

COMMON MARMOSET *Callithrix jacchus*

These small South American primates are vocal, active, social creatures. In the UK, they are still widely held as 'pets', often in woefully inadequate conditions.

Why do we keep Marmosets? For a number of reasons! Our pair were being kept by an incompetent owner: living in an old-fashioned bird cage, and highly obese, they were not in good shape when we received them from a primate sanctuary. Not only did they need a home, but we needed experience of keeping Marmosets, in the hope that in the future we will be able to maintain a rarer species.

Marmosets at Bede's Since arriving at Bede's in 2019, our pair of Marmosets have lost weight, become a great deal more active and look to be enjoying life.

RING-TAILED LEMUR *Lemur catta*

The Ring-tailed Lemur is possibly the best-known of all the lemur species. However, despite its success in captivity, it is struggling in its native Madagascar, where as few as 2,000 remain in the wild. Thus the need to manage a successful zoo population of this species is acute.

Why do we keep Ring-tailed Lemurs? Gentle, engaging, intelligent – it is no surprise that Ring-tailed Lemurs are such popular animals in zoos. Our two sisters no longer got on with the rest of their family group at The Wild Place Zoo, near Bristol; we were delighted to be able to offer them a home in Sussex.

Ring-tailed Lemurs at Bede's Our lemurs came to us in the summer of 2018. Now that they are established at Bede's, we hope to bring in further animals – either more Ring-tailed Lemurs, or possibly another Madagascan species.

BELANGER'S TREE SHREW *Tupaia belangeri*

Found throughout south-east Asia, as far north as southern China, the Belanger's Tree Shrew is part of a once-misunderstood family. They are not shrews, nor are they squirrels (the name of their family, Tupaiidae, comes from the Malay word for squirrel), nor are they the "primitive primates" they were once considered to be. And they don't really live in trees.

Why do we keep Tree Shrews? Tree Shrews are fascinating animals, but, lacking showy appeal and sometimes elusive, they are not maintained in many zoos. We are proud to be able to keep such an unusual species at Bede's.

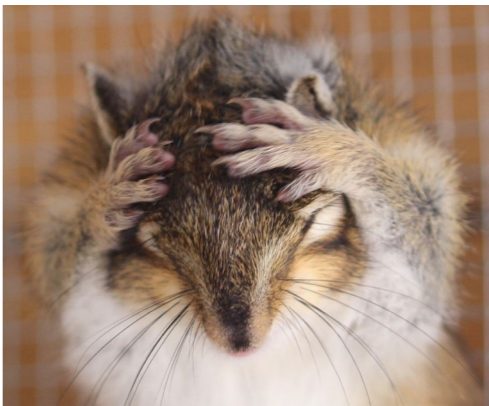
Tree Shrews at Bede's We inherited our original Tree Shrews – a mother and her daughter – from Drusillas Zoo, in 2011. Over the coming months, we intend to add some birds to the Tree Shrew enclosure.

EUROPEAN POLECAT *Mustela putorius*

This widespread animal is found through most of Europe, and as far as south as Morocco. In the wild, its favourite foods are frogs and toads – so, not surprisingly, it usually lives close to water. The Polecat is the ancestor of the domestic Ferret, although these wild animals would certainly not take kindly to be being put down a Yorkshireman's trousers.

Why do we keep Polecats? Our Polecats are part of reintroduction programme, with young animals bred at Bede's helping to boost the wild population of these attractive carnivores.

Polecats at Bede's We first received a pair of Polecats from Shepreth Wildlife Park in 2014; since then, we have bred 10 kits. Our current pair consists of a male who was born in 2016, and a female who was caught in a farmer's trap, before being rescued.



MAMMALS

We are also able to participate in several breeding programmes for endangered species, as well as providing a home for animals that have been bred in other British zoos.

SIBERIAN CHIPMUNK

Eutamias sibiricus

There are about 25 different species of Chipmunk; this is the only one found outside North America. Since the 1960s, released populations of these attractive ground squirrels have established themselves in mainland Europe – to the possible detriment of native species.

Why do we keep Chipmunks? Recent EU legislation outlaws the breeding of several possibly “invasive” species – including Chipmunks. The danger of non-native species escaping and establishing wild populations, at the expense of native species, means that only single-sex groups can be maintained in captivity. By looking after an all-female group, we are helping a zoo which now maintains only males.

