



Countryside Jobs Service Weekly Special Edition 24 November 2008

in association with the
Field Studies Council

Focussing on Environmental Education



Striving to Deliver Opportunities within the Environmental Industry

The Field Studies Council (FSC) is a charity established in 1943 to bring environmental education to all. The organisation runs 17 field centres around the United Kingdom delivering a range of environmental educational courses to students and learners across the age spectrum. We also run several community initiatives aimed at reaching those not normally able to participate in environmental education, as well as a ground breaking volunteer project that works with biological recorders to increase their skills and provide the next generation of experts in groups of fauna and flora.

At the heart of our programme are a range of professional development courses for volunteers, students, professional ecologists and land managers. Many of these are in partnership with universities or recording societies and provide accreditation to those wishing to make an environmental subject their career, or for those continuing their development within the industry.

Two areas in particular have become campaigning grounds for our organisation in recent years. Firstly the lack of fieldwork within the curriculum, with the obvious loss of field skills amongst children in education, with its inevitable follow on impact on our industry as a whole by the separation of the population from nature itself. Then the lack of knowledge concerning taxonomy that many students have, again impacting upon our species knowledge and therefore management knowledge. This is particularly dangerous for the future of our wildlife – as how are we to manage and conserve what we have if we cannot identify what we have in the first place?

Working with the Heritage Lottery Fund, the FSC has developed a Biodiversity Training Project to work with volunteers in the Shropshire and wider West Midlands area – as a pilot project – over a five year period to increase field and identification skills through progressive field training. We are currently half way through this programme of courses but already have successes with several regular volunteers recording high quality biological records and submitting them to the relevant recording schemes locally and nationally. We even have one volunteer who is now about to become a tutor for the first time during 2009, which is particularly exciting. Ultimately these biological records will end up on the NBN Gateway (see Special Edition of CJS weekly – 18 August 2008) and influence planning and management policy.

So we are seeing this two-fold approach develop within professional development; the more traditional educational approach through top quality associations with schools, universities and recording societies, as well as less recognised, but equally valuable, ways of development with funded schemes such as the Biodiversity Training Project where the training that many universities and other educational bodies do not have the time or expertise to provide is being supplied to volunteers and others to plug this skills gap. It is likely that the future of professional development lies this way with alternative opportunities arising along the way and we at the FSC are striving hard to deliver these opportunities to those who wish to thrive within the environmental industry.

If you want to know more about what we do please visit www.field-studies-council.org and if you want to know more about the Biodiversity Training Project please visit www.field-studies-council.org/biodiversity



OPAL is an exciting new partnership initiative which has received a grant from The Big Lottery Fund. It aims to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to get back in touch with nature by exploring and studying their local environment. Across England, OPAL regional offices are developing a wide range of participative programmes which will educate communities about the natural world around them.

OPAL would like to hear from anyone with an interest in the environment, so if you would like to get involved with your local OPAL office call 020 7942 5120 or email OPALexplorenature@nhm.ac.uk www.OPALexplorenature.org

Is the Climate right for Environmental Education in our schools?

Sue Fenoughty, Secretary of the National Association for Environmental Education, and fellow members of the NAEE Executive.



A decade ago, Environmental Education was one of 5 cross-curricular themes in the national curriculum; by 1997, it had almost disappeared. NAEE recognises that EE is needed today more than ever, to prepare today's youngsters for their role as tomorrow's stewards of the planet, and empowered to take action to reduce the harmful impact of human activities on the environment. There are opportunities in the curriculum for environmental education and also in some government initiatives so why isn't Environmental Education higher on the national curriculum agenda?

Drawing on my own experience as a teacher and environmental education teacher-consultant, and those of my teacher colleagues at NAEE, I have gathered many of the reasons and some of the barriers facing classroom teachers attempting to include the environmental dimension of outdoor learning.

A lack of status for environmental education in the curriculum with schools focussing on the 'tested' subjects and government targets, means there can be little support from management and poor awareness of the opportunities within the curriculum for regular outdoor learning. Professional development courses on EE are a low budgetary priority and budgetary constraints are cited against off-site trips or even for visiting providers. Other school time constraints mean that time is short for planning and organising trips which in itself can be daunting with the additional paperwork of consent forms, extra CRB checks for helpers and the ever present health and safety implications. Resources and experience are not always shared in some staffrooms and school management may question the necessity for outside activities.

Uninspiring schools grounds don't encourage teachers or pupils to leave the warm classroom, many pupils lack suitable outdoor clothing and even the fitness to venture far into what is for many an unfamiliar environment.

Lack of communication between teachers and providers of off-site activities can result in trips being regarded as 'extras' instead of enhancing the core curriculum. Visiting from conservation workers to school may not be sustained with follow up work and some teachers demonstrate an unwillingness to become involved in activities preferring to stand back and let others do the teaching.

Environmental Education is a very practical, pupil-centred approach to outdoor learning, its hands-on approach suits all ages and abilities, from learning through play in the Foundation Stage right through to A level biology field work.

Teachers need to be released from 'teaching to tests and targets' and given time to stand back and enjoy being outside learning with their pupils about the surrounding environment. Bringing back environmental education would raise pupil awareness of the world outside the classroom, and strengthen the role of school visits to places further afield to pursue their environmental studies, at field study centres, etc.

