

we bought a zoo where is it located

We Bought a Zoo is a heartwarming film that tells the story of a family's journey to revitalize a struggling zoo. Released in 2011 and directed by Cameron Crowe, the movie stars Matt Damon as Benjamin Mee, a widowed father who takes on the challenge of purchasing a dilapidated zoo in California. This article explores the real-life location of the zoo depicted in the film, its background, and the impact it has had on the community.

Location of the Zoo in the Film

The zoo that Benjamin Mee buys in "We Bought a Zoo" is based on the real-life Dartmoor Zoo, located in Devon, England. However, for the purposes of the film, a different zoo was used as the primary filming location. The majority of the movie was filmed at the Moorpark College in Moorpark, California, which features a petting zoo and various animal habitats that fit the narrative of the film.

A Closer Look at the Filming Locations

While the story centers around a zoo in California, the filmmakers utilized multiple locations to create a convincing backdrop for the narrative. Some notable filming sites include:

1. Moorpark College - This community college served as the main filming location. Its "Animal Studies" program and petting zoo were key elements in bringing the zoo to life on screen.
2. Los Angeles Area - Various scenes were shot around Los Angeles, including some beautiful California landscapes that provided a stunning visual for the film's emotional moments.
3. The San Diego Zoo - Although not used extensively in the film, this renowned zoo is often referenced in discussions about zoos in California.

The Real Dartmoor Zoo

Dartmoor Zoo, located in Devon, England, is the real-life inspiration for the zoo in the film. The zoo has an intriguing history and is known for its conservation efforts.

A Brief History

Dartmoor Zoo was founded in 1968 by Dr. Elizabeth O’Kane and has undergone several transformations over the years. After facing financial difficulties and changes in ownership, the zoo was purchased by Benjamin Mee and his family in 2006. Benjamin Mee’s experiences with the zoo served as the basis for the memoir “We Bought a Zoo,” which later inspired the film.

Key Features of Dartmoor Zoo

The zoo is home to a variety of animal species, including:

- Big Cats: Dartmoor Zoo has several species of big cats, including tigers and lions, which are often central to conservation discussions.
- Primates: The zoo is also home to various primate species, providing educational opportunities about their behavior and habitats.
- Amphibians and Reptiles: Dartmoor Zoo features a collection of amphibians and reptiles, giving visitors a chance to learn about these often-overlooked species.

The zoo places a strong emphasis on conservation, education, and animal welfare, making it a popular destination for families and animal lovers alike.

The Impact of Purchasing a Zoo

The story of buying and reviving a zoo resonates with many due to the challenges and triumphs faced by the Mee family. The film touches on several themes, including:

Family and Community

The film portrays the importance of family support and community involvement. Benjamin Mee’s decision to buy the zoo was driven by the desire to provide a stable and nurturing environment for his children after the loss of their mother. The zoo becomes a focal point for healing and growth, illustrating how communities can rally around a shared cause.

Conservation and Education

Both the film and the real Dartmoor Zoo highlight the significance of wildlife conservation. They emphasize the need for education about animal habitats and the challenges many species face in the wild. By visiting the zoo, families can learn about the importance of protecting endangered species and the vital roles these animals play in ecosystems.

Challenges and Triumphs

The process of revitalizing a zoo is fraught with challenges, from financial difficulties to regulatory hurdles. The film encapsulates these struggles while also showcasing the joy and fulfillment that can come from overcoming obstacles. The narrative encourages viewers to persevere in the face of adversity, inspiring others to take on challenges in their own lives.

Visitor Information for Dartmoor Zoo

For those interested in visiting Dartmoor Zoo, here are some essential details:

Location and Accessibility

- Address: Dartmoor Zoo, Sparkwell, Plymouth PL7 5DG, United Kingdom.
- Transport: The zoo is accessible by car and public transportation, with parking facilities available for visitors.

Opening Hours and Admission Fees

- Opening Hours: Dartmoor Zoo typically operates from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, although hours may vary by season.
- Admission Fees: Prices vary based on age and group size. Family tickets and concessions are often available.

Facilities and Attractions

Visitors to Dartmoor Zoo can enjoy:

- Animal Encounters: Opportunities for close encounters with various animals, including talks from zookeepers.
- Play Areas: Dedicated spaces for children to play and explore, ensuring a family-friendly atmosphere.
- Café and Gift Shop: Refreshments and souvenirs are available on-site, allowing visitors to relax and take home a memento of their visit.

Conclusion

In summary, **We Bought a Zoo** is more than just a movie; it's a story about

resilience, family, and the importance of conservation. While the film's primary shooting location was Moorpark College in California, it draws inspiration from the real Dartmoor Zoo in Devon, England. The zoo stands as a testament to the power of community involvement and the vital role of education and conservation in protecting our planet's wildlife. Whether you are a fan of the film or an animal lover, visiting Dartmoor Zoo offers a unique opportunity to connect with nature and support vital conservation efforts.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where is the original zoo that inspired 'We Bought a Zoo' located?

The original zoo, the Rosemoor Wildlife Park, is located in the United Kingdom, specifically in Devon.

Is 'We Bought a Zoo' based on a true story?

Yes, 'We Bought a Zoo' is based on the real-life story of Benjamin Mee, who purchased a dilapidated zoo in California.

What is the name of the zoo featured in the film 'We Bought a Zoo'?

The zoo featured in the film is called Dartmoor Zoological Park, which is located in Devon, England.

In which state in the U.S. did Ben Mee buy a zoo?

Ben Mee bought the zoo in California, specifically the ZooMontana.

Can visitors go to the zoo featured in 'We Bought a Zoo'?

Yes, Dartmoor Zoological Park is open to visitors and offers various animal encounters and educational experiences.

What year did Benjamin Mee purchase the zoo featured in 'We Bought a Zoo'?

Benjamin Mee purchased the zoo in 2006.

Is the story of 'We Bought a Zoo' more about the zoo or the family?

The story focuses on both the challenges of running the zoo and the personal journey of the Mee family as they cope with loss and rebuild their lives.

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