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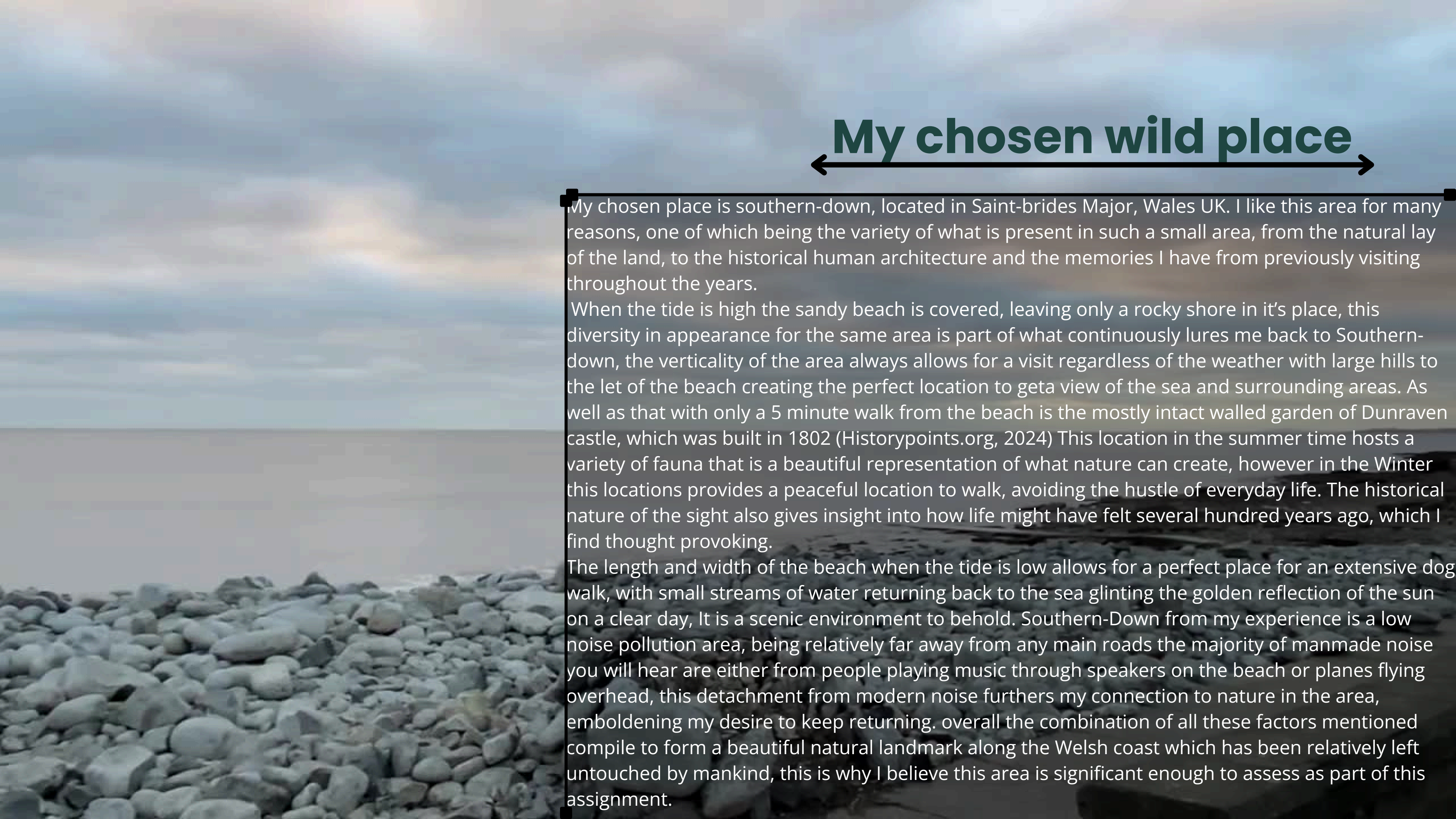
Liam Evans: Ecology assignment 2

Within this presentation I will name a wild place I have ventured into, which in this case was the beach located within south Wales called Southern-down; mentioning what I find admirable about it, along with attributes that I believe make it worthy of this assignments focus and how I have developed a connection to this place.

I will then show videos and photographs evidencing my visit and what I did in my time spent there to get to know the place, highlighting its key natural characteristics and what makes it a unique landmark in comparison to other areas.