Chipmunks at Bede’s Our four female Chipmunks arrived in 2016, from Battersea Park Zoo in London.

MEERKAT

Suricata suricatta

These south-west African mongooses are amongst the most well-known zoo animals – but this is a relatively-recent phenomenon: a hugely-successful BBC documentary, Meerkats United, was first broadcast in 1987, and was followed soon after by an increased focus on the species in a number of zoos – including nearby Drusillas. Subsequent appearances in The Lion King, and a succession of

insurance adverts, have cemented their place in the public’s affection.

Why do we keep Meerkats? Despite their near-ubiquity in British zoos, Meerkats are hugely popular. However, they do provide husbandry challenges – not least because of their complex social structures, which mean that some zoos are compelled to maintain several different groups. By taking on these animals, we are helping zoos which have bred Meerkats.

Meerkats at Bede’s Our Meerkats joined us from Tilgate Nature Centre, in Crawley, and Bristol Zoo. Getting groups of Meerkats to mix is exceptionally difficult – they are not naturally welcoming of strangers! – but we managed to combine our two groups.

AZARA’S AGOUTI

Dasyprocta azarae

Looking a bit like long-legged Guinea Pigs, Agoutis are found in South and Central America, where they patrol forest floors looking for food – and aiming to avoid becoming food for other, larger creatures.

Why do we keep Agoutis? Unobtrusive and shy, our Agoutis make perfect cage-mates for our group of Squirrel Monkeys.

Agoutis at Bede’s Our pair of Agoutis arrived in 2019, from other UK zoos; they have settled in well, but they will not be producing youngsters – the male has been vasectomised to prevent such an occurrence.

HAZEL DORMOUSE

Muscardinus avellanarius

The Hazel Dormouse is found throughout much of Europe, but its British population has fallen markedly in recent years. Hibernating through the winter, the Dormouse earns its reputation for laziness – although, come the spring, it is active and busy, albeit largely nocturnal.

Why do we keep Dormice? We are proud to participate in a nationwide breeding programme for the Hazel Dormouse, co-ordinated by Paignton Zoo. Animals bred at Bede’s have helped the wild population to grow, having been returned to the wild in the north of England.

Dormice at Bede’s We initially received Hazel Dormice in 2013; since then we have bred more than 30 youngsters, with 12 arriving in the spring of 2019. Staff and pupils at Bede’s have been actively involved in the building of nest boxes for wild Dormice, and the monitoring of nearby wild populations.

MONGOLIAN GERBIL

Meriones unguiculatus

These small Asian rodents are popular pets: all of the animals in Europe derive from animals brought to the UK from the USA in 1964.

Why do we keep Gerbils? Gerbils are easy to handle, and provide our pupils with the opportunity to learn to look after animals.

Gerbils at Bede’s Our Gerbils came to us in 2018.

DOMESTIC RABBIT

Oryctolagus cuniculus domesticus

DOMESTIC GUINEA PIG

Cavia porcellus

Two of the most popular domesticated species to be found in homes in the UK – kept mainly, now, for companionship rather than for food.

Why do we keep Rabbits and Guinea Pigs? Our pupils need to learn to handle animals; Rabbits and Guinea Pigs enable them to start to do so with confidence.

Rabbits and Guinea Pigs at Bede’s We have kept Rabbits and Guinea Pigs since the Bede’s Zoo was first established. Our ‘Belgian Hares’ are simply a breed of domestic rabbit – while they are certainly not hares, the breed was developed in Belgium, in the 1700s.



We have developed a small collection of African birds, most of which are to be seen in our large aviary, completed in 2018. Our aim is to provide a variety of birds with which our pupils can work, and which provide an attractive display within the Bede's Zoo.

AFRICAN GREY HORNBILL
Lophoceros nasutus

This is one of the smaller hornbill species; found though much of sub-Saharan Africa, it breeds in typical hornbill fashion - the female is sealed up in her nest, and, while raising her chicks, is dependent on her mate bringing her food.

Hornbills at Bede's Since coming to Bede's in 2014, our Grey Hornbills have produced 12 chicks, most recently in the Spring of 2019. Both the male – whose beak is black – and the female (who has red markings on her beak) will happily take food from the hand, or catch it if it is thrown into the air.

