



Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland Bulletin

October 2018

Welcome to the OWL Scotland bulletin which contains content from the Outdoor Learning Wales bulletin– Thank you to OLV 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.gsi.gov.uk

OWL Scotland – National News

Sally York – Education Policy Advisor for Forestry Commission Scotland visited Osnabruck Germany by invitation of Schutzgemeinschaft Deutscher Wald (SDW) to speak at their conference, ‘Young people and forest-related education - beyond the box’.

SDW is the networking organisation for Forest Pedagogues in Germany where many of the members are foresters trained in Forest Pedagogy, although there appears to be people with educational and environmental backgrounds. The conference was essentially about giving young people a voice in forestry, exploring ways in which this was done in Germany and other European countries, with speakers from Austria, Finland, Scotland and Switzerland. This was very timely with the draft strategy out for consultation and Sally gained many ideas how to engage with young people (and also how not to!). PS 30 and under? You are a ‘young person’ under UN.



Local OWL Events and News:

Ayrshire OWL Group

The Twitter launch (#GoAOWL) of the Ayrshire OWL group (@AyrshireOwls) prompted some interesting Tweets in response to the 15 challenges set to test our knowledge of the great Outdoor Learning opportunities Ayrshire has to offer. Challenges ranged from take a photo of the start point for a favourite walk, to find a tree 4.7m tall and tell us how you measured it, to describe the outdoor learning experience that has had the most impact on you, to photograph something/somewhere with a Burns connection. We now have 56 followers - many more than the number able to travel in person to our inaugural meeting back in May. @AyrshireOwls will continue to serve as a platform for sharing OL practice in greenspace, woodland, marine, built, hill and mountain environments.

The next meeting of Ayrshire OWLs is scheduled for 5.30 pm. on 21st November at the Training Room, Outdoor Education, St Joseph's Academy, Kilmarnock. The meeting will be held immediately after the 'O' Factor (2.30 p.m. -5.30 p.m.) held in the Assembly Hall at St Joseph's Academy. The 'O' Factor is an annual relaxed, fun, staff sharing exhibition of Outdoor Learning. It's an excellent opportunity for practitioners to meet with many local and national outdoor partners and providers. It is run by EAC Learning Outdoor Support Team. We encourage anyone attending the 'O' Factor to stay on for the OWL meeting and for anyone coming along to the OWL meeting to arrive a little early and take in the exhibition!

Greater Glasgow OWL Group (GROWL)

GROWL have three CPD workshops coming up - free to GROWL members:

Tracking workshop Sat 17 November 2018 led by Dan Puplett (please see attached flyer)

Outdoor First Aid Sat/Sun 8-9 December 2018 led by BASP UK Ltd

Foraging workshop Sun 21 July 2019 led by Mark from Galloway Wild Foods

To book, you must be a member of GROWL. Email hello@glasgowowl.com for more information about becoming a member or to book.

The GROWL Development Officer has been focusing on building an online directory which will map all the Outdoor and Woodland Learning providers and practitioners in the Glasgow region. If you live or work in the area (either personally or via an organisation), please fill in [this survey](#), to automatically become a GROWL member giving you access to CPD training, use of kit and to appear on our online directory (optional). We have also been developing our membership scheme, our fundraising proposal system and events programme and improving in general the way we operate.

South Highland OWL Group

Programme for winter 2018 and spring/summer 2019 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.

Choose from the list below and send your name & establishment to

julietp robinson@gmail.com who will then send a confirmation and location map for each workshop.

1. Learning from Scandinavia

Join Highlife Highland Ranger Saranne Bish for an informal session about the Finnish education system and their approach to outdoor learning.

Saturday 17 November 2018 in Strathspey (location tbc) from 10.00 – 11.30.

2. Wildlife Gardens

Join Sarah Walker of RSPB to share a collection of simple wildlife garden ideas to help 'Give Nature a Home' in your school garden.

Saturday 23 February 2019 in Inverness (location tbc) from 10.00 – 13.00.

3. Outdoor Food Preparation

Join us for informal training on the basics of food hygiene for use in campfire cooking in the outdoors.

Saturday 23 March 2019 at Culloden Woods from 10.00 – 13.00. *Max no of 12.*

4. Foraging and outdoor learning

Join Dan Puplett to explore the fascinating world of wild food. Learn the essentials of safe, sustainable foraging and some tasty and surprising recipes.

Saturday 18 May in Inverness (location tbc) from 10.00 – 16.00. *Max no of 14.*

5. Art of Pewter Casting

Join Lara Greene for an intensive day of working with pewter drop casting on an open fire. Back due to popular demand –book early!

