

**Dysgu yn yr  
Awyr Agored  
Cymru**

**Outdoor  
Learning  
Wales**



## Outdoor Learning Wales July 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:

Members from Monmouthshire and Torfaen Outdoor Learning Wales (OLW) network groups got together to enjoy the Risky Play Workshop led by Jo Dainty from Everyday Play on 12th June. Together, they explored ways to build a range of wooden structures using a variety of materials. Time was taken to consider impacts of learning and wider skills development that would result whilst learners took part in building their own structures and then incorporated them in their play. As risk management is an essential part of facilitating risky play, the group discussed the dynamic nature of successful risk benefit assessments.

Donna Squirrel, from Branching Out Learning said "We've really enjoyed a fabulous course today, funded by OLW. Lots of ideas for developing the use of structures and great discussions about risk benefits and dynamic risk assessments."

Everyone left the training day tired, enthused and more confident about the benefits of risky play and

keen to embed their learning into their delivery with the children and young people they work with.



### **Network Group Meetings:**

**Group:** Swansea NPT OLW, **Date:** 10/07/19, **Venue:** Gowerton Primary, **Time:** 4pm

**Group:** Anglesey OLW, **Date:** 09/07/19, **Venue:** Coed Llwyno, **Time:** 10am

**Group:** Carmarthenshire OLW, **Date:** 17/07/19, **Venue:** Trinity University, **Time:** 4pm

### **Network Group Events:**

The **RCT/Merthyr OLW** network group are inviting educators in the area to join them at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park for a day of outdoor learning training on the 4th July

9.30am - 3.00pm.

**Cost: FREE**

✉: [aled.hopkin@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:aled.hopkin@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk)

Share with us with us via: [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

### NRW

#### ***High Quality Outdoor Learning Guide for Wales***

A new outdoor learning guide for Wales was launched on the 21<sup>st</sup> June at Plas y Brenin Mountain Centre, Snowdonia. The High Quality Outdoor Learning Guide sets out the framework for getting children and young people outside, learning in Wales' beautiful wild places.

The guide, launched by Welsh naturalist and ambassador for outdoor learning Iolo Williams, draws on the collective knowledge and experience of outdoor practitioners from across Wales. It will help teachers and educators to embed the use of the outdoors in learning and teaching to provide powerful learning experiences.

High Quality Outdoor Learning for Wales' sets out the first phase of an ambitious new strategy for outdoor learning in Wales, with backing from Welsh Government and the department for Education.

For more information, or to download the new 'High Quality Outdoor Learning for Wales' guide (available in Welsh or English), visit [www.oeap.co.uk](http://www.oeap.co.uk) or Wales Council for Outdoor Learning [www.walescouncilforoutdoorlearning.org](http://www.walescouncilforoutdoorlearning.org)

### **Acorn Antics 2019**

Here's an early warning that our Acorn Antics campaign will be back again in the Autumn!

☐☐ Once again we will be asking education and learning groups to get outside and collect acorns to help us help us plant more trees which have been grown from local seeds. This initiative is also a great way for young people to learn about, and connect with, the natural environment in Wales.

☐ What do you need to do?

If you're a teacher or group leader, we want you to keep look out for nearby oak trees so when the campaign launches again in the Autumn you will be ready to go.

If you're a landowner and you have oak trees on your land, why not contact your local school or education group to see if they would like to collect the acorns from your trees when the campaign launches.

**i** Find out more about our annual Acorn Antics campaign here – <http://socsi.in/NeONE>

If you are visiting the **Royal Welsh Show** this year - 22 - 25 July 2019 at the showground in Llanellwedd – please drop by to say hello to us at the NRW exhibit.

### **Recipe of the month**

#### *Dandelion Pesto*

We have had wild garlic pesto so time to switch to dandelion!  
Get your learners to collect the dandelion leaves.

#### Ingredients

75g shelled pine nuts  
3 garlic cloves minced  
300g chopped fresh dandelion leaves loosely packed  
1 Tbsp lemon juice  
1 Tbsp lemon zest  
118ml olive oil  
1/2 tsp salt  
1 tsp turmeric powder  
1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper  
25g freshly grated Parmesan cheese



#### Instructions

- Place all ingredients except the Parmesan into a blender or food processor.
- Process until smooth. If it's too thick, slowly add a bit more olive oil.
- Add the Parmesan and continue to blend until the mixture has a smooth consistency.

Refrigerate, and eat within 3 days.

