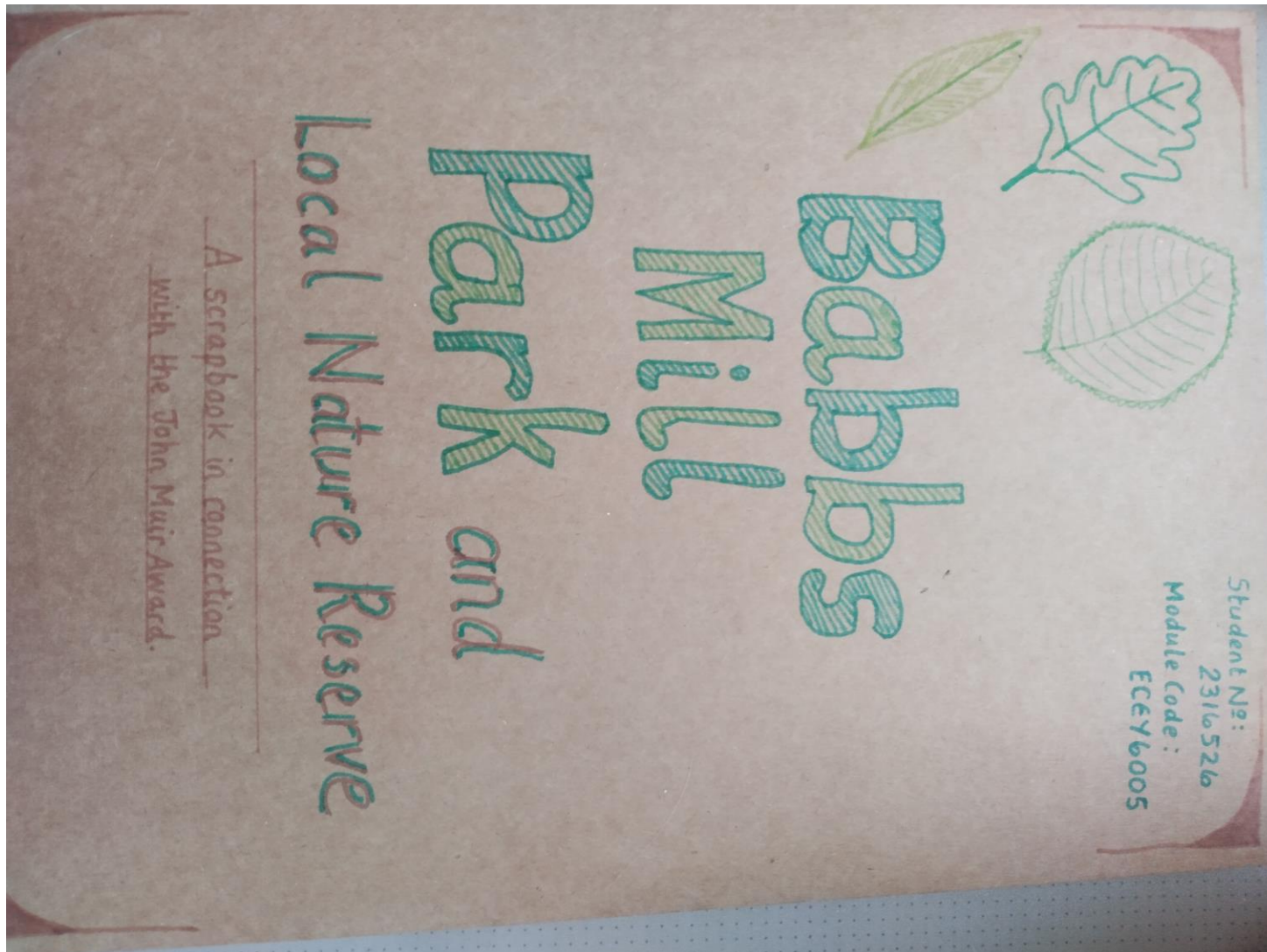


Please find attached photographs of the scrapbook relating to module ECEY6005. Please can you confirm safe receipt of this document, as I initially had some issues submitting it to Turnitin. Thank you.

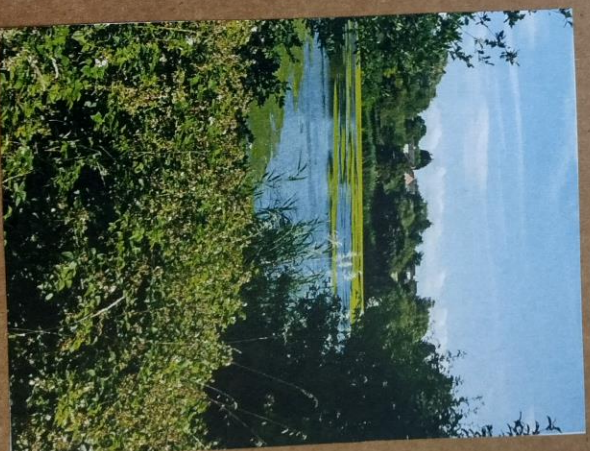
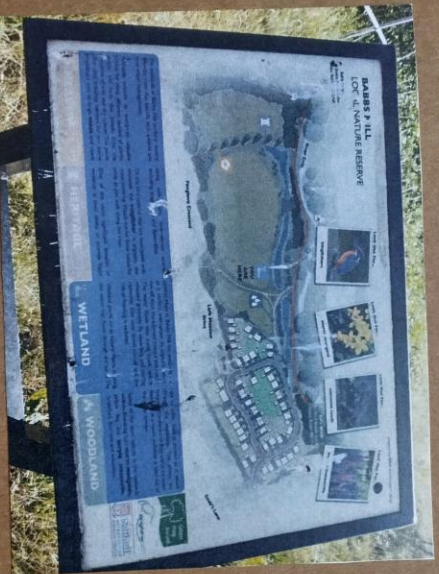


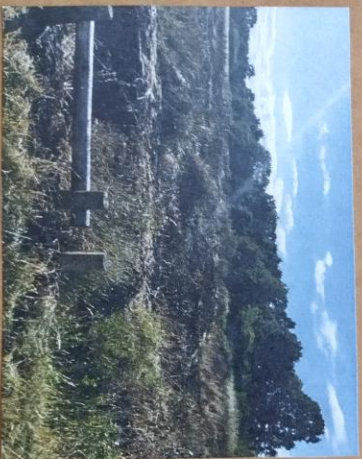
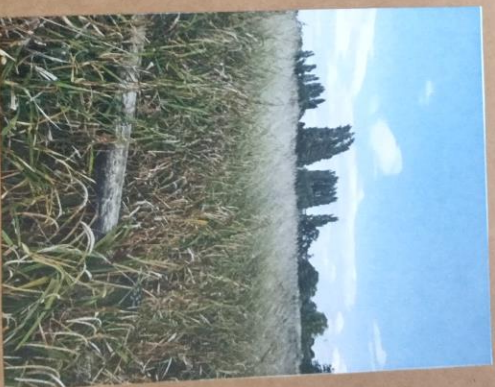
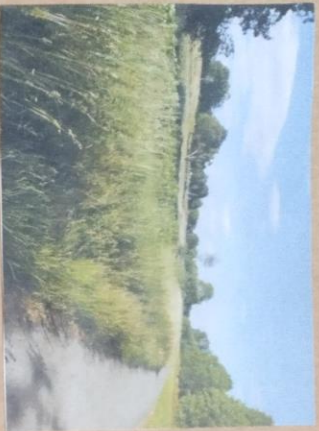
*The area outlined in red shows the map location of
Bobbs Mill Park and Local
Nature Reserve*



