



Series 1. Episode 20
Turning *Little Stones* show notes
Listen to a conversation with Libby
Scarfe from 'Seaside Explorers'.

Episode 20
Out & About (3)...
Seaside Adventures! with
Libby Scarfe

This is the third of our Out & About series. Previous podcasts (Episode 5-Woodland Adventures and Episode 12-Heathland Adventures) are available, and accessible from www.turninglittlestones.co.uk In this episode, we've headed to the seaside on a winter's day, when most wouldn't think of going to the beach!

Libby is an experienced primary teacher, who trained as a Beach School Leader. She now runs Beach School sessions for local primary aged children and 'Seaside Explorers' for accompanied children between the ages of 3 and 12.

We recorded this podcast after a Beach School session with a class of Year 1 children...

Connecting with your own 'back yard'

Libby reflects that leaving the classroom to go somewhere different holds a special appeal for children. Her philosophy is that children *first* need to connect with the natural environment wherever they live... it doesn't need to be the beach, the forest or the heathland... nature colonises wherever it can... in a pile of dirt, in moss... Adult carers who notice nature when they are out and about with their children are helping their children to connect with their surroundings... "look, the birds that were on the telegraph wires yesterday are there again today!"

Learning made fun!

As a primary teacher, Libby makes sure that the sessions she runs with school groups are influenced by their school Curriculum Map. Her role is to make whatever they are learning in class "interesting and fun!" She explains that there is no subject that cannot be enhanced and supported at the beach ... "there's poetry, music, maths, Vikings..."

Today's session was built around mapping – something she knew children were looking at in school. This she did by:

- drawing children's attention to direction (turning right as they walked to the beach)

- helping children to 'read' the stylised beach map and interpret it using the key

- inviting children to make their own island from the resources they could find at the beach (mud, rock, sand, pebbles...)

- inviting children to read the simple aerial map that Libby had made of the beach, to identify where some 'treasure' was hidden (and then dig it out!)

- inviting children to draw a map of the islands they had made and indicate where they had buried a 'golden nugget' by marking the spot with a X

In addition, so much more 'learning' was embedded in the session, including:

- creativity: ("stone music" with 2 pebbles) & art and design

- PSHE (working together & keeping safe)

- movement



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reminders of previous learning (such as marine habitats and islands around the island of Britain) and preparation for later sessions (aboriginal art)

The role of the adults

Clearly a certain number of responsible adults were needed to keep children safe. Libby expected the attending adults to be involved and engage in the activities – modelling curiosity and being co-explorers rather than 'teaching'.

The benefit of having Libby present leading and managing the session enabled teaching staff to relax and observe the children. She hopes this as a chance for teachers to gain a fresh perspective of children in their class, who may behave very differently from how they do typically in the classroom. She hopes staff may notice children's fascinations, their strengths, their natural inclinations, their confidence -all emerging by being in a different context.

In other groups, Libby likes to see attending adults learning alongside their children and discover how a trip to the beach can offer so much more than sandcastles and ice cream. The seaside should inspire exploration and curiosity... She hopes that parents and carers will be inspired to connect differently with their children, finding new things to discover together whenever they are 'Out & About'.

Longer term hopes and dreams...

Libby shares her 3 hopes for all children and families attending Seaside Explorers.

1. She wants to see children simply spending time outdoors and enjoying themselves.
2. She wants children to learn to appreciate their own 'back yard', love it and take care of it.
3. In time, she wants them to bring their own children to the beach, think of fun things they can do together, sharing and losing themselves in "the wonder, drama, the excitement of being outdoors".

She wants adults to understand that they don't need the latest expensive toys... a few recycled bits from home and spending time in nature is the best type of fun for children.

Time & Tide Bell & Coastal Connections

Libby is also involved in two exciting projects. Around the UK coastline, 'Time and Tide Bells' are being installed as art installations. It is a way for communities to celebrate and notice the connections between land and sea, the tides, ourselves and our environments.

Linked to this is a new project, called 'Coastal Connections' which aims to link the memories of the sea and coast through story. Libby is involving schools and community groups in this exciting project. Find out more about both at <https://timeandtidebell.org>

Further information, practical guidance and advice are available through

Turning Little Stones

Delving a little Deeper

See website for details.