Outdoor Learning Wales November 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:

The 15th October saw over 150 people taking part in the “Successful Futures through Outdoor Learning” conference at the Glamorgan Cricket Grounds in Cardiff. Three local network groups, Cardiff, Vale and Caerphilly, came together to run the event in partnership with the Cardiff Education Service. The day was started with an inspiring speech by the Leader of Cardiff council, Mr Huw Thomas discussing the importance of linking the Curriculum for Wales to outdoor learning to promote the 4 purposes.

Ceredigion OLW network group delivered Reconnect, a mental health training session at Denmark Farm on 30.09.19. The event was very well attended. Gill Byrne from the group said, “It was a really good day, added new members to the OLW group and strengthened links within the county. Thanks to OLW for the funding that enabled this to take place. It has been hugely beneficial!”

Network groups are very busy this month, fitting in meetings before the Christmas period begins! See the list below and try and get to your local meeting.

OLW Meetings
- **Group:** Monmouthshire OLW, **Date:** 05/11/19, **Venue:** Puddleducks Nursery, Raglan, **Time:** 4pm
- **Group:** Dyfi OLW, **Date:** 07/11/19, **Venue:** White Lion, Machynlleth, **Time:** 4.30pm
- **Group:** Cardiff OLW, **Date:** 12/11/19, **Venue:** Moorland Primary School, **Time:** 4pm
- **Group:** Torfaen OLW, **Date:** 13/11/19, **Venue:** BHVC Primary, **Time:** 4pm
- **Group:** Swansea OLW, **Date:** 14/11/19, **Venue:** Gowerton Primary, **Time:** 4pm
- **Group:** Ceredigion OLW, **Date:** 18/11/19, **Venue:** Ray Ceredigion Office, **Time:** 10am
- **Group:** Blaenau Gwent OLW, **Date:** 20/11/19, **Venue:** Gwent Wildlife Trust Environmental Resource Centre, Ebbw Vale **Time:** 4pm

Keep in the know and share with us with us via: [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

Recipe of the month

**Indian Spiced Baked Potato and Egg Foil Packets**

- 4 cups of sliced golden yellow potatoes (or diced sweet potato can be substituted)
- 3–4 tbsp olive oil or avocado oil
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp minced garlic (dried or fresh)
- 1/2 tsp curry powder seasoning with turmeric
- 1/4 tsp sea salt and black pepper each
- Foil
- 4 eggs
**Instructions**
Slice potatoes and toss them with olive oil and seasonings.
Place a large handful of potatoes in a square of foil. Double wrap with and extra square.
Repeat to make 4 packets.
Cook packets over a banked campfire for about 25 -30 minutes until potatoes are tender but not fully cooked.
Carefully remove packets, open and crack an egg on top of each foil pack.
Place back in cooking position for about 10 minutes or until yolks look firm but not overcooked.
Remove and garnish with any extra spices.
When cooked, remove from fire and watch for steam as you open the packet.

**Quote of the month**
“If you want your children to grow into capable, independent adults, give them space to make some decisions without controlling their every move. Let them try, let them try, let them fail. It’s not about them getting it right, it’s learning not to be afraid to try!”
Brooke Hampton

**Activity of the Month**
*Pumpkin Bird Feeder*
A small pumpkin  
Sticks  
Bird seed  
String to hang

- First, cut the pumpkin in half and scoop out the seeds, creating 2 bowls.
- Use a screwdriver to make 3 holes at the top of the bowl, to tie string to make a handle.
- Make 3 more holes towards the bottom large enough to poke the sticks through to make a perch for birds to sit on.
- Poke a few drainage holes into the very bottom of the bowl.
- Fill with bird seed and hang in a suitable place outside.

**Fact of the Month**
Did you know that water takes around 1000 years to travel all the way around the entire globe?

**Collective noun of the month**
A cackle or clan of hyenas.

**Species of the Month**
*Treecreeper / Certhia Familiaris*
The treecreeper is a bird that many people have not seen but with over 200,000 breeding territories in the UK, it is a lot more common than you might think. Once a treecreeper establishes a territory, it tends to stay within the boundaries.

The treecreeper has mottled brown and black plumage above and is mainly white below, with a long, slender, downcurved bill. It also has a white supercilium (stripe above the eye).

Treecreepers are very small, the size of a wren, and only weigh 10g, though they look a lot bigger due to their bill and long, stiff tail.

The treecreeper’s song and call is high-pitched and easily missed, sounding almost insect-like with a ‘see-see-see’ call.

Another name for the treecreeper is ‘tree mouse’, which suits it perfectly. It climbs up tree trunks in a ‘mouse-like’ manner, supported by its long, stiff tail.
Unlike the nuthatch, it can’t climb back down head first. It must hop down backwards due to its tail getting in the way so will often choose to fly down instead. It is rarely reported in gardens, but not necessarily because it isn’t there. A quiet, unobtrusive bird, it blends in with its habitat and rarely ventures out to bird feeders. Treecreepers are more likely to be found in gardens between November and April, probably because they are more conspicuous in the winter when there are no leaves on the trees. They are solitary, sedentary birds – you’d be lucky to see more than a pair.

If a treecreeper is disturbed, it generally freezes on the tree trunk making it very hard to spot. Its black and brown mottled plumage provides camouflage and makes it look like the bark of a tree.