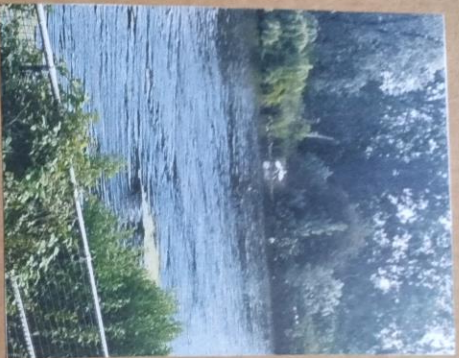
Discover...

My chosen place of discovery is Babbs Mill Park and Local Nature Reserve. The park is located in Solihull, west Midlands, in a village called Kinghurst. The park itself was created to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 1977. Due to its diverse habitat, Babbs Mill Park was designated a Local Nature Reserve in 2002. There are many entrances and exits to the park because of its large size, however the photographs below show the Faddbridge Road entrance, the route I use most.





Various scenes from
Bobb's Mill Park



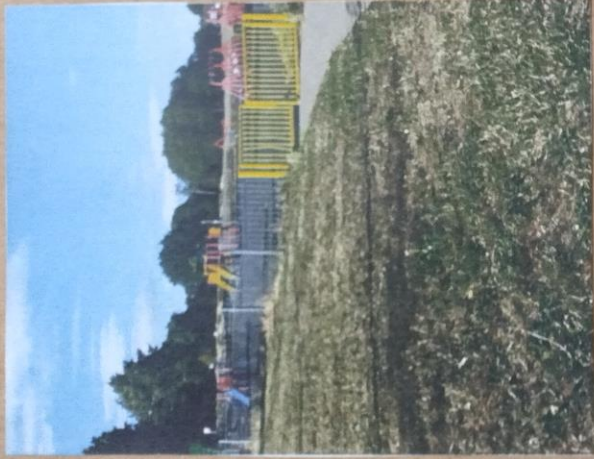
My reason for choosing this area are many and varied. Having moved to Kingshurst in 1995, after purchasing a property as my first married home, I was unfamiliar with the area. My husband had grown up not far away and had more knowledge of the area, so at weekends I used to find out more and take a wander around. As a nature lover and someone whose childhood was mostly spent outdoors, I was so happy to discover such a beautiful space as Bibbs Mill and to this day consider myself extremely lucky to be only a ten minute walk away from a place that feels like another world.



Over the last thirty years, Babbs Mill Park has been the backdrop to lots of special times in my life. Firstly, it provided a relaxing place to spend time with friends and family, when they came to visit our new home, being somewhere to take an afternoon stroll (often to walk off a ridiculously large Sunday lunch!) I remember my Dad being very impressed with the area, which was high praise from a man who loved to walk in lots of beautiful rural places and had probably visited some of the best. He and I often undertook walks together, be it a Sunday afternoon walk to the local sweet shop or a full day out incorporating a scenic walk with a trip to a classic car show. I felt proud to have introduced him to Babbs Mill Park, as a new place of interest.

Further along in life, following the arrival of my three children, Babbs Mill has been the venue for many picnic days, local events such as the 'Jiggy Duck Race' and a place to hone their bicycle and skateboarding skills. We all feel a sense of freedom and calm, when we are outdoors and a visit to the park always results in the discovery of something new or previously un-noticed.



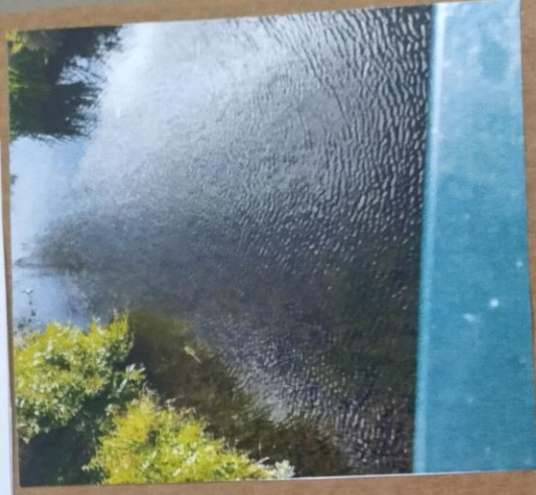
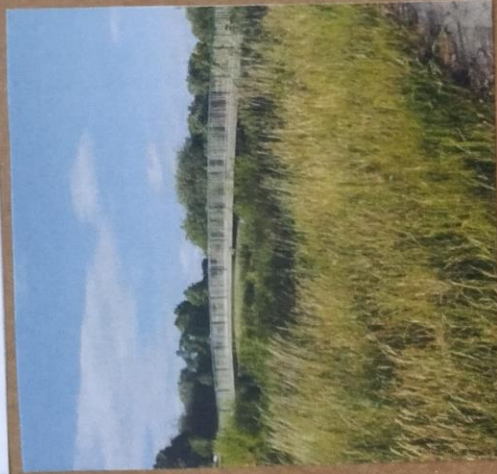


The children's
playground where I took
my children when they
were small.

 x

The pictures below show the
bridge where my children used
to (and still do) play
Pooh sticks.

Being outdoors fulfils different needs in all of us. Whilst we all enjoy observing the natural environment and the calming effect it has on us, my eldest daughter can indulge her sense of adventure, scaling the skate ramps or climbing trees. My son is a keen artist, who will often be inspired to sketch what he sees and my youngest daughter loves that the park provides somewhere quiet for her to get lost in her latest book read. At the current time, Babbs Mill provides me with ten minutes of down time, during my half an hour lunch break. I work at a local primary school, situated half way between my home and the park, and it is a way to escape the non-stop nature of the school day, just for a short while, giving me a fresh burst of energy to tackle the afternoons.

