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Scrap book



Discover Tennant Canal



I choose to explore my local canal called the Tennant canal. I always use to go here on a Sunday to walk my Nan's dog Lucy. It's a peaceful canal, but I have never took in its beauty or to stop and look at the wildlife at the canal. Meaning I did not appreciate my surroundings and the things within.



Lucy



That is why I have chosen the Tennant canal to return to this area to really explore and take in the surroundings in depth, and appreciate the wildlife. I am interested to see what plants and wildlife live there, and how I can contribute to the environment to promote sustainability to improve the area.



The Tennant canal flows through Jersery Marine through Cadoxton, joining the Neath canal by Aberdulais, which is 8 miles long.

Originally, it was built to connect the River Tawe and River Neath, but when finished the Tennant canal ran from the River Tawe to the Neath canal.

The Tennant canal was formed in 1824. Its purpose was also to help allow traffic of boats transporting goods to flow through better and taking stress of traffic off the Neath Canal, creating time efficient shipping, and allowing boats to rejoin the Neath canal to continue their journey.



Explore



Explore means to travel through a new area in order to learn about it, and being able to take in the beauty of a place.



The Tennant canal was not a new area for me, but really it was. Following the John Muir award, it is allowing me to explore a new side to the canal, include it's wildlife and the wonderful things that grow there, and the smells & sounds.



Upon entering the Tennant canal, I was brought to peace by the water of the canal flowing down by listening to it.

BUT something else caught my attention. This was ...

Japanese Knotweed



Japanese Knotweed is an invasive species that grows aggressively. It can damage plant growth, damage property and is hard to eliminate.

This can be harmful to a canal area as it can choke water ways and destroy habitats.

It can also block sunlight to other plants from the Japanese Knotweed being tall, affecting the overall health of the ecosystem.

Under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**, it's an offense to plant or cause this to grow in the wild.

Flowers



I went down the canal twice over a period of 2 weeks. I noticed the first time I went down at the end of March, there was very many flowers that had not bloomed yet. But, the second time I visited the canal at the beginning of April, I noticed more flowers around and a pollen smell in the air. For example, the first time I went the bluebells were not out, but they were the second time.

First visit



31st March

Bluebells grow in broadleaf woodland, fields, and along hedgerows. Bluebells will normally flower around mid-April to late May. Bluebells grow best in the shade, which the ones down the Tennant canal were shaded a little bit, which could suggest how they bloomed quickly in a short amount of time.

Bluebells



Second visit

10th April

Fun fact:

Their sticky sap was used in the 1500's to tie pages to books and glue feathers to arrows.



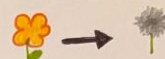
Dandelion clock

Down the Tennant canal, there was plenty of dandelions and dandelion clocks around, brightening up the canal with their bright yellow colour.

Dandelion



The dandelion clock is a white, fluffy, and sphere shaped seed head that was once the dandelion flower.



These flowers spread through the wind or people blowing the dandelion clock, which causes the seeds to spread and grow new flowers.

I have fond memories from childhood of always blowing a dandelion clock whenever I saw one, I would pretend to count the time. For example: 1 blow = 1 o'clock.



Buttercup



Buttercups are a common wild flower and there are nearly 2000 different species. The bright yellow colour of the flower is down to the pigmentation, and their shiny gloss comes from the layers of air beneath the surface. This causes their yellow reflection. A childhood game I use to play was place a buttercup under someones chin, and if it reflected yellow light it meant they like butter.



Red campion

The red campion flower is native to Europe and Asia, but is introduced to other parts of the world as a weed. It can grow up to 1 meter and is strong in scent. When I spotted this down the Tennant canal

there was only a few flowers of red campion out, so maybe that's why I did not personally find it strong smelling.

ALTHOUGH this plant is toxic to livestock and pets causing vomiting and diarrhea. From researching this flower I did not know the danger to pets. This knowledge has allowed me to educate my family, by making sure the family dog Lucy does not eat this.



Daisy



The daisy is 2 flowers merged into 1. It has a large outer layer of petals that makes up 1 part of the flower. The smaller cluster of tiny petals form the center of the flower. Daisy flowers are a well-known popular flower, resulting in children creating "daisy chains" or "necklaces", which is something I loved to do when I was younger, and each time I see a daisy I am reminded.

