

Zoo story: who is Kidlington Kid?

Could he be the great-grandson of Capra, a living descendant of the zoo?



Once upon a time, in 1931, a zoo opened in Kidlington. It was called Oxford Zoo, and two of the very first animals on show were a domesticated billy goat from England named Capra and his beautiful wife, the doe Carmelita, who came from Brazil. The zoo became home to various animals from around the world, including a brown bear, a bison, a camel, two leopards, three lions, several lamas, two polar bears, a number of wolves, and an elephant named Rosie who could perform magic tricks and make things disappear.

The zoo became a popular weekend destination for families, but it closed in 1937 after just six years when all the animals—all but two—were moved to Dudley Zoo. Only Capra and Carmelita remained. They stayed in the village because the pair escaped the zoo around two months before it finally closed its iron gates.

Nobody knew how Capra and Carmelita managed to free themselves. They had vanished. There were no tunnels, no broken wires, and nobody knew where they had hidden away. Zookeepers and volunteers centred their searches around a mound near the zoo entrance, a pinpoint known today as Kidlington Roundabout where Rosie is commemorated and where villagers believe her top hat and wand is buried. But nobody found the ruminant pair.



Rosie helped Capra and Carmelita escape.

What do we know about Kidlington Kid?

We have some evidence from Alice Parker-James, who took a shine to the youngster's initiative and imagination when he applied for a writing apprenticeship at Kidlington Voice Online Magazine. Here's what Alice reported on the KV website, in December 2024:

"KK has always demonstrated interest in learning the ropes when he's not actually chewing them. We fell for KK after he told us he became interested in words after discovering an old typewriter in the barn. He said he was intrigued by its clacking sounds and the mysterious marks it made on paper..."

That's not much to go on, but clearly, KK is a brilliant young man, brave enough to step up and willing to tackle a big challenge for a young goat, like writing. Is there an extraordinary 'adventure gene' circulating somewhere in his blood, a gene perhaps possessed by Capra and Carmelita, who planned to break free after speaking to Rosie who knew things and was very wise? Did Capra dream that one day a descendant of his would make it to Oxford? Was Capra simply paving the road ahead, for when the traffic lights turned green for everyone?

Let's hope we'll come to discover more about KK, as his story unfolds.