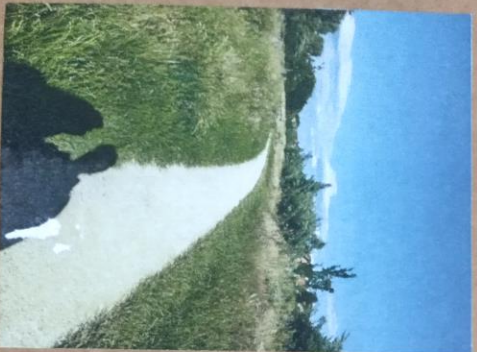




The picnic bench
 I sit on during my lunch
 hour, to get a shot of
 peace and quiet before
 the afternoon begins.



Sometimes I feed my pigeon
 friends too.



← An incidental silhouette
 of my son and I, on our most
 recent visit to the park.

The majority of my memories of Bobbs Mill Park are positive, happy memories. However, occasionally, when sitting by the lake, I feel sad when at the events that happened there in December 2022. Four young boys between the ages of six and eleven years, lost their lives at the park after falling through a frozen lake. They had gone to feed the ducks and skim stones across the lake, when one of them decided to walk onto the ice. The other boys followed, eventually falling in when the ice broke. Witnesses saw them shouting for help but even though emergency services were called, they were unable to save them in time. Sometimes my mind wanders, thinking how frightened, cold and helpless they must have felt, and the unbearable loss felt by their families. All of the school staff in the area were on alert, praying that the



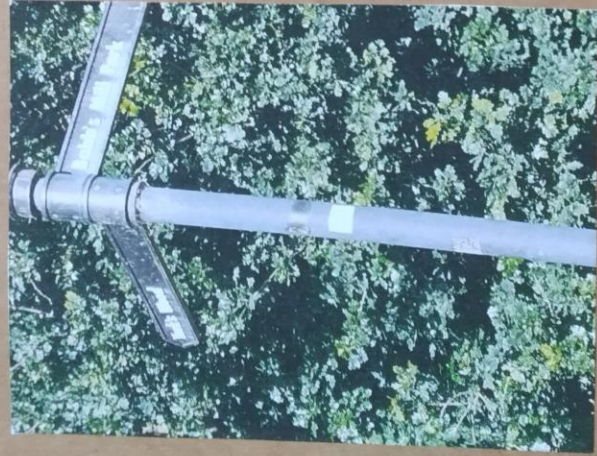
children were not from any of our families and feeling the sadness that would be faced by the staff and pupils of the school found to be involved. Vigils were held at the time of the incident, showing the togetherness of the local residents, united in their grief, and a memorial bench is now situated just inside the entrance to the park. Whenever winter settles over the park, it causes those painful memories to resurface and the neighbourhood community, I'm sure, will never forget.



Whenever I see these grass darts, it reminds me of being small and throwing these at my Mum's woolly jumpers. They would stick without her noticing and she wouldn't realise until we got home!

Memories of happy days!

EXPLORE...



In this section I will explore some parts of Bobbs Mill park in a little more detail than usual and talk about some of the new discoveries I have made. These include:

- Ladybirds
- Textures of natural and manmade materials within the park
- Plants and trees
- Bobbs Mill Cottage and Millhouse
- Kingshurst Hall



Ladybirds

Whilst walking through Babbs Mui Park, I saw quite a few ladybirds. Until around five years ago, I had not realised that ladybirds develop through a larva stage, presuming they hatched just as a smaller ladybird in their final form. Whilst engaging in a Forest School session, with nursery children at my place of work, the Forest School Leader pointed out a ladybird larva, which I was surprised to find, was actually larger than an adult ladybird. At first, I thought she must have been mistaken and dismissed the idea, until my curiosity got the better of me and I looked online to see that she was correct.

On a blackberry bush leaf, in Babbs Mui, I happened to spot a ladybird larva, causing me to investigate more closely. On an adjacent leaf, I saw a black ladybird with red spots in its fully grown form and decided to find out more. This is what I learned...

- In the UK, there are forty-six different species of ladybird.
- Twenty of these do not look like traditional ladybirds, being more plainly coloured.
- They range in size from 3mm long to 8.5mm.
- Ladybirds come in a range of colours, such as red, orange, yellow and black.
- Some of them have no spots.
- Ladybirds have been recorded staying airborne for two hours, reaching speeds of 37mph and heights of 3,600ft.
- Ladybirds like to eat aphids but some species feed on mites, pollen and nectar.
- In winter, ladybirds hibernate under leaves, in cracks in bark and sometimes in houses or outbuildings. My daughter's bedroom window appears to be one such place and we discovered a large amount of ladybirds around the frame, a couple of years back.
- Around March time, they emerge from hibernation, to feed and breed.
- Females lay between 5 and 50 yellow eggs, and continue to do so throughout the summer, laying up to 1,000 in a year.
- Eggs take from 3 to 7 days to hatch, into ladybird larvae, which have the same diet as their parents.

- The larvae develop in four stages before pupating and emerging as adults.
- Depending on species, there will be one or two generations of ladybird per year.
- The ladybirds' bright colours warn predators that they taste bad, as they secrete a foul-tasting fluid, causing birds to spit them out. Swifts, Swallows and Martins however, can eat ladybirds in flight.
- Folklore says it is good luck if a ladybird lands on you. They do bite but because their mouths are so small, we don't feel anything.
- The average lifespan of a ladybird is one year, although some species can live to a maximum of three years.

Having discussed my embarrassment at being 50 years old and not knowing about the ladybird lifecycle, my daughter appeared later in the day with a poem she made up, causing us both to giggle some more! The poem is shown below, with her permission and will be yet another cherished memory inspired by Babbs' Wild's Nature.

How does a ladybird come to be?

Was a question asked between Mum and me.

For we've only ever seen them fully grown,

But when we learned about the bit before, our minds were blown!

Mum thought that ladybirds came from eggs,

Already developed, with six little legs

Until the lady at Forest School taught

That they started as larvae, who would have thought?

Most people would think they'd be born with spots

But when you see a baby, you'll find that they're not.

They start off quite small, sometimes orange or white,

Before taking on more colours when the time is right.

If a ladybird has many spots, it means they are quite old.