Daisies can grow everywhere, in shade or sunny weather and on grassy fields or mountains. The flower resembles innocence, purity, loyalty and patience. I believe this is fitting for the daisy as it is a small simple flower.



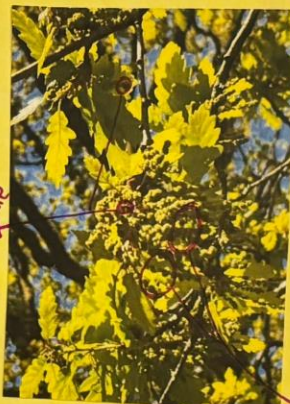
Ivy berries

When down the Tennant canal, I noticed these berries on the edge of the water. I researched these and found they were ivy berries. The berries are the flowers of the ivy plant, that develop after the flower has been pollinated. The ivy plant flowers between September to November, and the berries grow between late November to early spring.

The berries are nutritious and high in fat for birds to eat, and give them energy. However, these berries are toxic to humans when consumed.



Oak tree flower



The oak tree flowers are fascinating. They have male and female flowers. The females are small red buds between the leaves. The male flowers are the long, dangly clusters and appear during April and May, and they release the pollen into the air. These bloom before the oak tree leaves grow.



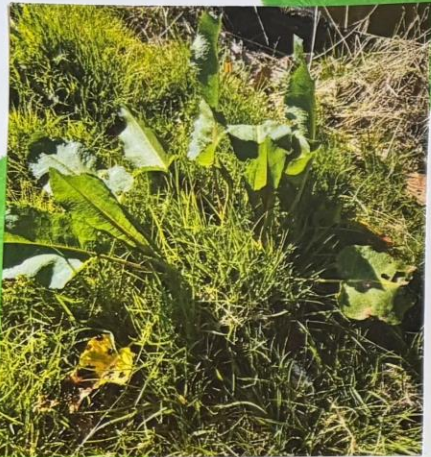
Opposite-leaved golden saxifrage

This flower plant has paired, rounded, green leaves with small, golden flowers among the green leaves. This plant is found near moisture near wet or damp areas, meaning the Tennant canal was a perfect habitat for this plant. It creates a positive habitat for small insects and small animals that like damp areas, such as ants, spiders and earwigs.



Dock Leaf

The dock leaf is a widely known plant around the world, by having the ability to grow in all temperatures. This plant can grow on many different land types such as waste ground, meadows, ditches, shorelines and river-banks. The dock leaf has many benefits for humans by being a herbal remedy for skin conditions, digestive issues and anemia. When I was younger my family have always taught me to rub a dock leaf on myself if I get stung by a stingy nettle, to relieve the pain. So, this plant is familiar to me.



Birds



When visiting the Tennant canal, I was surprised to not see as many bird as I hoped. However, birds need quiet areas to sleep and to destress, and as the Tennant canal is just the other side of the A465, which is a busy dual carriage way. When down the canal it can be noisy from the constant roar of cars passing, and could explain the lack of birds living at the canal.

Ducks

Ducks are a diverse group of water birds, which have webbed feet and waterproof feathers. Ducks can be found near wetland areas, so they can swim to conserve energy and health, and swimming lets them search for food and interact with their environment.

male mallard duck

female mallard duck



When spending time down the Tennant canal, the only breed of duck I saw, was the mallard duck. These ducks are mostly commonly found on UK canals. The females are a brown colour. While the males have a green head and a brown toned back end.



The ducks on the canal looked peaceful and calm while they swam along, quacking away. When watching them swimming, I noticed now there was always a male and female mallard duck together. This is because they form bonds or pairs for the breeding season, which is late winter to early spring.

I noticed this duck hiding in some reeds. This duck was hard for me to spot because they hide in the reeds to protect themselves from predators, such as foxes.



There was a road safety barrier in the canal, which a duck was swimming around. This is littering and can cause harm to the ducks, for example if they swim into it it could hurt them. 😞

Pigeons



There was plenty of pigeons down the Tennant canal, hiding in between the trees and sitting on branches.

These pigeons look like the common wood pigeon, and can be found in woodland areas. They are classified as amber in the UK under the Birds of Conservation Concern 5: the Red List for Birds.