Saturday 22 June in Strathspey (location tbc) from 10.00 – 15.30. *Max no of 12.*

Please bring your own lunch and outdoor clothing, we will provide hot drinks!

Follow our FACEBOOK page: www.facebook.com/groups/SouthHighlandOWL

West Fife OWL Group

Don't miss our AGM

Thursday 25th October 4-5pm

At Fordell Firs

Group Kit

We have three different kits available to borrow:

Pond Dipping;

Den Building

and Fire.

Each kit contains enough resources for a whole class and can be borrowed from our store at Culross Primary. Please call the school beforehand to check availability.

North East OWL Group

Family Nature Day, Glen Tanar

Cloudless skies and the stunning scenery of Glen Tanar provided a beautiful backdrop to OWLNEG's first Family Nature Day in June. In partnership with Glen Tanar Ranger Service, OWLNEG members delivered a series of activities for families of young children, including storytelling, shelter building, bow and arrow making, clay craft and flower pounding.

Numbers varied during the day, allowing a quality of attention that helped those children in need of greater assistance, the opportunity to be fully engaged and to enjoy a real sense of achievement. This proved a particularly special day out for some families and we reflected that higher numbers throughout the day could not have afforded this outcome.

'Fantastic Forests, NTS Crathes

On Sept 23rd 2018, OWLNEG members, in partnership with NTS Crathes and Girlguiding Banff and Buchan, delivered a 'Fantastic Forests' Event at NTS Crathes for Brownies and Guides from across Grampian. Intended to celebrate and investigate trees and woodlands, the workshops were also designed to fit the remit of the new Forest Challenge Badge, created by Girlguiding Scotland in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland. 55 Guides and Brownies attended 7 workshops, participating in a range of activities including woodcraft, forest trails, toasting marshmallows, five-minute fires, rhododendron removal, blindfold challenges and the construction of several squirrel feeders and a giant bug hotel ready for a new wildlife hide at NTS Crathes. Feedback from the day was very positive with Guiding partners feeling that the day had 'built confidence, skills and knowledge in every participant' and that Brownies and Guides had thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The event is currently being evaluated by delivery partners with a view to running it again next year.

Tayside OWL Group

Tayside OWL Group will be holding a Winter Crafts CPD event on Saturday 10th November at Kinnoul Education Shed. For more information and to book please contact taysideowlgroup@gmail.com

NEWS

Consultation on a Forestry Strategy for Scotland

A public consultation on a Forestry Strategy for Scotland was opened on 20 September 2018. It closes on 29th November and responses will be used to inform the content and structure of the final strategy.

The draft strategy for consultation underpins the Scottish Government's ambitions for forestry and has sustainable forest management at its core. It builds on and modernises the approach undertaken in previous forestry strategies, providing a 10-year framework for action to help achieve a 50-year vision for Scotland's woodlands and forests.

We would encourage everyone who is interested in the future of Scotland's woodlands and forests to participate.

The consultation can be accessed at <https://consult.gov.scot/forestry/scotlands-forestry-strategy-2019-29>

Research Document - Outdoor learning: closing the attainment gap in primary schoolchildren in Scotland

This Research Note compares the performances of 71 primary schoolchildren carrying out curricular tasks in outdoor and indoor classroom settings. By observing, recording and analysing how the children performed in group activities taken from the Scottish curriculum, an evaluation could be made of the relative merits of indoor and outdoor learning. In general, the results show that the outdoors environment had a more positive impact on individual and group performance than the indoor classroom. The effect of the outdoor setting on underachieving pupils was particularly notable, improving their engagement, contribution and self-confidence to match that of their peers. The results also indicate that the indoor classroom setting was less motivating, especially for those children with learning difficulties. By contrast, the richness of the outdoor setting provided an equitable learning environment where both younger and older children thrived, not only as a place where they were able to think creatively and work independently, but one where they could also learn how to collaborate and effectively solve problems with others in their groups. Furthermore, it helped them develop an appreciation of their own abilities and the natural world around them. Therefore, increasing the use of outdoor learning through national policy-making will support cognitive and social development in primary schoolchildren, and help close the attainment gap in Scottish education.

Working Forests' Campaign

Forestry Commission Scotland has released a new forest safety interactive story aimed at children. It supports the 'working forests' campaign.

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/news-releases/1614-interactive-adventure-teaches-forest-safety>

Tree Coring on Ancient Trees

Scottish Natural Heritage have published a new report about tree coring called A review of the theory and practice of tree coring on live ancient and veteran trees. You can read the full report [here](#).