As they grow the spots multiply and patterns unfold

On their shells, you may see. If you find one on a leaf,

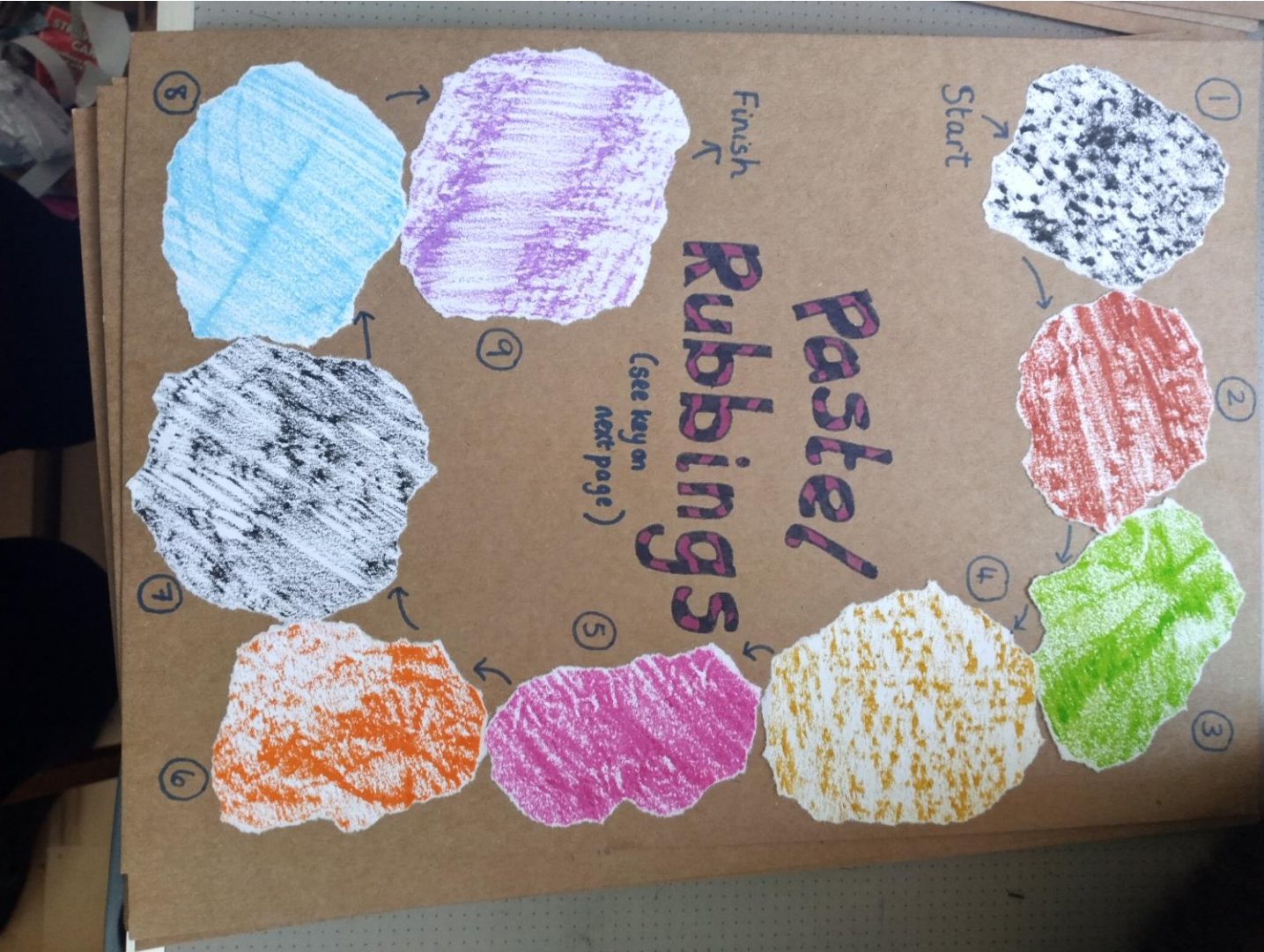
They hide a beautiful, tiny pair of wings underneath.

Such a wondrous work of nature, these tiny little friends.

Their life cycles are quite a joy to comprehend.

To know so many secrets about something oh so small,

Makes me realise there's so much left to learn after all!



Pastel Rubbings

Today I decided to record my journey through Babbs Mill Park using rubbings of things I passed along the way.

Rather than simply looking at the scenery, as I usually do, I tried to look for particular features and textures that I might not normally notice. When observing, I wrote down the things that crossed my mind whilst I rubbed the item I had found. This exercise proved a cathartic solution to help release some of the feelings I might not have expressed otherwise.

Below is a key to each of the nine rubbings and what they made me feel:

① Entrance footpath on Fordbridge Road

A path made of gravel set in concrete. A little hot on my feet today, as the temperature is in the higher 20's. I can't count how many times this path has provided an entrance to a new adventure or experience. Today the path is easy to walk on, unlike in the winter, when it becomes slippery with frost and ice, especially with the downward gradient.

② A bark rubbing from a tree next to the lake

Unusually, this tree has grown mostly sideways, stretching towards the water. I wonder if the reason for this is as simple as the sapling seeking out the water? Or maybe the young tree was repeatedly blown by strong winds, causing it to lean. Either way, the bark is pretty.

③ A fallen leaf from a blackcurrant bush ... no, blackberry.

I am so looking forward to picking blackberries from the bushes in my own garden! Last year I made my first blackberry sponge cake, as requested by a friend for our Summer get together. I wonder what recipe I can find for this year? My Granma would not believe I enjoyed blackberries and blackcurrants, after all the jams I helped her make when I was young.

④ Rings from the stump of a felled tree

No reason for doing this one, other than the fact I love the patterns the rings make. Also, I wondered what the tree would look like if it was still growing and what might have been the reason it was cut down. Losing a tree always makes me sad.

⑤ The plaque from the top of a waste bin

The tiny plaque is punched with the words 'ashtray' and 'gum' and is supposed to cover a small metal tray which catches both of these items and prevents them contaminating other waste. Sadly, through wear and tear or vandalism, the tray is missing, meaning fumes could easily be caused by hot ash and cigarette ends. I wonder where all of the park rangers are. There used to be lots when I was young, fixing things and keeping the park looking beautiful. Maybe this is another job affected by Council cutbacks.

⑥ A knot in the wood of a jetty plank

I love how the knot looks like a cartwheel, with lots of spokes. I think about how many people have sat on this little jetty, as I have today, looking out over the lovely lake and watching the geese and ducks go by. Today the lake is warm and calm, bathed in the sunlight. I think about the boys who lost their lives here in 2022 and how different the water was on that night. Cold, unforgiving and deadly. I hope the boys are warm somewhere now.

⑦ Circles in the top of a jetty post

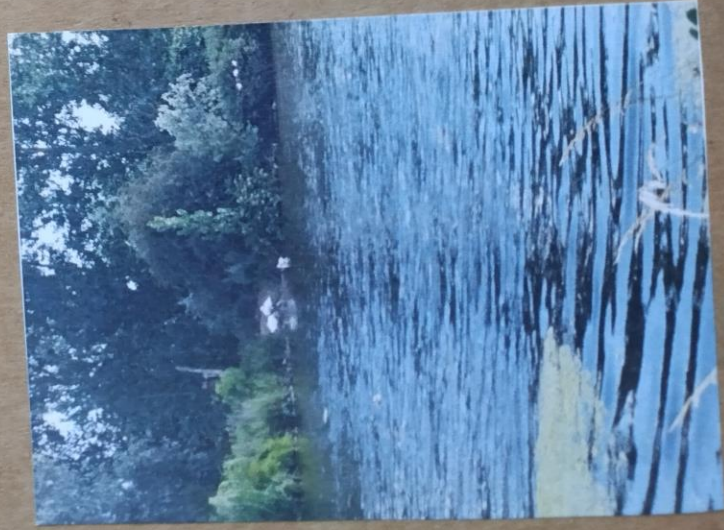
I think I just like circles. They make such lovely patterns, smooth and round like bubbles... no sharp and pointy parts! Lots of my doodles begin with a circle - there are so many possibilities for what it might become.

