

My John Muir experience with nature

I Discovered.....

Westhay Moor National Nature Reserve

My wonderful find of a natural experience was Westhay Moor National Nature Reserve, which is based in Glastonbury, Somerset, and covers 106 hectares. A true insight into the natural environment teeming with amazing wildlife. The landscape has wet woodlands; lakes and pools; vast reed-beds and raised bogs.

I take a deep breath, and breathe in that wonderful fresh air,

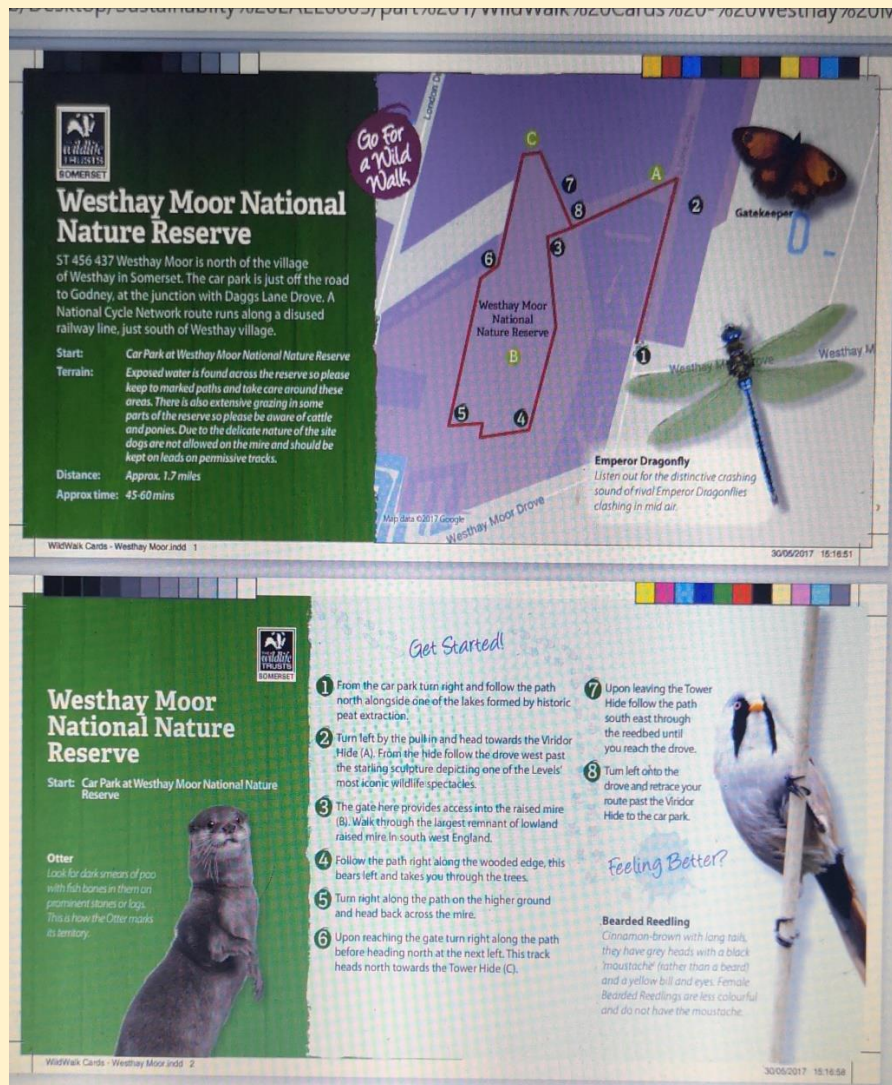
The beautiful natural aroma in morning, and that bright blue sky,

I'm planning my day to explore nature, but where?

The sun is shining bright up high, my favourite month, it must be July.

(D Winney July 2021)





/ walked, / looked, / stopped, / listened. Those wonderful smells, sounds and sights.



If you are thinking a year ahead, plant a seed

If you are thinking a decade ahead, plant a tree

If you are thinking a century ahead, educate the people.