NAEE's aim is to restore Environmental Education to the curriculum and we welcome links with all people and organisations who share this vision. For further details, please see our website www.naee.org.uk

Centres - Wales :

EcoDysgu is a 42 acre hands on education centre. Groups are tutored in workshops of bench making, gardening, woodland work, bushcraft and much more. Residential available. Volunteers needed. 01656 728137

CAT is concerned with the search for globally sustainable, whole and ecologically sound technologies and ways of life. The role of CAT is to explore and demonstrate a wide range of alternatives, communicating to other people the options for them to achieve positive change in their own lives. www.cat.org.uk

Centres - Scotland :

Marine education

The Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWDT) is at the forefront of marine environmental education on the west coast of Scotland. HWDT offers learning experiences for pupils of all ages on its research vessel *Silurian*, on the beach, and also in the classroom. Outdoor learning on *Silurian* involves school groups coming onboard and participating in various workshops. Beach workshops encourage students to explore the beach environment through discovery. admin@hwdt.org



The Dunnet Head Educational Trust can provide facilities for environmental education at the most northerly point of the UK mainland. Accommodation (serviced or self catering), classroom (seats 20), refreshments, broadband. Great base for field trips, wildlife trips, history, walking and fishing. Links with Orkney. Contact: info@iberacal.com Tel: 01847 851774

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh We offer a wide range of day, evening and weekend courses: botany, horticulture, botanical art and photography. For pleasure or qualifications including practical certificates in Field Botany and Horticulture. Schools programmes and teacher CPD in environmental arts and science. www.rbge.org.uk/education or 0131 248 2937.

Lochranza Field Studies Centre is located on the Isle of Arran of the west coast of Scotland. We provide educational courses for students in Geography, Geology & Biology specialising in A-level and Scottish Higher. We also provide Environmental Science based courses & John Muir Awards for primary schools and a full range of activities. 01770 830637 chris.trail@pgl.co.uk

Glachbeg Croft Education Centre in the Highlands of Scotland offers delivery of the school curriculum & events in a hands on way. Wanted. People comfortable with working on a small farm with young people with support needs on placements here. See www.glachbeg.org.uk

Earth Education - old hat or still a new beginning?

“Earth Education – A New Beginning” was published on Earth Day back in 1990 challenging the accepted institutional view of environmental education and offering an alternative to many environmental education projects and activities. So have things moved on since those heady days when earth education was still fairly new to the UK?



With much talk about obesity and lack of ‘natural play’ (see National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence – promoting physical activity in children, 2007) and ‘Nature deficit disorder’ (see Richard Louv, Last child in the Woods, 2005) it seems environmental education still hasn’t managed to address the need for more ‘contact’ with the natural world and a greater kinship with the non-human world. There is, therefore, still a huge role to play for earth education within the programmes offered by environmental/countryside organisations. Earth Education is about living more harmoniously and joyously with the natural world. Many organisations may well start off with Earthwalks which were first developed by the Institute for Earth Education in the 1980’s and, I would suggest, there is a greater need for them today in this ‘sedentary’ disconnected age. Earthwalks are light refreshing touches of the natural world focussing on the ‘senses’ and encouraging a sense of kinship, joy, reverence and love for the natural world. For those who have not been on one and even those such as myself who have been on lots they offer a new perspective and great joy at just being ‘out there’ and in touch with the earth and its life. Earthwalks are a carefully crafted series of flowing activities woven together to create a whole sensory experience of the natural world. The Institute for Earth Education has been working on some new earthwalks which we hope will be published in the near future.

Once practitioners have experienced Earth Education they often move on to run their own Earth Education programmes.

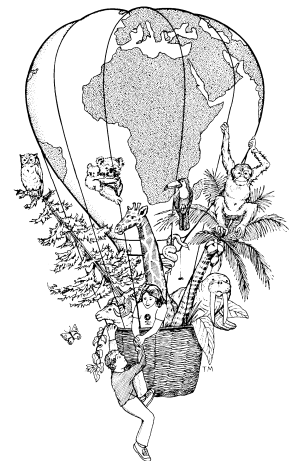
These are magical learning adventures that include activities that deal with understandings of how the natural world functions ecologically and how we are fundamentally part and parcel of these processes. These are combined with more ‘feelings’ activities and provide a springboard to look at changing lifestyles. With all the talk about climate change and the urgent need to preserve biodiversity and the planet’s ecological systems that keep the climate in balance – particularly the cycling of materials such as water, oxygen and carbon, and use of energy - earth education programmes are even more relevant today than back in 1980 when the first real solid programme – Sunship Earth, was published.

So if you are intrigued or wondered what happened to all that earth ed energy back in the early 1990’s – we are still here and thriving and running regular workshops introducing earth education as a whole and more specialised workshops dealing with specific programmes, earthwalks and Muir Treks (a wilderness experience aimed at teenagers and adults).

For more details do contact IEE by visiting the website – www.eartheducation.org.uk

Jon Cree, IEE UK Training Co-ordinator

PS IEE has now broadened it’s remit and is working with enriching the experience of visitors to our heritage sites and Steve van Matre ran a series of interpretation workshops in October which we hope to repeat in 2009 – see the IEE website for details.



A Year in the Life of an Education Programme

Learning does not happen just in the classroom, and is not restricted to children and students. At the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough we aim “To bring people together to take action for wildlife”. In order to do this, people need to make informed decisions, therefore, it is important to target learning opportunities to suit the needs of the audience. Innovative partnerships and volunteer support enable us to do much more.

We have a long and successful record of education and community work; staff work across 5 Education Centres and many more outreach programmes. Our broad aim is to engage communities with wildlife through their local nature reserve or other greenspace.

Working so much with schools, for us, it’s easier to follow the academic year, from August to July.



