

**Dysgu yn yr  
Awyr Agored  
Cymru**

**Outdoor  
Learning  
Wales**



## **Outdoor Learning Wales February 2019 Bulletin**

**Outdoor Learning Wales (OLW) is a national network, facilitated by Natural Resources Wales. OLW aims to increase the understanding, appreciation and sustainable management of natural resources in relation to Wales by drawing expertise, knowledge and inspiration from a range of partners, leaders and educators.**

The aim of this bulletin is to update our members in Wales on news, projects and initiatives related to sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR).

### **OLW Update:**

We are busy planning a new **national campaign** that we want you to get involved with, so watch this space and keep an eye on our social media as we will be announcing our exciting news as soon as we can! There will also be a funding update accompanying this news.

As it is the start of the new year for OLW activities, each network group will be need to complete and return the annual **administration form** to be able to access funding.

- The **large project** fund of up to £2000 is available to OLW network groups at 2 points in the year, 1<sup>st</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> October via the online application process on the OLW website.
- The **small project** fund of £300 per group is available now to OLW groups who have completed and returned the administration form. This money can be used for group administration or for shared resources or activities.

**Impio Outdoor Learning Wales Network Group** invites you to attend the 'Creating Successful Futures through Outdoor Learning' Conference which will be held at outside at Greenfield Heritage Park, Holywell, Flintshire on the 4th April 2019. <https://www.greenfieldvalley.com/>

Dust off your wellies, ditch your suit and get your mac out; join members of the Outdoor Learning Wales network to gain inspiration and practical ideas on how the outdoors can be used to deliver and support learning across the Curriculum for Wales.

You will be able to listen to guest speakers and take part in 3 workshops.

Be inspired, learn new skills, take away a wealth of resources and refresh your confidence.

Available workshops based on the 6 Areas for Learning and Experience:

*Expressive Arts:* 'The Lost Happy Endings' – bring the book to life with Polly Snape

*Health and Well-being:* 'Healing Nature' with Gemma Johnson

*Humanities:* Ethics, beliefs, religion and spirituality within the context of outdoor learning with Greg Woolley of the Egin Conwy OLW Group

*Languages, literacy and communication:* Use the inspiring seasons to create a special memory book with staff from Plas Drew Trust

*Mathematics and Numeracy:* Counting and Coding in Nature with teachers from Ysgol Glan Gele

*Science and Technology:* Surveying and observation with Iwan Edwards of the North Wales Wildlife Trust

Skill Enhancing Workshops:

Using mindfulness with groups of children - Why and how to use Mindfulness with groups of any age in the outdoors.

Using and maintaining edge tools - A workshop covering the safe use of edge tools – bushcraft knife, pruning saw, axe, draw-knife and billhook. Learn how to store, carry and maintain them.

Historic Healers – an over view of a curriculum liked project focusing on the healing and health properties of many common woodland plants

Flintshire Eco-Champions - A presentation on the new Environmental Education Programme developed by Plas Derw Trust in conjunction with Flintshire County Council

Attend 3, get three free - Delegates will have the opportunity to attend 3 workshops but will receive session plans for all 6 AoLE workshops.

Organisational marketplace

A marketplace of outdoor education groups, charities and organisations will be held at the Conference. A one-stop-shop for outdoor learning networking, resources and ideas. Marketplaces are limited, anyone wishing to secure a space should contact [education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk) asap. Spaces will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Lunch and refreshments included plus a chance to explore the park during your lunch break

Cost £30 a delegate

To book a place contact: [education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk)

We would love to hear about your outdoor learning activities so please share them with us via: [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

**Network Group Meetings:**

**Group:** Caerphilly OLW, **Date:** 06/02/19, **Venue:** Ty'n y Wern, **Time:** 4pm

### Natural Resources Wales



Upcoming training sessions run by NRW are aimed at promoting pupil wellbeing and health, utilising the natural environment as the vehicle for multiple health benefits linked to learning. This is a foundation level course, suitable for Wellbeing Coordinators, Healthy School Coordinators, Flying Start staff and those working with wellbeing and health groups.

