



## October 2022

### OWL Scotland National News

#### Updates

I love the changes that Autumn brings, along with the wonderful foraging opportunities. 2023 seems to be an excellent year for apples Scotland and I have been very much enjoying the abundance from my dad's garden in Pitlochry. A jar of Crème de mûre (bramble liqueur) from a batch of Loch Lomond brambles is also currently chilling in the fridge.



It has been a busy two months in the OWL Scotland world: The summer OWL Scotland networking weekend took place at Pillars of Hercules; additional Forest Kindergarten subsidiary courses have been held covering woodland ecology; and Local groups have been busy with AGM's, networking events and delivering CPD sessions. There really has been a great buzz growing around the country in the OWL community and beyond.

**SAVE THE DATE- OWL Scotland National Networking Weekend- Dounans-  
17<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> February 2023!**

### OWL Scotland Informal Networking Weekend

Pillars of Hercules was once again the location for the summer networking weekend. We were blessed with dry, warm weather which helped add to the relaxed feeling of the event. Workshops included: Felt Feet with Bonnie Maggio; Whittling and Carving with Willow Lohr; Nature ID with Claire Brady; Five Minute Fires (plus charcoal pencils) with Duncan McNeil; and Wooden Games with Kim Craigie.





An assortment of 40 familiar and new faces attended, creating a great space to share ideas, make new connections, tells stories around the fire and enjoy a pot luck dinner.



2022 is also the 30 year anniversary of what was called Forest Education Initiative (FEI) Scotland, and is now OWL Scotland. A wee celebration was held by the group, which of course included cake. As part of this celebration, there was a creative owl competition. Helen Hazlett from the Argyll OWL group won for her outstanding owl creation. Materials included a wooden body, mosaic tile feathers, door knob eyes and forks for feet!

A huge thank you to everyone that contributed entries to the competition and for everyone that came and attended this event.



## Forest Kindergarten Subsidiary Courses

Following on from the popular shelter and ropes, and woodland ecology courses, we are pleased to announce that the following courses will be held across Scotland over the next few months:

- [Using Fire in Forest Kindergarten](#) 29<sup>th</sup> of October- Abriachan Forest Classroom
- [Woodland Ecology in Forest Kindergarten](#) 4<sup>th</sup> November- Duffus, Moray
- [Using Fire in Forest Kindergarten](#) 4<sup>th</sup> November- Newbattle Abbey College
- [Using Tools in Forest Kindergarten](#) 12<sup>th</sup> November- Abriachan Forest Classroom
- [Using Fire in Forest Kindergarten](#) 12<sup>th</sup> November- Cuningar Loop, Glasgow
- [Using Fire in Forest Kindergarten](#) 25<sup>th</sup> November- Kinnoul Hill, Perth
- [Shelters and Ropes for EY Practitioners/ Forest Kindergarten](#) 25<sup>th</sup> November- Abriachan Forest Classroom
- [Using Tools in Forest Kindergarten](#) 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023- Cuningar Loop, Glasgow
- [Using Tools in Forest Kindergarten](#) 18<sup>th</sup> March 2023- Kinnoul Hill, Perth



Please note that you must be Forest Kindergarten trained to attend the fire and tools sessions. You can attend the shelters or woodland ecology courses if you are in early years and/or FK trained.

## Scottish Finest Woods Awards

Applications will open in January 2023 for the Early Years and Schools Categories of the Scottish Finest Woods Awards. The Awards are to encourage and reward schools and pre-schools that increase young people's understanding and appreciation of the environmental, social and economic potential of trees, woodlands and forests, and of the link between trees and everyday wood-based products.

Great prizes are on offer to winners and runners up!



Further information will be provided in the next bulletin and posted on the [Scottish Finest Woods Awards](#) website and OWL Scotland Facebook page.

## Scottish Junior Forester Award

Scottish Junior Forester Leader training is aimed at teachers/practitioners/youth workers who wish to undertake the award with children and young people. The course will take participants through the Award and give them the skills and knowledge required to run the practical aspects of it. Please note that the courses will cover either using tools OR tree planting as part of the Woodland Management section.