As soon as the schools break up, the process of reviewing the successes, feedback and evaluation of sessions begins, along with the review of programmes. To engage wider audiences, a huge programme of events run over the summer holiday period; everything from summer wildlife walks to community picnics and wild adventure and play days. Offering something for everyone we work with youth groups and summer schools, social services, and offer family learning events. Summer is naturally the time of year when new audiences are best encouraged to get out-and-about, and there's a great deal of wildlife to be found too! We also try to do some outreach work at other summer events, further widening our audiences. Events such as healthy living, community festivals and faith festivals can all be great to join forces with, and have seen great success.

August is also a time when exhausted staff take the opportunity for a well-earned holiday!

Come September and the new school year, the new autumn/winter programmes begin. Focusing on changing seasons, it sees themes of fruits and seeds, dispersal and hibernation dominating. Community events held in the October half term mimic this by looking for signs of autumn, other events go wider with links to Eid and Halloween, and a bat event which always draws in the crowds!

As the days grow shorter, wetter and colder, it has traditionally been hard to entice people outdoors. But we try to teach people that suitable clothing keeps you warm and dry, and being the first to spot some tracks or signs in fresh snow, or winter mud, is magical. Once people develop a lifestyle it becomes harder to persuade them to new ideas, but as always, working with children can break patterns, educating parents and the wider family. Many Wildlife Trusts now run Forest School type programmes. Attendees are taught how to dress and are provided with waterproofs. This year we ran Forest Schools in spring and late autumn with both early years and year 3s. Programmes differ slightly from mainstream education programmes, but we aim to get students out whatever the weather and leaning about being in the woods through play, activities (which can be curriculum-lead) and confidence building. This winter we are also planning a Forest School Awareness Day to encourage more practitioners within schools and other centres.

December provides a focus for events, with National Tree Week. Last year, an Interfaiths Community tree planting to extend a community woodland was a huge success, and this year we're planning our first ever Tree Dressing event in Peterborough.

February half-term sees events which can run either inside or outside, depending on the weather, who attends, and how they are dressed.

Winter is also a time to focus on school grounds, meeting with after-school clubs to discuss ideas to begin to develop the grounds over spring and summer.

Bookings begin to increase in April and May and the new schools programme, looking at spring wildlife, starts. It is also a time to focus on teacher training events, before we get too busy.

June and July is the peak season and Education staff can have wall-to-wall bookings for weeks on end! This is when schools want to be out; all the minibeasts are there demonstrating their adaptations to the full and their habitats are blooming! This is a subject most primary schools want to cover especially at this time of year. Towards the end of the school year, we also respond to numerous requests from schools for fun, end-of-term activities for groups. These can range from adventure activities such as shelter building and orienteering, craft making from natural materials, to pond dipping. Whatever the activity, the emphasis is on fun. Which leads us nicely back into the summer of community events again...!

Rachel Price, Community Wildlife Officer, The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough, www.wildlifebcnp.org



photo online

Events and training for providers:



WildWise offer an exciting programme of training courses to develop skills and resources and to inspire professionals working in the field of outdoor and environmental education, e.g. teachers, rangers, youth workers. With our own experienced team and a national network of specialists we deliver cutting edge training courses. 01803 868269, www.wildwise.co.uk

Training Courses for people working or leading others in the hills, mountains, or upland areas. Courses cover Safety, Navigation, Leadership and Technical Skills for Summer and Winter conditions. Approved Mountain Leader Training Provider. See www.widehorizons.org.uk/tyb or email tynyberth@widehorizons.org.uk or call 01654 761678 for further details.

Education for Sustainable Development, 1-3 December, Losehill Hall A great opportunity to explore education for sustainable development, as well as other current initiatives in environmental education. Find out what ESD means for you and your service through this in-depth practical three-day course. For further details please contact Sue Field, Learning Administrator, 01433 622472, training.losehill@peakdistrict.gov.uk or visit www.losehilltraining.org.uk

Garden Explorers Book and Training A practical guide to developing inspirational family learning in gardens and parks. Also available, two days of training at Hughendon Manor, Bucks and Beningbrough Hall, York in February 2009. For more information and to book your place contact Kate Measures on katemeasures@hotmail.co.uk

The ETN training programme consists of short courses, held in England at various locations. We have courses designed mainly for people and organisations involved in environmental education, SDE, etc., and aimed primarily at the voluntary sector, some participants come from local authorities and government funded agencies. Email etn@btcv.org.uk for further information.

Education in the Countryside, 23-27 March 2009, Losehill Hall This popular, jam-packed five-day course gives you everything you need to devise and deliver some superb and meaningful environmental education to children and young people. For further details please contact Sue Field, Learning Administrator, 01433 622472, training.losehill@peakdistrict.gov.uk or visit www.losehilltraining.org.uk

Learning Outside the Classroom at Nell Bank



Nell Bank is a partnership between the Nell Bank Trust and Bradford Council. The centre has a 30 year history of providing outdoor and environmental education to all ages and abilities. In August 2008 the centre won the National Lottery Best Environment Project Award.

Today I went for a walk in Middleton Woods. It's very muddy at the moment. The sort of mud that children love, sticky, squelchy and deep. Both parents and teachers, in fact, try to keep children out of exactly this sort of stuff. But I'm not a parent and I was a teacher in a previous life so anything goes. As far as I was concerned the 35 children and adults from inner-city Bradford following me were going to get a quality mud experience. The laughter, giggles and squeals of delight said it all.

Best PE lesson of the week?

Last week I worked with a group of KS2 visually impaired children from Leeds. One child who had no sight and reportedly rarely spoke didn't stop talking all day about the woods, the hens, the pond dipping.... Best science lesson of the year?

