

Now that's another story...

Mammals make great characters in stories, books and films, but have you ever wondered how true to life these animal tales are? Emily Jones compares some fictional favourites with real life creatures.

We all love reading stories about our favourite animals and like to imagine the adventures they get up to. But are our favourite tales based on fact or fiction? Take these stories for example...

Alice in Wonderland... One of my favourite children's stories is *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. It tells the story about a young girl called Alice who falls down a rabbit hole to find herself in a strange world of weird and wonderful creatures. One such character is the Cheshire Cat, who baffles Alice by fading to nothing but a grin. Now you may think there is no such breed as a Cheshire Cat, however it is thought that the Cheshire Cat is based on a real breed called the British Shorthair, as this is the breed Lewis Carroll saw on the label of Cheshire cheese. Sadly the disappearing act is definitely made up! Two other amusing characters in the story are the Mad March Hare and the Dormouse, whom Alice meets at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party. In the story the hare is indeed a bit mad,

but real hares sometimes act crazily too, especially at the beginning of the breeding season, around March, when males chase each other and females all over the place. As for the sleepy dormouse living in a teapot, this is thought to date back to Roman times. Edible dormice were kept by Romans in terracotta jars known as *gliaria* on tables and fattened up on walnuts. Once they were really fat they made good eating! Dormice hibernate for six or seven months of the year, so they are indeed very sleepy creatures!

Winnie the Pooh... Another story I'm sure you'll all know is *Winnie the Pooh*. Again there are some surprising grains of truth in the strange collection of animals living in Hundred Acre Wood. The book was written by A.A. Milne for his son, Christopher Robin Milne. Christopher had a teddy bear that he named after Winnipeg, a real black bear, which he and his father often saw at London Zoo, and 'Pooh', a swan they had met while on holiday. Of course bears don't really live wild in this country, but did you know that they really do love

Happy reading...

Here are a few more of our favourite mammal stories to read:
Tarka the Otter by Henry Williamson
The Hodgeheg by Dick King-Smith
Fantastic Mr Fox by Roald Dahl
The Animals of Farthing Wood by Colin Dann

to eat honey? They are often seen climbing trees to raid bee hives for the sweet treat. The Hundred Acre Wood is based on a real woodland (actually Five Hundred Acres) in East Sussex. At the time the story was written there were definitely no Tiggers there, but there were probably a few Piglets and even some Kangas! Wild boar, a member of the pig family, and introduced red-necked wallabys, similar to kangaroos, have been recorded in the real Five Hundred Acre Wood!

Harry Potter... A more recent kids' favourite are the Harry Potter books and films. As I'm sure you all know

Webster's message



Happy New Year to you all! If you're a bit bored after all the excitement of the holiday, then read on, because I have an exciting new competition to tell you about. To celebrate World Poetry Day on 21 March 2009 we're giving you the chance to win a year's free membership to our **Kids Gone Wild** club (winners that are existing members will receive a £10 book token instead). The winning poem will appear in a future edition of **Mammals UK!** All you have to do is write a poem about your favourite mammal and email it to webster@ptes.org, or pop it in the post (address inside front cover). It's that simple. Five winners will be picked by me and the team at PTES. So get scribbling! Hmm, now what can I rhyme with 'otter'...?

these tales are full of magical and mythical creatures such as the basilisk, Nagini the snake, Fawkes the phoenix and Buckbeak the hippogriff. These are mostly based on made up, mythical creatures, but most have at some time been believed to be true by some people! Werewolves are mythological humans that transform into wolves. Remus Lupin, Hogwarts teacher and friend to Harry, was a werewolf and there was a clue in his name. The scientific name for wolf is *Canis lupus* and 'lupine' means wolflike. The real meaning of the word 'werewolf' also has its origin in fact. The first part of the word comes from old English *weri* (to wear) and so werewolf actually means 'wearer of wolf skin'. Humans may have been dressed like this in battle to scare their enemies and so

started the stories of werewolves that we are familiar with today. Over the years some people have also produced evidence for the existence of unicorns, like the one that appears in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Many people have claimed to have discovered unicorn 'fossils', but these have been proved to be fakes made by gluing different animal skeletons together! Other people claim to have seen live unicorns, however these are thought to be unusual goats or antelopes that are born with just one horn. Oryxes, horselike antelopes, can appear to have one horn, if viewed side on.

Fit the real-life mammal to the story, clockwise from top left, dormouse, wolf, wild pigs, brown hare and wallaby (centre).

This is my friend Lyndsay, who makes wildlife movies! Where do I audition, Lyndsay? That's what I call a really...

GOOD JOB!



Name: Lyndsay Gale
 Age: 29
 Job title: Film director

Tell us a bit about your organisation...

I run my own independent wildlife production company called Wild About Production Ltd. We focus on producing videos of wildlife, and I work with wildlife organisations and businesses to promote conservation of wildlife and wild places, particularly through website videos. My main client is the Zoological Society of London (ZSL).

What does your job involve?

I spend a lot of time at ZSL London and Whipsnade Zoos. My days vary a lot, from running round filming animals and talking to keepers, to sitting at a computer editing and distributing films. One day I might be out on the downs with an elephant, the next working out how to do a time-lapse film of a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis.

What are your qualifications?

I have a BSc in zoology and MSc in wildlife management.

What attracted you to this job?

The day to day variety, the challenges involved in getting the shots, the creativity involved in thinking up new videos and editing them together, and being able to communicate one of my key passions – wildlife conservation.

What are the best bits about your job?

The variety in each week, getting up close and personal with many characters, human and animal, and seeing a finished film and knowing that I put it together!

And the worst....

Being out filming on cold and rainy days!

What advice would you give someone who is interested in a job like yours?

I haven't taken a traditional route into wildlife video making, and I don't think many people do. It's good to have a wildlife background and a passion for photography. Buy a camera and tripod and practice making your own films, and start contacting production companies, even sending them a short video of your own work.



KIDS GONE WILD!

Welcome to all our new KGW members, many of whom were lucky enough to receive membership as a Christmas present. What a great idea! Not only will you now get all the benefits of being a *Wild Child*, but the donation for your gift will go towards helping to ensure a future for endangered species all over the world!

Did you know as a *Wild Child* you can get a special discount on our wildlife watching events for you and all your family and friends? This year you can meet a monkey, visit a hedgehog sanctuary, or even be a wolf keeper for the day! Look out for a new *Wildlife Encounters 2009* brochure coming through your letter box very soon.

Become a *Wild Child* by donating just £15 a year to People's Trust for Endangered Species (that's less than 29p per week). You will receive a welcome pack and more as a great big thank you. You could even ask an adult to donate for you as a birthday present. Email Webster@ptes.org or call 020 7498 4533 for more details.

OFFICIAL WILD CHILD



NAME: **Bonnie** AGE: 8
 FAVOURITE MAMMAL: **wood mouse**



LE DORMOUSE PAUL BURROW; HARE ROBIN HAMILTON; WALLABY, WOLF & WILD BOAR PTES