



Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland Bulletin September 2020

Welcome to the OWL Scotland bulletin which contains content from the Outdoor Learning Wales bulletin— Thank you to OLW for letting us share their bulletin! You can find more information on Outdoor Learning Wales [here](#). If you have items for inclusion in the bulletin please send them to Bonnie.Maggio@forestry.gov.scot

OWL Scotland National News

Update

I didn't expect to be writing this bulletin within a return to restrictions for the Covid 19 pandemic. These are challenging times for everyone and I am so impressed to see that all of our groups have been continuing to support outdoor and woodland learning albeit in new and different ways. There are some exciting projects are underway across the network as you will see below in the group updates.

Some groups have been running events – in order to facilitate other groups to do the same we have published a [case study](#) with the North East OWL Group which is available on the website. If you are not already a member of your local OWL Group this is an ideal time to join and get involved.

2020 International Year of Plant Health

As we are all struggling on with the pandemic the climate emergency continues. The threat to our trees from pests and diseases is growing. Climate change, global travel and imported plants and wood increase this threat. As part of Plant Health Week this week we have published a series of Information Sheets for young people on Tree Pests and Diseases. These will be a great addition to your teaching resources.

They are available to download here: <https://forestry.gov.scot/sustainable-forestry/tree-health/keep-it-clean/tree-pests-and-diseases-information-series-for-young-people>

And on the keep it clean page: <https://forestry.gov.scot/sustainable-forestry/tree-health/keep-it-clean>

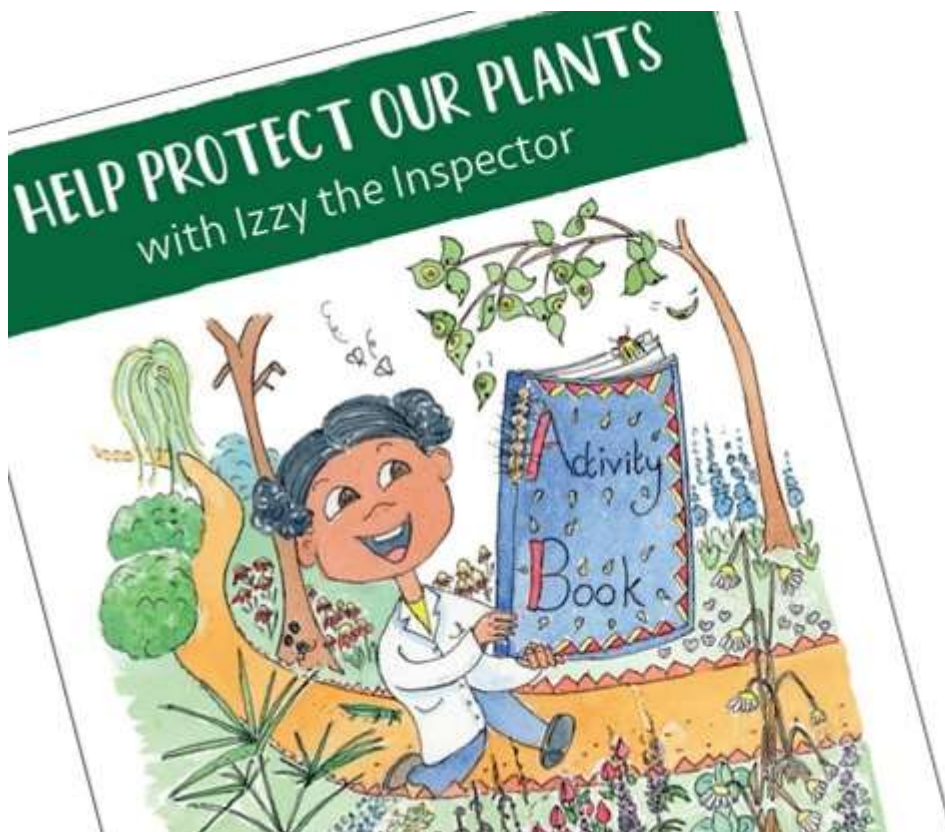


Bronze birch borer larvae beneath the bark of a silver birch tree

Izzy the Inspector

This fun activity booklet invites children to 'Help protect our plants with Izzy the Inspector'. It covers topics on things like why plants are important and an introduction to plant disease, insects and fungi to name a few, all designed to encourage children to explore the plants around them. For 6- 11 year olds

<https://yearofplanthealth.co.uk/izzy-inspector-book>



OWL Group Resources

We now have available:
a series of postcards for OWL groups with space for the group's own information.



