



Menter Addysg y Goedwig

Forest Education Initiative

Forest Education Initiative (FEI) Wales Bulletin

January 2014

Forest Education Initiative aims to increase the understanding and appreciation, particularly among young people, of the environmental, social, and economic potential of trees, woodlands and forests and of the link between the tree and everyday wood products. FEI is a national organisation, drawing expertise, resources and inspiration from a range of partners and leaders. The aim of this bulletin is to update our members in Wales on news, projects and initiatives related to trees, woods and forests.

FEI Update:

As you hopefully aware FEI is changing! Information on this has been sent via email to every FEI member. A copy of the news can be found attached to the email. We are really excited about the potential of the new organisation, Outdoor Learning Wales and hope that you are too! We will be keeping you informed about progress via this bulletin over the next few months but its business as usual until 1st April. Due to the need to rename FEI bank accounts when we move to the new organisation we will be not asking for full administration and financial information until April but we are missing some cluster groups details so if your cluster group is one of these we will be asking for the relevant information before either the small or project grants are allocated.

Applications are coming in thick and fast for the February round with some really interesting project ideas. We will let you know more about the ones that are successful in the next bulletin.

Facebook

For those of you who like to chat online and share ideas and experiences regarding forest education why not get involved via the "Forest Education Initiative Facebook" page? It's a great place to get some inspiration and problem solve!

Look us up at <http://www.facebook.com>

Natural Resources Wales Education Team Update:



The Natural Resources Wales Education have been hard at work this year and so far have involved 14,740 children and young people in learning in and about the natural environment. And we still have 2 months to go! Even Prince Charles got in on the act last month during a visit to Tredegar House in Newport where two of our staff were working in partnership with the National Trust. Haf and Peter held workshops in green woodworking for a visiting school. Their efforts were really appreciated!

Training for Education Professionals - Leafy Literacy and Wonderful Words or Cool Calculations

There are a few places left on our fantastic training courses (run throughout Wales), focussing on delivering literacy and numeracy in the outdoors. It's a great CPD opportunity, where you can improve your skills and performance in this area. These sessions have received impressive

evaluations and feedback so if you would like to try out a range of practical ideas to enhance teaching and learning please check out the fliers and get in contact.

All training events are **free**.

Contact: sheena.oleary@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk.

Forest School

20 Polish visitors will be coming over to Wales in February. As interest in Forest School rises in Poland these school staff and advisors are coming to gather information, visit local Forest Schools and undertake training. Hopefully we can give you a full report next month.

Quote of the Month

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.
Nelson Mandela “

Nature fact of the month

Did you know tree hugging is forbidden in China?

Plant of the Month

Snowdrop



Scientific name: *Galanthus nivalis*

Common names: Common snowdrop

They should not be confused with snowflakes (*Leucojum* and *Acis*.)

Snowdrops are perennial flowering plants native to large parts of Europe and are the best-known and most widespread of the 20 species in its genus.

Found in many types of woodland, churchyards, parks and gardens, snowdrops are some of the first bulbs of the

year to bloom. This early flowering plant, which carpets the ground between January and April, is aided by hardened leaf tips that can push through frozen soil. The downside to flowering in winter is that pollinating insects are scarce, so these little drops of snow spread mainly through bulb division.

www.bbc.co.uk

Activity of the month

Rainy Day Scavenger Hunt

Some things to look for to get children out enjoying the woods even in the worst of weather so get kitted up and get outside in the rain!

- Something that will collect raindrops.
- Something a bug could hide in.
- Something that absorbs water / repels it.
- Something shaped like a raindrop.
- Something with a colour of the rainbow in or on it (i.e. ROYGBIV).
- Something longer than your welly is high.
- Something smaller than your little finger.
- Something that could catch a raindrop?
- Find a fairy swimming pool and then build a diving board or swing over it or something?
- Arm them with "exploring sticks" to help them find the deepest puddle, the squelchiest mud, the prickliest plant, etc.
- Find something that is about to sprout or will sprout.
- Something that floats.
- Something that sinks.
- Something that stinks.
- Something dry on a wet day.
- Find the driest place in the woods.
- Something that will make you wetter (love knocking droplets of water off branches onto people)