(Chinese Poem)





(Happily Ever Mom)

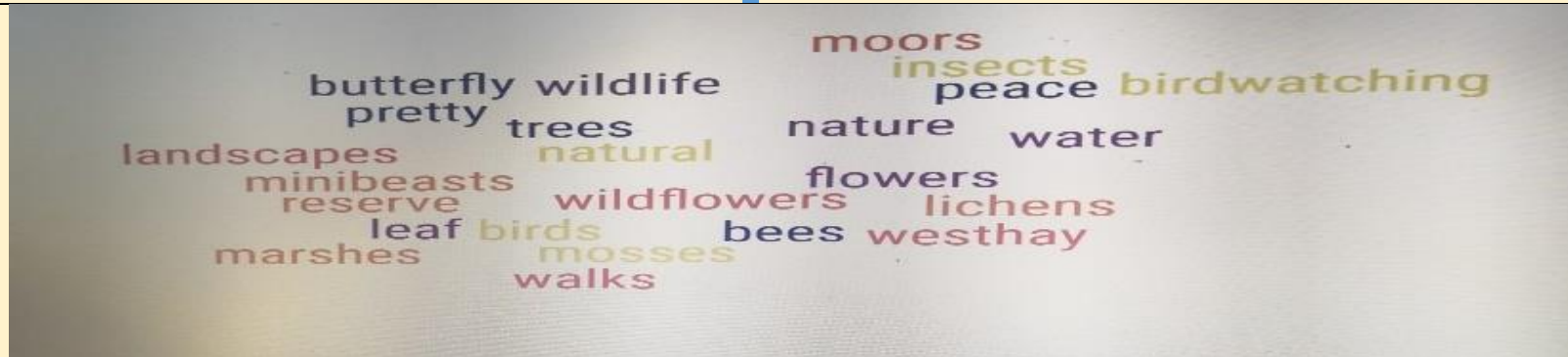




'Wildness is where one feels oneself to be in a wild place.' Aldous Huxley



I Explored



Wild flowers and Insects





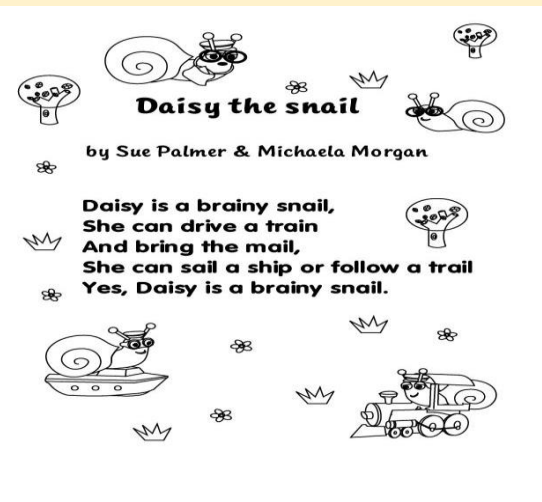
I walked these paths many times, different times of the day, but never stopped to take in those wonderful sights, such as the wild flowers. Those pretty colours, the smells, and some were so soft to touch. I looked closely at the flowers, to see many insects living within the flower.





‘...it is not enough for people to be in sympathy with the plight of the natural world, they must become ‘active conservationists’, as campaigners, as practical project workers, as scientist, as artists, as writers.’ John Muir.





(Pinterest)

One morning, I came across The Emperor dragonfly, in fact there were hundreds. They were close to the water edge; it was their impressive colour and large in size that caught my eye. The female differed slightly to the male, as the colour was a duller greeny-blue whereas the male, was pale blue with a black stripe running down the body and an apple green thorax.

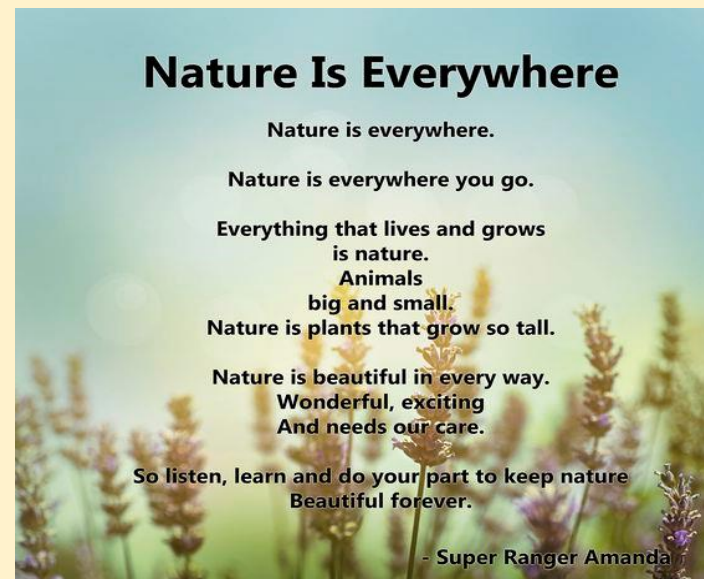




Going on a nature treasure hunt, let's see what we can find.....