- 5<sup>th</sup> November, [Kinnoul Hill, Perth](#) – using tools
- 26<sup>th</sup> November, [Newbattle Abbey College](#)- tree planting
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December, [Abriachan Forest Classroom](#)- tree planting
- 4<sup>th</sup> March 2023, Glasgow- more details to follow- using tools.



## Local OWL Events and News

### Argyll OWL

Getting Together Outdoors, Argyll OWL groups networking event, was held on Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> of September at Inveraray Primary School. It was lovely to catch up with familiar faces after so long and to meet others who came along from different areas. Short workshops provided an introduction to running labyrinth sessions, bushcraft activities and timber circles. There were lots of opportunities to network and contribute to the wish tree and nature vision board.

The next Argyll OWL meeting is the AGM on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November. For more details on this please visit the group [Facebook page](#).



## Clackmannanshire and Forth Valley OWL

At the joint group AGM those present voted for the merging of the two groups. The decision was made that going forward the group would be called the Forth Valley OWL group as Clackmannanshire falls into this area. The group are currently in the process of updating documents and bank accounts but are already planning events and activities.

Winter Crafts Meet- Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 4.30 pm. Further details will be posted on the [Forth Valley OWL group Facebook page](#)

## Moray OWL

**Nature toolkit session "Using Nature as a Resource to Support Mental Health."  
Friday 18th November 10:00 to 15:00**

This session will provide an opportunity to combine theory with practice, whilst amassing a useful toolkit of activities to suit a wide range of people. It will be entirely outdoors and provide hands-on understanding of group engagement, management and delivery/facilitation of activities that will make a difference: Sensory, active/passive activities, fire, food, stories and art. Something for every occasion that can help people to find a safe and beneficial direction in nature.

Please bring clothing for all weathers, a packed lunch and water bottle. Snacks, tea & coffee will be provided. For further information and to book a spot, please contact Nature 4 Health at [admin@n4h.co.uk](mailto:admin@n4h.co.uk)

## North East OWL

OWLNEG member and Aberdeen City Ranger Duncan McNeil delivered one of the workshops at the recent OWL Scotland Networking weekend at Pillars of Hercules farm in Fife. Duncan's workshop was on safe fire-lighting techniques for use by outdoor practitioners and he also showed us how to make charcoal pencils over the fire.



Chair Doug Gooday delivered twilight CPD sessions on safe fire-lighting to teachers and staff from Skene School and Mintlaw Academy. The sessions covered: safety and risk assessment, Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC), behaviour guidelines, equipment and resources, Curriculum for Excellence Links, five-minute fires, Kelly Kettles and Leave no Trace principles.

On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2022, OWLNEG partnered with the First Aid Training Co-operative to deliver an Outdoor First Aid Course for Forest School and Outdoor Learning Leaders. The course provided a brilliant session outlining the fundamentals of first aid for forest school practitioners.

The venue this time was Leochel Cushnie Village Hall (near to Alford). Duncan McNeill, our trainer for the weekend, made the course relevant, challenging and very enjoyable.

I think I can speak for all the participants in saying that we all came away feeling more confident and secure in our knowledge and understanding of first aid and clearer about our responsibilities.



In the last 3 months, John Malster, an OWLNEG member, has run 7 workshops on wildflowers and meadows. Two of these were in Aberdeen in conjunction with St. Machar Cathedral and Earth & Worms Community Garden. There were a further 2 events run in Portlethen: one for Scottish Countryside Rangers Association and one for Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service. Another 2 events were in association with Haddo Country Park and an event in Huntly was run for Deveron Arts. Attendance at these workshops ranged from 18 to 2, with an average of around 10 participants. We hope that many people will now start sowing local provenance seed in Aberdeen City and Shire.

### **Foraging course – Thursday 27th October 2022, 10am - 2pm.**

OWLNEG have organised a Wild Foraging Workshop for adults with Dan Puplett from Dan Puplett Nature Awareness. This will take place at Haddo House & Country Park.. The cost is £30 per person. To book, please email Douglas Gooday - [douglas.gooday@btinternet.com](mailto:douglas.gooday@btinternet.com).

