



February 2023

OWL Scotland National News

Hello OWL Scotland network. It seems like a long time since the December edition. I am sure with the festivities of the holidays now past we are all welcoming the longer days and the subtle hint of spring around the corner. I did manage to escape up to Glencoe for a wee day on the mountains with my family. A full day in the snow was amazing and the spectacular scenery of Glencoe reminded me of my love for winter.

The welcoming of longer days is also a reminder of the OWL Scotland National Networking Event in February. This event was once again held at Dounans, Aberfoyle and the team loved connecting with members from around Scotland. More details on the event will be covered in the next edition of the bulletin.



In this edition there are reminders of the last few courses from OWL Scotland before the end of March, updates from local OWL groups around Scotland. Events are continuously being added to the OWL Scotland event webpage so please keep an eye on this for future courses and events. There is also news on the IPA world conference in Glasgow, winners of the Young People in European Forests Awards, and access to the special 16<sup>th</sup> edition of Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmills (ASHS) publication, The Full Circle, Women of the Woods.

As always, any questions please do not hesitate to contact me and share any of your Outdoor and Woodland Learning adventures through the [OWL Scotland Facebook page](#).

Eilidh, Education Programme Manager

## Scottish Finest Woods Awards 2023- open for applications!

Could your school or early years setting be the winner of the Scottish Finest Woods Award 2023? Applications for the schools and early years awards are now open to nursery, primary, secondary and special schools anywhere in Scotland.

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. You may also be able to enter the [Climate Change Champion Award](#).

There are cash prizes of £250 for each of the winning school and early years entries plus winners receiving a Mag Post kindly provided by Caledonia Play plus attendance at the award ceremony at the Royal Highland Show. For more information on the awards and to download an application form please visit the [Scottish Finest Woods Award website](#).



## Forest Kindergarten Subsidiary Courses

We have one final Using Tools in Forest Kindergarten course running on the 18th of March 2023, 10 am- 3pm, at Kinnoul Hill, Perth. Please note that these courses are for early years practitioners who have undertaken Forest Kindergarten training. For more information and to book a space please visit the [OWL Scotland events webpage](#).



## 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 remaining course will cover using tools as part of the Woodland Management section.

There is no requirement to attend training before delivering this award programme

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

## OWL Scotland Resources and Courses Review

Scottish Forestry and OWL Scotland are reviewing all resources and courses and we would love your help!

We have an online survey where your feedback and future suggestions will be invaluable in evaluating the impact and benefit of the Scottish Forestry / OWL Scotland programmes and how we can further support outdoor and woodland learning across Scotland. The **deadline is the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2023**.

You can complete the survey on a desktop using this [link](#).

### Online survey

The survey will take 10 - 20 minutes depending on your attendance at events, training or courses and how many \*wonderful\* suggestions you share with us.

Use the QR Code or link provided



### A Winner is among you!

Everyone who completes the survey will be entered into a prize draw for one person to win a £100 MUDDY FACES VOUCHER.

Second prize 'Dragon Sneeze'

The survey can also be completed anonymously



### Young People in European Forests (YPEF) awards

A team from Boroughmuir High School, Edinburgh, has been named the first-ever UK winner of the Young People in European Forests (YPEF) awards with a heart-warming video on forestry in Scotland. The short film was produced by students Hari Pranavam, Izzy Pickard and Raphael Uddin. The Young People in European Forests (YPEF) awards are held annually in 11 countries across mainland Europe. This was the first year the UK had entered.

Helen McKay, chief forester for Scotland, presented the award, and said: "It is enormously encouraging to see the young people's enthusiasm for woodlands and forests."

YPEF 2023 has the theme of Our Favourite Forest. It will be open on 1 March for entries from schools, youth groups and other organisations. Entrants will be asked to submit a media project which showcases their knowledge and understanding of forestry in their part of the United Kingdom - England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales. The project can be in any format and may be an extended essay, fact file, PowerPoint or video. The deadline for entries is 31<sup>st</sup> May.



### Feedback needed on Scottish Forestry Website

Staff have recently started to rebuild the Scottish Forestry website, and the input of the OWL Scotland network is needed!

Digital and Web Content Manager, Cameron Edwards, commented "We've created a very short survey to let people tell us about their priorities and experience when visiting the website. Ultimately, what's important to our users? How does the site work for them (or not). This input really will go a long way to helping us build the kind of site content and services people need."



Scottish  
Forestry  
Coilltearachd  
na h-Alba

To complete the survey please use this [link](#).

## Local OWL Events and News

### Moray & North East Groups Networking Event

OWLNEG and Moray OWL Group are pleased to be working in partnership to deliver our next outdoor learning event, which will be held at Greenmyres Eco Bothy, Huntly on Sunday 26th March.