- Rather than collecting objects, why not photograph them on a phone / iPad / camera? How about a cobweb hung with water drops? A stream splashing over a rock? A puddle reflecting a tree?☒
- Something humans can eat.
- Something dead.
- A sign that humans don't respect their environment.
- Something underneath something else.
- Something with colour – you could use paint sample cards for matching and comparisons
- Something with smell.
- Something with texture.
- Something that doesn't belong.
- Something with a hole in it.
- Something tickly, or smooth, or crunchy or bumpy.
- A fairy's slipper, an elf's bed.
- Something weird, still, old, new.☒
- Something that is tiny, itsy bitty, and teenie weenie.
- Something that looks alien.
- Something that looks like a track made by an animal.
- Find something that looks inhabited.

Useful equipment (you don't actually need any of this though)

- Treasure bags or collecting baskets – litter pickers – wipes – cameras – broly for tree / shrub shaking – tarp for displaying scavenged treasure – pencils / paper / clipboards for 'tally charts'

Inspired by a request for scavenger hunt ideas for a rainy day in the forest, these suggestions are from members of the Forest Schools Initiative [Facebook page](#). This is copyright free material – please share! I love the idea of photographing objects rather than collecting them (see below). It means you can 'collect' very delicate items or objects you can't actually reach – and then leave them for others to enjoy
Julie Mountain

Species of the Month

Voles:

There are three species of vole on mainland Britain, the water vole, field vole and bank vole. All voles have a round face, with a blunt nose and tiny ears barely visible in the fur, and a relatively short tail.

The bank vole is the smallest and the one most likely to live in gardens. Its most obvious feature is its chestnut brown fur. The bank vole is slightly larger, more of a grey-brown colour, and has an even shorter tail – it is sometimes known as the short-tailed vole. The water vole is much larger, with a shaggy brown coat. All three voles are widely distributed across Britain, although the water vole is now very rare.

The bank and field voles are believed to be in decline due to loss of habitat, but precise numbers are unknown. The water vole is now one of our most threatened mammals and numbers have declined by 95 percent in recent decades. It has full legal protection, and is listed as a priority species for conservation under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

The bank vole lives in woodland and hedgerows, keeping close to shrubby cover, but adapts well to gardens.

The field vole lives in open, tussocky grasslands, so is unlikely to occur in most gardens, although it will sometimes live in orchards.

Water voles live alongside rivers, ponds and canals, wherever there is dense waterside vegetation to provide food and shelter. They are occasionally found living around large garden ponds.

Bank voles are most likely to live in hedge bottoms or shrubbery, sometimes venturing into overgrown patches of long grass or brambles.

Voles are vegetarians, feeding mostly on grass and herbaceous plants, although they will take fruit in the autumn. They are themselves food for many predators, including owls, foxes, stoats and weasels.

<http://www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk/>



Website of the month

www.playlearninglife.org.uk

Helping schools, settings and families take learning and play outdoors

Courses, Workshops and Events:

Woodland Skills Centre

Woodland Skills Centre is a not-for-profit Social Enterprise company in north-east Wales with 50 acres of woodland, extensive covered workshops and teaching and social space. The Centre runs a wide range of courses, many of which are suitable for Forest School leaders wishing to extend their range of skills. Course costs include all materials.

See the website for details of courses including pole lathe, green woodworking and making a shave horse, woodland management among many others.

Contact: www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk

Cardiff Metropolitan University - School of Education – Wellbeing in the Woodlands

Using the outdoor classroom to facilitate whole school approaches to wellbeing in the woodlands - A short course for teachers. Thursday 24 April 2014 and Friday 25 April 2014 **Cost:** £180

Other courses available –

Cooking Outdoors	31/03/2014
Earth Education	20/05/2014
Teddy Bears' Picnic	27/06/2014
Education Outside the Classroom	30 June & 1 July
Teddy Bears' Picnic	03/07/2014
Teddy Bears' Picnic	04/07/2014
Teddy Bears' Picnic	14/07/2014
Teddy Bears' Picnic	15/07/2014
Teddy Bears' Picnic	16/07/2014

Contact: cseoutdoored@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Get Into Woodlands with The Prince's Trust, in partnership with The Duchy of Cornwall

24th Feb - 28th Mar 2014

Do you know someone aged 18-25, unemployed and interested in a career in Forestry?