VIOLET TURACO
Musophaga violacea

There are 23 species of turaco – relatives of the cuckoo, found throughout sub-Saharan Africa; 15 of these species can currently be seen in the zoos of the UK. They are not especially strong fliers, but they are adept at making their way through thick forest foliage. Violet Turacos are native to West Africa,

Turacos at Bede's Our first pair of Violet Turacos came to us in 2014; they reared their first chick in 2018. Our current female came to us in the Spring of 2019, from Birdland, in Gloucestershire.

BLACKSMITH PLOVER
Vanellus armatus

With a call that sounds like a blacksmith's hammering, this attractive bird is a familiar sight through East and Southern Africa; it seeks water, but can survive in relatively dry areas.

Plovers at Bede's Our plovers were bred in the English Midlands; they came to Sussex in 2018, to take up residence in our new aviary. They have produced several clutches of eggs, but despite the best efforts of our male none have yet been fertile.

LEMON DOVE
Columba larvata

This attractive dove is widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, but is rarely seen in captivity; there are currently only six European zoos keeping the species (of which three are in Russia). Nonetheless, its

beauty and its calm disposition make it a relatively popular species for private breeders. Lemon Doves are common in the region of South Africa where Bede's pupils have been involved in rhino conversation projects in recent years.

Doves at Bede's Our first dove, a male, came to us in the Spring of 2018, and was soon joined by two females. Our first chicks hatched in 2018.

WHITE-HEADED BARBET
Lybius leucocephalus

This charismatic species, related to woodpeckers and toucans, is recognisable through the bristles at the base of its beak. Lively, pugnacious and active, they are a fantastic species to maintain within the school zoo.

Barbets at Bede's This is the most unusual species at Bede's: there are none in any European zoos, and just a few held by private breeders (ours came from a private breeder, in 2019). We currently hold two males.

NORTHERN WHITE-FACED OWL
Ptilopsis leucotis

Found in a band spreading across Africa, from Senegal to Kenya, this owl mainly hunts small mammals – mice, rats and so on – but also eats a significant number of invertebrates, including beetles, spiders and scorpions.

Owls at Bede's Our pair of owls came to us in 2011, from a private keeper in Yorkshire. We are currently training them to fly to a gloved hand.



REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS AND INVERTEBRATES

Amphibians and – especially – reptiles have become massively popular as pets over the past 20 years. The Federation of British Herpetologists claims that there are now more reptiles kept in UK homes than there are dogs. Despite this, many vets are less familiar with reptiles than with dogs or cats, and the care given to reptiles in pet shops is often inadequate.

Our collection consists mainly of species that are frequently seen in the pet trade, with a number of 'rescue' animals amongst them, allowing our pupils to develop a familiarity with these important animals.

REPTILES

Leopard Gecko *Eublepharis macularius*

Wonder Gecko *Teratoscincus scincus*

Corn Snake *Pantherophis guttatus*

We have bred a number of these snakes – probably the most popularly-kept snake in Britain.

Royal Python *Python regius*

Our Royal Pythons were previously maintained by a private keeper who was unable to provide them with the correct level of care; we have brought them back to health.

Inland Bearded Dragon *Pogona vitticeps*

Docile and charismatic, Bearded Dragons are excellent reptiles to handle.

Hermann's Tortoise *Testudo hermanni*

Our animals were rehoused at Bede's having previously been kept as pets.

Common Musk Turtle *Sternotherus odoratus*

Our three Musk Turtles belonged to our much-loved late colleague Guy Rudnick. We are proud to look after them on his behalf.

Razor Backed Musk Turtle *Sternotherus carinatus*

Common Map Turtle *Graptemys geographica*.

AMPHIBIANS

Golden Tree Frog *Polypedates leucomystax*

White's Tree Frog *Litoria caerulea*

Chinese Fire Bellied Newt *Cynops orientalis*.

