

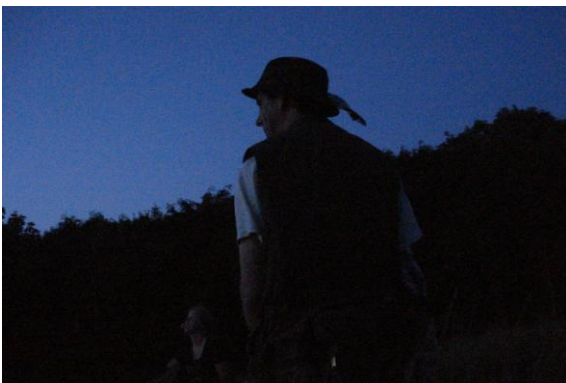
## Exploring Nature play SW – World of difference - Vodafone volunteer project



The magical part of 'Exploring Nature Play' is that you can take something quite ordinary and turn it into something wonderful .. like a volunteering opportunity turned into a <sup>1</sup>John Muir Award Pilot with 12 children and adults all gaining their Discovery level award, making new friends, exploring magic wild places, discovering and conserving those wild places right on their doorstep, sharing what they find and learn.

Here is a short story about our magical journey.

Last year Dan and I saw an advert from <sup>2</sup>Vodafone looking for 500 volunteers from across the country to be supported through their World of difference campaign. You had to identify and approach a charity that you would like to work with, gain their permission to support your application and then write a proposal about why your volunteering with this project would make a difference.



Step 1- Dan asked if <sup>3</sup>National Children's Bureau - NCB the host charity for the Play England team would support his application as he would like to volunteer with <sup>4</sup>Play England Access to Nature funded Exploring Nature Play (SW) project based at Fort Apache/ Play Torbay, after some discussions and a few emails and a proposal to SMT, it was approved and Dan could then start working on the Volunteering proposal.

Step 2 - With 4 months part time work available we felt that it was important to do something outside the box, 1. Be an integral part of the Exploring Nature play team. 2. Delivery of a John Muir Discovery level Award. Dan had already accompanied me on fact finding mission to find out more about the John Muir Trust as it was something that he had already expressed an interest in - I needed to see for myself how Play and an environmental award could sit together.

I needn't have worried – it fitted perfectly next step Dan would need to write a proposal outlining the project then wait and see if our Vodafone placement would be granted! .

Step 3 - World of Difference Vodafone proposal was written, submitted, and Dan was successful and selected as a WOD Vodafone Volunteer.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.jmt.org/jmaward-home.asp>

<sup>2</sup> Vodafone World of Difference volunteer - <http://worldofdifference.vodafone.co.uk/default.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> NCB National Children's Bureau - <http://www.ncb.org.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> Play England - <http://www.playengland.org.uk/>

Step 4 – John Muir Discovery Award delivery plan written and submitted, and was successfully chosen as a suitable project for the award scheme.

March 26<sup>th</sup> – Dan attends Explore : Play: Connect conference in North Tyneside as part of the Exploring Nature Play (SW) team delivers a very successful bushcraft /play workshop, starts writing BLOGS, tweeting and FB entries to share his experiences.



### Evaluation feedback from Explore :Play: Connect

“This is my first pointy stick – I am going to ask for a knife for my birthday and try whittling at home”

“It’s so satisfying when you light your first fire!”

“Hot chocolate made using a Kelly kettle and marshmallows cooked on a fire in a colander – that’s a first for me!”



April – Attends Play Torbay’s AGM to promote the John Muir Award opportunity - Identifies group of children / families to participate in JMA

May – Hosts introductory JMA session followed by 2 activity sessions, to discover and explore our wild places of Primley Park and Fort Apache Adventures Playground.

June – 2 sessions at Fort Apache, to explore the wild play space and carry out conservation work.

July – A night walk and afternoon session, to discover the wildlife of Primley Park.

August – Celebration exhibition.



October – Dan will attend Explore play Connect – in the City to talk about the adventure!

In addition to this very successful JMA pilot project Dan has also used his placement to develop his skills in working with a national charity, take on more responsibility in planning and delivering activities, working to a agreed plan with a variety of partners. Support a group of adults and children to gain a nationally recognised award. He has set up his own small business, and is taking on local and regional commissioned work. This stage of our adventure is nearly over but for Dan, well I think he has many new adventures to have with his organisation Sylvan Adventures. Please get in touch, if you have any questions on [danbest@sylvanadventures.org](mailto:danbest@sylvanadventures.org)

<http://www.sylvanadventures.org>

<http://worldofdifference.vodafone.co.uk/blogs/daniel-best2012/>

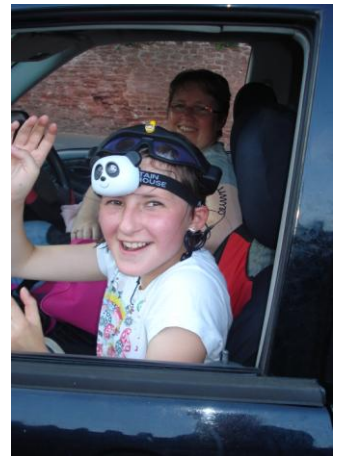
## Evaluation feedback from The John Muir Award

From an adult “The sessions were well thought out and inclusive.”