This training is for adults in schools, early years, forest school, outdoor learning and mental health/social care

The Workshops include tracks & signs, green wood working, ethnobotanical walk, willow weaving, pond dipping and nature crafts.

To book your place and to find out further information please contact Julia via email - [julia.m4cay@gmail.com](mailto:julia.m4cay@gmail.com)



### Ayrshire

Ayrshire OWL are looking for new members and office bearers ahead of the group AGM in April 2023. Please contact Joanne if you would like more information on the group or to express an interest in any office bearer posts. [Joanne.dempster@princes-foundation.org](mailto:Joanne.dempster@princes-foundation.org)

### Dumfries and Galloway

Dumfries and Galloway OWL member Jenny Stephenson and members of the South West Community Woodland Trust (SWCWT) were delighted to win the Scotland's Finest Community Woodland Award 2022 for Taliesin Community Woodland.

Scotland's Finest Woods Award Judges said the team were a 'worthy winner of the Tim Stead Trophy for their stellar work in engaging people with this woodland site. SWCWT has created a special site that provides a number of important habitats and encourages and enables local people to come together out of doors in a welcoming environment.'

Taliesin Community Woodland is a haven for nature and for those who love to be in natural surroundings. It is already used by Forest school and outdoor learning groups, and is seeing more visitors of all ages including people with mobility issues.

Congratulations to the team at SWCWT for winning this award and creating this super location that is frequently used by members of D&G OWL and the wider community.



## Moray

On 18/11/22 we hosted a workshop Using Nature as a Resource to Support Mental Health, run by Nature 4 Health (N4H) at Loch of Blairs, Rafford. 15 participants attended and gave very positive feedback on the outcomes.

This training focused on how to create a safe place, the science behind nature connection and ways to deliver for maximum benefit. Research has clearly shown that combining physical activity, social contact and nature really helps improve mental wellbeing. Our experiences of working with people with poor mental health have helped us to understand some of the best ways to set up positive activities.



Involving participants with these themes in a hands-on way, offering various skills, techniques and practices for a range of abilities and participants. Including use of fire, shelters, games, exercises and more, all with an emphasis on theory and application. We cooked food over the fire and ate together, made paracord key fobs, had a storytelling session, mindful movement exercise and a variety of sensory games.

An important aspect of all of this was linking these activities in a way that people who were struggling with social and mental health issues would feel comfortable, involved and able to contribute. Many aspects of how to facilitate to individuals and groups were discussed. Feedback at the time was warm and grateful with many people relaying that they had an enjoyable and interesting/educational day. It was noted that the accompanying theoretical online presentation (3hrs) would be a useful addition to the in-person training day.

## South Highland OWL

We have had a busy time since the last reported workshop in autumn, particularly at Abriachan Forest Trust! They hosted 5 workshops before Christmas, attracting over 80 participants. Their focus was with Early Years which was supported and promoted by OWL Scotland. These workshops included using fire, tool use and ropes & shelters. They also held a Crafty Christmas open day for families and Scottish Junior Forester Award training.





We have lots planned for **2023** and here is a summary:



### **1. Fire Safety Training for teachers on Friday 24 March @ [Abriachan Forest Trust](#).**

The aim is to equip teachers and outdoor educators with the confidence and skills to make fires outdoors, using the OWL safety guidance. This will be in the afternoon and if proves popular, will be repeated.

### **2. Gaelic in the landscape on Sat 22 April @ Dundreggan with Ceit Langhorne**

We will visit the brand new Rewilding centre at [Dundreggan](#) and Ceit will take us on a walk to show how folklore in the landscape is reflected in place names, their meaning and what they can tell us about culture-nature connection. If there's time, we will look at plant and animal names and their culture-nature connections.

### **3. Art therapy in the woods on Sat 20 May @ Ness Islands, Inverness with art therapy student Sarah Robinson**

The aim of this workshop is to introduce participants to the concept of [art therapy](#). Art therapy is an established form of psychological therapy delivered by trained art therapists. It's designed to help anyone, including those whose life has been affected by adverse experiences, illness or disability, but supporting their social, emotional and mental health needs. You won't become an art therapist from coming to this workshop, but Sarah who is also a teacher and artist herself, will give you some skills to use techniques that you can use with your classes/groups.



### **4. Birdsong for outdoor educators on Sat 24 June @ Aviemore with [Dan Puplett](#) who is a naturalist, conservationist and environmental educator**

In this workshop you will learn how to recognise a range of birds by their songs. We will cover some helpful tips for learning birdsong as well as ways in which we can share an appreciation of birdsong with others, regardless of our level of experience. The workshop is ideal for teachers, and anyone involved in engaging others with the natural world.

To **book places** on these workshops, Juliet is setting up **Eventbrite** where booking can be done online. In the meantime, please **email her** at [julietpcrobinson@gmail.com](mailto:julietpcrobinson@gmail.com) and she can send the link(s) when the Eventbrite is set-up. We also keep our [Facebook](#) page regularly updated.



