

Inspiring a Positive Future by Connecting People and Nature



GIANT STORY MAKING

Giants in the Forest combines art, technology and the natural environment to inspire people to think about their surroundings, how they are changing and their place in shaping that change.

Connecting to nature: What was the 'nature' and who was connected to it?



'Giants in the Forest' was a national arts project developed by a Scottish arts group called Vision Mechanics. They created and seeded giant wicker heads and installed them at a series of amazing locations in England, Wales and Scotland including at the only two other UK mainland UNESCO Biosphere Reserves..

The Biosphere's three 'giants' are festooned with growing native woodland plants have been hoisted into the trees overlooking the River Torridge on the Tarka Trail between Torrington and Weare Giffard.



The Giants overlook the River Torridge and help raise awareness of the Biosphere's Nature Improvement Area work that will re-create, restore and connect important habitats such as rare culm grassland and woodland, raise water quality, reduce floods and boost the local economy.

As part of the Nature Improvement Area education programme, more than 400 pupils from 15 primary schools used the Giants as Inspiration for individual and class stories about the environment.

What actually happened and how was the Biosphere involved?

The Biosphere saw how the national Giants in the Forest Project could support our work to engage people with their local environment. We worked with partners to generate the support and money to have three of them made and installed beside the Tarka Trail near Torrington.



Championing Life

Empowering People

Different Solutions

Working Together

As part of the Nature Improvement Area project, taking place in the River Torridge catchment, the Biosphere Team chose to involve local primary schools in a 'giant story making' activity.

Sara Hurley, a professional story teller, was engaged to devise the 'giant story making' activity centred around a full day visit to the giants..

The 'home base' for the story telling activity was the Biosphere's inflatable dome; an ideal outdoor learning space, which was set up each morning for each school party.



Teaching notes were developed so that the giants can still be used to support learning .

The Children's stories are available on-line together with YouTube films of the project at <http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/giants-in-the-forest.html>

The giant stood silently, amongst the trees, looking around him. The trees towered taller than a house and the branches were as thick as car tyres, and even stronger. They swayed in the wind. Connor, Yr 5. Black Torrington school.

For the community/people involved, what has changed because of what was done?

The giant story making activity supported the schools' outdoor learning and cross curricular learning objectives. It helped the children with confidence building, creative thinking and relationship building. Children were encouraged to explore and learn about the environment using all their senses and to incorporate that experience into stories..

Each child's finished story becomes their personal contribution to the story of the ever-changing place where they live. It anchors them to the environment and the growing things and processes that shape it.

The Giant story telling activity improved the children's literacy and enjoyment of landscape and the environment and we hope, sewed a seed that will germinate into a desire to understand and care for the natural world