In another slide I will state and present how I actively took measures to preserve and promote the health of the area I visited in an ecological manner.

finally I will reflect on how my visit to Southern-down impacted my opinion on the area and how my actions within the area changed my perspective of how to engage with that environment in the future. I will then go through self reflection, stating how my attitude has changed and assessing what more I can do to preserve that type of area along with how this experience influenced my own ambitions in the outdoor sector. I will then go through why I chose to use this presentation design to format my assignment and how I feels it aids in visually



My chosen wild place

My chosen place is southern-down, located in Saint-brides Major, Wales UK. I like this area for many reasons, one of which being the variety of what is present in such a small area, from the natural lay of the land, to the historical human architecture and the memories I have from previously visiting throughout the years.

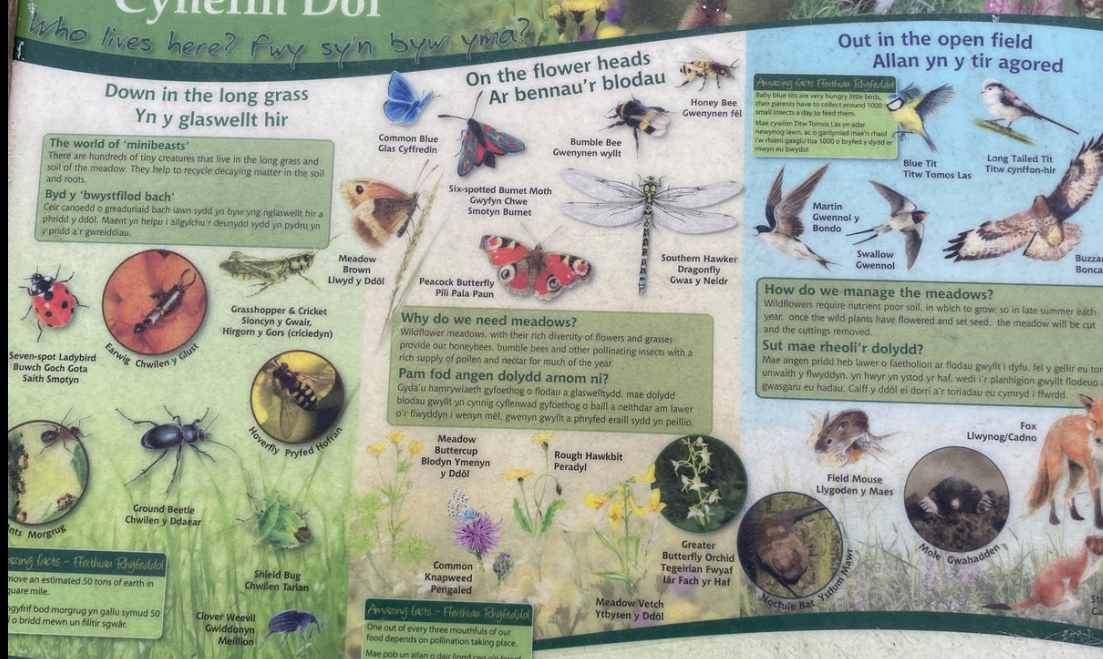
When the tide is high the sandy beach is covered, leaving only a rocky shore in it's place, this diversity in appearance for the same area is part of what continuously lures me back to Southern-down, the verticality of the area always allows for a visit regardless of the weather with large hills to the let of the beach creating the perfect location to get a view of the sea and surrounding areas. As well as that with only a 5 minute walk from the beach is the mostly intact walled garden of Dunraven castle, which was built in 1802 (Historypoints.org, 2024) This location in the summer time hosts a variety of fauna that is a beautiful representation of what nature can create, however in the Winter this locations provides a peaceful location to walk, avoiding the hustle of everyday life. The historical nature of the sight also gives insight into how life might have felt several hundred years ago, which I find thought provoking.

The length and width of the beach when the tide is low allows for a perfect place for an extensive dog walk, with small streams of water returning back to the sea glinting the golden reflection of the sun on a clear day, It is a scenic environment to behold. Southern-Down from my experience is a low noise pollution area, being relatively far away from any main roads the majority of manmade noise you will hear are either from people playing music through speakers on the beach or planes flying overhead, this detachment from modern noise furthers my connection to nature in the area, emboldening my desire to keep returning. overall the combination of all these factors mentioned compile to form a beautiful natural landmark along the Welsh coast which has been relatively left untouched by mankind, this is why I believe this area is significant enough to assess as part of this assignment.



Exploring the Wildness

Upon exploring southern-Down I found a variety of landmarks, including Wildlife, nature retaking man-made architecture, and the impacts of erosion changing the landscape slowly but surely over the years. Next to each provided image I will provide context as to their value in exploring the wildness of the area.



