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## INTRODUCTION

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 was, 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 cricket 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 of Dance 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.

During the pandemic of 2020, the need to connect with nature was seen to be more vital than ever before. Being around animals is good for you, on so many different levels. Having a collection of animals within a school seems to be the most obvious and sensible decision we could possibly make!

John Tuson Deputy Head

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. 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.

#### **GRANDIDIER'S VONTSIRA** *Galidictis grandidieri*

Sometimes known as the Grandidier's Mongoose, the Vontsira isn't really a mongoose at all, but, rather, is a Euplerid - a family of carnivores unique to Madagascar. The best known Euplerid is the Fossa; the Grandidier's Vontsira is possibly the least known, found only in one small area of south-western Madagascar. Researchers in Madagascar report Vontsiras being friendly and unafraid of human contact - indeed, they have helped themselves to human provisions, particularly enjoying tinned fish! Their natural diet includes invertebrates and small mammals and birds.

Why do we keep Vontsiras? The captive population of Grandidier's Vontsiras is tiny: there are currently eleven animals, kept in zoos in Germany, England and the United Arab Emirates. Those animals are all overseen by the Euplerid Foundation, based in the north of England, which hopes to establish the species in captivity so as to provide a "safety net" population should its wild population fall, and also to enable more to be learnt about this beautiful species. Bede's was chosen as a location for some of the animals as it is possible for them to live here in relative peace and quiet - we don't know how they would respond to living in a busy zoo, with many visitors.

Vontsiras at Bede's We currently keep three Vontsiras. The pair - Ricky and Tripod - are the parents of Timmy, who may move to a different collection so as to be paired up with an unrelated female. Our Vontsiras came to us in early 2022, from a private zoo in Cornwall. Tripod - our female - lost one of her legs after falling in her previous home; however, she copes superbly with just three legs, and is still incredibly agile. The Vontsiras' outdoor enclosure was in part funded by the parents of Georgie Cloke, a pupil at Bede's between 2016 and 2021; Georgie was a superb Animal Management student, and left us to study Biomedical Science.

#### **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. Look out for the walkway we have built for them, taking them beyond their enclosure, and sometimes making them work that little bit harder for their food.

#### **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 - a brother and sister pair - joined us from Bristol Zoo. One of the highlights for many Animal Management classes is having the Meerkats released into the classroom to say hello.

#### **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 a 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.

### 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 two female Chipmunks arrived in 2016, from Battersea Park Zoo in London.

### 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 it 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.

### **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 Agouti makes a perfect cage-mate for our group of Squirrel Monkeys.

**Agoutis at Bede's** Our Agouti arrived in 2018, from Chessington World of Adventures; born in 2010, she has reached a grand old age for an Agouti.

## SPINIFEX HOPPING MOUSE

#### Notomys alexis

This unusual rodent is a native of western and central Australia. It has long back legs, enabling it to 'hop' in its desert home.

Why do we keep Hopping Mice? Plentiful in the wild, and in Australian zoos, these rodents are almost unknown outside their homeland. The Australian government is very strict about the exportation of animals, and when it allowed a small group of Hopping Mice to come to Hamerton Zoo, in Cambridgeshire, put down strict guidelines as to where any animals that were bred there could be moved. We were delighted to take a small group of mice from them, to help manage the British population of this species.

Hopping Mice at Bede's We have to be careful not to breed too many Hopping Mice - it would be easy to be

overrun by them! We therefore keep males and females separately, and only put them together when breeding is required.

## BRAZILIAN GUINEA PIG

#### Cavia aperea

This wild relative of the domestic Guinea Pig is found throughout South America, from Argentina to Venezuela.

Why do we keep Brazilian Guinea Pigs? An interesting contrast to their domestic counterparts, the Brazilian Guinea Pig mixes well with other species, and thrives in captivity.

**Brazilian Guinea Pigs at Bede's** Having originally brought in a pair from Exmoor Zoo, we bred a number of these animals; we now keep only two sisters, born here in 2020. They are quite shy, so you won't always get to see them!

### **DOMESTIC GUINEA PIG**

#### Cavia porcellus

One 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 Guinea Pigs? Our pupils need to learn to handle animals; Guinea Pigs enable them to start to do so with confidence.

**Guinea Pigs at Bede's** We have kept Guinea Pigs since the Bede's Zoo was first established.

















## **RING-TAILED LEMURS**

#### 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. Since 2020, they have shared their enclosure with two Black Lemurs - each species largely keeps itself to itself, although it is the Blacks that are in charge!

## **BLACK LEMUR**

This attractive lemur species hails from the northwestern corner of Madagascar, where - like all lemurs - it is under threat from habitat loss. Only the males are black - the females are, instead, a reddish brown.