⑧ A fallen Elm leaf

One of the few leaf names I remember now. As a Brownie and Girl Guide, I learned so many tree names that my adult brain cannot recall now! I vow to study them again and remind myself. Also, this would be a lovely exercise to do with the children at school. We collected leaves for printing but never spoke about which trees they came from.

⑨ The slats of a bench I sat on before going home

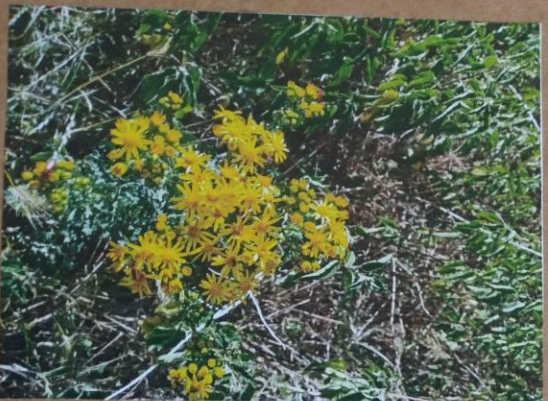
A warm bench, on a beautiful sunny day, overlooking a rippling, serene, sun-kissed lake. Greenery all around and the sounds of nature whispering in my ear. How much better can life be?



Plants, bushes and trees found within Babbs Mill Park and Nature Reserve.



Common Hogweed
(*Heracleum Sphondylium*)



← California Goldenrod



My own sketch of a Marsh Marigold



Marsh Marigold

Scientific name: *Caltha
palustris*
This plant favours damp places,
such as ponds, meadows,
marshes, ditches and wet
woodlands.



Wild blackberries
in various stages of
growth.





Dandelion seedhead
(also known as Dandelion clock
or Puffball)



Hedge Bindweed
(*Calycegia Silvatica*)



Common Teasel
(*Dipsacus Fullenium*)



Sycamore - can grow to
35m tall and live for 400 years

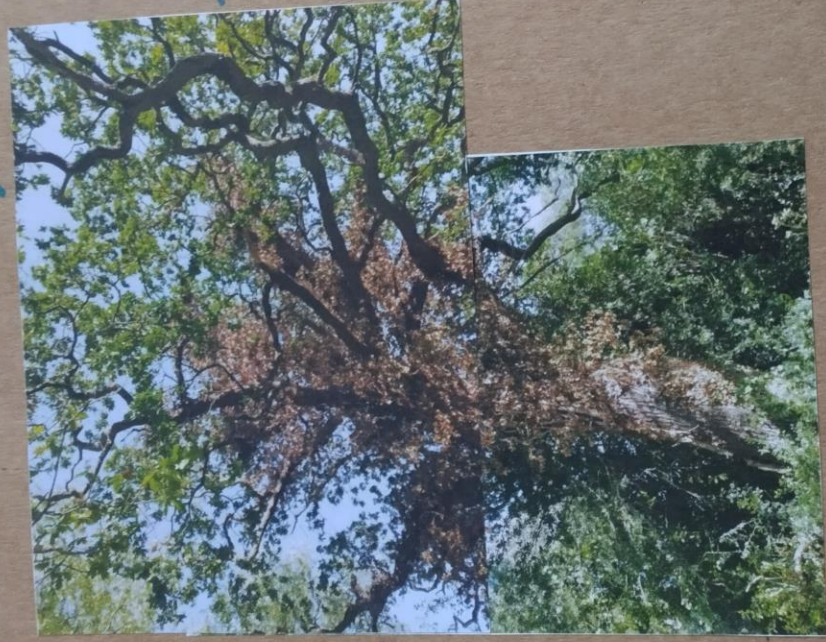
This tree has been pruned using
the 'pollarding' method, to keep
it smaller than it would
naturally grow.



Oak - can grow to between
20-40m tall

I photographed this tree without even noting what type it was. It's sheer size and shape took my

breath away and instantly reminded me of 'The Folk of the Faraway Tree' by Enid Blyton.



grandiose

ancient

spawling

magnificent

twisted

mysterious

Just some of the words which came to mind when I saw this beautiful tree.

Babbs Mill

Roughly in the centre of Babbs Mill Park, is an old millhouse and adjoining cottage. This is known as Babbs Mill and is thought to have been named after the miller who operated it. Below are some photographs of the building as it is today (2025) and on the following page, there is some information about the history of the mill itself. This information is quite old, having been compiled in 1989 and made into a book, sponsored by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.





Kingshurst Mill

BABB'S MILL

Babb's Mill has only been part of Kingshurst since the beginning of this century. There was a mill there in the thirteenth century and corn was being milled as late as the First World War.

The name is believed to have come from an early miller, John Babb, who died in 1651. However, we have found an earlier John Babb(e) who lived there, in the sale documents of the Mountford lands to the Digbys in 1618. Here he is described as recently deceased and is presumably the later John's father or grandfather, and shows that the mill was in the possession of one family for some time.

By 1751, the mill was owned by Edward Cook of Sheldon, who sold it that year to a John Barts of Yardley. The mill belonged at that time, as it probably did throughout, to the manor of Sheldon, in particular Sheldon Hall.

By 1849, a John Andrews was in residence but previous to that it is possible the Yorks were in possession. After all, both Luke Bull York and his wife Sarah were millers and they would have had to have somewhere to practise their trade. In between 1905 and 1919 the mill became part of Kingshurst Hall Farm and was sold, together with the Hall, by the Digbys in 1919. The Townshends tenanted this property together with the Hall from the new owner Mr. A. Fifield. Once the mill ceased working, a conversion was undertaken in the early twenties (1920-3) to create farm-workers' cottages. They have remained as cottages ever since. The mill pool was drained sometime in the Second World War (c1942).

The present mill building is of considerable age. There were three runs (water-courses) and three wheels, with water diverted from the River Cole providing the motive power. In fact, the modern course of the Cole follows the line of the old mill-runs rather than its old course further to the north. One of the millstones now serves as a doorstep to the old mill building.

Of the two main types of installation, the 'Overshot' and the 'Breast' Wheel, the latter is more likely for Babb's Mill as the Cole is not a ferociously powerful river and the Overshot Wheel does require a good head of water.

The old mill building is the one nearest Kingshurst. The other main building is the cottage that adjoins the mill and the out-houses at the back were once a stables, traphouse and pigsty.