Idea of treasure to find		Choose your own treasure for your setting:
☐ Tree		☐
☐ Grass		☐
☐ Dandelion		☐
☐ Daisy		☐
☐ Bee		☐
☐ Bird		☐
☐ Worm		☐
☐ Leaf		☐

(NDNA)



(Pinterest)

Caterpillars



Hungry Caterpillar Song
Seasonal Songs in Aktion by The Learning Station

I'm a very hungry caterpillar crawling around,
Eating everything in sight that can be found.
I'm weaving a cocoon on a good size twig,
And I'm starting to get real big.



I'm eating so much, you can hear me chew.
Chomp, chomp, chomp's all I want to do!
So much that I just can't stop.
I'm afraid that I might pop! Pop!



I'm a butterfly flying about.
I'm beautiful, I want to twist and shout. Hey!
I'm a butterfly; it's a brand new day.
And I still hear my little friends say...

[Repeat]

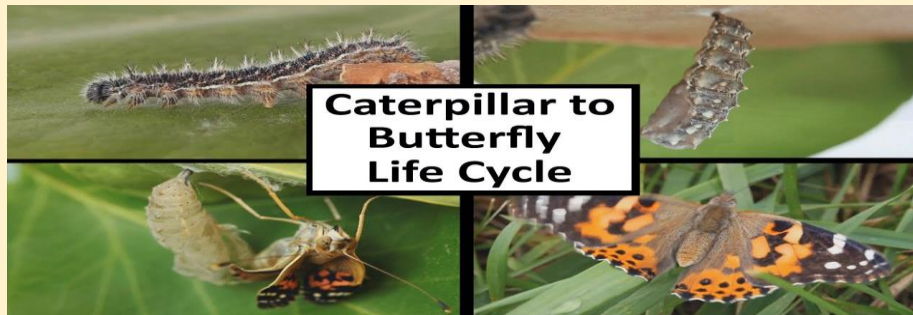
<http://www.gut.bear/watch?v=qfch0wlg8>



(Pinterest)

10 frequently asked questions about a Caterpillar

1-Q. What is the first meal a caterpillars has?	A. It's own shell
2-Q. The caterpillar has one job, what is it?	A. To eat. They eat leaves, flowers, plants
3-Q. How much do caterpillars increas their body mass?	A. It is as much as 1,000 times or more
4-Q. How many eyes do a caterpillar have?	A. 12, which are in a semi circle
5-Q. How many muscles does a caterpillar have in its body?	A. It is 4,000
6-Q. How many legs do a caterpillar have?	A. its 6, which is same as adult butterflies and moths
7-Q. What can caterpillars produce?	A. Silk
8-Q. Why do other animals like to eat caterpillars?	A. Caerpillars contain a lot of protein
9-Q. What is the average size of a caterpillar	A. The size of a caerpillar is between 30 to 60 mm
10-Q. What is the average lifespan of a caterpillar	A. The average is just three weeks



(Pinterest)



(Pinterest)

Butterflies



To a Butterfly



*I've watched you now a full half-hour
self-poised upon that yellow flower
And you little Butterfly! Indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.*

10 facts of Butterflies

- 1. Around the world there are 20,000 known species of butterflies*
- 2. Skippers and true butterflies are the two main groups of butterflies*
- 3. "Flutter" is a group of butterflies*
- 4. Butterflies live in all different environment conditions*
- 5. Tropical areas or rainforest is where most species are found*
- 6. Female butterflies are heavier than males*
- 7. 56 million years ago butterfly fossils date back to Palaeocene epoch*
- 8. Butterflies evolved from moths*