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

### **Quote of the month**

"Children must be taught how to think, not what to think"

*Margaret Mead*

### Activity of the Month

*Build a squirrel drey. It won't be easy!*

A fun way to see how red squirrels make their nests.

Squirrels take about 4 days to make a drey and they usually have 3 or 4 ready that they can use.

This activity could be done whilst learning outside using natural materials or in the case of poor weather you could use any other man-made materials.

Ideally, this activity uses natural materials that red squirrels would naturally use. Get your learners to collect these items from your outdoor space:

- Twigs (thin hazel whips are excellent!)
- Leaves
- Moss

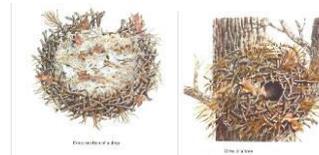
In small groups or pairs ask your learners to form the structure of the drey by placing twigs in a circle.

Some may like to use hazel whips and interweave them to make the structure more substantial.

Next place a mixture of leaves and moss inside the twig structure.

Dependent upon the materials, the drey may be lifted and kept for a while as a reminder or if it is not so solid and likely to collapse, then take lots of photos!

Materials can eventually be put back outside or in a compost bin.



### Fact of the Month

Did you know that the strawberry is the only fruit with its seed grown on the outside?

### Collective noun of the month

A group of hedgehogs is called an 'array' ☐

### Species of the Month

Red Squirrel / Y Wiwer Goch



We are fortunate indeed to have red squirrels in Wales, albeit in very low numbers.

They have many endearing features: the colour of their coat, although it can vary, is a gorgeous warm orange/red and it is often this that first catches the eye as they zip through the trees or bound across the ground; in the autumn they grow fur on their ears – these adorable ear 'tufts' as they are called do in fact serve the purpose of keeping them warm in the cold winter months. Finally, the big fluffy tail offers balance when moving through the trees as well as keeping them warm as they wrap themselves up in it whilst in their dreys – the word for a squirrel nest.

Red squirrels live in a drey, which can take 4 days to build! It is made by interlinking twigs into a ball and then lining it with lots of soft moss and leaves. Dreys are built in trees against the tree trunk and rest on a branch. Red squirrels use their dreys to raise their young as well as to rest in during the day. They can produce two litters of young per year. A baby red squirrel is called a 'kitten' and they can have three or four kittens in each litter.

Have you ever seen a red squirrel in Wales? You may be more familiar with their cousins the grey squirrel as there are far more of these now in Wales and the UK. However, did you know that the grey squirrel should be in north east America and not here in the UK? Victorian collectors brought grey squirrels over from America in 1876 and they have set up home here, adapting very well indeed to the food and other resources that they need.

They are doing so well in fact that they are pushing our native red squirrel numbers down and down. Latest figures for the UK show about 5million grey squirrels to about 140,000 red squirrels!

The main reason for this is that the grey squirrels out-compete the red squirrels to food and other resources and over many years this has caused the number of red squirrels to decline. The red squirrel requires plenty of woodland and a great deal of this habitat has been removed as well as roads being built through them – a term called fragmentation. Red squirrels also die from a disease called Squirrel Pox Virus which they catch from grey squirrels.

Fortunately, there are areas where red squirrels can still be found in Wales and one of these is Clocaenog Forest in the north east near Ruthin. A group of volunteers from Red Squirrels Trust Wales have been helping Natural Resources Wales to halt further decline and boost the numbers by bringing in some captive-

bred red squirrels. Hopefully, in the future visitors to Clocaenog Forest may be lucky to see red squirrels again! Squirrels can be seen on Anglesey and occur in forests in mid-Wales.

Rebecca Clews-Roberts - [www.redsquirrels.info](http://www.redsquirrels.info)

### **Plant of the Month**

#### *Sematophyllum demissum*



*Sematophyllum demissum* is a slender pleurocarpous moss that forms yellowish to golden green mats which lie flat against the substrate, except for the pointed tips that characteristically turn upwards.

The beautiful golden-tinged moss *Sematophyllum demissum* has its entire British population in Wales.

Each patch does not typically extend for more than about 20 cm, though in favorable conditions some continuous colonies can stretch up to 80 cm or more. The main colonies comprise a mat of trailing, little-branched shoots, each about 5 cm in length.

The draped appearance gives rise to the specific name (*demissum* = cast down).

When growing isolated from other mosses, the upper edge of patches often has a border of dense, short and erect branches. Leaves are straight, acuminate and nerveless.

When wet, the leaves are imbricate and when dry they tend to spread at an angle of about 45° from the stem. Capsules are usually present, which are short and have lids with a long beak, born on a seta that is generally about 1.2 cm long.