Why do we keep Black Lemurs? Mixing different lemur species together works well - but we needed to be careful to choose a species that would get on well with our Ring-tailed Lemurs. Although our two females won't breed, we are participating in the European breeding programme - providing a home for animals whose genes are already well represented in the European population.

#### **Black Lemurs at Bede's**

Our lemurs are a mother and daughter pair. Our older animal is very well-travelled: she was born in Olomouc Zoo in the Czech Republic, and has lived in Prague, Riga, and Parc Animalier d'Auvergne, in France, from where she came to us in 2020; her daughter, Mogoi, was born in Riga in 2013.

### BINTURONG

#### Arctictis binturong

The Binturong's scientific name - Arctictis - comes from the Greek for 'bear-weasel', and in English they are sometimes known as the 'bear-cat': neither of these descriptions is zoologically accurate! Binturongs are actually members of the Viverrid family, related to Civets and Genets. Native to south-east Asia, they will eat pretty much anything, and their most impressive feature is their long, muscular, prehensile tail. They use this to balance and also to hang on as they move through forests. Equally impressive is their smell: Binturongs have the odour of burnt popcorn! Vulnerable in the wild, Binturongs are under threat from forest clearance, and also from being hunted as a food item.

Why do we keep Binturongs? Binturongs are charismatic, interesting, and rather loveable! They breed well in zoos, and our pair came to us when the zoo at which they had been born was struggling to be able to send them to a collection in mainland Europe. We were delighted to be able to offer them a home here in Sussex!

**Binturongs at Bede's** Our Binturongs were both born at Hamerton Zoo, in Cambridgeshire. They settled in to their home here very quickly after arriving in December 2021. Paul Juniper, who is in charge of the Bede's Zoo, helped to develop the husbandry guidelines for Binturongs when he worked at Southport Zoo, in the 1990s. The work that he and his colleagues undertook there has allowed the Binturong to flourish in captivity.





# BIRDS

We have developed a small collection of African birds. and have bred a number of species over the years. 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. We are currently assessing our future direction with our bird collection - we may look to build a larger aviary in which we can mix our different birds.

#### 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 they first came to Bede's in 2014, we have bred 16 chicks, most recently in the Spring of 2021. Amongst the new homes for those youngsters have been Paulton's Park, in Hampshire, and the Lake District Wildlife Park, in Keswick. We currently have just one male, for whom we may look to find a mate in the near future.

### **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 male has been with us since the Spring of 2020.

#### **LEMON DOVE** *Columba larvata*

This attractive dove is widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, but is rarely seen in captivity: there are currently only three European zoos keeping the species. 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 conservation 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, since when we have raised a number of birds.







# BIRDS

## 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 owl came to us in 2011, from a private keeper in Yorkshire. He has seen a great deal of change at the Bede's Zoo since then!

#### BRUCE'S PIGEON Treron waalia

This striking pigeon is found throughout western Africa, where its favourite food is figs. It is sometimes known as the Green Pigeon - despite being yellow and grey.

**Bruce's Pigeons at Bede's** We have kept this species since 2018, but have not yet been able to establish a breeding pair.



# **REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS, INVERTEBRATES AND FISH**

Amphibians and – especially - reptiles have become massively popular as pets over the past 25 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. Fish have long been popular pets - we keep a small collection here, as well as a small number of invertebrates.

### **INVERTEBRATES**

Madagascan Hissing Cockroach Gromphadorhina portentosa

MacLeay's Spectre Stick Insect Extatosoma tiaratum

**New Guinea Giant Spiny Stick Insect** *Eurycantha calcarata* 

**Pink Tipped Giant African Land Snail** Archachatina marginata

**Giant African Land Snail** *Lissachatina fulica* 

Our small collection of invertebrates includes some interesting species. Their care is pretty straightforward.



# **REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS, INVERTEBRATES AND FISH**

### **REPTILES**

#### Leopard Gecko Eublepharis macularius

A popular pet species. One of our geckos was donated to us in 2010; she is at a pretty grand age for this species.

#### Corn Snake Pantherophis guttatas

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.

**Eastern Casqueheaded Iguana** *Laemanctus longipes* This central American lizard is a good climber and an unusual species for us to keep.

**Blue Spiny Lizard** *Sceloporus serrifer cyanogenys* Found from Mexico to Texas, this lizard is fast-moving and a little bit nervous. In the wild or in captivity, they like to hide away. Our animals were bred at Hamerton Zoo; they are ovoviviparous (live-bearing rather than egg-laying).

