

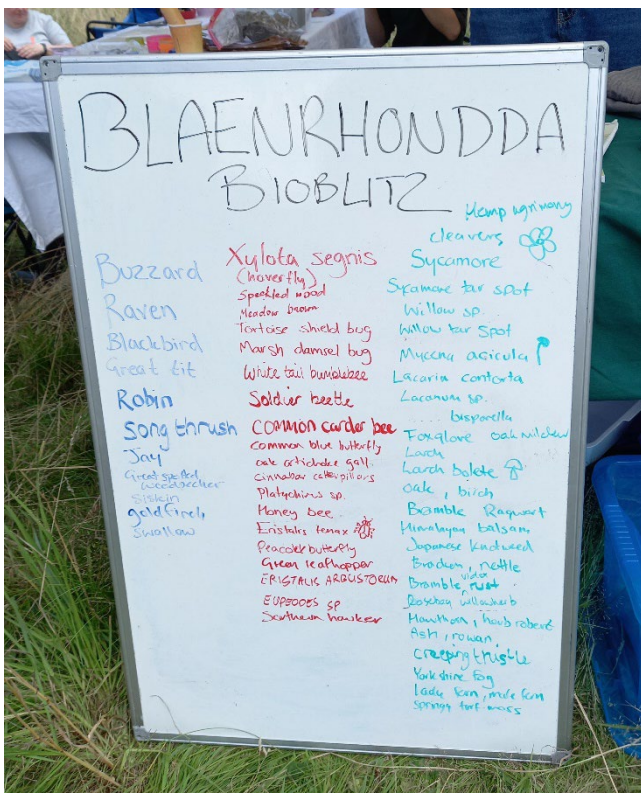
Inspiring young people to care for peatlands

Eleri Reed, a teenager from Swansea in South Wales, found a passion for peatlands while completing her John Muir Award and has spent time inspiring other young people to care for this important habitat.

“I would highly recommend undertaking the John Muir Award as it encourages young people to discover their local environment and take action for it.”



Volunteering alongside the Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project during the summer holidays of 2023, Eleri spent time clearing Himalayan balsam and supporting surveying efforts, including joining a bat survey and multiple wildblitz events. Not only was she able to visit new places, learn about peatland conservation and meet new people, Eleri was also keen to inspire others with her John Muir Award activity.



As a volunteer at her local Girlguiding Brownie Unit, Eleri saw this as a perfect opportunity to engage young people in a conversation about the importance of peatlands and what we can do to help protect them. To undertake this task, Eleri developed a game and a presentation to teach young members about peatlands, John Muir, and the importance of conservation work. Following on from this, Eleri continued this conversation with her peers at school, sharing her knowledge and experience as part of her GCSE Geography project in front of her classmates.

“I have applied to attend college to complete A Levels and I was able to discuss the John Muir Award in my application to demonstrate my interests outside of school.”

“I particularly enjoyed the tasks I completed for the conserve section of the John Muir Award because I found the physical challenge of removing balsam fun and I really felt like I was helping to make a difference. I also really enjoyed going on an evening bat walk with an ecologist and counting the number of bat passes to help survey the activity of this nocturnal mammal.”



In addition to all of this hard work, Eleri has contributed to an [article about her volunteering experience](#) for Lost Peatlands Project. Her review of *The Peatlands of Britain and Ireland – A Traveller’s Guide* was featured in the *Small Woods* magazine making her its youngest reviewer to date. Eleri is now looking to the future and how she can continue this important work.

Peatland restoration

The Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project is a Heritage Lottery Funded project that aims to restore the upland landscape of the Upper Afan Valley in Neath Port Talbot and the Upper Rhondda Fawr in Rhondda Cynon Taf, South Wales. The project encourages local communities to explore and enjoy the local landscape, and to immerse themselves in the history and heritage of the area. You can find out more information about the Lost Peatlands Project and how you can get involved on its [website](#).



Content and photographs provided by Eleri Reed.