I spotted a few nests high in the trees. Pigeons typically nest and breed from March to October. Although, Pigeons do not have good nest building skills by using just twigs and leaves.



Butterflies



Down the Tennant canal, I saw a few butterflies flying around happily. Although, I only managed to capture a few pictures as they were so fast.



The green-veined white butterfly

There was a few of these butterflies around the canal, which makes sense as these butterflies prefer damp areas. It is also attracted to bright flowers like buttercups and bluebells. This particular one landed on a yellow dandelion. I watched it sit there for a while collecting nectar. The green-veined white butterfly are drawn to these nectar-rich flowers.

The painted lady

I only saw one painted lady butterfly, and was constantly on the move, to one flower to another, closing its wings for a rest and then going on. They only live between 2-4 weeks, and are native to Africa, and arrives every year for the UK summer, making it a long distant migrant.



Holly blue butterfly

This was my favourite butterfly I saw down the canal, and was also was the only one I saw. They like to fly high in trees, in bushes and grasslands, but I observed this one being content on the ground. They are popular early spring which is when I went down the canal.



Butterflies are attracted to nectar which comes from flowers, as it is a food source for them. They contribute to the environment by being great pollinators, as when they land on flowers and move, it then transfers to other flowers and the air.



Bees



When visiting the canal, I saw a few bees around. I firstly heard them with their buzzing sound, and then saw them flying past.



Bumble bee

I capture the bumble bee taking in a rest and the pollen from the dandelion flower. Bumble bees can detect the nutritional value of the pollen and the quality of plants. They also build their nests close to the ground. These bumble bees do not make honey as they do not need money to survive the winter, as most die in Autumn.

Bumble bee



Honey bee

I saw one honey bee, happily sitting on the flower collecting nectar and pollen to make honey. The honey bee is more slimmer compared to the bumble bee, so they can move faster to collect pollen and nectar, and smaller to be able to fit and move in the hive.

Bumble bee



Honey bee



Conserve



Conserve: The careful management and protection of natural resources or living things, to ensure their sustainability for future generations

I have reflected on the Tennant canal visit and now I can contribute to conserve and protect the canal and its sustainability for the future. Here is a few ideas I implemented...

Idea 1: Nature back pack



Within my setting, the children often go out on walks around the local area and woodland. I suggested we could enhance these walks by creating bags that have information books, like birds and flowers, magnifying glasses, binoculars, paper bags to collect anything they wanted to keep, and a pencil and book to draw or write.

How does this promote and conserve nature?

- Allowing children to be involved in nature, it allows them to understand how to protect their environment for the better and for the future.
- Help them to want to protect their environment for the future generations, and how their actions affect the environment.
- children become more knowledgeable on what lives in our environment.
- The outdoors improve children's mental health and resilience leading to happier children.



Idea 2: Bee Keeping

our hives



I have grown up with my dad being a beekeeper. Over the past three years, I have made regular trips with him to see the hives, and being taught about bees and the hives, and the honey within. My Dad has about 30 hives in total on a local farm, creating local honey and conserving our environments.



How do we promote and conserve the environment?

- Protecting pollinators by providing healthy colonies (hives).
- Biodiversity by encourage pollinator-friendly environments.
- From the above we get the added benefit of honey (natural food resources)
- Beekeeping supports diverse plant species and bees encourage growth of plants, by transferring the nectar when flying
- The bees turn the nectar and pollen into honey, and as beekeepers we remove this to allow the bees to keep working.



Honey comb where bees store honey and lay eggs.



Idea 3: Duck platform



When I was down the Tennant canal with my Dad, I was wondering how I can contribute to the duck's life on the canal. I discussed this with my Dad and we came to a conclusion that a duck platform would be beneficial.

The benefits of a duck platform is it offers safety to the ducks, from predators. Platforms that float above the water are appealing qualities to ponds, lakes and canals towards the wildlife, as for example they are a safe nesting area for ducks, away from predators like foxes.



I felt this was essential for the canal as there was not much bank area for the ducks to rest or nest. The canal is known to be home for the foxes so this proved to be a beneficial project for the Tennant canal.



How did I make the duck platform?