INVERTEBRATES

Madagascar Hissing Cockroach

Gromphadorhina portentosa

MacLeay's Spectre Stick Insect

Extatosoma tiaratum

New Guinea Giant Spiny Stick Insect

Eurycantha calcarata

Chilean Rose Tarantula *Grammostola rosea*

Pink Tipped Giant African Land Snail

Archachatina marginata

Banded Coral Shrimp *Stenopus hispidus*

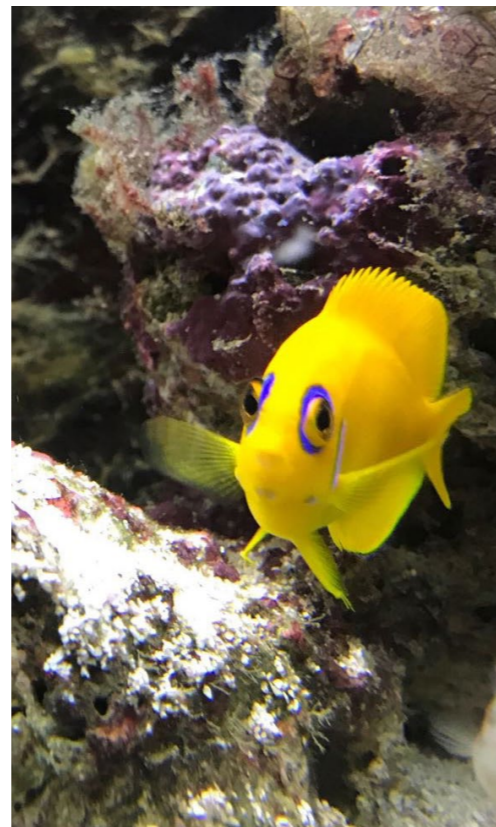
Known as the "Boxing Shrimp" because of the large pinchers on their third set of legs. These pinchers are often held erect and give the Banded Coral Shrimp the appearance of a boxer ready to fight. They are very active members of our reef community tanks.

Dwarf Hermit Crab *Paguristes cadenati*

These active scavengers can consume large amounts of animal waste matter and algae helping to keep our marine tanks clean.

Dahlia Anemone *Urctina felina*





Our collection of fish consists of species widely available to private aquarists – fish-keeping is a hugely popular hobby, and thus it is important for our pupils to develop an understanding of aquarium work. Unfortunately, fish-keeping no longer features on the syllabus for the Animal Management course our pupils follow, so it is likely that we will reduce our collection in the future.



Black Molly *Poecilia sphenops*

Although they are not true livebearers - they do not have a placental link to their offspring - they do allow the embryos to develop inside the female's body cavity, giving the fry a bit of a head start. They also practise sequential hermaphroditism - the ability to transform from a female into a male if population pressures warrant it.

Spotted Dora *Agamyxis pectinifrons*

Bronze Corydoras Catfish *Corydoras aeneus*
Corydoras catfish, originally from South America, are easy-going fish who get along well in community aquariums.

Common Plecostomus *Hypostomus plecostomus*

One of the common catfish species that we hold but also one of the most interesting - it has developed a rasping sucker by fusing its lower jaw. The common plec is often kept in fish tanks to eat algae but aquarists are sometimes surprised by the size they can attain.

Bristle-nosed Catfish *Ancistrus temmincki*

Synodont Catfish *Synodontis multipunctatus*
One of our more carnivorous catfish.

Neon Tetra *Paracheirodon innesi* -

One of the commonest aquarium fish, it has been bred in the UK since the 1940s. One of several species of Amazonian tetras that we keep.

Silver Tipped Tetra *Hasemania nana*

Glowlight Tetra *Hemigrammus erythrozonus*

Lemon Tetra *Hyphessobrycon pulchripinnis*

Phantom Tetra *Hyphessobrycon megalopterus*

Pakistani Loach *Botia almorhae*

Harlequin Rasbora *Trigonostigma heteromorpha*

Scissor tail *Rasbora Rasbora trilineata*

Blue Striped Mbuna *Labeotropheus fuelleborni*

One of more than a thousand different species of Mbuna that are endemic to Lake Malawi. They have developed highly-defined feeding niches and are so localised to their habitat that one species may only be found in the shallows surrounding an island the size of a small lawn.

Rainbow Kribensis *Pelvicachromis pulcher* -

Native to southern Nigeria and to coastal areas of Cameroon, this species of cichlid inhabits both slow and fast-moving water, though it is only found where patches of dense vegetation are available. Our pair have bred regularly and are excellent parents.

Lemon Peel Fish *Centropomus flavissima*

Yellow Tailed Blue Damselfish *Chrysiptera parasema*

Common Clownfish *Amphiprion ocellaris*

One of the most familiar of sea fish, due to their appearance in the film Finding Nemo; there are 30 different species of Clownfish.

