

Sustainability in Early Years



Discover Pembrokeshire!



During my John Muir award I decided to explore and discover places in Pembrokeshire.

Firstly me and my family went to Bosherton Lily Ponds. Bosherton Lily Ponds is part of Pembrokeshire's national park and is my families favourite place to visit. The views are beautiful and it has a perfect mix of woodland and coastal walk paths to discover as well as the perfect broad haven beach.

The second place we visited in Pembrokeshire was Scolton Manor in Harfordwest. This was a new place that my family discovered during our Pembrokeshire adventures and it instantly became a family favourite that we will continue to visit regularly. Scolton Manor focuses on explore, play and discover and has plenty of opportunities to do so; with an onsite bee keeping centre, an eco explorer woodland village and plenty of ponds and bird hides too.

During our Pembrokeshire adventures I discovered how my children thrive in nature and seem to be the most confident outdoors where they are able to freely learn about things they discover and are genuinely interested in learning about.





Exploring Bosherton



While exploring Bosherton Lily ponds I was blown away by its natural beauty and the wildlife we experienced. I was also shocked by how clean the paths were and how little litter we spotted during our adventure which was a nice surprise.

*Bosherton Lily
Ponds!*



Exploring pLants



Wild Garlic!



Bluebells



Dandelions



Cherry Blossom



The Swans of Bosherton



I watched in awe as a Mother swan laid on her eggs in a perfectly made nest in the lily pond. I was especially surprised by how interested my 5 year old was to see the swan in her nest and he also asked if he could take a picture of the swan so he could tell his friends in school.

That night I was curious to know how long Swan eggs take to hatch The Swan Sanctuary (no date) state how it only takes 6 weeks for swan eggs to hatch therefore in 6 weeks time we intend to go back to Bosherton lily ponds to see if we can spot some baby swans (also known as cygnets).



More Birds of Basherston...



As we walked up this woodland path we caught a bird picking something up with its beak and smashing it into the ground. As we got closer the bird got scared and flew off but left what was in its beak on ground. It was an empty snail shell as the bird had managed to eat the snail inside.

Snail shell



I felt incredibly lucky to see so many herons on our visit to Basherston Lily Ponds. I was even more shocked when a Heron flew down and sat on a rock across the stream from where me and my family were having a picnic. It was absolutely amazing to be able to admire a bird that you don't see everyday up close. Unfortunately we weren't lucky enough to see the heron in action and catching any fish but it was still an incredible experience to watch the heron.



Amazing

Nature



When your woodland adventure leads you to the coast....



The beautiful Broad Haven beach!

we read books about the sea creatures we may find on the beach. We got sand in between our toes and had a family sandcastle competition

We discussed with our 4 year olds the importance of bringing all of our rubbish from our picnic home and also the importance of beach conversation and cleaning up litter on the beach. However there was no litter on Broad Haven beach which was lovely to see



Exploring Scolton Manor



Our first ever visit to Scolton manor was for the John Muir Award. On this particular day my partner was unable to join me therefore I took the 2 children by myself. I realised that although I had never been to Scolton Manor before and I was by myself with the children I was much more confident due to the fact that I feel at home in Pembrokeshire and feel a sense of belonging in the area.

We in fact had a wonderful day, my son spent time using his imagination and making up games in the parks, we visited the bee centre and sat outside the tea room eating ice cream and listening to the bird. My daughter even had her first taste of ice cream at Scolton Manor.



The Highlight of our
Adventure...

The Eco Explorer woodland
village



The most incredible park we have ever visited!
Look at that amazing tree house



However there's more....

Scattered around the eco explorer village park were bat and bird houses in the trees as well as areas with Bug houses for children to fill with rocks, sticks, mud and plants that they discover around the park. The park also included educational games for children such as leaf identification.

This inspired me and the children to fill the bug houses in the park and also look into making our own bug in our garden to attract and observe bugs in the garden.



Leaf identification



Bug House



Bat House

The Walled Gardens



Butterfly



As we walked through the walled garden I admired the willow arch as my son ran through it using his imagination to make a game. We observed the beautiful flowers growing and watched a butterfly fly from flower to flower. We even got to go into the greenhouse and see what fruit and vegetables they were growing. I was very impressed to hear that all the local produce they grow in the walled garden gets used in the onsite tea room.