The old mill building is now the residence of Mrs. Bloxham and the mill cottage belongs to Arthur and Ivy Townshend, close relatives of Walter Townshend, the last tenant of the Hall.



Babbs Mill Looking Towards Kingshurst

In addition to the millhouse building, adjacent to Babbs Mill Park is a wooded area, known as Yorks Wood. On the edge of this site, there are currently four tower blocks known as 'Kingshurst House', 'Catesby House', 'Digby House' and 'De Montfort House'. These names are familiar to me, in addition to the name 'Wingfield', as these are the names used for our house groups in the school I work in. The names of these tower blocks relate to some of the families who have owned land in and around Kingshurst over the last few centuries. There was a large building, known as 'Kingshurst Hall', built on the grounds where the current tower blocks are. Although the hall was demolished in 1962, a small part of the surrounding moat and foundations can still be seen today, in between the different blocks. Some information on Kingshurst Hall is shown overleaf.

THE HALL

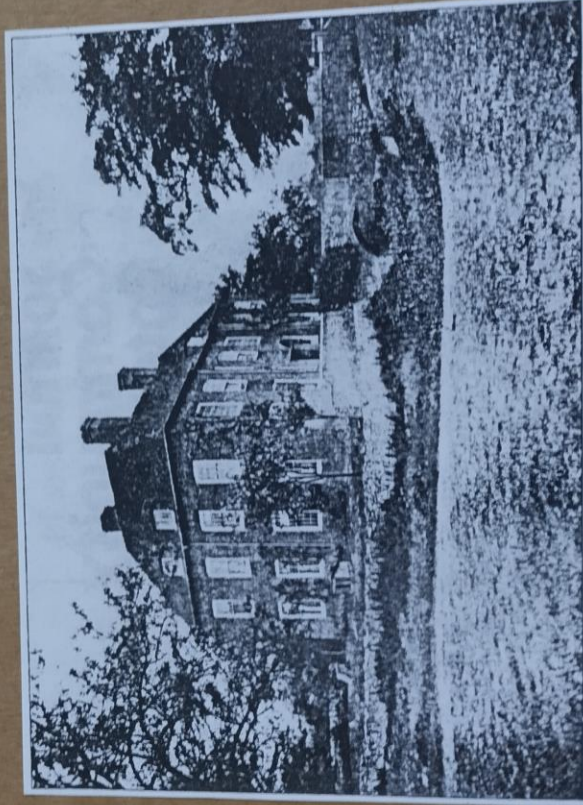
Kingsurst Hall was a large red-bricked building with a tiled roof, built between 1700-1720.

The front entrance was reached by crossing a brick bridge that spanned the moat. Inside the front entrance hall there was a large oak staircase that led to four bedrooms. Above these bedrooms were four attics, and a man's room that was approached by a back staircase. The lower floor consisted of kitchen, pantry, scullery, cellar, dining and drawing rooms. The dining room, which was also used as a ballroom in earlier times, was oaklined from floor to ceiling. The windows had shutters to them which, when opened in the daytime, formed shelves below the windows.

In the kitchen was a large range for cooking and in the large chimney there were hooks on which hung sides of bacon for curing. The water for the Hall came from a well situated in what is now Yorkswold Infants playing field and was pumped by a pump near the side door. With the well being situated where it was, and Arthur's memories of Walter ploughing up bricks and tiles in this field it lends credence to a previous Hall being built there. The roof of the Hall had a large indentation that was lead lined. The rainwater caught in this was channelled to a soft water tank that was in the cellar.

The gardens that surround the moat on three sides had in them numerous trees, some of them fruit trees. These included Victoria Plum trees.

The farm buildings, barns, wash-houses, stables, pigsties, etc., were bulldozed into a pool near the Hall at the time of its demolition in 1962, halving the pool's original depth. This dip can be found outside Wingfield House, and is now a play area for the estate's growing population of children.



Kingsurst Hall

After the demolition of the hall some of the bricks were used to repair the bridge which, apart from the mound and moat, is the only remaining evidence of anything other than a housing estate ever being there.

KINGSHURST MANOR AND HALL.

The Manor of Kingshurst is said to have belonged to the Montforts before they acquired Colehill and to have descended to Richard, second son of Peter de Montfort, in about 1368.

His widow Reese, in 1418 is said to have entailed John de Catesby who married her granddaughter, Margaret, co-heiress of William de Montfort, but the Manor was subsequently regained by the Lords of Colehill and Sir Baldwin Montfort held it.

His son, Sir William Montfort or Mountfort lived here in about 1390 and established his title against John de Catesby.

Sir William is said to have handed much of his demesne land of Colehill to his son Sir Edmund Montfort who lived here and made the park in 1447-8. His possession does not appear to have been undisputed, since in 1458 his half brother Sir Baldwin released his right in Kingshurst Manor to Humphrey Stafford, eldest son of Henry Duke of Buckingham and in 1474 Richard Montfort Clerk, presumably his brother, did the same.

Baldwin's son Simon Montfort, is described in 1465 as late of Kingshurst and was attainted in 1495, from which time the profits of the Manor were found by inquisition to have passed to Simon Digby until his death in 1520, after which they passed to his son Reginald Digby.

During the year 1480, Simon Montfort and his son Thomas sold oaks and other trees from the Kingshurst Estate, to Robert Onley. He specifies in the deed that the trees situated on the Knobbe were not to be touched, this is presumably the one that still stands behind the flats called Kingshurst House.

It was maintained in the inquisition made in 1526, that Kingshurst had from time immemorial been a separate Manor and never part of Colehill. It has been said that the Manor did not pass with Colehill to the Digbys. It was conveyed to Simon Mountford and others in 1529 and Simon addressed a letter from there to Cromwell in 1531.



Kingshurst Hall Just Prior to Demolition

In 1534, the attainder against Sir Simon Mountfort was reversed and his grandson, also Simon, was granted the Manor of Kingshurst. The Digby family still disputed possession of the Manor, but in 1578 George Digby made a conveyance of Kingshurst to Francis and William Mountfort. William Mountfort was holding the Manor of the King by fealty and rent of a red rose at his death in 1610. He also held Kingshurst Park.

On 24th October 1601, at his son Edward's Marriage with Elizabeth, daughter of Valentine Browne, he settled this Manor with others on them and their male heirs. Sir Edward Montfort subsequently passed away his rights in the Manor to Robert Digby Lord of Coleshill.

IN 1610 WILLIAM BULL MOVED INTO KINGSBURST.

William Bull moved into Kingshurst Hall, as a tenant of the Digbys after selling Sheldon Hall to the Devereux family.

In 1635 on the death of William Bull, the tenancy passed to his son Josias, who held it until his death in 1671. It then passed to his son William, who held it until his death in 1723. He was followed by his son Josias, who lived there until his death in 1743. The tenancy was then left to his nephew John York, who lived until 1792 and he left it to his son Richard York, who stayed until his death in 1812.