And OWL Scotland buffs which can be used as face coverings.



Groups should let me know if they would like a supply of either. Bonnie.Maggio@forestry.gov.scot

Covid 19 Guidance Update

Here is an update on what is happening as regards outdoor learning and moving forwards with Covid 19. We have been asked about OWL Scotland's policies on moving forward after lockdown and would like to reiterate that groups should follow Scottish Government guidance at all times.

All the Scottish Government documents are online here

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Restarting forestry work was included in Phase 1 also with the Forestry Sector Restart and Resilience Plan

<https://forestry.gov.scot/covid-19>

And the safety guidance for Forestry work :

<https://www.ukfisa.com/news-events/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19-in-forestry.html>

From an outdoor learning perspective the following shows the recognition by decision makers of learning outdoors. AS said before full time school will probably still need to consider these spaces because of the nature of COVID-191. An extract from the Covid 19 Re-opening Schools Guide which can be seen in full by following the link.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-re-opening-schools-guide/>

1. Practical approaches to physical distancing – use of outdoor spaces

In parallel with the indoor environment, education authorities and schools should consider appropriate use of the outdoor environment to enrich the learning experiences of children and ensure as many children as possible can benefit from formal education at school. Evidence suggests that outdoor environments can limit transmission, as well as more easily allowing for appropriate physical distancing between children and staff.

Effective outdoor learning can be delivered across many subject areas and the 3-18 learner journey, whilst enabling benefits in relation to learner engagement, health and wellbeing and educational attainment. Informal outdoor classrooms set within the natural environment can often be effective spaces for learning. However, where some level of shelter is required the periodic use of the school building should be considered. With any repurposing of space, particularly in respect of any greater use of outdoor spaces for learning, schools should ensure that pupils with complex needs or disabilities are not disadvantaged

If outdoor equipment is being used, schools should ensure that multiple groups do not use it simultaneously, as well as considering appropriate cleaning between groups of children using it (see [hygiene measures](#)).

How learning and teaching is adapted for an outdoor environment should also be considered. [The Outdoor Learning Directory](#) provides links to a variety of resources that can be filtered by subject area and curriculum level.

Early Years National Networking Event

Due to the Covid 19 outbreak we postponed the special Early years National Networking Event – we are planning to run the event in March in a different non-residential format. The event will be an opportunity to attend a variety of hands-on workshops to help develop the outdoor learning practice of early years practitioners. Date to be confirmed. Please watch this space.



Resources

We have updated our Resources section on the [website](#) with summaries of resources available for different levels. There are many more resources available in the resource library which can be searched for using the search function.

If you would like any hard copies of resources – we have some available:

Wee Green Fingers

Wolf Brother's Wildwoods

The World Beneath our Feet

Tree Stories

Tree Measuring

Woodland Workout

Trees and the Scottish Enlightenment

Pine Poster

Please email Bonnie.Maggio@forestry.gov.scot with your request and address. Thank you!

Local OWL Events and News:

Ayrshire

A mixed year with successful group events and then all put on hold during lockdown. The AGM (planned for June) was postponed and held as a virtual event on 10th September.

Skill Share

Skill Share meetings held in June (Kilmarnock) and September (Dumfries House near Cumnock).

Twitter @AyrshireOwls

Our account has 178 followers. It is used, along with direct emailing and the OWL Scotland Group pages, to stay in touch with both existing and potential Ayrshire OWL members. The account is a useful platform through which to share and find out about developments across outdoor learning and has proved its worth in the last few months in particular.

'O' Factor, November 2019

Ayrshire OWLs had an information stall at the 'O' Factor – an annual EAC Education event. It further raised our profile in East Ayrshire.

