

# Excerpt from - 'John Muir: A Very Colourful Life'

by the Pupils of Dunbar Primary School, 2015



A selection of images from Dunbar Primary School's 'John Muir: A Very Colourful life'. Perhaps you could be inspired to create your own John Muir collages!

## Background:

2014 marked the centenary of Scottish-American John Muir's death, from pneumonia in a Los Angeles hospital on Christmas Eve. He is widely considered to be the 'Father of America's National Parks' and one of the founders of the worldwide conservation movement. His had been a long and full life and one that should be celebrated, not mourned. Consequently, it was commemorated in Scotland by a 10-day national festival centred on Dunbar, his birthplace, on 21 April, his birthday in 1838.

Dunbar Primary School, John's only school, especially wished to mark the occasion for he is far and away their most famous and influential former pupil. Eden Blair, a member of the school's Parent Council, devised the idea of identifying 34 key moments in John's life, one for each of the school's primary and nursery classes. Eden's brief notes were issued at random to the classes along with a square metre of canvas and a collection of 'bits' – fabric, wool, buttons and the like. The result was a feast of artistic innovation, controlled by the class teacher but led by the pupils themselves. Each panel was different in style but the whole was a wonderfully vibrant telling of a remarkably colourful life.

The resulting 35 metre long story of John's life went on display for the first time on 21 April 2014 and was one of the highlights of Dunbar's input to the Centenary Festival. Viewers were astonished at the creativity shown by the young folk. It has since been shown in a number of other venues in the town but many have felt that it merits much wider attention. However not many venues have 35 square metres of display space to spare! It would have been a huge pity for that to be lost and so a book was created to help share this fantastic collection with a wider audience.

The book, featuring all 35 images and the story of Muir's life is on sale from Dunbar Primary School and the John Muir Birthplace Trust. Proceeds from the book's sale will be used to preserve and store the pupils' marvellous creation and any extra will help to develop the garden spaces at Dunbar Primary School's John Muir Campus.

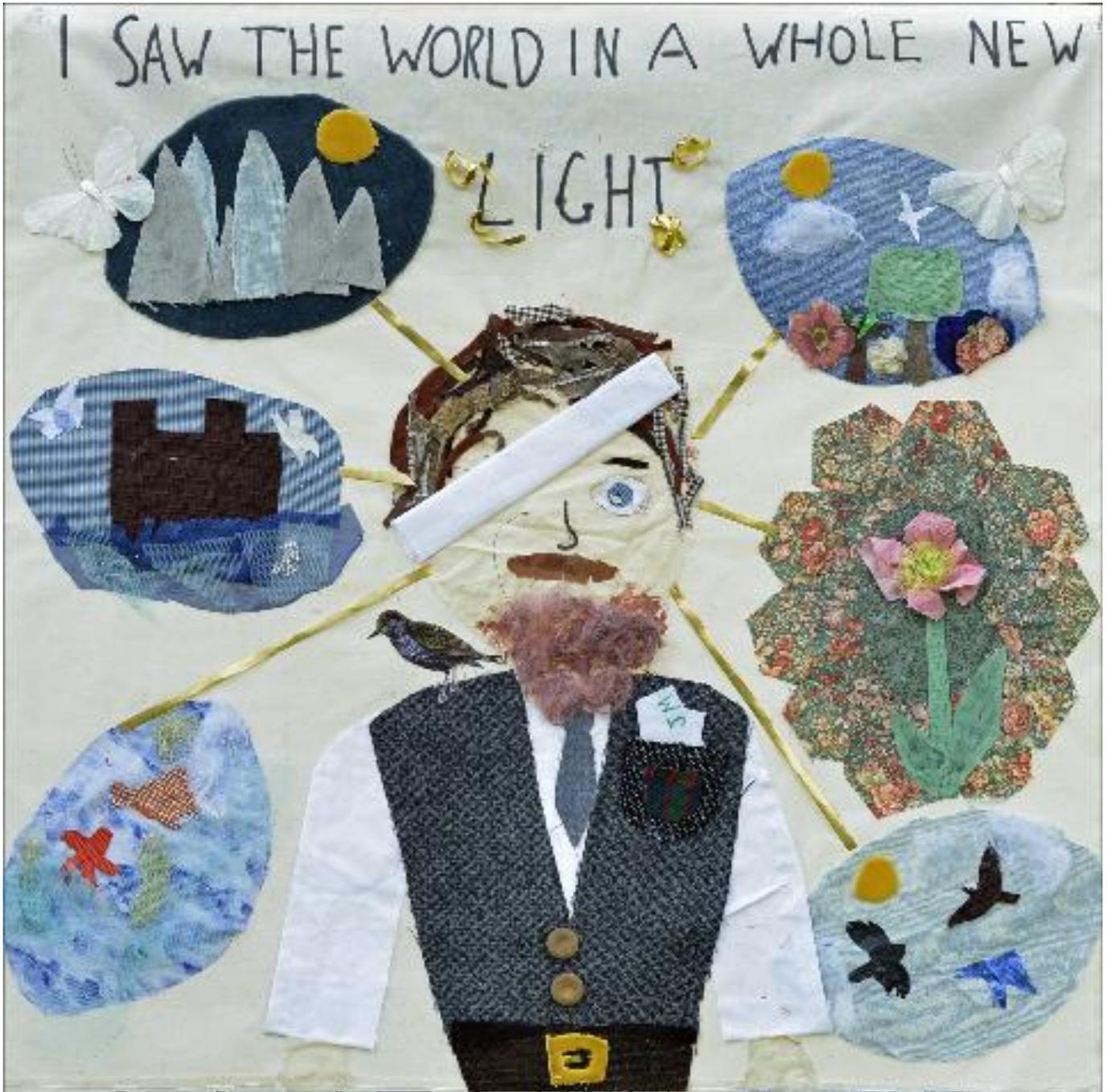
Below are a selection of five images from the book.



Introduction to collage (and front cover of book)



The birth of John Muir on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1838, and his childhood in Dunbar



John Muir's temporary blindness, making him realise that he wanted to explore the world of nature.



John Muir jumping for joy the first time he saw Yosemite Valley in California



John Muir with his wife Louisa and his daughters Wanda and Helen at their home in Martinez, California.