

Our Report:

Our trip to visit the Eden Project in Cornwall was an incredible experience, where we learnt about not only the plant life and other features of the Project itself, but also learnt how to plan and organise such an adventure.

The Trip:

The journey started early in the morning at Whittlesford train station, where we met up with our luggage in tow. We arrived in plenty of time for our train, and in fact were waiting for a while! Once we reached London, we had to take the Tube to Paddington, which was an okay journey because the Elizabeth line is not as noisy. Next was the train to Plymouth, where we saw some stunning views of the sea! The trainline went right up to the water, so we could see it very clearly. On this train, we ate our lunch, and Sophie brought an extra treat of chocolate to keep us going! We also walked up to the door of the train and got a lovely view of the coast from there too. We changed trains successfully at Plymouth, and were headed for St Austell Station. Sophie had a little nap, it had been a long day but out of the windows were beautiful sights of forests.



Eventually we arrived at St Austell! The trek up to the Premier Inn wasn't far, although it was all uphill. However, there were lovely views all the way there. It did mean as we trundled up, we could see the town laid out below us. We were glad to finally reach our accommodation, where we split up to go and unpack our things and freshen up before dinner. We reconvened for dinner at the Premier Inn restaurant, which was very tasty although a hefty wait - luckily we brought entertainment, and played some of our favourite games as we waited and discussed how excited we were for the following day when we would be visiting the Eden Project!



The next day, the wait was over and it was time for the Eden Project! Our initial plan had been to take the bus, but as we felt up to it we decided to walk instead - a good decision, as it was a beautiful route with gorgeous scenery and babbling brooks. It was pretty peaceful, too, with only the odd walker.



We reached the Eden Project, and queued to get in. It was very busy there! Walking out of the centre, there was a viewing platform from which you could see the Biomes.



We walked down and around the outside parts of the Project first, trying to see as much as possible. Unfortunately, we were unable to see Bombus the giant bee, a piece of artwork we were particularly keen to see, as it was not where it was indicated on the map. We attempted to check lots of sources to find out if it had been relocated but sadly this was to no avail. Then, we walked past the tea on the way to the Rainforest Biome. We spent a while rubbing our fingers on the plants to smell all of the different scents which was really fun-especially as Neri is such a tea enthusiast! We prioritised the Rainforest Biome because during our initial research for the Project, the Rainforest Biome sounded the most impressive, and it was significantly bigger, alongside this, Sophie is very keen on all of the plants of the Rainforest with one of her favourite childhood books being Eva Ibbotson's "Journey To The River Sea". Bags and coats were left in the storage, because the Biome was very warm and we didn't want to overheat. It was an incredible experience; trees towering high above our heads, leaves of brilliant greens, and a

myriad of floral scents. The incredible thing about the Biome was how immersive it was - when you were in it you really felt as though you were actually in the rainforest and it was an unforgettable experience. There were exciting and additional touches such as the giant waterfall, and other smaller ones - you could splash people with water from alongside one of the rope bridges that had water mist coming up from it, which was lovely to cool down. It was definitely fair to say that both of us ended up very wet! Although, if you were feeling too hot there was an air con room, which provided a much needed, blissful break from the high heat of the biome. Another incredible addition was the viewing platform which we queued to climb up. This allowed us to see the entirety of the Biome from up high and see just how incredible and beautiful it was all together. However, it was very high up and we did get a little scared - the steps and platform itself swung from side to side a bit due to the fact that they were suspended from the Biome's roof on steel cables but it really added an incredible, additional touch to the experience of the Rainforest Biome. All in all, the Rainforest Biome was truly the highlight of the Eden project.



We left the Rainforest Biome to sit outside and have our lunch. There, we discussed our next move - the day was progressing and we needed to allow time to walk back, but we still had the Mediterranean Biome to go, along with several other bits we wanted to see on the way. One day didn't feel enough to admire it all properly, so we ended up deciding to come back again the next day. Our original plan had been to go on a walk that day, but the tickets give you as many visits as you would like for the whole year, and we had come all this way so wanted to get as much out of it as we could. We thought we'd look at the bits and pieces like Infinity Blue that afternoon, and spend the next morning looking at the Mediterranean Biome. So we headed to The Core which contained Infinity Blue alongside some other artwork such as 'Seed' (a piece of artwork which is a giant stone representation of a seed). We spent a fair amount of time at Infinity Blue because during our research of the Eden project we saw it and thought how incredible it looked but when actually seeing it was even more impressive and a real highlight of the trip! It was also interesting for Neri to see the "Seed" and Infinity Blue because of her passion for art.