The Bee Centre



Some good tips to help the Bees

What more can we all do in Pembrokeshire?

- Avoid the use of pesticides which are injurious to pollinators
- Ensure pollinating insects are considered when planning weed spraying and hedge cutting, especially during the flowering season
- Protect natural habitats such as native meadows and pastures
- Encourage the planting of bee friendly plants
- Encourage the public to take up beekeeping or to put bumble bee boxes in their gardens
- Educate the young on the environmental importance of bees
- Protect swarms – Ensure information is readily available for the public about who to contact if they see a swarm
- Avoid throwing out unwashed honey jars. Honey from overseas can contain serious diseases harmful to our bees

Behind this fence we could see all the bee hives and how close they were to all the lovely flowers in the walled garden.



Unfortunately the day we visited, the honey kitchen was closed and the shop had sold out of honey which means we will have to return to see the honey kitchen in action and to buy some Scolton Manor honey.

Spotting wildlife....



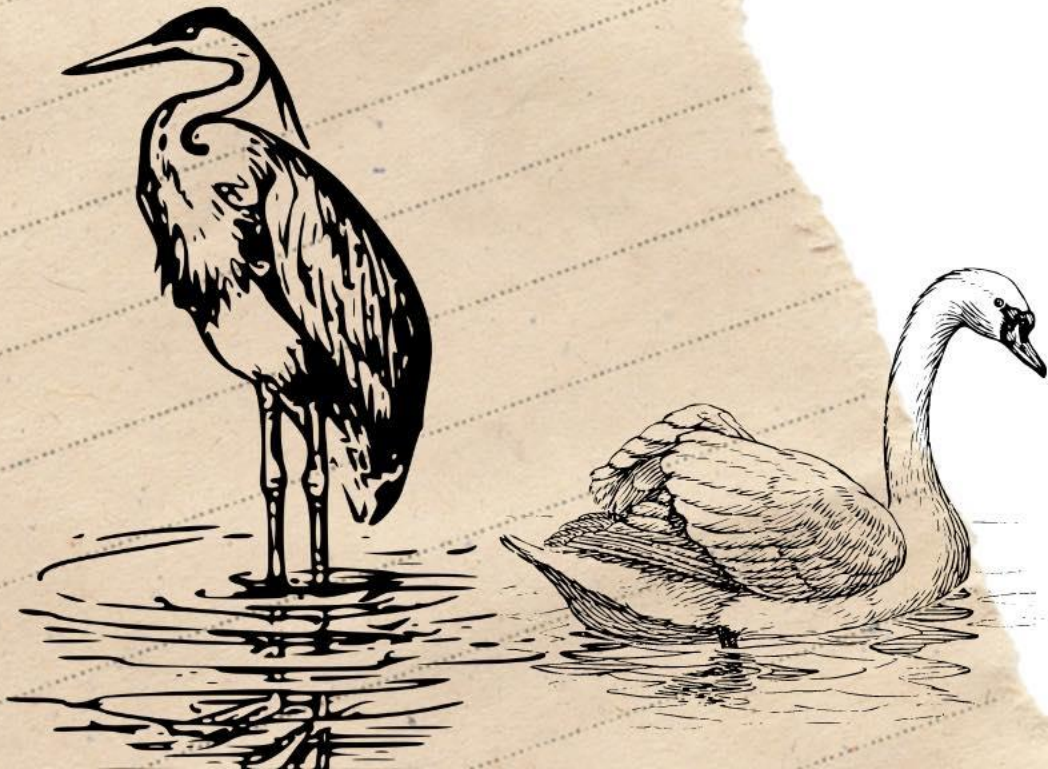
The Swan and The Heron

In reeds by the coast, where sea meets the sky,
A swan glides gracefully, her feathers shimmering high.
With elegance unmatched, she dances on the lake,
Her beauty is breathtaking, no mistake.

Yet nearby, a heron stands tall and still,
In the shallows, with patience and skill.
The shadow of him against the setting sun,
A picture of peace, second to none.