Firstly, I explored my garden and found materials that I could recycle and use. I knew what materials I needed from research I had carried out. These materials were:



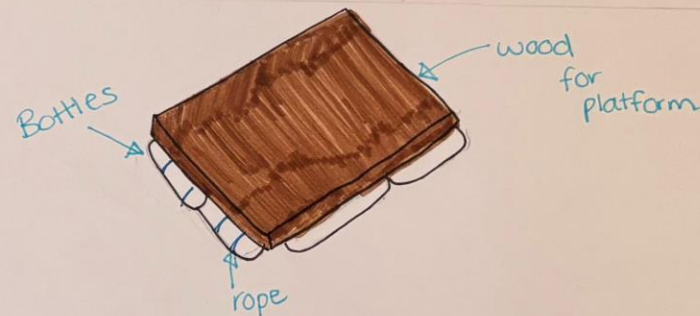
Wooden plank

- placed upon bottles for the ducks to sit on



Bottles
- used to float the platform

I reused these materials as it promotes sustainability as it promotes less waste. I built the duck platform with the help of my Dad as he is knowledgeable on the outdoors. The platform was a quick and easy build, and asking my Dad for guidance when needed. I drew a plan to follow of how I want the duck platform to look.



Testing the duck platform:

After building the platform, I took it to the Tennant canal to check it floated well.

I was unsure how well it would float, as building this was a new experience for me. When it floated, I was shocked and happy as my plan worked, and I knew it positively supported the ducks and breeding of ducks down the canal.



As this was successful, I am interested in making more of these for further up the canal. I am also looking more ways to contribute to the canal by making bug hotels in the future and bird houses.



Share



(the Tennant canal when it was used for transportation in the 1900s)

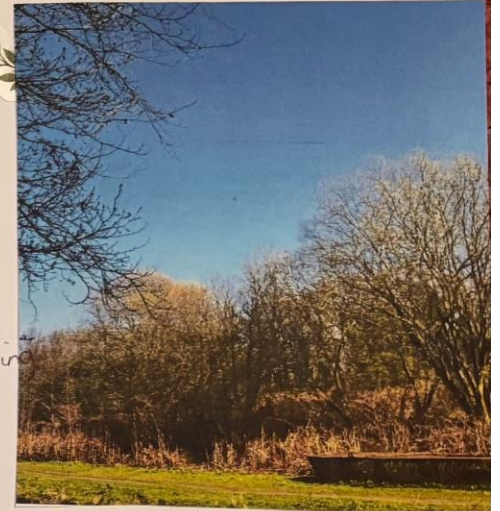
I feel honoured to have shared the canal with many individuals of Cadaxton, past and present. Without the hard work from people of the past to build and work on the Tennant canal, I would not be able to share the history of it with my family or with the John Muir Award.



I shared this project with my family.

They quickly became curious when I started visiting the canal more often to capture pictures and the beauty. This resulted in my family joining my walks down the Tennant canal to share my experience.

I was obvious in my family's interest, for example my sister kept finding flowers and wondering what they were.



Once I have finished my scrap book, I have promised my elderly relative and my Mum, Dad and sister they can look through it. I hope this will encourage them and help them to promote sustainability, through understanding how as human beings we are responsible for our environment, and how this promote wildlife and plants to grow and breed.

This project has enabled us as a family to connect with nature again like we did once before.



John Muir



John Muir was born in Scotland 1838, where he found his love for the outdoors. Aged 11 he moved to America. This sparked his passion to explore, to write and campaign to protect the outdoor spaces. He understood and wanted to protect wildlife and their environments for the wellbeing of people and wildlife. He wrote articles to enable others to understand nature, and developed the world's first national park system. He recognised that nature contributed to the wellbeing of humans and that plants should be a value to themselves and not to be exploited.

His campaign against exploitation and the degradation of natural resources, and advocated against preserving them and protecting them.



David Attenborough



David Attenborough is also a conservationist like John Muir. Like John Muir he is widely known for his work and promotion in conserving and appreciating the natural world. He has committed 60 years of his life to promoting and advocating the world through documentaries (Blue Planet), public appearances and doing work with conservation charities (WWF). His work recognised biodiversity loss and climate change influencing positive sustainability in today's world.

