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.

**OLW Update:**
This is the final edition of the OLW Bulletin for 2019 so we hope you all have a very merry Christmas. And a Happy New Year of course!

This year has seen 3 more Successful Futures through Outdoor Learning Conference delivered by OLW network groups across Wales - Impio OLW network group in North East Wales; Newport, Monmouthshire and Torfaen OLW network groups in the South East; Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan and Caerphilly in South Central Wales.

These events have supported over 350 educators to understand how the 4 purposes of the Curriculum for Wales can be realised through a connection to nature.

OLW provided network groups with a Themed Project Fund this year to deliver local outdoor learning opportunities to celebrate the launch of the very first Wales Outdoor Learning Week.

We hope to offer each OLW network group £500 to participate in this themed week in 2020, so start thinking how your group could get involved!

**Diary marker - WOLW2020 - 30th March to the 3rd April.**

Keep in the know and share with us with us via: Facebook or Twitter

**Site in the Spotlight** *(contact us about nature spaces you use for learning)*

*Bute Park, Cardiff*
Bute Park is a Green Flag site and a CADW Grade 1 listed park that can be found just behind Cardiff Castle, where it acts as the green heart of the city.
There is a superb tree collection, natural play features, three cafes, and a wealth of horticulture and wildlife.
Bute Park’s nationally significant arboretum is unrivalled in the UK for the number of significant trees it contains. There are over 3,000 individually catalogued trees, some of which are rare and ornamental.
The Education Centre provides a range of learning sessions which aim to help pupils to understand the importance of plants and animals and can provide learning material to accompany school curriculum.

www.bute-park.com
Quote of the month
“Fill your life with adventures, not things. Have stories to tell, not stuff to show. Unknown

Activity of the Month Supplies:
Wool and Stick Christmas Trees

You will need:
Small sticks
Glue gun and glue
Green wool
Decorations e.g. leaf confetti, mini pom poms, buttons
UHU Glue
Yellow card
Scissors

- Make a stick tree shape by breaking twigs into 2 long side pieces, 1 short crosspiece and a little trunk.
- More able learners could square lash the triangle shape together or using the glue gun to fix them in place.
- Cut a long length of green wool and tie one end onto the tree.
- Wrap the wool around the tree repeatedly going from side to side and working your way up and down.
- When you have built up a green middle to the tree, tie the loose end of yarn.
- Glue or thread your tree decorations onto the strands of wool. You can use natural materials or any mini bits and bobs.
- Cut a golden star from yellow card and stick to the top of your tree
- Use an extra piece of wool to make a loop at the top of the tree so that it can be hung up.

Fact of the Month
Did you know that in the Ukraine, Christmas trees are often decorated with fake spiderwebs? It is believed that seeing a spiderweb on Christmas morning brings good luck. This belief comes from the story of a poor lady who could not afford to decorate her Christmas tree. On Christmas morning, she awoke to find spiders had decorated it with webs, and when the first rays of light touched the spiderwebs, they turned into gold and silver.

Recipe of the month
Camping Fondue
Fondue may be attributed to fancy dinners and restaurants, but you can do it camping too! A great way to use up Christmas chocolate.

Ingredients:
220g block of chocolate (or bag of choc chips)
A dash of milk (add to desired consistency)
Fruit or marshmallows (for dipping)

Method:
Heat a heavy saucepan over the camp fire and add chocolate. When the chocolate has melted, add milk and mix until combined. Remove the pan from the fire. Being careful of the hot pan - you could pour into another container if you can use it before it solidifies - use skewers, forks or sticks to dip fruit or marshmallows in the chocolate.

www.kidscraftroom.com
www.campsaustraliawide.com
Species of the Month
Sparrowhawk/Accipter nisus
The Eurasian sparrowhawk, also known as the northern sparrowhawk or simply the sparrowhawk, is a small bird of prey in the family Accipitridae.

Sparrowhawks are broad-winged raptors with long tails and long, thin yellow legs. Adult males have slate-grey upperparts and fine rufous barring underneath. Females have brownish-grey upperparts and less rufous barring than the male. They have a more prominent white line above the eye.