- **Connection to Nature for a Healthy Future**, Date: 06/03/19, and 14/03/19, Venue: Porthkerry Park, Vale of Glamorgan
- **Connection to Nature for a Healthy Future**, Date: 12/03/19, Venue: Clawddnewydd Village Hall and Bod Petruel Woodland, near Ruthin

Contact: [education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk)

Listen to our very own Sue Williams talking passionately about the multiple benefits of outdoor learning at EWC [Professionally Speaking](#) event.....sharing the stage with the Minister for Education and Iolo Williams.

This month NRW education staff are meeting with their counterparts from Scotland and England Forestry Commission. Discussions on sharing resources and providing a GB voice for outdoor learning are on the agenda.

More outdoor learning resources such as activity and session plans, information notes and guides are regularly being uploaded to the [website](#) so keep an eye out!

### Recipe of the month

*Campfire Nachos*

1/2 bag of tortilla chips

15oz can black beans, drained and rinsed

2 plum tomatoes, chopped

4 oz grated cheese

3 spring onions, chopped

sour cream

hot sauce, optional



- Take 2 sheets of heavy duty foil, at least 20 inches long and set them on top of each other.
- On the longest side, fold both pieces of foil together, and over, 3 times.
- After folding the foil together, open the non-folded sides. There should now be one big sheet.

- Spray the whole foil with nonstick spray.
- Place tortilla chips into the center of the foil.
- Spread beans out on top of the chips. Then tomatoes and sprinkle the cheese on top to cover.
- Pull up long sides of foil, together above the chips; fold twice to seal, leaving room above nachos.
- Roll the sides up so that they are sealed, also leaving some space around nachos for air flow.
- Place on a trivet or grill over your campfire and cook for 8-10 minutes.
- Open carefully and add green onions, sour cream, and salsa to the top.
- Serve immediately and enjoy!

NB: The campfire needs to be providing a LOW heat to avoid chips burning on the bottom.

[www.passionforsavings.com](http://www.passionforsavings.com)

### Quote of the month

“Focus on the excitement and it will lead you through the obstacles”

*Piya Sorcar*

### Activity of the Month

*Sewn Nature Hearts*

Great for a bit of fine motor skills!



- You will need to collect fresh leaves for best results
- Scissors
- Needle
- Thread
- Pretty paper for the secret message

1. Collect some leaves. The bigger the better.
2. Prepare the secret note. Write on it and roll it up.
3. Cut two of the leaves into hearts the same size. It looks great if you can keep the stem of the leaf in the middle.
4. Place two of the leaf hearts on top of one another and start to sew around them. Be careful not rip the leaves.
5. Stop 3 cm before you join the other stitching.
6. Gently squeeze in the secret message.
7. Sew the remainder of the leaf heart together until the stitching meets.
8. Tie it off just as you would if you were hand stitching material.

[www.mothernatured.com](http://www.mothernatured.com)

### Fact of the Month

Did you know that lone male foxes are sometimes called ‘Tods’? Hence the expression all on your tod (alone).

### Collective noun of the month

A host of sparrows

### Species of the Month

*Blue ground beetle (Carabus intricatus)*

Ground beetles are a large family, with more than 20,000 species worldwide. Most species of Ground Beetle are carnivorous, and some will run swiftly to catch their prey. Although there is some variation in their body shape and colouring, most are shiny, black and have ridged elytra (wing covers).



The blue ground beetle is the largest and one of the rarest ground beetles found in the UK.

Both larvae and adults are mainly nocturnal and thought to feed largely on tree slugs. The larvae have only been found on a handful of occasions in the UK.

All the sites where it has been found are ancient woodlands, mainly oak with occasional beech, in river valleys with a south-westerly aspect. They are all damp woodlands, with abundant mosses and are at least occasionally grazed by sheep.

This beetle has always been considered a rare insect nationally and is currently known from only ten sites in the UK. The blue ground beetle has been discovered at just its second known site in Wales, coinciding with the launch of a new project aimed to protect it and its habitat. Funded by the National Lottery, the **Blue Ground Beetle Project**, led by the invertebrate conservation charity Buglife Cymru, will deliver habitat management work at Coed Maesmelin ancient woodland in Skewen, Neath Port Talbot, to improve habitat conditions for this extremely rare beetle.