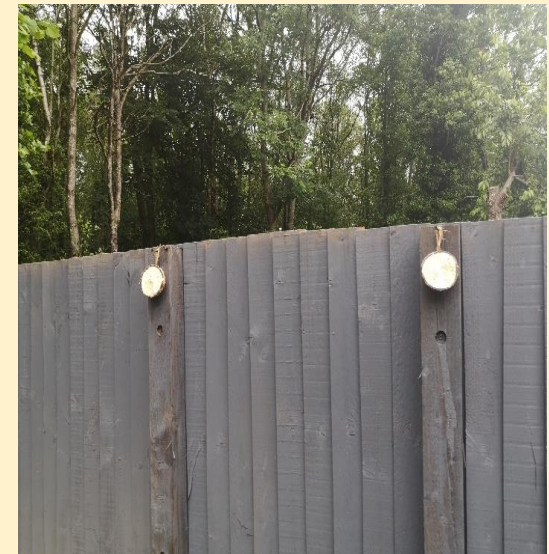
*How motionless! – not frozen seas
More motionless! And then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!
This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My tress they are, my sister's flowers;
Have rest your wings when they are
weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.
By William Wordsworth (1770-1850)*

9. *Bees are the largest group of pollinators in the world and butterflies are second*
10. *Butterflies' breath through openings on the abdomen called 'spiracles' as they don't have lungs.*



Conserve

Following my wonderful adventure and experience with wild nature, and ensuring I leave those exciting trails as I found them, taking all my rubbish home and not to litter this pleasing environment. It made me reflect back at my home and garden, I now wanted an animal friendly environment to support a sustainable future. With the woods behind my garden and the birds that visit regularly, I decided to place suet coconut feed on the back fence.





I peep over the fence and look what
I see,
a little grey squirrel ignoring me,
he's sat on the tree in his drey,
I wonder if he wants to come and
play.

D. Winney (July 2021)

I also wanted to have bees, butterflies and insects in my garden. Therefore, I upcycled those old plant pots, a touch of paint, new healthy soil and some wonderful plants to encourage nature to visit. When choosing the plants, I researched which were the best for these wonderful creatures to make them want to visit my garden, however, what a pleasant surprise when I got to the garden centre, to find that they promote 'bee friendly' and 'bee happy plants', along with 'Garden Xperience' where these promote and encourage butterflies and bees. There is now rich habitat for these loved plants, which caring from them supports our well-being too. To ensure I stay in touch with nature and continue to learn, I have signed up to the e bulletins of John Muir, Westhay, Somerset Wildlife Trust and RSPB



Insect exploring the flower



Bee friendly flowers

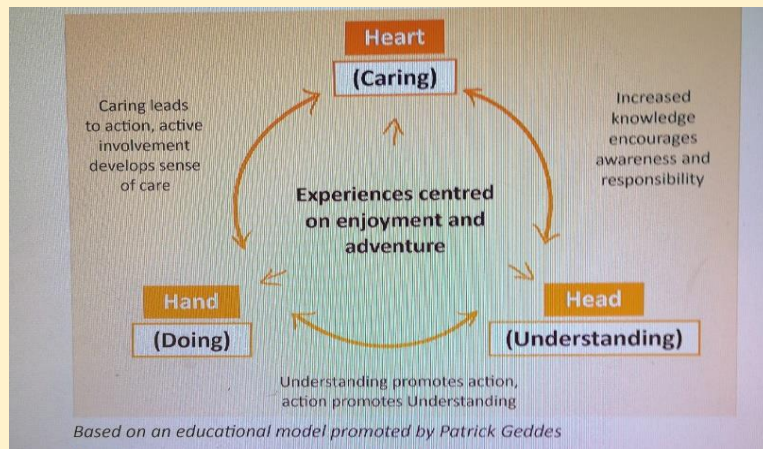


Butterfly and Bee friendly flowers



Share and Reflect

Taking part in the John Muir award has been joyous, the amazing time exploring and what wonderful and beautiful sights, sounds and smells I have experienced. The knowledge I have gained, whether it was something small or big, all contributed towards my learning. I have appreciated everything about this journey, along with the positive aspect for my health and well-being. Having a better understanding gave me passion for the spectacular outdoor environment and a great love for nature, and those things I took for granted, and didn't notice before. This holistic approach, Heart, Head, Hand has got me closer to nature.



The John Muir Award

I went to **Discover** what would I find?

I need to **Explore** to stimulate the mind,

I want to **Conserve** and protect biodiversity,

I am proud to **Share** with my University.

(D.Winney July 2021)