Teachers Dirty Weekend, Isle of Cumbrae, March 2020

Ayrshire OWLs displayed at this international, teachers' training weekend along with many other local and national outdoor organisations.

Membership

Membership/mailling list remains dominated by people involved in EAC education, we are pleased to see that it is gradually broadening in response to **enquiries coming through the OWL Scotland website** and our visibility on **Twitter**. **Direct mailing** of individuals and organisations working across Ayrshire in outdoor and woodland learning has also begun to increase membership.

The Future

Currently, the committee are all members of the same team working in East Ayrshire. At the recent AGM, new members agreed to serve on the committee as ambassadors for the respective Ayrshires and others will use the coming year to train up so as to be ready to serve as office bearers. Our new Chair, Jo Dempster, Princes Foundation, will take up the post in October.

Argyll and Bute OWL Group

The group had an interesting presentation by Matt Ritchie. Matt is the archaeologist for Scotland's newest agency, Forestry and Land Scotland. He is came to talk about The First Foresters – and the Mesolithic prequel Into the Wildwood – collaborating with archaeologists, ecologists, artists, designers and photographers to create a fresh take on our deep past



The networking event in Inverary has been postponed – We hope to organise the network event in spring 2021 – Watch this space.

FIRST AID

We would also like to ask at the moment of any interest in doing an outdoor first aid course. We are only gauging interest at the moment with the potential of organising the courses to meet

demand in the Little OWL groups - Cowal, Helensburgh & Lomond, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll and Oban. Argyll OWL Group will endeavour to subsidise the cost of the course.

Please let me know which Little OWL area you can attend for the course whether it be just one or if you are willing to travel. Do remember to take into account that it is a two day course please.

Email argyllowlgroup@gmail.com

Greater Glasgow OWL Group (GROWL)

Under lockdown, GROWL has put all face-to-face CPD and networking events on hold until restrictions are lifted.

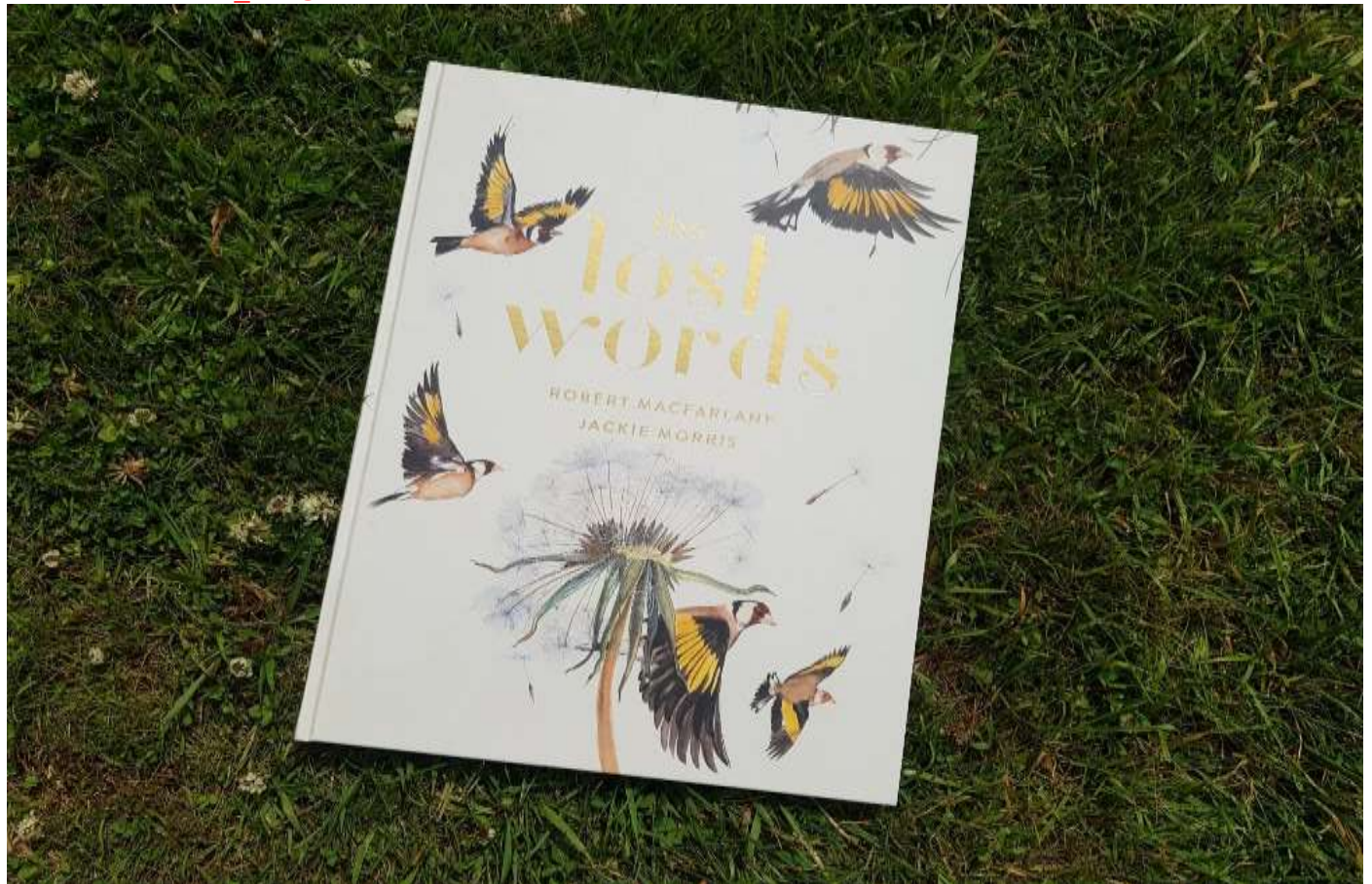
We have been working on creating an outdoor learning kit library online booking system (one of our Special Projects).