Yesterday I went on a Nellbanian Bear hunt with a group of very imaginative KS1 children. Independently they explained at length the bear paw prints they found in the mud and wondered, could I also hear the bear rustling the trees? While sniffing at the air, they asked if I too could smell the bear and even showed me where they had found bear pooh! Best literacy lesson of the month?

Tomorrow I'm working with upper KS2 who have been stranded on the Island of Nellbania. They have to work together to save humanity from environmental disaster, rescue rare Giant Nellbanian Frogs and cross piranha infested custard. Best PSHE lesson of the week?

I'm not totally crackers I just have a great job which enables me to work in a fantastic outdoor setting with all ages and abilities. I've been working with children for 18 years, only four of them have been in a classroom. Working outdoors is not for everyone but experiencing learning outside the classroom is an important aspect of both teaching and learning. Without this article getting too serious, many researchers draw attention to the fact that teaching and learning in the classroom has restrictions placed on it simply by its nature. A teacher has a requirement to deliver a prescribed curriculum. Learning in the primary classroom often takes place in the same room with the same teacher for the whole school day. Lessons are invariably delivered from the front with limited opportunity for extended or unconstrained discussion between the teacher and individual learners. This leads naturally to an asymmetrical relationship forming between the teacher and learner. Taking a class to a centre like Nell Bank helps redress this relationship imbalance. If someone different teaches a class it allows the teacher to learn something new with the children. It could be about animals living in a pond, woodland or even just going for a walk and getting muddy. Lets face it it's hard to remember a lesson you had about fractions when you were ten, but the residential visit you went on with your primary school teacher.... Unforgettable!

Ruth Welch, Senior Training Officer at Nell Bank



photo online

If you are interested in the work we do at Nell Bank please contact us.

Centre Manager: Bruce Fowler. Contact Details: Nell Bank Centre, Denton Road, Ilkley, West Yorkshire. LS29 0DE Telephone: 01943 602032 Email:ruth.welch@bradford.gov.uk Visit: www.nellbank.com

Centres: England (Midlands & Northern)

LONGTOWN outdoor education centre

Longtown O.E.C. is a fully equipped residential centre for 55 people. It has excellent on-site facilities including a small woodland, river access and a classroom set in 15 acres of private grounds. It is located in Herefordshire between the eastern edge of the Black Mountains and the River Monnow. The centre runs specialist training courses for outdoor leaders including navigation, campcraft and first aid. More details are available on our website at www.longtownoec.co.uk or for further information please contact us on 01873 860225, email longtown@northamptonshire.gov.uk

The Arboretum Trust, Kew at Castle Howard, North Yorkshire. Beautiful and safe 150 acre Arboretum providing a wide range of curriculum linked outdoor activities for children aged 4-18. Woodland, grassland and wetland habitats. Covered Outdoor Classroom. Professional development courses for teachers. Volunteering opportunities. Contact education@kewatch.co.uk or visit www.kewatch.co.uk

Blackpool Zoo Education Department delivers a wide variety of unique and exciting experiences to our visitors. We aim to inspire and connect people to the natural world, through public talks, education sessions, Zoo-to-You outreach scheme and offer research and work experience placements. Seasonal Education Assistants are employed annually. Contact education@blackpoolzoo.org.uk

The North York Moors National Park Education Service provides activities and resources to help people of ages and abilities experience, enjoy and understand more about the special qualities of this fantastic national park. For more information go to www.moors.uk.net or e mail: education@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk

The University of Leicester Botanic Garden and its satellite site the Attenborough Arboretum annually hosts over 7,000 children (from nursery age through to FE) and adults on taught education programmes. These explore science, geography, citizenship, art, RE and numeracy curriculum areas. See www.le.ac.uk/botanicgarden

Whirlow Hall Farm is an educational based charity farm located on the Sheffield edge of the Peak District. Offering high quality hands-on environmental sessions to all ages and abilities. Daily school trips or short residential visits. Whirlow Hall Farm is a working farm and therefore also provides practical farming sessions. 0114 2360096 educationenquiries@whirlowhallfarm.org

Gorse Hill City Farm is committed to educating the community about organic agriculture and horticulture, humane treatment of animals, conservation and the environment. We offer educational, volunteer and work placement opportunities for children and adults. Please contact us for more details. Telephone: 0116 2537582, E-mail: gorsehillcityfarm@live.co.uk, Web site: <http://www.gorsehillcityfarm.org.uk/>

Hard to reach or just misunderstood?

If your aim is to engage 11 – 14 year olds, the old adage holds true; it's not what you say, but how you say it. Their attitude to fieldwork comes mainly from their background – both academic and socio-economic. Whatever the starting point, engaging young people is a mixture of salesmanship, empathy, persuasion, entertainment and of course patience.

To get young people to 'buy into' your fieldwork, you have to 'sell' it to them. They need to be convinced that it will be worthwhile and of benefit to them, but they won't be convinced by the argument that 'it's the law' or 'it's the rules'. Good salesmanship skills can help to explain what they will learn, what they will see and how it relates to what they can do next.

Empathy is needed to understand that any fieldwork you do with them will be seen as just that; work in the field. School is inherently 'boring' (their word, not mine) and routine, so again, it's back to the salesmanship! Empathy is needed also to see their priorities and ideas will be coloured by seemingly unrelated issues, such as boy/girlfriends, the affect of fieldwork on their new trainers and other apparent trivia that will nonetheless have a significant impact on the outlook and approach of an individual.

You have to persuade them that you can be relied on to deliver what you promise; it's no good being a brilliant salesman, then letting them down in the field. We employ young graduates, normally in their first 'teaching' posts, who often find it easier to gain the trust of 11 – 16 year olds, than much more experienced teachers. There is no 'generation gap', no experiential divide and absolutely no temptation to use phrases such as; "in my day".