## Funding Opportunities

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

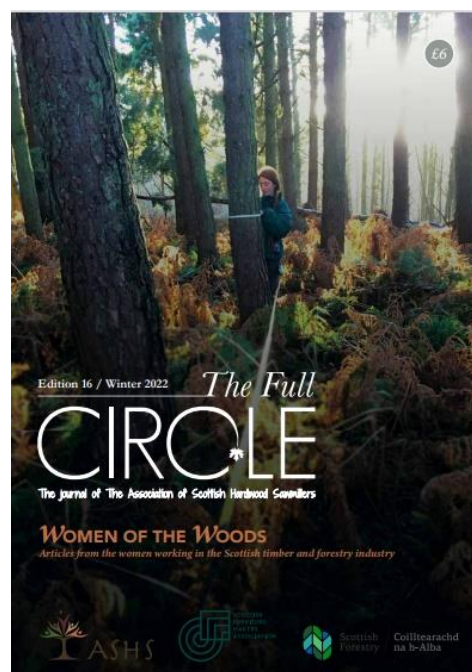


## Other News

### **The Full Circle**

We are very excited to be able to share the most recent edition of the [Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers](#) magazine, The Full Circle. The 16<sup>th</sup> edition, Women of the Woods, celebrates the amazing work of women in the sawmill and forestry industry. OWL Scotland would also like to share our deep sadness of the news of the recent death of Kitty Birley, who edited this special edition. Kitty was the ASHS Coordinator and Environmental Project Manager at Scottish Wood and was a fantastic female role model to young women. Our thoughts are with her family and friends during this extremely difficult time.

ASHS have kindly allowed us to share this publication with the OWL network to increase connections between education and industry. To access the [16<sup>th</sup> Edition of The Full Circle](#) please use the following password on the OWL Scotland Website- ASHS2023.



### **IPA Glasgow 2023**

The International Play Association (IPA) World Conference 2023 will be held at Glasgow Caledonian University between the 6<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> June 2023. This will be a hybrid conference offering opportunities for delegates to take part in-person or virtually.



Children's experience is woven through the conference, with presentations of visual media, papers, projects and research. More information can be found [here](#). Delegates can find out about children's experiences in Scotland first-hand through our programme of facilitated visits.



## STEM Nation

This online resource was created as part of Scotland's STEM Education and Training Strategy. On this site you will find a range of resources to support, inspire and connect such as: the latest developments in STEM, interesting practice examples to inspire and make connections, information on the STEM awards programmes available in Scotland and links to the Young STEM Leaders Programme, and much more for ELC, primary, secondary, ASN, CLD, and school based technical support staff.



Visit the [STEM Nation website](#) for more information on training events and opportunities.

## 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:

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

## [Other updates on Outdoor Learning](#)

## Nature Restoration Jobs and Skills Conference

What skills do we need to deliver nature-based solutions to the climate emergency?

Scotland's first online Nature Restoration Jobs and Skills Conference will demonstrate how nature restoration can tackle the nature and climate emergency and provide attractive new opportunities for business and for Scotland's current and future workforce. This online conference will take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 from 10.00-12.30. Find out more and book your FREE place [here](#).



## Exploring Resilient Treescapes in the face of Climate Change – BOOK NOW!

Saturday 18 March 2023, 10.00am -4.00pm, The Botanic Cottage, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh . £8.00 per person



You are warmly invited to join us for the first Regional [Tree Warden](#) Forum for Scotland, which is being kindly hosted and supported by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Perth & Kinross, and Fife Tree Warden Networks.

This magnificent setting is an ideal venue to bring us all together to learn and **explore the importance of tree health, species adaptation and the value of hedgerows**. The morning's talks will take place indoors and the group will have the opportunity to explore the amazing Botanic Gardens in the afternoon as part of the outdoor workshops.

Tree Warden Forums are always a great opportunity to meet others who are passionate about trees and find out about other local projects and initiatives. All tree enthusiasts are welcome, whether you are signed up as a volunteer Tree Warden.

**To BOOK please Click [HERE](#)** - where you will also find the full agenda and further event details.

Please note refreshments, and a free copy of the new '[Tree Grower's Guide](#)', which can be purchased from The Tree Council website, are available to all who attend the event. We do ask you bring a packed lunch, or food can be purchased from the onsite café.

**[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.



### **DYW live offer – nature-based jobs and skills showcase 13 March 2023**

Do you work with young people in secondary school? If so, please promote this nature-based jobs and skills showcase live sessions from 13:30 – 15:15, offered by NatureScot.

Young people will hear from a range of professionals working in the nature-based sector. They will learn about the importance of tackling the nature and climate emergency and how to secure a job working with nature.

Find out more here on the [e-sgoil 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](mailto: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.