#### **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**

White's Tree Frog Litoria caerulea

### FISH

**Common Plec** *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

#### Pakistani Loach Botia almorhae

**Rainbow Cichlid** *Pelvicachromis pulcher* The scientific name of this species makes reference to its appearance - "pulcher" is Latin for "beautiful".









# 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 a few rather homemade wooden cages.

Over the coming years, further outdoor enclosures were added, as the collection grew. A Meerkat enclosure was constructed, as was a 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. 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 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 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, then Chief Zoological Officer of Bristol Zoo, and now the Director of Dublin Zoo.

Growth and development have continued: the arrival of our Binturongs and Grandidier's Vontsiras are exciting recent highlights. 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?

t 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 40 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 89 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 — with one former pupil working at Singapore Zoo, and another monitoring whale and dolphin populations in the English Channel.

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 Binturongs, cleaning out the Royal Pythons' vivarium, or rearranging the branching in the home of the Siberian Chipmunks. And as part of 'The Flourish Project', all of our First Year pupils undertake a course based in the school zoo, exploring issues faced by the wildlife of the world. We want to give our pupils access to a festival of opportunity – and the school zoo is very much an important part of that.

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 Grandidier's Vontsiras beautiful Madagascan carnivores - 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.

# STAFF AT THE BEDE'S ZOO



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 Snow Leopards, and with a plethora of primates. He is the Assistant Head: Boarding at Bede's.



Alex Saunders is a former Animal Management student at Bede's. She works part-time in the zoo while completing a degree in animal behaviour.



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 the Housemaster of Stud House.



**Charlie Adams** joined us as a volunteer, and has made himself indispensable in and around the zoo where he is currently completing an apprenticeship in Animal Care. His favourite species with which to work are the Binturongs.



John Tuson has been at Bede's since 1993, and is the school's Deputy Head. He teaches English, but has significant experience of animals and zoos: between his first and second spells Bede's, he worked at Newquay Zoo in Cornwall, and he writes frequently for several zoo journals. He has recently published a book about the zoos of Britain and Ireland; this sold out its first print run.



**Thea Taylor** previously worked in the zoo on a part-time basis. She now has a full-time role monitoring dolphin and whale populations in the English channel, but still returns to volunteer with us every week.

# **BEHAVIOURAL ENRICHMENT**

Former 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?

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 40 species, so catering for their individual enrichment needs can be quite a challenge. Each animal has different requirement, as a snake is not going to need the same enrichment as a Squirrel Monkey. However, this mammoth task is undertaken by zoo staff 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 and Binturongs 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.

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 with our lemurs. 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 FUTURE

he numbers of students studying the Sixth Form BTEC course is at a record high: in 2021 17 pupils began to study Animal Management in the Lower Sixth.

Our latest project has been the development of an outdoor enclosure for our Grandidier's Vontsiras. These highly unusual animals are very rarely seen in zoos, so we wanted to provide the most attractive space for them that we could.

Our one-time rabbit run offers us some possibilities now, and we would love to be able to develop this space - possibly for our Meerkats, possibly as an aviary.

Indoors, our "Herptile Room" (home to our fish, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates) still requires some work so as to create a more attractive space in which our pupils can hone their animal husbandry skills.

While many of our animals are held in non-breeding groups, we would very much like to be able to breed our Binturongs -and the Vontsiras as well, of course.

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

# **BACKGROUND TO THE SCHOOL**

ede's is a large independent school, with around 800 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 people who are able to find real joy in their education, and can go on to contribute to society in a positive fashion.



## 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 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) and **Dr Andrew Carroll** (teacher of mathematics). To **Netty Gunn**, who has brought a wealth of experience to working in the zoo, covering for a maternity leave. To **Helen Poyser** whose role in establishing the zoo was crucial; after four years as zoo manager, she has now moved on to a new position in Norfolk. And also to the brilliant **estates team**, who have supported us and helped us with our development.

To Alan Ashby (designaka@hotmail.com) who has produced the information signs which are to be seen within the zoo. To Rick Davies, of Willerby Landscapes, who generously supplied us with many of the plants which can be seen in the Bede's Zoo. To the Cloke family, for their financial support of the zoo, which has enabled us to develop our Vontsira enclosure. To Mark and Chris of Team Building With Blte, who have given us invaluable help as we have developed the 'furnishing' within some of our enclosures. To Sarah McCoy, our fantastic cleaner, who keeps the non-animal side of the zoo building looking clean and tidy. To Tim Brown, who has enabled us to keep a species as fascinating as the Vontsira. And to animal-keeping colleagues across the country who have been supportive of our work, including, in particular, staff at Drusillas, Chessington World of Adventures, Hamerton Zoo and Bristol Zoo.

And to the pupils of Bede's who have embraced and enjoyed the zoo in their midst  $\ldots$ 



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