They share this realm, the swan and heron,
Each embodying grace in their own melodic song.
One glides on the surface, the other poised to dive,
Together in harmony, they thrive.

In this dance of nature, they find their place,
A swan's gentle glide, a heron's silent grace.
Two creatures of water, in perfect accord,
Their presence a testament to nature's reward.



CONSERVATION

After our Pembrokeshire adventure we as a family were inspired to attract more nature and wildlife to our own garden. We as a family want to do our part in nature conservation and protect our planet.

We decided to try and attract more wildlife to our garden



We are extremely fortunate that behind our house is a beautiful woodland and we often see all sorts of birds, squirrels and bats. The woodlands is also home to many others types of wildlife that we just haven't been fortunate to see yet. For example most mornings we wake to the sound of a woodpecker pecking at trees but we are yet to actually see him.

We decided that to attract wildlife to the garden we would need bird feeders, a bug house and adding some other homes for wildlife to use if they wished to do so.



Our garden



We created a bug hotel for the garden

After being inspired by the bug hotels in Scolton Manor we decided to create our own Bug hotel. Bug hotels help to provided bugs with safety and shelter and can also help to attract more bugs to the garden as they have somewhere to raise their young.



Making bird feeders

Me and my daughter created a bird feeder by using a toilet roll and covering it in peanut butter and then rolling the peanut butter roll in bird seeds. We then used string to hang it up and added a skewer through the middle for the birds to stand on.

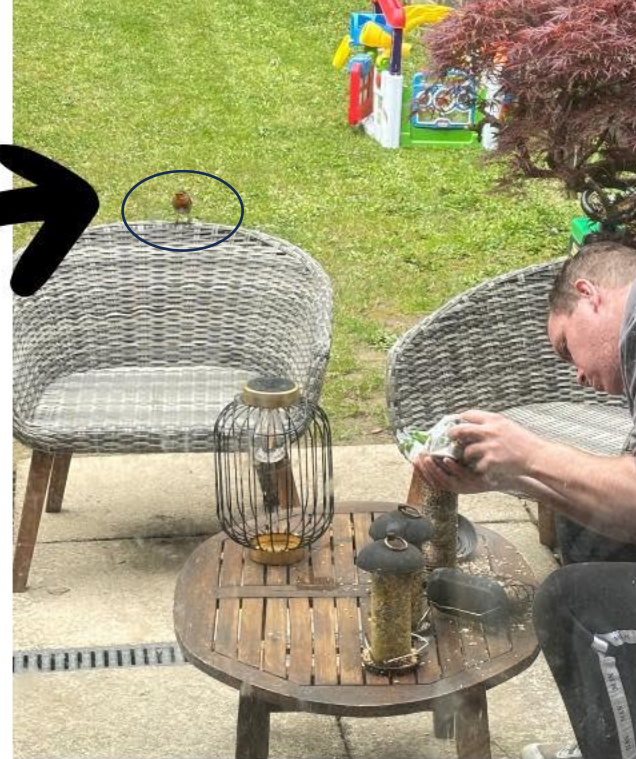
Birds struggle to find food in the winter months therefore by supplying food to the birds all year round the birds will have a reliable food source that they can count on.



Feeding and attracting more birds to our garden



Watch this greedy robin creep closer and closer to the food!





To be more sustainable we also have been trying to hang our washing outside in the garden when the weather is dry to avoid using the tumble dryer.

We installed a bat house at the back of our garden as we have a lot of bats flying around in the night.



Reflection

Upon reflection the John Muir awards has given my family an incredible opportunity to connect with nature and spend quality time together. It has given us a new perspective and allowed us to make changes in our garden to conserve nature. These changes have also impacted our daily lives as now as a family we look forward to going outside in the mornings and filling up our bird feeders as well as hanging up our washing on the dry days and we also spend more time looking through our patio doors and admiring the birds in our garden. The John Muir award has also shown me that I can do activities like making bird feeders with me 9-month-old and building and painting a bug hotel with my 4-year-old and they are not too young to be getting involved in conservation projects.