Once we'd finished for the day, it was time to head back. For dinner, we went for pizza instead of waiting for the Premier Inn dinner. The pizza place was just round the corner, so we looked up a menu, decided our orders, and went round to get our food, while our mothers went to the nearby supermarket for their own dinner. We all grouped into one of the rooms to eat and played some games afterwards, before retiring for some much needed rest.

The next day rolled around, with another Premier Inn breakfast to prepare us for the day. We made our way, taking the same picturesque route as before, over to the Eden Project. This time we knew where we were going, so we made a quick beeline for the Mediterranean Biome. It was a pleasant temperature, bustling with visitors and smelling of freshly baked pizzas (there was a restaurant in the centre) and beautiful floral scents. We made our way round the Biome, through the Cactus Garden and past the orange trees. Walking through the colourful poppy patch and the wide range of chilli peppers (labelled with their rating on the Scovill scale) was really fun. Particularly in the Mediterranean Biome were many things that you often see in shops: oranges, olives, cork so it was fascinating to see them all growing and learn lots of interesting facts about them!



After we'd finished going round, we headed back for another quick look at Infinity Blue as we were both keen to see it again and then headed out. On our way back, as it was only midday, we took an extended walk, to view the wonderful countryside. We went down to the beach, and had a small explore. We were then planning on heading back via bus, as we were pretty exhausted by this point, but unfortunately we missed it by a matter of seconds! This led to us heading home by foot however, we were glad that we missed it in the end because it meant that we were able to head down to the Bay and a couple more beaches which was really enjoyable. Although, we then ended up quite tired with a fair distance to go before we would arrive back at the Premier Inn and so we popped into the shop to buy a packet of motivational sweets to share. By the time we got home Sophie had done more than 30,000 steps! We split up for dinner - one party for the Premier Inn, the other for pizza.



The next day came, and it was time to go home! Checkout was at 10am, which gave us plenty of time to eat breakfast and pack up our remaining things. There was plenty of time before our first train of the day, so we had a stop at the park on the way to the station. The journey home

was essentially a reverse of the way there, and it went just as smoothly. We were sad to part ways when we arrived back in Whittlesford, we'd had an amazing time!

After our trip, we collected together our favourite parts and photos and made a booklet of information. Much of it was things we learnt at the Eden Project, but we also did further research on the plants and features that we found particularly interesting.

Fundraising:

To fundraise the rest of the money for our project, we ran a stall selling temporary tattoos and hair chalk at the Sawston Fun Run & Walk. Neri has helped with filming the promotional video for the Fun Run before, but has never run a stall! We emailed the organisers to ask for a spot, which they were happy to provide along with a table and chairs. To prepare, we painted a banner on some fabric, bought our supplies, and organised extra things like water and tape. The day was fairly successful, although it was very warm in the sun. As well as this, Sophie did a day of babysitting. She planned and ran a space themed day where she did lots of space activities for them and made some little certificates for them at the end. This allowed her to earn an additional £40 which could be put towards the trip. We had also planned to sell cakes at the Reach Fayre ride which is a cycling event with stalls along the way, we did all the planning for the number of cakes, cost of the ingredients and estimated profit but this unfortunately did not go ahead due to us deciding that the Fun Run would be better as it was more local.



What We Gained:

Overall, it was a really worthwhile and wonderful experience that neither of us will ever forget!. We got to be independent and take initiative to plan and raise money, we learnt about many fascinating plants, and we had a fabulous time! We both gained independence from having to plan the whole trip and calculate costs, to preparing our own stall at a big and popular event. Running our stall at the Fun Run also boosted our confidence as we had to talk to lots of people who we didn't know. It was also a very enriching experience as we learnt about lots of different cultures and their different uses of plants alongside getting to see a lot of beautiful countryside which we would definitely not have seen if we had taken the bus. Sophie also loves photography and took around 1,500 photos at the Eden project and even more along the way! We are very grateful for the incredible opportunity, and are so glad that young people like us get a chance to do this.