Again the tenancy of the Hall passed to a nephew, Luke Bull York. After his death the Hall was vacant for some time. However, the length of time is not quite clear as there are records of both Charles Thornley and Cattell family members being associated with the Hall.

IN 1876 THE TENANCY PASSED INTO THE TOWNSHEND FAMILY.

Henry Townshend resided there from 1876 to 1937. The tenancy passed then to sons George and Walter Townshend who remained there until George died in 1959 and Walter Townshend moved to Castle Bromwich before the Hall was finally demolished in 1962.



Kingshurst Hall

Having spent time researching the area around Babbs Mill Park, it appears to have a long history. However, as pointed out in 'History of Kingshurst', a small book purchased from my local library almost thirty years ago, most of the area's history has lapsed into obscurity. The majority of the area we know as Kingshurst today was created post-war, to deal with population growth. Since living in Kingshurst, I have often heard people complain that we are always bottom of the priority list when it comes to local improvements or community projects. It can sometimes feel that we live in a forgotten area that no-one cares about. An example of this is the situation with our local shopping centre. In 1995, when I moved to the area, murmurs of a new shopping centre were swirling, and had been for a few years previous to that. However, the project has been subject to so many funding issues, that we have only recently seen the old centre demolished. Despite promises that building would start this summer, the pile of rubble remains and there is no sign of any progress. In the meantime, we are left with an inadequate, ridiculously expensive local store, one building that houses the library and hairdresser, a small pharmacy and a dentist surgery. Our local residents deserve better. The identity of a region is often formed by its history but it feels that Kingshurst has lacked a historical identity for many years. I would like to educate children in my school setting about the area's history and make them feel proud of their village.

Conserve...




What is a meadow?
A meadow is grassland which is not regularly grazed or cut, but instead is allowed to grow to produce hay. Meadows hold some of the most diverse range of different grass and herb species of any one habitat. Meadows are a key source of food for many insects and birds. Meadows are also a source of many different plants and flowers. Meadows are also a source of many different plants and flowers. Meadows are also a source of many different plants and flowers.



Managing our meadows
Regular mowing or cutting with long to create a healthy meadow. The grass will receive an annual hay cut between July and August, which is the best time to mow meadows for both wildlife and practical hay making considerations. Parts of the meadow may be left uncut to provide later flowering species seed and to provide areas of longer grass as an opportunity for some insects and small mammals.



Enhancing our meadows
Before these improvements, the grassland of this park had few types of grass and wildflowers, which means limited ecological value. Therefore seed was collected from local species rich meadows, cutting the native wildflowers and grasses in late summer just after flowering. This green hay was brought to this park and spread, so that the seed had the chance to germinate and enhance the grassland for wildlife and people.



Signage explaining current conservation methods

Why are meadows important?
Meadows are a key source of food for many insects and birds. Meadows are also a source of many different plants and flowers. Meadows are also a source of many different plants and flowers.



Why are meadows important?
Meadows are a key source of food for many insects and birds. Meadows are also a source of many different plants and flowers. Meadows are also a source of many different plants and flowers.





As can be seen from the images on the previous page, lots has been done already to conserve the environment within Babbs Mill Park. Work has been supported by the European Union Regional Development Fund and the Warwickshire Wildlife Fund.

It has been pleasing to see new trees planted in the park, which I believe were put in place to replace trees chopped down when some new houses were built at the rear of the park. Also, many of the trees which have been cut down have left rotting stumps which are an ideal home for insects of many types, such as woodlice, beetles and the like. The Kingfisher Project have also played a big part in caring for the River Cole, of which the manmade lake in Babbs Mill forms a part.

Kingfisher Project

Kingfisher Country Park was opened in July 2004. The park was created to care for an 11km stretch of the River Cole valley, improving it both for people and wildlife.

The valley contains many different types of landscape and wildlife habitats. Alongside the river there are areas of formal public open space, tall herbs and scrub, coarse grassland, wetland with several small ponds and ancient woodland.

The park includes man-made lakes, including Shard End and Babbs Mill Lake. Shard End's lake was created in an old gravel quarry, while Babbs Mill Lake in Kingshurst serves as a flood control feature.

A variety of wildlife can be observed along the river, including kingfishers, herons, water voles, minks, and otters. Shard End features ponds that have become havens for pond invertebrates, amphibians, and winter visitors like teal and widgeons. Nearby coarse grassland provides a breeding ground for skylarks.

Works Wood in Kingshurst, an 11 hectare ancient woodland, is home to a variety of birds, such as sparrow hawks and greater spotted woodpeckers. In spring, the woodland floor is carpeted with bluebells, wood anemone, and celandine. Late autumn brings the discovery of various fungi, contributing to the woodland's year-round appeal.



*Kingsfisher Stone
in
the park*



A home for insects

Through my local Asda supermarket, I have found details of a local community group, which arranges litter picking in the local area. They require volunteers and are happy for people to help out for whatever length of time they can. When school finishes in one week, I shall be contacting the representative to offer my help.

In addition, I have researched more about blackbirds and ladybirds and now know how to encourage them and cater for their wellbeing. As my place of interest is a public park, I will be limited on what I am allowed to do but plan to put my ideas into practice at home, in my own garden, to encourage the wildlife that is already there.

Blackbirds

In relation to blackbirds, I already have a large area of blackberry bushes where many birds come to feed and rest. However, I had never thought to leave water out for them also. I have now placed a shallow plant pot dish in the midst of the bushes, out of the reach of cats and other possible predators.

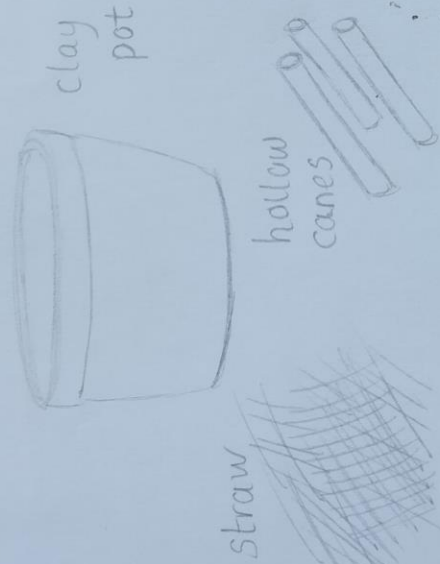
While researching on the Woodland Trust website (woodlandtrust.org.uk), I had also not known that blackbirds mostly forage for food on the ground, rather than up high on bird tables. They can also apparently hear worms moving under the surface of the ground. Insects are mostly eaten in spring and summer, whilst fruit and seeds are more important in winter. I have noted this and will be sure to vary where I place food this winter.