We have produced a [Resources Summary flyer](#) for download which sets out all of our resources, ages and stages and how to get copies.

Scotland's Local Storytelling campaign

Scotland's Local Storytelling Campaign is underway and runs to 30 November. Schools & communities take part by hosting a storytelling event around the theme #GrowingStories Get your storytelling toolkit, info on funding and find out how to take part here: <https://www.sisf.org.uk/local-campaign/>

Training

Wild Sparks Outdoor Play & Learning courses Autumn 2018 Training Programme

Welcome to autumn term 2018! We hope you had a wonderful summer. Here at Wild Sparks we've been busy with our holiday play scheme, gaining further insight and first-hand experience into the multi-faceted benefits of free play outdoors. Each day Children showed us their incredible capacity to problem solve, work together, resolve conflict and generally apply their skills, knowledge and creativity to whatever a long, uninterrupted day in the forest threw at them. I have no doubt that each of these children will return to school more confident, more inspired and ready to learn.

This Autumn we are offering some brand new courses with a specific focus on embracing risk and stepping back to let children lead. Courses are suitable for anyone working with nursery and primary aged children throughout the childcare, play and education sector.

All our courses are led by Wild Sparks' staff currently working as outdoor play and learning practitioners. We bring an up to date and working knowledge of the challenges and benefits of taking groups outside; each training day will feature lots of peer to peer learning and collaborative thinking.

Funding

Outdoor Learning in Nature Fund

This fund opens for applications on 26 September 2018. The closing date for applications is midnight on 31 October 2018. Further information including Round 2 Information for Applicants document is available via the link below. Round 2 is specifically targeted at Tier 2 activity which supports the Learning in Local Greenspace Project in the following local authority areas - Aberdeen City, City of Edinburgh, Dundee City, East Ayrshire, Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian. Registered charities, constituted organisations and local authorities are invited to submit proposals that will support a minimum of 4 schools to take learning outdoors, starting in spring 2019 and ending no later than December 2020. More information can be found on the link below:

[Outdoor Learning in Nature Fund \(Round 2\)](#)

Grounds for Learning

The new small grants scheme is open

<http://www.ltl.org.uk/naturegrants/index.php>
Community Fund

The FCS Community Fund supports community groups and organisations that encourage people to use woods more. The guidance document can be found [here](#).

Food for Thought funding

Please see this Education Scotland funding signposted on OL Directory
<http://outdoorlearningdirectory.com/index.php/grants/908>.

Recipe of the month

Apple pie on a stick



You will need

- 200g sugar
- 1 tbsp cinnamon
- 4 cooking apples
- 4 dowels or roasting sticks

In a small bowl, mix together sugar and cinnamon and set aside.

Push the stick or dowel through the top of the apple to the bottom until the apple is secure. Roast the apple 2 to 3 inches above the bed of hot coals and turn frequently. (As the apple cooks, the skin starts to brown and the juice dribbles out.)

When the skin is loose, remove the apple from the coals but leave it on the stick.

Peel the skin off the apple, being careful not to burn yourself because the apple is very hot. Roll the apple in the sugar and cinnamon mixture and when cool enough, eat!

www.koa.com

Quote of the month

“Who looks at a small child running up and down a hill over and over again and thinks, “What this kid really needs is to sit at a desk and do some worksheet and computer exercises so that we can produce some measurable instructional outcomes.” Who does that?”

Peter Greene

Activity of the Month

Leaf shape play

Have fun creating shapes, pictures and for crafting.

You'll need:

- leaves
- scissors
- hole punches (optional)
- glue, string (optional)
- tray
- paper



Get outside and collect your leaves. Try to find as many colours and textures as possible. Use scissors and hole punches to cut up the leaves into different shapes and different sizes.

Once cut up put them all in a container move the shapes around on a blank piece of paper or another suitable surface.

As an extension, use glue, stick, etc, to stick shapes together to make a picture e.g. caterpillar.

www.mothernatured.com

Fact of the Month

Did you know that carving vegetables into candlelit faces originated hundreds of years ago in Ireland, but the Irish used turnips or potatoes? When Irish immigrants arrived in America and discovered pumpkins, a new Halloween ritual was born.

Collective noun of the month

An array, a nest, a prickle of hedgehogs

Species of the Month



Clingfish

Clingfish are an order of fish in the family Gobiesocidae, which has over one hundred different species throughout the world. They are all small fish (few exceed 6-7cm in length when fully grown) which are called clingfish due to the fact that their pelvic fins have adapted to form a suction disc on the underside of the fish which allows it to attach itself to rocks, even in strong tides (a similar feature is seen in the lump sucker species of fish). Like all other clingfish species, the two spotted clingfish is small, seldom growing to longer than 6cm, and a 10cm specimen would be considered large.

