



December 2022

OWL Scotland National News

Welcome to everyone who has recently signed up for the OWL Scotland bulletin. It is great to have you involved in this increasing network of teachers and practitioners in outdoor and woodland learning. In this edition will find lots of updates and planned events from groups across Scotland, various courses, important consultations and how to apply for free fruit trees packs.

As the winter solstice creeps closer I feel quite grateful for the recent cold snap which has been long overdue. Despite the daunting prospect of rising bills, as regular users of the outdoors, I'm sure we have all had our concerns over the impact of recent unseasonably warm weather on the natural world which we all treasure.

It has been quite a busy year around the country and after my first full year with OWL Scotland I feel much more settled into my new job. I have loved the opportunity of travelling to visit some of the sessions, events and projects being run by various OWL groups.

Several groups have been hosting or preparing for winter craft events to share skills and meet new and existing members. Others have been planning for the year ahead with CPD sessions and networking events to revive memberships after the impact of Covid. Whatever stage your local OWL group is at I know they would welcome input from their members. As always a huge thank you to everyone involved in local groups and for all the hard work and commitment you give to raising awareness and skills in this sector.

Bonnie and I would also like to wish everyone festive greetings for the holidays!

Eilidh, Education Programme Manager



SAVE THE DATE- OWL Scotland National Networking Weekend – Dounans, Aberfoyle - 17th- 19th February 2023! Please note that currently local OWL group members have priority booking to this event and have been sent the link for booking. In January we will offer remaining spaces through the OWL Scotland bulletin. More details on local groups can be found on the OWL Scotland group page of the website. Contact your local group directly if you would like to join or if you are a member and would like to attend the event.

Forest Kindergarten Subsidiary Courses

Following on from the popular Shelter and Ropes, Fire and Woodland Ecology courses, we are pleased to announce that the following courses will be held in the new year-

- [Using Tools in Forest Kindergarten](#) 27th January 2023- Cuningar Loop, Glasgow
- [Using Tools in Forest Kindergarten](#) 18th March 2023- Kinnoul Hill, Perth

Please note that these courses are for early years practitioners who have undertaken Forest Kindergarten training.

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 early years settings 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 is available on the on the [Scottish Finest Woods Awards](#) website and will be in the next bulletin and posted on [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 but are lacking the confidence or skills to do so. 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.

There is no requirement to attend training before delivering this award programme. If you are an experienced and confident outdoor practitioner you can lead this award.

- 4th March 2023, [Glasgow- Pollok Country Park](#)- using tools.

Local OWL Events and News

Argyll

The Argyll OWL team are holding an **online group meeting and AGM on the 16th of January 16 at 12:00 pm**. If you would like to attend please email the group (argyllowlgroup@gmail.com) so further details and the correct link can be sent through. We are also looking for office bearers, so again please email us for more information or to express and interest in joining this wonderful committee.

A follow up networking event 'Where do we go now?' will be held in Inverary on the 18th of March at 12 noon. This will not only give us a chance to share ideas but also for the group to come together and create a joint vision for 2023 and beyond.



Ayrshire



Coffee, cake and conversation: We will be meeting at Dumfries House STEM Centre at 10 am on the 23rd Jan to discuss the future of OWL Ayrshire. The group would love to encourage new support and celebrate the existing work that is going on in our outdoor and woodland environments. We also want to hear from you about how we can continue to engage with new members and audiences

so, whether you have ideas or just want to meet up with likeminded people we'd love to see you there. Just email Joanne (Joanne.Dempster@princes-foundation.org) in advance so we can make sure there are enough biscuits!

Ayrshire OWL will be looking for people to fill the secretary and treasurer roles ahead of the group AGM in April 2023 so please contact the group if you would like more information or to express an interest in either of these posts.

Forth Valley OWL

The recently merged Forth Valley and Clackmannanshire OWL groups (now Forth Valley OWL group) have just held their Christmas Crafts meeting at Plean Country Park. As the group continue to build up numbers they loved to hear from individuals and organisations that are passionate, or want to increase their skills in outdoor learning. Contact Jenny (jenny.ventham@forestryandland.gov.scot) for more information on the group.

Edinburgh OWL



All thanks to Jo, Jess and Blair for hosting our 2022 AGM at The Zoo. It was a fast-paced, well attended evening with great contributions from all attending to shape our plans together for 2023. Welcome to our lovely, new, EOWL members and to Eilidh for joining us!