We have also started a weekly online discussion forum for outdoor learning practitioners based in Glasgow. This call is to share challenges and best practice as we get back out into the woods and if any other Owl members are interested in joining, to get in touch directly with our Chair Sophie Kyle at sophiekyale@gmail.com

West Dumbartonshire OWL Group

WD OWL have been having Zoom meetings to kick-start The Lost Words Project where we aim to create activities to champion 5 of the poems from The Lost Words book by Robert MacFarlane. Activities will cover Literacy, Numeracy, Health & Wellbeing, and Expressive Arts experiences and outcomes and will all be designed to take place outdoors in the hopes this supports practitioners going forward with teaching CfE in the outdoors.

Contact us at: Wd_owl@hotmail.com



Dumfries and Galloway OWL Group

DGOWL are trying out new things to help with maintaining our activities and group during the coronavirus pandemic. For a while we have been having committee meetings on Zoom and we decided to have our April meeting virtually too. It was a great success with 10 people able to join in. We started by discussed how we all were and what we were each doing and if there was any help anyone needed. People were really positive and were developing new ways of working and volunteering.

Next dates for meetings and skill shares in 2020:

8th October

8th December

Lusi Alderslowe

co-chair

Dumfries and Galloway Outdoor and Woodland Learning Group

check us out on Facebook @OWLDG and Twitter @DGOWLGP

North East

Willow, Wonderful Willow

Working in partnership with Aberdeen City Ranger Service we are delivering a maintenance workshop for anyone working with willow in school grounds on 7th November 2020. The course content includes:

Why are willows special and valuable to school grounds?

Are they worth the effort?

Creating structures

Maintaining structures

Involving children and risk benefit analysis.

Due to high demand this course is already full, but we are looking to deliver it again soon.

Outdoor 2 day paediatric first aid course

Working in partnership with Duncan McNeill we are organising a 2 day outdoor paediatric first aid course, hosted by Mucky Boots on Saturday 14th & 21st November 2020.

Our next OWLNEG meeting is via Zoom on Monday 28th September at 10am.

South Highland OWL Group

Programme for Spring/Summer Saturday CPD workshops

The South Highland Outdoor & Woodland Learning (OWL) Group exists to support outdoor learning across the southern half of the Highlands. This group is for outdoor learning practitioners, teachers, early years' practitioners and anyone with an interest in outdoor learning. All workshops are **FREE** and count for **CPD** time for teachers.