These fish are easy to identify with their distinctive shape and colouring. They have a long, flattened snout like a duck's bill, a fringed flap by each nostril, and two blue spots behind the head. They vary in colour but are often pink with red spots and red fins.

They grow up to 10cm and are found throughout UK and Europe in shallow, sandy inshore waters and weed-covered boulder shores throughout Wales.

Their life cycle and behaviour is poorly understood, but they are a shallow water fish, which rarely ventures into waters deeper than 40 to 50 metres and are sometimes found trapped in rockpools by the retreating tide.

Their diet is thought to consist of very small marine crustaceans such as very small prawns, sea slaters and copepods. Clingfish are prey for other fish and are sometimes found in the stomachs of all manner of larger fish such as cod, whiting, bass and pollock. Due to its small size the clingfish has no commercial value and is not consumed by humans.

www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

www.britishseafishing.co.uk



Plant of the Month

Oak / Quercus robur / Quercus petraea

There are 2 native British oak tree species; Pedunculate oak and Sessile Oak.

Sessile oak was the first to arrive in the UK, and grows naturally in upland areas; pedunculate prefers lower regions.

There are 2 key distinguishing features between sessile and pedunculate oak. The first is the acorn.

On pedunculate oak they are borne on stalks (or 'peduncles'), sessile acorns are not. Secondly, in winter if you look at the dead leaves remaining on the tree, you will see that the leaf stalks on pedunculate oak are very short.

In late winter and spring, light brown buds which look like small nuts are arranged spirally around outer twigs and are clustered at the twig tips. The leaves emerge between April and May.

Oak does flower, with the male flowers appearing as slender pale green catkins and the female flowers on spiked stalks behind them. The male catkins appear with the first leaves.

Oak leaves are quite distinctive, having 3-6 unequal 'thumb' shaped lobes on either side of the leaf, which gives it a wavy edged look. Often tiny discs appear on the underside which are made by insects and called galls, but do not seriously affect the tree. Leaf fall occurs in October and November.

The green acorns develop during the summer and sit in a small cup. Oaks do not necessarily produce acorns every year. When they do, the acorns fall usually leaving the cup behind and turn brown as they lie on the ground. Once they have fallen, an acorn's first task is to send out a red shoot which roots in the ground and becomes the main tap root. This descends deeply seeking out water. The next spring a main shoot appears, and two opposed leaves develop.

Mature Oaks can have a massive spread to them and are often as wide as they are tall. Outer branches regularly die and fall, leaving decaying or dead stumps which are a common feature of the tree. After a while the oak starts to undergo a process known as 'crown death' which is a natural part of its life cycle, as the highest branches start to die back first. The heart wood of the main trunk will also die and rot without killing the tree, so that oaks often have the appearance of being three quarters dead, and yet they are still healthy.

Oak trees can live over a 1000 years old but are generally mature at 75, and live on average 150-250 years. Today they are the commonest British native tree met with in woods and hedgerows. Their great utility for man has meant no other tree has played such an important role or been so valued by humans, even to the extent of being an object of worship and veneration.

284 insect species have been found living in oaks. Jays and Squirrels, which both feed on them, spread the acorn by carrying them away and burying them in the ground. The Purple Hairstreak and Purple Emperor butterflies rely on oak. Most British bats roost in the crevices and hollows, and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Spotted Flycatchers, Nuthatches and Treecreepers find food and nest holes on oaks. Wild Primroses, Bluebells and wild garlic and wild violets all rely on the rich soil beneath oaks to thrive. Some ecologists argue individual oaks should be designated nature reserves in their own right!

Oaks require substantial amounts of water and will send out extensive and deep roots in search of it. Mature oak trees will draw up large quantities, rapidly removing water and nutrients from other plants. Many woodland and shade loving plants such as wood anemones and aconites will do well under oaks.

In the last 5 years a new disease of oaks known as "Sudden oak death" or *Phytophthora ramorum* has struck native oaks. *P. ramorum* invades plants through the bark and cuts off the flow of food from the leaves to the roots. Eventually the roots die, causing the upper tree and limbs to die from lack of water. The trees must be felled.

Contact:

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

Or contact us:

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Join us on **Facebook** – “Forest Education Initiative” group (we have over 5000 members so were unable to change from our original name!)