## North Highland OWL

### Winter Willow Lanterns & Cosy Campfire, November 12 @ 12:00 noon

During this two-hour workshop, you will construct your own willow lantern, which you will get to take away with you. Whilst it is drying, there will be refreshments around the fire. Once dried, a short walk along the secret trail will take place with the lit lanterns. Target audience: Primary and Secondary Teachers/ASN Teachers/Home Educators

For more information please visit the [OWL Scotland website](#).

## South Highland OWL

### Foraging & Tracking with Dan Puplett, October 22 @ 10:00 am.

This session will teach you easy to learn tracking techniques and plants to safely forage so that you can pass on your knowledge to your classes/groups. For more information and to book please visit the [OWL Scotland website](#).



## Tayside OWL

### Tayside OWL Group – Lost Words workshop, October 29 @ 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

As a group we will share how we can work with language and literacy outdoors, in a range of outdoor settings, and for a range of ages and abilities. You will come away with activity ideas for creative approaches to literacy outdoors. There will be opportunities to develop and share your own ideas.

This is for educators in early years, primary and secondary. Priority will be given to Tayside OWL Group members and wider OWL Scotland group members. For more information please visit the [OWL Scotland Events page](#).



## **West Fife OWL**

West Fife OWL Group have different resource kits that are available to borrow. Each kit (den building, fire, pond dipping, woodland play and now a knives and tool kit) can be loaned out for an initial period of two weeks and contains enough materials for a class of up to 30 pupils. One of our committee members has kindly offered to drop off and collect kits.



To borrow a kit, please email the group on [westfifeowl@gmail.com](mailto:westfifeowl@gmail.com) giving your name, School, kit(s) wanted and date required. Please also 'like' our Facebook page, [Outdoor and Woodland Learning-West Fife](#).

## **Funding Opportunities**

Learning through Landscapes, Local School Nature Grants Programme is an outdoor learning fund that offers fully funded outdoor learning training for school or early years staff ,and up to £500 of equipment.

The grants are available to schools in England, Wales and Scotland. For more information and to apply, visit the [Learning through Landscapes website](#).

For other funding opportunities, please visit the [Creative Star Learning](#) webpage.



## **Other News**

### **Branching Out update – Nathalie Moriarty, Branching Out Manager**

In 2007, the Scottish Forestry Branching Out Programme was launched. It is aimed at people with moderate to severe mental health conditions receiving direct NHS or charity support. It started with three pilots and there are now 35 regular groups running every year. For each group, 12 clients meet once a week, for three months in a local woodland, and are supported by two certified Branching Out leaders and one mental health worker. They complete their John Muir certificates through a variety of activities such as bushcraft, plant ID, environmental surveys, health walks and mindfulness activities, to name just a few.

Over the last couple of years we have given a particular focus to building regional hubs that can deliver the programme. These are essentially regional support groups that help the organisations and people that deliver and refer to the programme. Should we be building up capacity in your geographic area, you will see further advertisements locally via various platforms, including the OWL Scotland networks

and greenspace health partnerships, where we will advertise for new organisations to get involved.

If you want to find out more about work in this field, a good start would be to widen your network contacts in green therapy and investigate whether you have a local green health partnership group, and if you can join it. This may open up opportunities for multiple avenues of green health work in Scotland.

Here is a list of useful resources:

- [Promoting green health | NatureScot](#)
- [Green Health Partnerships | NatureScot](#)
- [Greenspace for Health - Our blog - Public Health Scotland](#)
- [Frontiers | Developing Scotland's First Green Health Prescription Pathway: A One-Stop Shop for Nature-Based Intervention Referrals \(frontiersin.org\)](#)

Local green partnership groups:

- NHS Lothian [Greenspace and Health Strategic Framework for Edinburgh and Lothians.pdf \(nhslothian.scot\)](#)
- NHS North Ayrshire [North Ayrshire Green Health Partnership - Home | Facebook](#)
- NHS Lanarkshire [Green Health | NHS Lanarkshire \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#), [Greenspace \(elament.org.uk\)](#)
- NHS Tayside Dundee focus <https://www.greenhealth.scot/>
- NHS Highland [Home - Think Health Think Nature](#)



*Building capacity for a new Dumfriesshire hub with the OWL network, in partnership with Instinctively Wild. Branching Out training induction day at Mabie Forest, March 2020. Branching Out programme manager Nathalie Moriarty in centre. Image copyright Scottish Forestry, 2020.*

**Scottish Government's Lyme disease campaign.** The campaign aims to raise awareness of tick bites and the symptoms of Lyme disease in a bid to encourage people to take precautions when spending time outdoors.