1. Gaelic in the woods. Learn about how to engage children in woodlands through the gaelic language @ Strathspey. February 2021
2. Woodland beastie hunt & Wild Challenge. By Sarah Walker, RSPB. March 2021 @ Strathspey. Postponed 2020
4. Slipper felting in the woods with Abriachan Forest Trust. April 2021 @ Abriachan. Postponed 2020
4. Citizen science using biological recording in the woods by Emily Brown, Science Development Officer. May 2021 @ Inverness. Postponed 2020
6. Natural dyeing with Christine Matheson @ Abriachan. June 2021. Postponed 2020
7. Story telling in the woods with Creeping Toad @ Inverness. June 2021

Tayside OWL Group

The POP – Perth Outdoor Playgroup which is part of Tayside OWL Group had a den building session for families. 10 families attended and social distancing worked well. The group has further sessions working with families planned on 2nd and 30th October.

Group Meetings are being held on Zoom – the next meeting will be on Tuesday 12th January at 7.30pm. Restrictions allowing there will be a face to face AGM on Saturday 6th February at 10am at the South Inch in Perth. For further information please contact the group.

Taysideowlgroup@gmail.com

West Fife OWL Group

We hope to continue our training as soon as we can and into 2021 to reoffer outdoor cooking and basic food hygiene run by Julia MacKay, Kelly Kettles – Jenny Ventham, How to pick and set up your outdoor learning site- Jenny Ventham. The First Foresters and Into The Wildwood – Marcia Cook.

West Fife OWL Group have 3 different resource kits which are available to borrow. Each kit contains enough materials for a class of up to 30 pupils and can be loaned out for an initial period of two weeks. One of our committee members has kindly offered to drop off and collect kits.

Den building Kit: contains a selection of tarpaulins, rope, string, bungees, tent pegs, clothes pegs- add some trees and you have everything you need for a team building challenge.

Fire Kit: contains a folding portable fire pit, Kelly Kettle, Fire steels, water container, fire blanket, fire proof gloves and first aid kit.

Pond Dipping Kit: contains 6 white plastic specimen trays, 6 long handled nets, a selection of pots to allow children to observe pond life in close-up and FSC Freshwater identification guides. Can also be used in shallow streams and rock pools.
(Kit photos attached)

To borrow a kit, please email the group on westfifeowl@gmail.com giving your name, School, kit(s) wanted and date required.

NEWS

SAPOE Teaching Learning Outdoors

17 September, marks the launch and publication of SAPOE's Teaching Learning Outdoors (TLO) online resource.

The TLO course provides teachers with an opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to take learning outside the classroom. It supports the Scottish Government's aspirations that outdoor learning is consistently deployed as a relevant and effective method of education delivery across Curriculum for Excellence, particularly during the education recovery phase.

The development of the TLO course is the first of two resources with the second course, 'Supporting Learning Outdoors', will be available from October 2020.

The TLO course can be accessed [here](#) and more information is available on the [SAPOE website](#).

Resources

Refreshed curriculum narrative for Curriculum for Excellence:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/resources-to-support-the-refreshed-curriculum-for-excellence-narrative/>

Finding greenspace for outdoor learning just got a whole lot easier

The [Greenspace Map for Outdoor Learning](#) has been developed by NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage), in collaboration with Ordnance Survey and Esri UK, and allows teachers, educators and others to quickly identify greenspaces close to their education establishment that may provide outdoor learning potential. This new resource complements our [Beyond Your Boundary: easy steps to learning in local greenspace resource and associated Professional Learning](#)

Other news

Check out the latest Outdoor Learning news from Scotland

Have a look at [Outdoor Learning Directory news page](#), where you'll find fresh updates, including news and resources from the Learning in Local Greenspace project.

<http://outdoorlearningdirectory.com/index.php/news/>

Contact:

To contact your local OWL group please go to the [OWL Scotland website](#)

Or contact us:

Bonnie Maggio
Education Programme Manager
Scottish Forestry
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh EH12 7AT

Bonnie.Maggio@forestry.gov.scot

Join us on **Facebook** – [Outdoor and Woodland Learning Scotland](#)