The present distribution of this moss is known from eight sites, of which seven are in valleys scattered around the Rhinog Range and the other is further north within the Snowdon Range. The plant does not occur at high altitudes in Wales and is restricted to the lowlands and upland fringe.

*Sematophyllum demissum* is limited to woodland sites in Wales. It has been stated that the plant prefers lightly shaded spots and whilst it does often occur in such situations, most of the Welsh colonies are beneath mature deciduous woodland canopies.

In Wales, it is considered a national priority for biodiversity conservation under Section 42 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended) and is categorised as 'Vulnerable' on the national Red List.

[www.rbg-web2.rbge.org.uk](http://www.rbg-web2.rbge.org.uk)

### **Courses/Events:**

#### ***Events Plas Derw Trust – recommended Outdoor Learning Training Network member***

Forest School Practitioner level 3

Dates: 11. 12. 13. 19. 20. 26. 27 September

Contact: [anjela@plasderw.co.uk](mailto:anjela@plasderw.co.uk)

#### ***Forest School Swansea Neath Port Talbot – recommended Outdoor Learning Training Network member***

Forest School Leader Level 3

Date: 16, 17 & 18 September and 14, 15 & 16 October

Venue: Bishops Wood Countryside Centre

Cost: £900

Forest School & Coastal School Leader Level 3

Date: 16, 17 & 18 September and 14, 15 & 16 October and 2 & 3 October 2019

Venue: Bishops Wood Countryside Centre

Cost: £1100

Coastal School Leader Top Up

Date: 2 & 3 October 2019

Venue: Bishops Wood Countryside Centre

Cost: £240

Outdoor Learning Practitioner  
Date: 25 Sept and 9 & 23 October  
Venue: Bishops Wood Countryside Centre  
Cost: £300



Outdoor Paediatric First Aid  
Date: 7 & 8 November  
Venue: tbc near Swansea  
Cost: £125  
Contact: [info@forestschoolsnpt.org.uk](mailto:info@forestschoolsnpt.org.uk)

### **Magor Marsh**

A guided walk around Magor Marsh looking for the elusive glow-worm.  
Date: 04/07/19  
Cost: £15 non-members and £10 members. Booking essential  
Contact: [www.livinglevels.org.uk](http://www.livinglevels.org.uk)

### **Life on Marsh Festival**

A wildlife and heritage mini-festival to celebrate the Gwent Levels.  
Local music, food, drama and storytelling along with all the usual pond dipping and bug hunting  
Date: 13/07/19  
Cost: £10 entry per car / £2 each if you walk.  
Contact: [www.livinglevels.org.uk/events](http://www.livinglevels.org.uk/events)

### **Marshy Mondays**

A fun afternoon for families with pond dipping a, bird watching and crafts at Magor Marsh  
Date: 29/07/19 and 05/08/19 – 1-3pm – £2.00 per child  
Contact: [magormarsh@gwentwildlife.org](mailto:magormarsh@gwentwildlife.org)

### **Ray Ceredigion**

Ray Play Day – family friendly day out with over 30 different activities  
Date: 07/08/19 11.30am – 3.30pm  
Venue: Square Field, Aberaeron  
Contact: [rayceredigionadmin@btconnect.com](mailto:rayceredigionadmin@btconnect.com) / 01545 570686

### **Bute Park**

Curriculum linked outdoor learning opportunities for schools and learning groups led by education staff under the shadow of Cardiff Castle.

Educational sessions available include:

- Gerry's story (A giraffe who gets lost in Bute Park)
- Who lives in the park? (homes and habitats)
- Mini-beast hunting (bugs and slugs)
- Environmental art
- A history tour of Bute Park
- Trees, trees and more trees!
- River Taff explorer
- Woodland games and challenges

Contact: [meriel.jones2@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:meriel.jones2@cardiff.gov.uk) / 02920 788403

### **Anglesey Sea Zoo**

Offering a range of activities as part of creative adventure from September.

Monthly: Tiny Gems 0-6mth  
For new parents and parents with older children.

Weekly: Baby Discovery 6months+ & Little Inventors 15months+

Weekly: Creative Critters 5+

Family fun 2+  
Contact: 07900950731

**National Meadows Day**

6 July

**Dragonfly Week**

13 - 21 July

**Big Butterfly Count**

19 July – 11 August

**National Whale and Dolphin Watch**

27 July – 4 August

**National Marine Week**

27 July – 11 August

**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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