Upon arriving at the walled garden of Dunraven castle, it was clear the nature has began the process of reclaiming the land upon which the walled garden sits upon, with vines of ivy creeping over the tall thick walls and cracks forming from trees growing through the wall itself. Through time the wildlife of the area has completely reclaimed the area upon which Dunraven castle sat with many trees and bushes now towering above what remains of the shattered timeworn castle walls, so much so that if you did not know the castle once stood there, you would not have an idea of it's existence at all. The gardens interior is still managed and cared for, preventing nature from taking complete control over the area. this speaks to the wildness of the area profoundly

Through exploring this location, I found a board containing a visualisation of the wildlife located within Southern-Down. The birds present in the area are Blue Tits, Long tailed tits, Martins, Swallows and buzzards. There are also mammals present in the area, Foxes, Field mice, Moles, Stoats and bats. Southern-Down is also home to a variety of plant life including the Greater Butterfly Orchid, Meadow Vetch, Rough Hawkbit, Meadow Buttercup and common knapweed. The board also shows the insect life: Honey bees, Bumble bees, southern hawker dragonflies, peacock butterflies, meadow brown butterflies and six spotted burnet moths all reside within the meadows surrounding Southern- Down. Ladybirds, ground beetles, shield bugs and clover weevils also call Southern-Down their home.



Another example of nature reclaiming the wildness of the area within Southern-Down would be the clear indicator of coastal erosion and intense weather knocking down walls that are over 6ft tall as well as the ground eroding away from underneath them, this everchanging landscape emphasises the wildness of the area, indicating that despite long human presence, nature has been whittling away at the walls of the castle garden and the wall lined along the beach's car park along the drive down to the beach it is also visible that coastal erosion has taken away walls of old sheep pens along the cliff edge. It is a unique experience to witness this damage not being repaired, creating an authentic and memorable set of areas to explore without recent human intervention. the combination of old human architecture, coastal erosion and wildlife speaks to the wild nature



through my own visit to the area, Southern-Down seemed to be relatively clean in comparison to other coastal areas of Wales such as Pourthcawl. This may be due to the popularity and easy access to other areas. There were however several areas in Southern-Down that had rubbish spread around, likely a result of storm Darragh which conjured winds of up to 90 miles per hour (FOX Weather, 2024) however these wrappers and bags were easily collected and placed in the bin they leaked from. from experience in the area Southern-Down is a popular area for teens and young adults to set up fires and play music into the night. The aftermath of these fires can be viewed in these photos, in order to respect the environment I believe its important to return stones used in fires where they were taken from and scoop up the ashes with a dustpan and place them in a nearby bin to leave the area as you came to it



upon my visit there was also a large amount of natural debris lining the coast of the stony beach, this was also likely a result of storm Darragh which likely caught many loose twigs and branches and brushed them along the shoreline. Whilst not an issue in itself amongst these branches and twigs were many man made plastics such as netting and wrappers; Such materials are not natural to this environment and should be removed. In my visit, any netting, wrappers and plastics spotted amongst this natural formation were plucked out and placed in the nearby bin, ensuring that natural wildlife didn't mistake it for food or get snagged in the netting etc.



Animals in Southern-Down such as the different bird species mentioned in the previous slide along with fish can get caught in these fishing nets and other man made materials. This can lead to injuries, infections, and even death. (National ocean service, Gov, 2024) This can be avoided through simply cleaning what you see on a beach visit



Reflection - my experience

Overall, I feel as though my understanding for the ecosystem within Southern-Down has deepened, With this visit I made sure to pay close attention to discovering the natural wildlife in the area and the impacts of nature overtime on the surrounding architecture. After assessing the manmade impacts of the area such as littering, the remnants of campfire ashes etc I felt as though such a beautiful area should be respected by those who visit it and an active effort to leave the area as it was found should be taken by any visitors.

Through taking action and cleaning the area my sense of attachment to Southern-Down has also increased, I have developed a sense of responsibility for the upkeep for the area through my now deepened understanding of the wildlife that inhabits its land. This interaction only fuels my ambitions to pursue a role or job that plays an educational role in protecting the environments we so frequently engage with and often take for granted.

References

(Historypoints.org, 2024, *Site of Dunraven Castle*)

(National Ocean Service.Gov, 2024, *What are the impacts of marine debris*)

(Sistek, S, 2024, *Storm Darragh Wind Speeds: Fox News*)