Sparrowhawks are specialist hunters of more than 120 species of bird, ranging in size from goldcrest to pheasant. Despite this preference for feathered prey, they have been recorded taking a wide variety of small mammals, including bats captured in flight. Many of their victims are plucked and eaten while still alive. Contrary to popular belief, sparrowhawks do not control the numbers of their prey, but the numbers of prey control the number of sparrowhawk. Sparrowhawk ensure the health of their prey population by weeding out the sick and unwary. They hunt by surprise, but frequently crash into windows when pursuing their prey.

Sparrowhawks frequently fall prey themselves to goshawks, who will not tolerate the smaller birds in their territory. Tawny owls are also major predators of young sparrowhawks.

Female sparrowhawks are typically 25% larger than males, but often twice as heavy. Because of the size difference, male sparrowhawks court the females with caution, as the female can kill her suitor. The female is dependent on extra food provided by the male to produce enough fat to allow her to lay eggs.

In medieval falconry, the sparrowhawk was deemed to be a bird for a priest. In falconry the male spar has long been known as the musket. The name was later used for the small handgun used by soldiers (hence musketeers).

Like all birds of prey, sparrowhawks are vulnerable to pesticide poisoning. The species was virtually wiped out in Eastern England in the 1960s due to DDT either killing them or rendering them infertile. During the sparrowhawk's absence, no obvious increase appeared in songbird breeding numbers, nor was there an obvious decline when hawk numbers recovered.

Most young sparrowhawks will breed within 20km of where they were raised. Birds which use the same nesting territory in successive years will usually also have the same mate. British sparrowhawks are largely resident, but migrants from northern Europe both pass through and winter here.

A male sparrowhawk can survive for two or three days with food, but the larger female can last for up to six days.

While a male sparrowhawk can live to seven or eight, the female may survive until she is ten or 11. Sparrowhawks gained full protection in Britain in 1961.

Collective noun of the month
An aurora of polar bears

Christmas Quiz
Answers at the end of the bulletin

1. Which ocean is Christmas Island in?
2. In which author's novel is it “always winter but never Christmas”?
3. What Christmas decoration might you find growing in an apple tree?
4. What Christmas food is made from “marsh-whorts”?
5. Who tried to steal Christmas from the “Who’s of Whoville”?
6. Each year Bergen sends a Christmas tree to the people of Newcastle and the people of Oslo send a Christmas tree to London, in thanks for what?
7. Where did the Christmas tree originate?
8. Which country did the gingerbread house come from?
9. For the UK to have an official White Christmas, according to the Met Office how much snow must fall?
10. Bedford Fillbasket, Cromwell and Wellington are all types of what?
Courses/Events/Information:

Forest School Swansea Neath Port Talbot – recommended Outdoor Learning Training Network member
Forest School Leader Agored Cymru Level 3
Date: 16, 17 & 18 March and 27, 28 & 29 April
Venue: Bishops Wood Countryside Centre, Swansea
Cost: £900

Coastal School Top Up Agored Cymru Level 3
Date: 20 & 21 May
Venue: Bishops Wood Countryside Centre, Swansea
Cost: £240

Forest School Assistant Agored Cymru Level 2
Date: 16, 17 & 18 March and 28 April
Venue: Bishops Wood Countryside Centre, Swansea
Cost: £400

Outdoor Learning Practitioner Agored Cymru Level 2
Date: 12 & 26 March and 23 April
Venue: Bishops Wood Countryside Centre, Swansea
Cost: £300
Contact: info@forestschoolsnppt.org.uk

Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales Strategy
The Welsh Government’s new Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales is a long-term strategy to prevent and reduce obesity in Wales, which will be delivered through a range of solutions - including opportunities to play.
The Welsh Government’s vision for 2030 and beyond is for ‘the people of Wales, and our future generations, to have the best start in life and live longer, better and happier lives’.

Christmas Quiz Answers
1. Indian Ocean
2. C S Lewis
3. Mistletoe
4. Cranberry Sauce
5. The Grinch
6. Help from Britain during WW2
7. In the 16th century devout Christians across European brought decorated trees into their homes
8. Germany
9. One single snowflake within the 24-hour period
10. Brussel Sprouts

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

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