“The night walk was a great idea.” “It was fun to explore Primley Park in the dark.” (young person on JMA)

“Well thought out and planned, relaxed, flexible, focused and reflective.”

Activities suitable for JMA “Yes, they helped engaged people with the environments they were in, enabled adults and children to be involved together.



“Made people think about nature and conservation.” “Encouraged sharing of experiences.”

“He helped us to recognised and explore nature, he made sure it was fun, interesting and educational for the wide range of ages.”

“Through activities and games together and on our own, we used all our senses to explore what was around us.”

“It was great to explore the wilderness of a space that’s right in the middle of an urban area.”

“It was great to explore 2 different types of spaces.”

“I don’t think there was anything that I didn’t like – except when I couldn’t go.” “I would have loved to do a residential.”

“I think Dan would have been a John Muir.”

“He knew his audience and helped them to play to their strengths so that they all wanted to be there and do more.”

“How and where to plant new trees to keep the wild place growing.”

“I would also like to commend the JMT for a fantastic award that’s accessible and flexible and a great learning too for all ages, helping us to learn, explore, share and conserve the world around us in a way that we can all do something to help.” Jane Hembrow (PE)

“Very good – enthusiastic and friendly at all times. Plus very knowledgeable.” (Adult on JMA)

Something from Dan =

## World of Difference Vodafone proposal

Aim of the 4 months x 15 hours per week volunteer project :-

- Lead a local pilot of an award that would support the aims of “Exploring Nature Play” project and take the children on a new adventure :
- Identify a group of aprox 12 children and volunteers who would take part and help to shape this adventure.

This adventure would allow the children the opportunity to take part in the Four Challenges that are at the heart of each John Muir Award; discover - explore - conserve – share.

Milestone: **Children and adults to explore and become more aware of nature around them and the opportunities for play and enjoyment that it provides.**

Outcome – **150 children, young people and volunteers become more aware of nature.**

**Milestone** – Volunteer will be an integral member of the Exploring Nature play team (SW)



Outcome – **Volunteer will gain new skills**

**Milestone** – Volunteer will with support write the proposal John Muir Award in partnership with the John Muir Trust, including finding the wild place / places.

Outcome – **Exploring Nature play SW/ Play England will become JMA provider**

**Milestone** – Volunteer will promote the John Muir Award and the benefits of participating in it. at the ENP conference in March.

Outcome – **1 Volunteer will share skills with 5 other volunteers, and reach an audience of 100.**

Dan supported a workshop at the Explore Play Connect event in North Tyneside – 150 participants.

Twitter, has currently had 253 twitter followers.

Facebook page viewed by nearly 20,000 different people.

**Milestone** – Volunteer to BLOG and FB on regular basis.

Outcome - **Blog has had 2500 page views, and Project promoted on Sylvan Adventures Facebook page and has had 96 likes, with one posting being seen by 200 people.**

**Milestone** - Identify children and young people who would benefit from being involved in the project, together with volunteers and staff from Fort Apache and local partners.





**Outcome – 12 children and young people will be recruited into the ENP – JMA**

**Milestone** - Deliver the John Muir Award.

**Outcome – 12 children and young people will be awarded JMA, 6 Volunteers will be actively involved in JMA delivery.**

**Milestone** - Organise event for community members with other volunteers and children / young people.

**Outcome – 150 children / young people and community members attend celebration exhibition and presentation. The celebration event took place as a launch of an exhibition portraying both Dan’s journey as a Vodafone volunteer and the John Muir Award, it took place over Playday week!**

**Milestone** - Evaluate and produce a report on the John Muir Award..

**Outcome – report written and adapted for a variety of other uses to publicise and promote the work that Dan has been involved in.**

#### **John Muir Discovery Level Award work plan.**

The main aim of our pilot discovery level John Muir Award, is to introduce the young people and (hopefully their parents / guardians) to new wild spaces in Torbay which they could revisit after the project has finished, to provide bonding experience between the participation, family members and our natural world.

To reduce or remove personal barriers to connecting to nature, through first hand experiences, sensory games and activities.

To boost participants self –confidence and self-esteem, through experiencing new situations and experiences, expressing themselves through physical and craft activities.

To learn more about the natural world and it’s associated wildlife life around them, and its importance to our lives.

To identify what impact our playing is having on our adventure playground “Fort Apache” in Hele, Torbay

Below are some links that you might be interested in:

<http://www.playengland.org.uk/>

<http://www.playengland.org.uk/our-work/projects/exploring-nature-play.aspx>

<http://www.imt.org/jmaward-training-events.asp>

<http://loveoutdoorplay.net/>