In Britain, the treecreeper traditionally favours broadleaved woodland, though it is found in many other habitats. In mainland Europe, the small songbird is found in upland conifer forests. This is because there is another species of treecreeper in mainland Europe, the short-toed treecreeper, which occupies the broadleaved woodland. The reason that the treecreeper isn’t confined to conifer forests in the UK is that the short-toed treecreeper did not make it to this country because broadleaved woodland hadn’t established itself when Britain separated from the rest of the Continent. Short-toed treecreepers are also sedentary, which means that they couldn’t fly that far. However, they have made it to the Channel Islands where there is a breeding population.

When it comes to nestbuilding, the treecreeper did not opt the most common solution. Instead, it builds its nest behind a flap of loose bark. The treecreeper starts with a base of twigs and then add grass, moss, lichen and wood chips. It takes about a week to build the whole nest. The female then lines the nest with hair, wool and feathers. Given that a clutch size is about 5-6, the nest can get quite crowded towards the end. Treecreepers breed between April and July, taking advantage of caterpillars to feed their young.

www.discoverwildlife.com

Plant of the Month

Broadleaf Plantain / Plantago major

Also know as white man's foot, common plantain, rat-tail and waybread or greater plantain. This is a species of flowering plant in the plantain family Plantaginaceae. The plant is native to most of Europe and northern and central Asia but has widely naturalised elsewhere in the world.

It is a broad leaved, tough weed, resistant to drought and flooding. The young leaves are edible, although the flower stem does bear an unhappy resemblance to a rat’s tail!

Broadleaf plantain is a native perennial weed found on disturbed habitats, roadsides, grassland, on tracks, waste and cultivated ground. It occurs throughout the UK on a range of soils and is almost always associated with the activities of man. It is recorded up to 1,500 ft.

Plantain forms many strong roots that anchor the plant securely. On paths, where the plant may be trodden on, it has small prostrate leaves with a growing point just below soil level. But on untrodden ground the leaves are semi-erect, and the growing point is at soil level.

After surviving the winter, both roots and shoots grow throughout the summer. Plants can flower and set seed just 6 weeks after germination - an average plant producing 14,000 seeds per year. Indeed, the plant usually reproduces by seed, not from the roots.

Plantain has several uses and is one of the most abundant and widely distributed medicinal crops in the world. Herbalists use the leaves to stem bleeding in small wounds, as well as to soothe insect bites and stings (it’s the plantain, not the dock, that might help with nettle stings); and the fibres are tough enough to make cord.

A poultice of the leaves can be applied to wounds, stings, and sores in order to facilitate healing and prevent infection. The active chemical constituents are aucubin (an antimicrobial agent), allantoin (which stimulates cellular growth and tissue regeneration) and mucilage (which reduces pain and discomfort). Plantain has astringent properties, and a tea made from the leaves can be ingested to treat diarrhea and soothe raw internal membranes.
Broadleaf plantain is also a very nutritious leaf vegetable that is high in calcium and vitamins A, C, and K. The young, tender leaves can be eaten raw, and the older, stringier leaves can be boiled in stews and eaten. Broadleaf plantain is not related to the fruit also known as plantain, which is a kind of banana.

Courses/Events:

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

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

**Plas Derw** — recommended Outdoor Learning Training Network member

We are proud to announce the launch of our Agored Cymru quality marked CPD training courses for the new areas of learning as outlined in the new National Curriculum for Wales.

Sessons will include:
- Expressive Arts
- Health & Wellbeing
- Humanities
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Science & Technology
- Language, Literacy & Communication

Contact: hannah@plasderw.co.uk

**RSBP Newport Wetlands**

A range of curriculum linked outdoor learning sessions available.

Contact: Newport-wetlands@rspb.org.uk

**IOL Conference**

Outdoor Learning Wales members are being offered a discounted ticket costing £3.

- Quote nrwol19conf on booking.
- Date: 16/11/19
- Venue: Atlantic College, Llantwit Major
- Contact: institute@outdoor-learning.org

**State of Nature Report 2019**

The State of Nature Report 2019 has been published. The report outlines the changes in abundance and distribution of UK species and documents how human impacts are driving changes in wildlife across the UK.

[https://nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019/reports/](https://nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019/reports/)

**Local Schools Nature Grants Scheme**

Apply for £500 worth of outdoor resources, and a two-hour training session thanks to Postcode Local Trust, which receives funding from players of People’s Postcode Lottery.

[https://www.ltl.org.uk/nature-grant/](https://www.ltl.org.uk/nature-grant/)

**Renew Wales** offers support to schools and community groups who want to try and make a difference to their environment through a mentoring scheme:


**Awards for all**

Funding for projects that involve and support communities:

[https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-wales#section-3](https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-wales#section-3)

**Field Studies Council**

FSC Bursary provides support to individuals who are from disadvantaged backgrounds enabling them to take part in FSC curriculum focussed courses with their school class.

[https://www.field-studies-council.org/the-fsc-bursary-fund/](https://www.field-studies-council.org/the-fsc-bursary-fund/)

The FSC Have a centre in Margam Park that schools and other groups can visit:
**Contact Us:**
Karen Clarke
OLW Coordinator
Natural Resources Wales
0300 065 3609 / 07721 302667
outdoorlearningwales@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

**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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