We are very pleased to have been awarded funds to create an active and inspiring, outdoor learning year ahead. We will be advertising themed CPDs using the excellent OWL Scotland, published resources, in the use of Tools, Fire, Den-building, Storytelling, Environmental Arts Foraging and more.

We are additionally pleased to be able to assist a Scottish Junior Forester Award with young people and their teachers and hope to build on this experience for future years.

A return to our annual Nature Play Conference, in partnership with City of Edinburgh Council has given a sparkle to many hearts. Please save the date in your diary: **Saturday April 29th 2023**, for what promises to be a wonderful event together.

We are in the process of tuning in the fine details for our CPD calendar and please do look out on the [Edinburgh OWL Facebook page](#) for further information including details of where to join us for these and /or at our monthly meetings. Our next Meeting will take place on **Monday 12th December 2022. (7.00pm -9.00pm) for Jo's, OWL Book Group & Drinks.**

Best wishes to OWL friends across Scotland - Barbara, EOWL Chair

North East OWL



At the end of October, we held a Foraging Workshop at Haddo Country Park for our OWLNEG members, led by Dan Puplett. We talked about how including elements of foraging in our Outdoor Learning practice, can help with Nature Connection.

We explored the woods of the park learning about edible plants, leaves, berries and nuts, and other non-food uses such as cordage and soap. We broke for lunch and enjoyed pine needle tea. Twelve OWLNEG members attended; we all enjoyed the day and learnt a lot from Dan. Thanks also to Laurie Malster, the Haddo Park Ranger, for hosting us.



On Thursday 1st December we held a joint networking meeting with Moray OWLS group at Greenmyres Eco Bothy. More details to follow on the [NEOWL](#) and [Moray OWL Facebook](#) pages and also the next OWL Scotland bulletin.

North Highland OWL

The North Highland OWL group held a Winter Willow Lanterns & Cosy Campfire on the 12th of November. It was great to welcome new and familiar faces and create many lovely willow lanterns.

Refreshments were shared around the fire, followed by a short walk along the secret trail with the lit, newly created, wonderful lanterns.



South Highland OWL



We have had a busy few months with lots of CPD workshops! **Abriachan Forest Trust** has hosted two workshops with 2 more to come with a focus on Early Years. In October they held 'Using Fire with early years pupils' and in early November 'Tool use with early years pupils'. On 25 November they will held 'Ropes and Shelters' and on 3 December 'Scottish Junior Forestry Award training'. They have been very busy bees!

On Sat 22 October we held a very successful and busy workshop '**Foraging and Tracking with Dan Puplett**' in Strathnairn Community Woodland near Inverness. You can see from the photos that we found tracking signs of red squirrels and other mammals and even spotted frogs, toads and newts in the leaf litter! We also found lots of autumnal plants and fungi to safely forage.

We are now planning our **next suite of CPD workshops for 2023**. Themes such as Art Therapy, Song birds, Storyworks and Gaelic in the woods will be confirmed soon with locations and dates. See our [Facebook page](#) for details as they arise.



West Coast OWL

West Coast OWL hosted a very successful CPD day in September, based at Plockton Primary School, where we had access to a community-managed space with plenty of different tree species. Cat Martin from Coigach led an inspiring morning of activities for literacy and nature connection, followed by an afternoon of mindful photography.

17 local early years practitioners and our local FLS Ranger were eager participants and all took away many ideas for activities.

WC OWL Group is now planning our next year of activities, including supporting secondary schools with the Scottish Junior Forester Award. At least three of our members have signed up for the training session at Abriachan in early December and staff from Plockton High School have expressed an early interest in running the award for some of their pupils.



We're also just finalising our shopping list for a second kit set - with members spread between Lochalsh, Gairloch and Ullapool, we're developing 'owlets' with their own resources in different locations around the area to maximise availability.

WC OWL was very happy to work with the North & South Highland OWL Groups to deliver the successful networking day at Fairburn during the summer and hopes to be able to work together again before too long.

West Fife OWL

West Fife OWL Group held a very informative and tasty Food Safety and Outdoor Cooking Course in Blairadam Forest depot at the end of October. The day was an excellent mix of learning how to cook safely on a fire, food hygiene training and hands-on cooking (and eating, of course!).

Julia Mackay from North East Scotland OWLS set up a well-equipped outdoor cooking space and had lots of practical tips on fires and cooking outdoors.