BEHAVIOURAL ENRICHMENT

Lower Sixth student Georgie Cloke explores the ways in which we enrich the lives of the animals within the school zoo.

An essential element within our zoo is the daily enrichment to our animals. But what is enrichment? What is its purpose within our zoo? Our zoo manager, Helen Poyser, explains: "Enrichment is provided for the animals in order to ensure they have the stimulus needed for physical and psychological well-being". Such stimulus plays a vital role in maintaining peak physical and mental health for all our species; it requires them to think and puzzle, the longer the better - no animal in the wild would ever have its food in a metal bowl. We endeavour to give our animals the most natural life possible, and sometimes this can mean being somewhat inventive with our feeding strategies.

Here at Bede's we care for 70 species, so catering for their individual enrichment needs can be quite a challenge. Each animal has different requirements, as a snake is not going to need the same enrichment as a Squirrel Monkey. However, this mammoth task is undertaken by Ms Poyser and a small army of enthusiastic students, and this ensures every individual animal receives stimulation and interest every single day.

Our arboreal species - Lemurs, Squirrel Monkeys, Kinkajous and Common Marmosets - all require enrichment that is going to need them to climb and challenge them physically. Our Kinkajous have strong prehensile tails; they receive their food hanging on thick ropes which asks them to hang upside down. This is how they would access fruit on trees in the wild, and so by doing this we have achieved the

replication of natural feeding behaviours. Every snake we have has the option to climb within their enclosures: although they might not need as much mental stimulation, they can still benefit from physical. Another large element of our enrichment is the scatter feeding technique. Scattering live food (Invertebrates such as mealworms) allows all aspects of a habitat to be utilised and the animal is required to scout, chase and dig for its food. The Meerkats have a dig box: to access the crickets they must make use of their long front claws and strong front legs. We use this technique for many of our species including all of our African Birds.

Enrichment does not only have to be centred on food; it can also impact the ways in which the enclosure is structured and the items within the habitat. This can involve live plants to provide shade and climbing material, or housing compatible species together, as shown in our African aviary. A less known form of enrichment is olfactory: applying new scents, whether this be an herb or a perfume, around an enclosure can provide an animal, or a group of animals with a new puzzle. This is a particular favourite with our troupe of Squirrel Monkeys, who love to get involved in anything new.

Enrichment is an absolute must for every animal in the zoo's care - without it we wouldn't be able to maintain such healthy and happy animals.



THE HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL ZOO

The genesis of the Bede's Zoo can be traced back to 2008 when Paul Juniper first came to work in Upper Dicker. As soon as he was ensconced in the school, he started to develop a small collection of animals in his lab: a snake or two, some frogs, a very nice Blue-tongued Skink - all followed, and the idea of doing this properly began to germinate.

The school's Academic Deputy Head, John Tuson, was convinced of the value that a collection of living animals could bring to Bede's – and as someone who had previously worked in a zoo himself, and who freely admits to being obsessed with zoos and with animals, he was determined to help to develop such a collection in Upper Dicker.

In 2011, Mr Juniper, and his animals, migrated across the school campus, to their current location: what was once a large storage shed for sports equipment was converted to a classroom, an animal kitchen, and two animal rooms. Three outdoor enclosures – suitable for small carnivores – were included, as well as the current Tree Shrew enclosure.

Over the coming years, further outdoor enclosures were added, as the collection grew. The Meerkat enclosure was constructed, as was the rabbit run (utilising anti-seagull netting). David Hartley, a retired Headmaster from Yorkshire who kept a large private collection of different species, donated two mongooses, some fruit bats and a skunk. The current Kinkajou enclosure was created, initially for Macaws, then, later for our African birds (who in 2018 moved into a more spacious aviary). A run of smaller, lightweight, wooden enclosures was built to house Dormice, Red Squirrels, and various birds.

As the school zoo became fully established, we made the decision to expand its area, and to invest in better facilities. In the autumn of 2017, work began on what had previously been a storage yard, to the west of the existing zoo area. The site was cleared,

with two substantial houses built by the school's own estates team. Three new external enclosures were developed alongside these houses. A brick pathway and a perimeter fence were installed, while the zoo's old, wooden enclosures were replaced by newly-built exhibits for birds, Hazel Dormice and Siberian Chipmunks.