If you can be entertaining, interesting, humorous and friendly, you will always do better with this age group than if you adopt a draconian disciplinarian approach. The image of the teenage rebel is one that is well worth keeping in mind; if you lay down the law, the natural reaction is rebellion.

And patience; this you need plenty of. Young people of this age are hugely image-conscious, to the point where they will not wish to show their enthusiasm or enjoyment while it is happening, but will then admit to these 'weaknesses' afterward – endlessly frustrating and somewhat confusing from the adult perspective.

Our courses, ranging from Environmental Science, Ecology, Biology, Geography, Geology and History, are put together to fit within the curriculum or syllabus they are using and are, as a general rule, as practical as possible; we have always focussed on data collection and practical activities, even games with younger children, in the belief that most young people are both happier learning though practise rather than theory, and that in addition, their learning is more efficient.

This older age group will not necessarily be one you would attempt to play games with, but the idea of maximising the practical aspects definitely holds true.

Tom Davis

PGL travel Ltd, Alton Court, Ross on Wye, HR9
5GL 08700 551 551 enquiries@pgl.co.uk



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online



Centres: England (South & Anglia)

Make learning fun! Overlooking Brancaster Staithe harbour and saltmarsh, Brancaster Millennium Activity Centre is an idyllic setting for a school residential / day visit. Expert tuition in adventurous and challenging curriculum linked activities such as sailing, kayaking, field studies, citizenship and more. The centre incorporates the latest renewable energy technology. Please contact brancaster@nationaltrust.org.uk

Avon Tyrrell Activity Centre set in beautiful grounds in the New Forest offers a range of environmental education sessions for primary schools, youth groups and families. Day or Residential visits are available. For more details please contact us. Tel: 01425 672347 Email: info@ukyouth.org Web: www.avontyrrell.org.uk

Suntrap Forest Education Centre offers environmental and adventurous activities from foundation to A' level in Epping Forest. To find out more visit www.suntrap.waltham-forest.lgfl.net or email suntrap.centre@walthamforest.gov.uk

BEECHE (Bromley Environmental Education Centre at High Elms), based at High Elms Country Park, Farnborough, Kent, is a community facility that delivers environmental education to schools and provides visitors with events and information at weekends and in the school holidays. This brand new, fully accessible, straw bale construction can also be booked by community groups, and hosts the Green Roof cafe for refreshments. For more information: www.bromley.gov.uk/Beeche or contact the Countryside officers on 01689 862815 email:countryside&parcs@bromley.gov.uk or for schools information contact 01689 860571 email:environmental.education@bromley.gov.uk

Investing in education and engaging with the community is vital to Anglian Water. We offer an exciting education programme, with education centres, materials, interactive games and our super hero Captain Splosh. For a FREE visit for students or community groups please contact Kevina Haycock on 01480 323585 for more information.

The UK's (and probably the World's) first **Treehouse Study Centre** has just been opened by the Countryside Education Trust at Beaulieu in the New Forest! The innovative, inspirational and sustainable buildings were opened by countryside aficionado Alan Titchmarsh. To see more go to www.cet.org.uk - A perfect location for schools and community activities. (tel 01590 612401)

Warren Barn Residential Centre, Cockington, Devon www.countryside-trust.org.uk
A new camping barn style centre located within minutes of the coast. It includes a large kitchen and dining area downstairs with separate male and female dormitory accommodation upstairs sleeping 36. Diverse range of activities led by experienced education rangers to choose from.

Wellgate Community Farm aims to be a growing place for individuals and groups. We run a hands on scheme to help disaffected youngsters reach their goals, run educational visits to schools as well as visits to the farm. For more information please contact us on 01708 747850 or visit www.wellgatecommunityfarm.org.uk

The Lulworth Education Programme, taught by experienced field staff, offers study topics that are curriculum led and tailored for all ages. Our unique natural resources, demonstrating classic coastal landforms, are studied by schools and colleges worldwide. rangers@lulworth.com 01929 400155

The Gordon Brown Centre is a 25 acre outdoor centre delivering environmental education. We deliver fun activities to both children and adults of all ages either daily or on a residential basis. Go to www.thegordonbrowncentre.org.uk for full details or telephone 01256 762824.

Gatton Park Education uses our beautiful parkland and gardens in Reigate, Surrey as an educational resource for all ages. School groups enjoy visits on national-curriculum linked programmes or as part of free innovative environmental or creative projects. We run exciting activities for families, courses for adults and birthday parties. www.visitgatton.org.uk

The Residential Experience aka “Our Geog Trip Down South” By Michelle Rogers, Deputy Manager

I have just waved off a group of AS Geography students and knowing that I need to write this article I have decided to use them as my inspiration.

The group arrive on their coach on the Monday afternoon and are welcomed by the teaching team. “We arrived at the Chatsworth Field Study Centre in Swanage by minibus. We pulled up to the centre and we saw two friendly faces there to greet us; these two people were our tutors for our time in Swanage. We were taken into the building and were given information about the Centre and then we were able to choose our rooms. (Megan Trinder and Melissa Collyer, Staunton Community College)

The consultation with the teachers started long before this week, from booking and a preliminary visit. During that meeting we discussed the programme for their visit in great detail. This includes the locations they would like to visit and any elements of their syllabus that needs to be covered.

The first evening with the group, uses activities to get to know the local area. A popular choice is the “Blind Drop”, a night navigation exercise involving team work and map reading. Small groups are dropped in different locations with information including grid reference aiming to return safely to the centre. Most groups find different routes, all enjoy the experience and return safely.