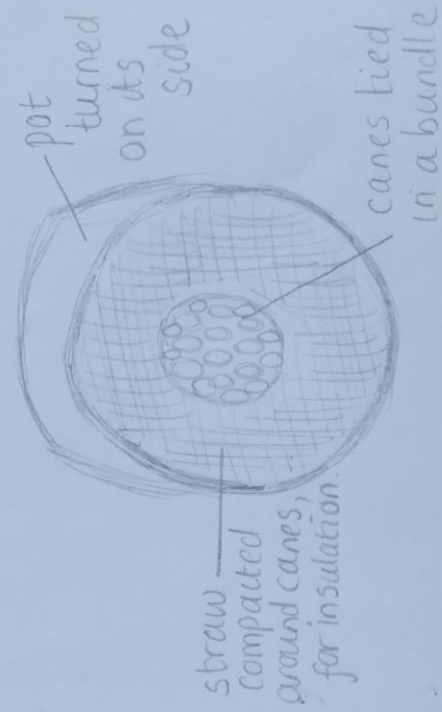
A blackbird sketch
inspired by reading
feeding advice on various
websites and seeing
lots of beautiful blackbird
images.

Ladybirds

Having already seen ladybird larvae on blackberry bushes at Babbs Mill, I have observed my own blackberry bushes and seen a couple of adult ladybirds there too. My garden is very natural and ladybirds will not be damaged by any pesticides, as I do not use them. However I have no actual purpose built places for ladybirds or other insects to live. I have watched a video on how to make a ladybird home from a crack plant pot, some straw and some hollow garden canes, and this is something I plan to do in the summer holidays, giving a safe but not too artificial place, to support the ladybirds.



Finished ladybird home



Information obtained via Asda Supermarket:

The Big Help Out - www.thebighelpout.org.uk

I will be meeting a group of local volunteers outside our local Asda, in two weeks time, to participate in local litter picking activities.

Via the Solihull Council website, I have also discovered a group known as 'Clean & Green' who are active in cleaning up the local environment, including Babbs Mill Park. I will be following their Facebook page to spot details of future events I can attend.

Just half an hour ago they reported having collected 13 bags of litter, bags of cans and a car bumper from Babbs Mill Park!

Let's say goodbye
to sights like this.



Share...

As an experience I have thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the John Muir Award, and have found my love of the outdoors and nature being brought into much sharper focus than before. Leading such busy lives sometimes causes us to lose touch with the things we enjoyed as children or young adults and it is important that we don't let this affect our sense of wonder and awe at the natural world around us.

In order to share the experience I have had, I will be presenting this scrapbook to my university lecturers, alongside a critical analysis of how the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework supports but also sometimes hinders the delivery of education for sustainability and citizenship. In doing so, I will take into consideration children's rights, the role of adults in education for sustainability and the effects of socio-cultural, historic, legislative and policy contexts, in relation to sustainability. All of these areas have an impact on early years education and care and will be explored in depth.

In addition, this scrapbook and my presentation notes will be shared with the Dean of my university, hopefully providing ideas and inspiration for sustainability modules in future courses and degrees.

Following presentation of my work, my aim is to share it with the staff at my place of work. I currently work in a primary school situated in a deprived area of Solihull in the west Midlands and understand that many children in our school do not have access to gardens or places of interest. I want to provide the benefits of outdoor learning in providing a holistic education for our children, and to encourage staff and leadership to link outdoor learning to all areas of the curriculum on a more frequent basis. As we are about to begin the new school year with a different headteacher, my hope is that new ways of learning will be embraced and that we can equip children with the knowledge and skills needed to protect the surrounding environment for themselves and future generations.

Ironically, whilst working on my scrapbook in school, at the end of the day, I was advised by the cleaner that I had no need to use the clean recycling container any more as school no longer had a recycling bin collection in place. I was horrified by this information, having seen how much paper is thrown away every day and already dismayed that we do not have other recycling facilities for plastics also. Milk cartons, drinks bottles and plastic packaging are being discarded daily with the normal school waste.

As part of promoting sustainability, I will be speaking to our new headteacher about the reasons for recycling being discontinued and whether or not there is a way to reinstate the collections.

John Muir Factfile

Name

John Muir

Born

April 21st, 1838, in Dunbar (a Scottish port)

Died

Died in a Los Angeles hospital in 1914, following a short illness.

Family

Muir married Louie Wanda Strentzel in 1880 and raised two daughters named Wanda and Helen.

Occupation

Explorer, Inventor, Conservationist and Writer

Beliefs

John Muir believed it was not enough to just appreciate the nature around us, but that we should aim to become active in its conservation. Muir fought to conserve wild places as he believed they offered experiential value and that they provided a chance to measure the effects of human influence, as compared with other areas. Muir was motivated by his passion for natural spaces and was committed to preserving America's wild environments.

Background

John Muir emigrated to the United States in 1949, aged 11, alongside his family. His love for the natural environment began in periods of rest from working on the family farm, when Muir and his brother would explore the fields and woods of Wisconsin. In 1867, Muir suffered an eye injury, temporarily blinding him. When his sight returned, he vowed to focus on conservation of the fields and woods and began to travel around the world. In 1874, his writings entitled 'Studies in the Sierra' launched his writing career. He became a founder of the conservation movement and was passionate about protecting the world's natural landscapes. He undertook expeditions to mountains, glaciers and forests, inspiring many people with his writings on his discoveries. His influence helped create Yosemite National Park, and he was also a founder of the Sierra Club. The purpose of this club was to promote the appreciation and protection of wild places. Muir also fought against commercial industries invading the areas and spoiling the natural environment. In the late 1800's, some of the wild spaces faced the threat of logging by timber companies, but his perseverance paid off and led to some important victories. Such wins had a positive impact on the National Park System currently in place.

Critique of Muir's work

Muir's early work was considered discriminatory towards Native Americans however this was thought to be a product of his strict upbringing and his views eventually changed. He grew to empathise with and admire the indigenous communities for their minimal ecological footprint and the way they cared for the land. He later joined the Sequoyia League (an indigenous rights organisation).

Fun fact

Muir became an inventor and once invented a device to tip him out of his bed, before dawn broke.

Legacy

The importance of protecting the world's wild spaces is more relevant today than ever before. Muir possessed the admirable quality of being willing and able to change his views when presented with new information that countered his previous beliefs. This is a trait that could serve modern conservationists well today, when new discoveries are made so rapidly, due to technological advances.

The John Muir Award

The John Muir Award was introduced in 1997 and continues to the present day, albeit with a slightly altered approach for 2025. In 2023, the 500,000th John Muir Award was celebrated.

John Muir inspires me to take a more active role in the conservation of my local wild spaces, due to his wanting to learn more about the relationships between plants, land, and animals. As a lover of all three, I would like to improve my knowledge of their interconnectedness, rather than simply appreciating them in their individual forms.