All of this work was undertaken by the school's own extraordinary team of craftsmen, particularly Phil Pepper, Andy Rideout and the indefatigable Rupert Caine. The quality of the facilities we have is a testament to their skill, and also to their imagination and ability to find solutions to the problems that such a project inevitably presents.

Meanwhile, in order to be able to keep primates, the school applied for and received approval from DEFRA; we also needed to be awarded a Dangerous Wild Animals Act licence – although the animals which trigger such a requirement are our lemurs, which might not be seen as the most dangerous animals we hold. We have also registered our collection on ZIMS, a database of captive animals covering all of the world's professionally-run zoos.

The new facility was officially opened in September 2018, by Dr Christoph Schwitzer, the Chief Zoological Officer of Bristol Zoo. Bede's now has a truly unique facility: a zoo which is a teaching resource, which enables pupils to learn and to pursue their interests, and which allows pupils to participate in national and international programmes for the benefit of wildlife.



WHY HAVE A ZOO IN A SCHOOL?

It is unlikely that anyone looking at Bede's would question why we have a Mathematics Department. Or a Dining Hall. Or a string of Football pitches. We're a school, and schools tend to have such things.



It might not be so immediately obvious, however, why we have a small zoo within the school grounds. A small zoo that, at the last count, contained about 70 species of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish and invertebrates.

The answer is several-fold, and the benefits the zoo brings to us, tangible and intangible, are many.

Most obviously, the collection we hold in the zoo forms the cornerstone on which is built the Sixth Form BTEC Animal Management course. This course provides a superb opportunity for those pupils who wish to work with animals, wild or domestic, or who wish to have something unusual to sit alongside their scientific qualifications. Since we started offering the course, in 2013, we have seen 53 pupils complete their BTEC qualification, with around 90% doing so at distinction level. Pupils who have undertaken the course have moved on to study veterinary medicine, veterinary nursing, zoology, conservation – and many other courses not directly connected with animals. Several of our alumni have gone on to work in zoos and aquaria around Great Britain, and further afield – we recently heard that one former pupil has started working at Singapore Zoo.

The collection also provides the location for one of the school's most popular activities: the Zoological Society. Each week, large numbers of pupils are able to spend their afternoons feeding the Grey Hornbills, cleaning out the Royal Pythons' vivarium, or rearranging the branching in the home of the Siberian Chipmunks. And as part of their "Twenty-First Studies" curriculum, all of our First Year pupils undertake a course based in the school zoo, exploring issues faced by the wildlife of the world.

The zoo also enables us to look beyond our own school campus. The facility allows the school to participate in a number of national breeding programmes of endangered species: European Polecats, bred in Upper Dicker, have been released into the wild, in the Brecon Beacons; offspring from our Hazel Dormice have, similarly, returned to the wild to help replenish depleted natural populations. Meanwhile, pupils and staff from the school are involved with the breeding and tracking of wild Dormice, a small population of which is struggling to maintain a foothold in Sussex.

The Bede's Zoo is not, primarily, a facility for sightseers: it is a working part of a school rather than a visitor attraction. However, each month we welcome many groups to the school zoo – from local schools, disadvantaged children, from our own Prep School, or anyone who is interested in the work we are doing.

Perhaps above all of this, however, we feel that a connection with animals is enriching, calming, fulfilling. Feeding mealworms to a Bearded Dragon, gaining the trust of a Kinkajou, or simply appreciating the beauty of our pair of Violet Turacos - resplendent African forest birds - brings something to the lives of the young people who are privileged to be able to enjoy these opportunities.

And, for all of these reasons, we are delighted that, alongside the school's Media Studies Studio, its Squash Courts and Swimming Pool, its boarding houses and Art School and Cricket Pavilion, there is also a small collection of animals at Bede's which have come to us from all around the world.



Paul Juniper came to work at Bede's, as a Science teacher, in 2008. His background was one which combined education and zoos: his father had been a keeper at London Zoo, and before training as a teacher, Paul had spent a decade working as a zoo keeper, at a variety of British collections, including Southport Zoo, in Lancashire, Chester Zoo, and Woburn Safari Park, in Bedfordshire. He had worked with Asian Elephants, with Binturongs (shaggy-haired, Labrador-sized, arboreal beasts, with a fantastic smell) and with a plethora of primates. He is the Head of Boarding at Bede's.