### **Plant of the Month**

*Blackthorn / Prunus spinose*



This small, deciduous tree is also known as sloe, and is a native to the UK and most of Europe.

Spiny, shrubby and densely branched, mature trees can grow to a height of around 6-7m and live for up to 100 years. The dark brown bark is smooth, and black-purple twigs form straight side shoots, which develop into thorns.

The small, narrow leaves are slightly wrinkled, oval, toothed, pointed at the tip and

tapered at the base.

Blackthorn flowers are hermaphrodite, meaning both male and female reproductive parts are found in one flower. White flowers appear on short stalks before the leaves in March and April, either singularly or in pairs. Once pollinated by insects, the flowers develop into blue-black fruits measuring 1cm across.

This tree can be confused with hawthorn in the winter when the leaves have dropped.

The flowers of blackthorn appear before the leaves and the spines have buds along their length, on the hawthorn flowers emerge from the same point as the buds.

Identify in the winter by looking for black and spiny twigs with leaf buds along the spines.

Blackthorn is native to Europe and western Asia. It can also be found in New Zealand and eastern North America. It grows best in moist, well-drained soil and thrives in full sunlight.

It grows naturally in scrub, copses and woodlands, but is commonly used as a hedging plant.

Early flowering, blackthorn provides a valuable source of nectar and pollen for bees in spring. Its foliage is a food plant for the caterpillars of many moths, including the magpie, common emerald, small eggar, swallow-tailed and yellow-tailed. It is also used by the black and brown hairstreak butterflies.

Birds nest among the dense, thorny thickets, eat caterpillars and other insects from the leaves, and feast on the berries in autumn.

Blackthorn was long associated with witchcraft, and it is said that witches' wands and staffs were made using blackthorn wood.

The timber is hardwearing and tough, light yellow with a brown heartwood and was traditionally used for making walking sticks, Irish shillelaghs and tool parts. It burns well and is often used as firewood.

The sloes are used for wine making, preserves, and flavouring gin.

Blackthorn can be susceptible to fungal diseases which causes blossom wilt in fruit trees, and the fruits can sometimes be distorted by a gall-forming fungus, *Taphrina pruni*.

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

### **Courses/Events:**

***Wales Outdoor Learning Week***

1 -7<sup>th</sup>/04/19

### **Year of Discovery - Wales**

This is a country overflowing with wonder

[www.visitwales.com/discovery](http://www.visitwales.com/discovery)

### **WCD Young Carers**

Promoting awareness of Young Carers within schools. Staff information, classroom sessions, initial drop ins for children, and other support for schools in Wrexham, Conwy & Denbighshire.

Contact: [shelley@wcdyc.org.uk](mailto:shelley@wcdyc.org.uk)

### **RSPB**

Curriculum linked outdoor learning sessions for schools

Venue: Newport Wetlands

Contact: [newport-wetlands@rspb.org.uk](mailto:newport-wetlands@rspb.org.uk) / 01633636363

### Charity Trees for Cities

Looking for 2 Cardiff schools to be involved in an Edible Playground project  
<https://treesforcities.org/our-work/edible-playgrounds/>  
Contact: [Laura@treesforcities.org](mailto:Laura@treesforcities.org)

### OPAL Surveys

How healthy is your local lake or pond? By taking part in the OPAL Water [survey](#), you'll help scientists learn more about how polluted our lakes and ponds are.

Discover the impacts of local air quality on our natural environment  
By taking part in the [OPAL Air Survey](#) you can find out about air quality near you.



### International Year of the Salmon

[www.cefas.co.uk](http://www.cefas.co.uk)

### World Wetlands Day

02/02/2019

### Big Farmland Bird Count

08 – 17/02/19

### National Birdbox Week

14 – 21/02/19

### Fairtrade Fortnight

25/02/19 to 10/03/19

### World Book Day

01/03/19

### World Wildlife Day

03/02/19



### Contact Us:

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### **Contributions:**

Please submit suggestions for content or items of interest for upcoming bulletins by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.  
All submissions are subject to Coordinator approval.

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