They can apply to join our free training programme where they can:

- Learn about the different aspects of forestry work from seedling to sawmill
- Gain qualifications to help get a job in the forestry industry such as NPTC Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross Cutting (formerly CS30) and Emergency First Aid
- Improve teamwork and communication skills and boost confidence, interview skills and their CV
- Receive six-months support after the programme to help find a job

Contact: gaye.warwick@princes-trust.org.uk

Forest School SNPT

Agored Cymru (OCN) Level 3 Forest School Leader Practitioner Award - 3-7 March 2014 (plus two practical days) 7-8 April 2014

This course is for people who wish to become Forest School Leaders and/or set up their own Forest School. This is a nationally recognised qualification

Agored Cymru (OCN) Level 1 An Introduction to Forest School - 17-19 March 2014

Training for people who want to learn more about Forest School or who want to volunteer at sessions, supporting a qualified Forest School Leader. This is suitable for anyone including teachers, parents, support assistants, nursery nurses, youth workers, artists, community workers carers and workers from environmental organisations.

Contact: info@forestschoolsnpt.org.uk

Wild Elements

Woods and Words, Bangor Library – Sat 15th Feb (8 years+)

Woodland scramble, crafts and sensory challenge

Woodland Imps – Coed Gorswen, Rowen (1 day play scheme 5yrs+)

A gentle walk, with games and activities, including lunch.

Wild in the Woods – Penrhyn Castle (3 day playscheme for 8 yrs+)

Wild Cooking - 2 March, 12am - 4pm, Castell Penrhyn, Bangor

Contact: www.wildelements.org.uk

Môn Active First Aid

Môn Active provide a range of training opportunities within the outdoor activity sector and specialise in delivering first aid courses that are fit for purpose. We have developed first aid courses that deal directly with the outdoor sector and specifically Forest Schools, dealing with illnesses and injuries specific to the environment you work in, including discussing delayed medical help, common illnesses seen in children and young people and providing you with a systematic method of dealing with incidents and emergencies. We have courses running throughout the year, or we can come to you and deliver a course to your team. Group bookings carry huge discounts so please get in touch to discuss your requirements. Visit our website or email us for more information.

Contact: www.monactive.co.uk or info@monactive.co.uk

Brilliant Residentials: The first national Learning Away conference

Friday 21st March, 2014

Widehorizons Margaret McMillan House, Kent. In addition to keynote speakers Professor Tim Brighouse, Professor David Hopkins and Peter Carne, there will be a range of engaging workshops offering practical solutions to the challenges involved in organising residentials.

Contact: <https://bookwhen.com/gwt2n>

Out to Learn Willow

Living Willow School Workshops

Now is the time to plant Living Willow domes, tunnels and other structures for play and shade. We offer a full design and build service for schools with children involved every step of the way. Willow structures are extremely popular proving to provide invaluable opportunities for free play and also shade and shelter in school grounds. For larger projects we provide a set of drawings which can be used for display and curriculum work.

Willow kits and courses on willow structures are also available.

Contact: www.outtolearnwillow.co.uk

Other News:

The RSPB Big Schools Bird watch 2014 survey is happening now between 20 Jan and 14th February. Easy to do and some great maths can come out of it.

For more info and loads of resources see <http://www.rspb.org.uk/schoolswatch/>

Sainsbury's Welsh Community Grant Fund

Grants of up to £500 will be awarded annually to charities and local community groups for a range of projects and activities which fit our core values of food, family, kids and health and also arts/culture, environment and social welfare. In this round we have £53,792.33 to award. Organisations can be any size as long as they support the community in Wales. Applications are online only and should take no more than 15 minutes.

Contact: <http://www.ccworks.co.uk/sainsburys>

Climate Week –3-9 March 2014.

Britain's largest climate change campaign, with half a million people attending over 3,000 events each year. Climate Week is about how people can live and work more sustainably, and you can run any kind of event or activity you wish. Here are some ideas:

Enter the Climate Week Challenge, a competition for small teams in schools and workplaces. It needs no preparation, is free and helps develop innovation and teamwork.