John Tuson has been at Bede's since 1993, and is one of the school's Deputy Heads. He teaches English, but has significant experience of animals and zoos: between his first and second spells at Bede's, he worked at Newquay Zoo, in Cornwall, and writes frequently for several zoo journals.

Peter Jones has taught Science and Animal Management at Bede's since 2008. He has close links to Africa, having lived in Zambia, Algeria and Malawi, where he worked as a Science teacher and Housemaster in an international school for seven years, before moving to Italy to teach science in Milan for a year. His particular interest is in aquaculture and he has a Masters in Fisheries Biology; his thesis was on the fish of Lake Malawi. He is responsible for the zoo's fish collection. He is the Housemaster of Stud House.

Helen Poyser joined Bede's in 2018, as manager of the school's zoo. She has a degree in Sports Science, but fell into animal care at Gauntlet Birds of Prey Centre in Cheshire before progressing onto London Zoo and Colchester Zoo. With a decade of animal care under her belt she has worked with a wide range of species from rats to camels, but her main focus has been in free flight and mixed taxa demonstrations - meaning she has a particular specialism in animal training. Since arriving at Bede's, she has revolutionised the feeding regime of our various animals, exploring both what the animals eat, and how that food is presented to them. She has also proved to be a brilliant instructor of students!.

STAFF AT THE BEDE'S ZOO



THE FUTURE

With the extensive development of our various animal enclosures, the arrival of a number of new species, and the appointment of the zoo's first manager, 2018 was a very busy year for the Bede's Zoo. But nothing stands still, and we continue to look at ways in which we can improve the school zoo, and the work we undertake here.

The numbers of students studying the Sixth Form BTEC course continue to rise; we are now exploring the possibility of offering a GCSE-equivalent course, for pupils in Years 10 and 11, and hope to be able to launch this in 2020.

Our Dormouse breeding project has been extraordinarily successful – we have produced as many youngsters as any other 'zoo' in the UK. However, the Dormice are not especially visible – they are strictly nocturnal – so we are hoping to move them to an 'off-show' breeding centre, allowing us to develop their enclosure for other species.

Our biggest future project will be the development of our "Herptile Room" (home to our fish, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates). We are looking to create a more attractive space in which our pupils can hone their animal husbandry skills.

Meanwhile, while many of our animals are held in non-breeding groups, we look to breed a number – our Plovers are proving the most difficult nut to crack here! And new species will be joining the collection as well.

So: some consolation, but also recognition that we must be continuously looking for improvements!



THANKS TO

To **Pete Goodyer**, Bede's Headmaster, who believed in the Bede's Zoo, and backed it, when less imaginative headmasters would not have done so.

To **Rupert Caine, Phil Pepper, Phil McCullagh, Andy Rideout and Steve Hadland**... whose skill as builders and craftsmen has allowed us to develop a facility of such great quality.

To **Noj Northway**, the Bursar at Bede's, who has supported the development of the Bede's Zoo, particularly during its recent expansion.

To **Rick Davies**, of Willerby Landscapes, who has generously supplied us with many of the plants which can be seen in the Bede's Zoo.

To the **Bede's staff**, past and present, who have contributed to the work of the Bede's Zoo, including Guy Rudnick (former Head of Psychology), Nancy Morton-Freeman (Head of Biology), Dr Andrew Carroll (teacher of mathematics), and Dr Sam Earle (former teacher of Science).

To **animal-keeping colleagues** across the country who have been supportive of our work, including, in particular, staff at Drusillas, Chessington World of Adventures, Battersea Park Zoo, Tilgate Nature Centre, and Bristol Zoo. To our vets, Peter Stotesbury, of the Highcroft Veterinary Group, and Kirsty Turrell. And to Alan Ashby (designaka@hotmail.com) who has produced the information signs which are to be seen within the zoo.

And to the **pupils of Bede's** who have embraced and enjoyed the zoo in their midst...

BACKGROUND TO THE SCHOOL

Bede's is a large independent school, with around 750 pupils aged from 13 to 18. As one of the youngest major independent schools in the UK (it was founded as recently as 1979) it has never been restricted by its history, and has always been able to approach its curriculum with imagination. The development of the school zoo, to support the BTEC Animal management course, is but one example of this approach. As well as maintaining a collection of animals, the school strives for academic excellence, sporting and creative success, and the development of young men and women who are able to contribute to society in a positive fashion.



BEDE'S
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