REHIS food hygiene trainers Lorna Ross and Catherine Busson ensured we learned all about food handling, the difference between high and low risk foods and how to keep each other safe and healthy.



Best of all, we learned all these new skills while preparing a scrumptious three course lunch - vegetable soup, tacos, fajitas with sides and chocolate brownies to finish! All together it was a thoroughly enjoyable and worthwhile day and we left with new skills, recipes and a food hygiene certificate.



Funding Opportunities

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



Other News

Professor Hayward's Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment - public consultation

Recognising the need to look to the future, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced in October 2021 the intention to reform qualifications and assessments.

This reform process will seek to ensure that all learners' achievements are fairly recognised to afford every learner an enhanced and fair opportunity to demonstrate the breadth, depth and relevance of their learning. **This consultation closes 13th of January 2023** and we would encourage everyone to read over this and comment.

Visit the [Scottish Government website](#) for more information.

Skills delivery independent review: call for evidence

In September 2022, the Minister for Higher Education, Further Education, Youth Employment and Training set out to parliament that he would be initiating an independent review of the skills delivery landscape in Scotland as part of work to ensure that the skills system is fit for purpose for delivering Scotland's national outcomes and meeting future economic challenges including the transition to net zero.

The purpose of this call for evidence is to gather evidence from all interested parties to inform recommendations in relation to the future of the skills delivery public body

and advisory landscape, including the future remit and status of Skills Development Scotland.

For more information, and to contribute towards this consultation please visit the [Scottish Government website](#).

IPA Glasgow 2023

Two of our regional OWL members are Board Members of **IPA Scotland**, who are delighted to be able to share news of being chosen to host the *22nd International Play Association Triennial World Conference* in Glasgow in June 2023



Globally, this is the only conference of its kind, unique in bringing people together to help create a world where all children have the right to play. We believe this is more important than ever as children's lives are impacted by global economic trends, environmental change and, of course, the pandemic.

The conference, **taking place at Glasgow Caledonian University from 6th - 9th June 2023**, will examine how UN General Comment No 17 on article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child has impacted policy and practice in Scotland, and worldwide, to improve children's right to play and to create possibilities for the future.

There are a number of ways you can participate and support the conference, details of which can be found on the [conference website](#).

- Become a [delegate](#).
- Become a speaker- [submit an abstract](#) for a paper, workshop, play activity or poster
- Become an [Exhibitor](#) or Sponsor
- Promote the conference through your networks, and encourage submission of abstracts
- [Join IPA](#) to become part of the international network and benefit from discounts
- Follow us and repost on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) #IPAGlasgow2023.

[Further Training Opportunities](#)

Junior Ranger Introduction for Rangers, Practitioners and Educators

- 12th December 12:00-13:30pm- online
- 12th January 13:00-14:30pm- online
- 23rd January 18:00-19:30pm- online

This event is geared towards ranger services, outdoor practitioners and any other outdoor educators that would like to learn more about the various elements relating to the Scottish Countryside Ranger's Association Junior Ranger programme as well as Junior Ranger Programmes more widely.

During this workshop, we will provide an overview of what the programme entails and offer insight into the various competencies that young people must achieve in order to receive the award. Advice will also be given on how you can organise and structure your sessions in a way that allows participants to meet the necessary criteria of the award. For more information, and to book a space please visit [Eventbrite](#).

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 \(start date: March 2023\)](#)

Learning for Sustainability Scotland

2022 AGM and networking event: Transformational Change through Learning- Wednesday 11th January 2023, 16:00- 18:00

This online event is an excellent opportunity to network with other Learning for Sustainability Scotland members. This year, we'll be hosting inspirational speakers and celebrating stories on the theme of transformational change through learning. For more information and to book a space please visit [Eventbrite](#).

[Other updates on Outdoor Learning](#)

[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.

[Free Fruit Trees with TCV](#)

As part of the 'From the Ground Up' project with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), if you are a primary school in mainland UK you can order one of the free fruit tree packs containing:

- 2 x apple trees
- 2 x pear trees

The fruit trees are grown in the UK and will be dispatched between the 6th and 17th March 2023 ready for you to plant and will come with full planting instructions. For more information on the project and how to apply please visit the [TCV website](#).

Contact Us

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

Or contact us:

Eilidh Malcolm
Eilidh.malcolm@forestry.gov.scot
Education Programme Manager

Scottish Forestry
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh
EH12 7AT

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