The next few days of the experience involve visiting various sites in the area, such as Lulworth Cove, Studland and Swanage Bay. They complete exercises and worksheets to enable them to collect the information they require. The students enjoy using the different equipment; and everyone gets involved. The tutors deliver the information about the areas, giving the students time to think around subjects and draw their own conclusions, before moving on with the topic. “We learnt and saw things that can’t be displayed in text books, it’s the taking part, working and observing that made us remember crucial information” (Hannah Cherry, Harlington Upper School)

Evenings are for classroom based follow up sessions ranging from traditional drawing up of graphs to a dragon’s den style presentation. “We may not have enjoyed that late lesson times, but we all agreed that it was better than working from a textbook, in the same old classroom back at school.” (Megan Trinder and



Melissa Collyer, Staunton Community College). Once the sessions are over the students have free time, to make use of the centres facilities, many opting to use the sport equipment provided.

Towards the end of the week tutors talk to the students, reviewing their experiences. It is important not only to find out how the week has gone in terms of their course work and case studies; but also the overall experience. For many groups it's an opportunity to get to know each other and the teachers.

To conclude, the residential experience is vital to the students, both for subject information and social skills.

www.allnatt.co.uk



photo online

Scottish Wildlife Education and The Scottish SPCA

The Scottish SPCA Education Department undertake the task of spreading the animal welfare message across Scotland. At the core of their work is their mission to engage as many people as possible in animal welfare. Essentially their role is to engender informed and caring attitudes towards animals in young and old alike, in order to prevent cruelty to animals, sadly so often caused by ignorance.

The School Outreach Programme offers free sessions with an Education Officer on a variety of curriculum linked topics that also link with animal welfare. The aim is for a hands-on approach with audience participation from the start in a wide range of wildlife linked activities. The Education Department also run a range of workshops at community education events. In the wildlife crime workshop, children are required to examine various crime scenes and use their detective skills to discover the crimes and track down the crooks. Whilst this is a lot of fun it also makes them aware of threats to wildlife such as illegal trapping, poisoning and badger digging. (A member of the public once reported a stuffed badger as a casualty caught in a snare!)

It is hoped that schools will be able to complement their wildlife topics in the future with a visit to the new build Wildlife Rescue Centre. With a purpose built classroom and enclosures that prevent any disturbance to the animals, visits will promote the understanding of Scottish wildlife, and the threats it faces. Students will learn how to make informed decisions and develop responsible citizenship.

The Scottish SPCA rescues around 16000 animals a year, nearly 3000 are wildlife casualties. Let's hope that education (with a varied programme of activities and resources) can continue to

enlighten and inspire, so preventing cruelty to animals.

Lindsey Cowie, Scottish SPCA Education Officer

education@scottishspca.org www.scottishspca.org

SCOTTISH SPCA
Scotland's Animal Welfare Charity



photo online



EXMOOR
NATIONAL PARK

Twenty Years of Education in Exmoor National Park

Leaving Strode College, Egham in 1988 as a P.E. and geography teacher I could never have predicted the fantastic

opportunity that education in a National Park (NP) would offer me. It was largely accidental and something I certainly hadn't planned.

The NPs in Great Britain are areas protected because of their natural beauty and recreation value. National Park Authorities (NPA) work to achieve the conservation of these areas and to encourage a better understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities. In achieving these aims the Authorities must also seek to foster the social and economic needs of the local communities. In the late 1980s the education service within Exmoor NPA was me, as part of the Ranger team; of which there were four. My remit was simple to make as much happen through local schools and volunteers as was possible. It was heaven, no school environment, children and teachers very willing to get involved and do something, but the cloud of the prescriptive National Curriculum (NC) was upon us. Despite this restriction teachers wanting to get their children out of the classroom found the way, and my feeling is that more learning took place outside the classroom then.

In the 1990s Somerset County Council were looking to dispose of their outdoor residential education centres, and Pinkery came the way of Exmoor NPA. Despite the ups and downs of changing curricular and emphases placed on schools, Pinkery has remained very popular with many schools returning for over 15 years. I suggest this is a reflection of those teachers that 'believe' and are prepared to put in the extra effort that a residential experience demands. A considerable body of academic research would support the linkage between early experiences outside the classroom in the countryside and future beliefs or career.

The present era, has been one of verifiable and quantifiable health and safety mechanisation. I understand the necessity and agree with the fundamental principles, expressed by Alan Dyer of Plymouth Uni, who says "ensuring children are safe is part of being a responsible adult. But where do we draw the line so that the excitement and adventure are not lost?".⁽¹⁾

For those that have the passion to share the countryside with others, don't be put off. Freeman Tilden, a Canadian Mountie, and pioneer of outdoor education quotes Anatole France: "do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire." (2)

Today, within Exmoor NPA, and generally speaking all environmental providers, education is no longer just a 'bolt on' to get some good pictures of happy children but is an integral part of many projects. Lottery funding has enabled us to deliver education projects in Taunton, Bridgwater & North Devon and an education officer to deliver a project on the Brendon Hill Mineral Line. We realise that the adults of today are the children of yesterday and the more time we can spend integrating them into their environment the greater the understanding and belief in the purposes of a NP. We certainly aren't perfect, but I like to think that trying to engage every child during every year of their education within Exmoor has created some inflammable stuff. Dave Gurnett, Education Manager, www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

Ref 1 Dyer, A. (2003) A Sense of Adventure, Earth Education from Resurgence 226. <http://www.resurgence.org>

Ref 2 Tilden, F. (1957) Interpreting Our Heritage, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Providers and Organisations:

Garden Organic is the UK's leading organic growing charity. As part of its charitable work, the charity runs a free education programme, Garden Organic for Schools, designed to teach children about organic growing and food and to help support school allotments and growing projects. For more information visit www.gardenorganic.org.uk or call 024 76 303517.