A stakeholder toolkit containing key messages, top tips, social media assets and posts, and a poster which can be printed and displayed is available here: [Scottish Government Marketing Resource Centre: Lyme Disease.](#)



**Teachers needed to help develop the Nature Discovery Map Scotland (NDMS) education toolkit!** Are you interested in developing your skills in technologies and digital literacy? Would you like the experience of working collaboratively with other educators and digital experts? Join NatureScot's pilot project starting in October!

We have an opportunity for teachers/schools to work with us on a pilot project to develop an exciting new school digital mapping resource. This will help to explore and record biodiversity in and around education settings. Taking part in this pilot can support your professional learning in Technologies – you don't have to be an expert!

After the pilot, it is hoped that this resource will be scaled up to become a national resource for all schools. Use of this tool will support digital literacy in pupils, outdoor learning and Learning for Sustainability (LfS).

For further information and contact details, please see our [Nature Discovery Map Scotland](#) webpage.

### **Further Training Opportunities**

**John Muir Award, wild places and education priorities Nov 16<sup>th</sup> 2022, 16.00-17.30**

Join this John Muir Trust webinar exploring how wild places and the John Muir Award can benefit learning and educational priorities in Scotland, and key resources that can help. Aimed at teachers, youth workers and practitioners supporting young people's learning in Scotland, this session will introduce two resources designed to support practitioners:

- John Muir Award and the Curriculum for Excellence publication – this refreshed publication highlights how the Award can support school priorities and contribute to learning
- Achieving awards in, through and for nature – a collaborative resource designed to support learner journeys and progression through nature-based awards in Scotland

Find out more and book your free place [here](#).



## **Learning through Landscapes**

FREE Erasmus+ Early Years practitioner course - learn how to develop great outdoor spaces for 0-6 year olds. For more information visit the [Learning through Landscapes website](#).

## **Free Short courses with Queen Margaret University (QMU)**

The Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council are paying for a number of free places on short courses at QMU, provided you meet certain criteria. For more information see the individual course listings on the [University's website](#).

Possible courses of interest for the OWL groups include:

- [Fundraising, Development and Finance - Free places \(start date: January 2023\)](#)
- [Making Places for Outdoor Learning - Free places \(start date: 5 March 2023\)](#)
- [Sustainable and Safe Event Management - Free places \(start date: TBC\)](#)

## **Other updates on Outdoor Learning**

**The Young People in European Forests competition** is taking place in the UK for the first time this year. It aims to encourage young people, age 15-18, to showcase their passion for their country's trees and woodlands.

Teams are invited to submit a media project, which displays their knowledge and understanding of forestry in their part of the United Kingdom. The project can be in any format and may be an extended essay, fact file, PowerPoint or video. This year's theme is 'Forestry and the Future'. Entries are open and will close on the 7 November 2022. Information will be posted on the [Royal Forestry Society](#).



[Scotland's Outdoor Learning Directory](#) aims to provide a portal to outdoor learning services provided by various Scottish organisations, plus news and research from the wider network.



## Woodland Trust- Tree Tools for Schools

Along with providing [free tree packs](#) for schools and communities, The Woodland Trust has a fantastic online learning hub – [Tree Tools for Schools](#). This site is designed to support their free tree packs and includes everything you need to plan, plant and care for your trees.

This hub also includes a fantastic range of [activities](#) to help inspire outdoor learning. Resources include ID sheets, scavenger hunts, outdoor arts and crafts, puzzle sheets and ideas to help wildlife. Resources are focused on the English school curriculum but can be easily adapted for use in Scotland.



## Contact Us

To contact your local OWL Scotland group please visit the [OWL Scotland website](#).

Or contact us:

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Or visit our [Outdoor and Woodland Learning Scotland Facebook](#) page.