Enter the Climate Week Awards for professional achievement that is helping to create a more sustainable society.

Run a Climate Week Swap event at which people can exchange clothes, books or children's toys they don't want any more.

Contact: <http://www.climateweek.com>

Learning through Landscapes

The charity Learning Through Landscapes (LTL) is offering a free resource for anyone who has an interest in children's wellbeing at school although it has been designed to be particularly relevant to support staff. It explores how outdoor play in schools supports children's learning and development, identifies a range of ideas for enriching play and shares practical advice from schools that have developed good play practice.

Go to <http://www.ltl.org.uk/learning/PlaytimeRevolution> Thanks to generous funding from LTL project partners they are able to offer UK schools a downloadable copy of School Orchards free of charge go to <http://www.ltl.org.uk/resources/results.php?id=541>

Muddy Faces

This download has been developed as a handout that people can use to inform others on how to dress effectively for the elements. <http://www.muddyfaces.co.uk/dressingfortheoutdoors.php>
To celebrate Dressing for the Outdoors we have 10% off all clothing until 28 February 2014. Please use code CLTH14N when ordering

Contact: www.muddyfaces.co.uk

Keep Wales Tidy

Keep Wales Tidy are carrying out a pollinator project in March. With support from Natural Resources Wales and proceeds received from the single use carrier bag charge they are giving community groups, **schools**, organisations and SMEs the chance to apply for FREE National Garden Centre voucher worth up to **£150**.

Contact: <http://www.keepwalestidy.org/wildweekend>

Children's Playswings – A Good Practice Guide

A good practice guide to the safe siting, installation and use of children's rope swings in trees. The guide is intended to help outdoor playworkers to manage the risks - and benefits – associated with rope swings, and to provide practical advice on how to install them effectively.

Contact: www.monkey-do.net or www.londonplay.org.uk

Forest Holidays

A Forest Holiday is whatever you want it to be. Escape to one of nine idyllic locations, stay in luxurious woodland cabins, and make your holiday your own.

2 new stunning locations opening in 2014 – Thorpe Forest and Delamere Forest.

Contact: <http://www.forestholidays.co.uk>

Forest Kindergarten Documentary to watch on line.

The forest kindergarten in the documentary *School's Out* is an outdoor school for 4- to 7-year-olds in Langnau am Albis, a town of about 7,000 in northern Switzerland.

Contact: http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/doublex/2013/12/forest_kindergarten_watch_kids_in_switzerland_and_go_to_school_outside_in_school.html

Small Woods Association

Small Woods is a partner (with RDI and Forest Research) in an EU project aimed at facilitating the mobilisation of timber from woodlands (see attached press release). The project will be looking at ownership, governance, woodland management and harvesting across 14 regions in 11 countries (Lochaber and North east England/Yorkshire in the UK) with the aim of developing novel approaches. As a first step Andrew Kitching of RDI and I are pulling together information on past and existing projects so we can learn from experience from across the UK.

We'd be interested in hearing about any schemes that you are aware of that have had the aim of engaging owners and mobilising more timber from woodlands. It would be really helpful if you could let us have, if possible, any information on project aims, scope, outputs, targeted landowner groups, outcomes, and any indication of what did or didn't work. Links to websites would be helpful, as would project reports and evaluations, if available.

Contact: PhilTidey@smallwoods.org.uk

Orchard Planting

The Tree Council has funds available to assist schools and community groups proposing to undertake well-planned orchard planting projects during National Tree Week, 29 November to 7 December 2014. The fund is open to projects where the total tree planting costs are between £100 and £700. Community groups and schools are eligible for funding, but must meet the set criteria.

Contact: <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/funding-latest/2014/01/orchard-windfalls-2014?src=newsletter>

Dwr Cymru Education

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water is a not-for-profit company. That means that every penny we make is reinvested in our company for the benefit of customers, their communities, and the environment around us. We work with schools to encourage pupils to love and value water and understand our work. Over 38,000 pupils visit one of our four education centres every year or have the Welsh Water experience through outreach at their schools, each having a fantastic time. Activity sessions available include; Water cycle, water efficiency, minibeast safari, waste water treatment works tours, pond dipping. All sessions are free.

Contact: <mailto:education@livingandlearningwithwater.com>

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