The Wild Boar Consultancy, founded by Dr Martin Goulding, deliver educational Powerpoint presentations on all aspects of Wild Boar behaviour and ecology. Dr Goulding is a qualified (PGCE) and experienced lecturer with enhanced CRB clearance, who is able to present to audiences of any age range. Contact www.wildboarconsultancy.co.uk

The Sustainable Development Education (SDE) Network is the Scottish network for organisations and individuals involved in sustainable development education – enabling people to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to build a sustainable society. For more information, visit www.sdenetwork.org or email coordinator@sdenetwork.org. For our free monthly bulletin, go to www.sdenetwork.org/bulletin

Cornwall: Geology, botany, SSSI's, culture, maritime and industrial heritage. To understand the pieces of the jigsaw of this unique area of Cornwall, Paul Simmons (MA Cornish Studies) and professional educator (WWT) and walker can help. www.walkitcornwall.co.uk. 0771 408 4644. paul@walkitcornwall.co.uk

Acclaimed poet, performer and educator offers creative writing workshops on environmental themes for all ages and abilities. Workshops may include an outdoor element (often a walk in an inspiring wilderness location) and an indoor writing session. For more information, email susan@susanrichardsonwriter.co.uk and visit susanrichardsonwriter.blogspot.com

The Westcountry Rivers Trust is running a new environmental education project; Cornwall Wet Feet, delivering visits, activities and events with a watery theme to local schools and community groups. We also welcome groups and volunteers in developing their own ideas. Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Tel: 01579 372140. www.wrt.org.uk

Bringing Nature to your doorstep with our events and activities. We provide Environmental Education at schools, etc, around the UK, as well as at our bases at Shustoke and Hatton Country World. More information: www.naturalworldexperience.com; 07811 403713

Need a **dynamic team to run school/educational trips**? Experienced with Key Stage 1 & 2. Set up to come to your location or provide trips out. Based in Cambridge but happy to travel. CRB checked and First Aid qualified. Contact Janet Watt at janetwatt@woodlandtrust.org.uk or Tel: 01223 513243

Wildside Education... providers of nature education and bushcraft in the Blackdown Hills. Offering training, schools work, company days, camps, nature walks, Dads and lads, birthday parties... they take groups at their site in East Devon, or they will travel. Www.wildsideeducation.co.uk

The Scottish Countryside Alliance Educational Trust (SCAET) was set up as a Scottish charity in 2003 in response to the obvious need to reconnect the people of Scotland with the countryside. Get yourself, your school and community involved by visiting - www.scaet.org.uk to see how you can participate in our projects.



Farming & Countryside Education (FACE) helps young people learn more about food and farming in a sustainable countryside. FACE promotes visits to farms as part of the curriculum and provides easy access to resources and activities to complement these visits. For further information visit www.face-online.org.uk

Leave No Trace is an Outdoor Ethics Education Programme designed to promote responsible outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnerships. Techniques designed to minimise the social and environmental impacts to these areas are incorporated into the Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics Education Programme as seven Principles. For more information, www.leavenotraceireland.org

WILDLIFE WATCH

Wildlife Watch is the junior wing of the Wildlife Trusts and has been engaging families in taking positive action for the environment since 1971.

Watch encourages and nurtures young people's interest in wildlife and the environment by



creating learning opportunities, and inspiring personal participation and celebration. We have subscribing members across the UK and support a network of volunteers working with young people in community-based Watch groups.

Watch Leaders are adult volunteers recruited by Wildlife Trusts; some have existing wildlife knowledge or environmental skills but others, who simply bring an enthusiasm to engage children in environmental action, learn alongside them. The culture is one that truly values the place of adults as mentors and role models and The Wildlife Trusts support Leaders teams with procedural guidance, face-to-face training, insurance and information resources.

Participating in, and shaping group activity – such as pond-dipping, improving a local area for wildlife, campaigning or bat surveying - enables children group members and adult volunteers to develop interpersonal and practical skills and the confidence to enjoy being outdoors and learn through personal experiences - having fun *and* making a difference.

If you would like to know more about volunteering with the Wildlife Trusts, as a Watch Leader, within an education team or in another role. Please contact your local Wildlife Trust you can find their details on www.wildlifetrusts.org under Your Local Trust.

Volunteers required:

We have an opportunity to help start up a **brand new Wildlife Watch group in Elgin**. Wildlife Watch leaders don't need any experience, just a passion for working with children and the environment. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. Please contact the Watch Support Officer, Jillian Strachan on 01674 676336 or jstrachan@swt.org.uk

Groundwork South Tyneside and Newcastle V Volunteer Placements - Gain valuable experience in delivering environmental education activities including Forest School and community events to a variety of age groups. 30 hrs per week over 23 weeks. £80 per week out of pocket expenses paid. Work towards Platinum Youth Achievement Award. Continuous recruitment. Contact Sarah Dinning 0191 428 1144 www.groundwork-stan.org.uk

Wembury Marine Centre always needs volunteers, we work with schools and the general public on the rocky shore, teaching people about rockpool life. We will be recruiting full time volunteers in the New Year but also need part time volunteers from March - October. More information from www.wemburymarinecentre.org

WDCS is looking for a volunteer to support the education programme, tasks will include assisting with development of the UK Dolphin Diploma by researching and developing methods of outreach and promotional activities plus helping to develop resources for school visits. The office is in Chippenham, for more information email volunteering@wdc.org

Earth Calling are at the forefront of environmental education in Edinburgh and the Lothians. We are always on the lookout for passionate volunteers to join us in spreading the environmental message. A great chance to learn new skills, meet new people, and have great fun. Contact gus on info@earthcalling.org

Take a walk in the Park / Guiding lights

Parc Cenedlaethol Arfordir Penfro Pembrokeshire Coast National Park



The first guided walk in a British National Park took place in Pembrokeshire in 1966. Here at Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority we recognise the role guided walks can play in reaching out to a wide audience and helping them to understand and feel connected to a place. With a guide, a good walk becomes a great walk; a great walk becomes a memorable experience.

What makes a good guided walk?

In short, a good guide. In order for a guided walk to be successful it should: • Be well planned – the leader should have researched the walk well in terms of subject matter, safety, convenient stopping points and props • Be accurately advertised to meet, if not exceed, participants' expectations • Be thematic – the theme of the walk should be reinforced along the way. Participants are more likely to remember the information if it is thematically organised • Be interactive – allow for questions and answers, involve the participants, and appeal to as many senses as possible • Be concluded, rather than just fizzle out

The leader needs: • A warm, welcoming smile and a willingness to engage • A passion for their subject • The ability to adapt and communicate specialist information to different audiences in a fun and memorable way • To address the group as a whole at planned stopping points • Flexibility!

How do we engage a wide range of people?

We offer walks to cater for different levels of fitness and different interests. They are accurately advertised so people can choose the one that best suits their interest and ability. Our programme of guided walks includes walks from 1-10 miles, family shore searches, short walks focusing on local history, wildlife watches and a few specialist walks. We are now moving away from offering specialist walks and concentrating on being more inclusive.

Who gets involved?

Our guides are National Park rangers and specialist staff as well as casual activity leaders. All have fantastic knowledge of and passion for Pembrokeshire and the desire to share that with others. Participants range from babies in backpacks to great-grandparents, local villagers to travelling tourists.

Evaluation

A key to running successful events is to evaluate them. Find out where people have come from and why, what aspects they enjoyed or didn't enjoy and use this information to inform the next programme of walks. For more information on the activities and events programme run by Pembrokehire Coast National Park Authority or for a copy of the 2008 evaluation please contact Rebecca Evans on 0845 345 7275. Visit our website at www.pcnpa.org.uk.



photo online

Resources:

	<p>We promote Forest Schools and challenging outdoor play through the provision of resources, information and ideas for groups in the outdoors. Our specialised range includes tools, fire lighting kits, safety equipment and imaginative play resources. All are sourced and recommended by experienced practitioners. Visit our website at www.muddyfaces.co.uk</p>
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Green Bug Productions Wildlife Discovery Packs - Fun, Educational, Engaging. Based around regions & habitats providing instruction and activities to help children discover wildlife in a fun way. Packs contain eye-spy challenges, treasure hunts, hands-on identification activities and colouring in sheets and posters. Great for individual children and families. Group packs also available. 01496 850237 info@green-bug-productions.co.uk www.green-bug-productions.co.uk

Producing video, web content, games and learning resources for the education and charity sectors since 2001. Experienced broadcaster and teacher Karl Rawstone will work with you to design and produce bespoke materials addressing differentiation and access. See our work at http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/text/60/play_and_learn.html, visit www.twodotsinacircle.com or telephone Karl on (01929) 459 519.

As a companion to 'Arable Plants', we have now published 'Arable Bryophytes - A Field Guide to the mosses, liverworts and hornworts of cultivated land in Britain and Ireland', normally £21.95 but available at the pre-publication price of £17.95. Orders via sales@wildguides.co.uk or 01628-529297.

Wild About Britain is home to hundreds of thousands of pages on British wildlife, the environment and the great outdoors. With a huge forum, gallery, newspaper, directory and maps, we've got over 20,000 members and 2 million visitors a year, and it's all completely free. Join us as www.wildaboutbritain.co.uk

Environmental education resources, including teacher's packs, prepared to suit your site and needs, using techniques that fully engage learners at all levels in active, fully participatory learning through discovery. To discuss your project please contact Bruce Ferguson 01388 776463 email bf@cms-ne.co.uk www.cms-ne.co.uk

The Hawk and Owl Trust has produced, with the Field Studies Council, a "Guide to British Owls and Owl Pellets" – a laminated wallchart/booklet, illustrating pellets, how to dissect them, and the skulls and other bones they contain. £3.75 (inc UK p&p) www.hawkandowl.org See also what's on offer at the Trust's Buckinghamshire and Norfolk education centres.

Pimp my Panel

Firstly, know this: interpretation and education via 'the panel method' is not particularly effective. Being shown around a site by an enthusiastic, skilful guide is much, much better.

The continued popularity of panels is because they are a logical (and relatively cheap) way of plonking a lot of information close to where it is needed. This may sound a bit negative but it's important to recognize the limitations of panels in order to design good ones.

Good panel - or a stinker?

Most visitors are not there primarily to be educated. Any learning that takes place will probably need to be a tease.

Nowadays, panels are almost a standard requirement in a well-interpreted site. Imagine that you've just arrived by car at the site (why didn't you cycle?!!) the first thing you look for is the welcome panel to tell you what's what.

If it's a good panel you will find what you need to know (main points of interest, where the toilets are, no camping etc). You will be educated with some fascinating facts and learn why you need to care about the site too.....result!

If the panel is a bad-un (and many are) it will provide information about the sponsors, some stuff about history that you can't relate to, a long list of plant species but few good pictures. There will, however, be lots of meaningless logos. You will soon be bored and thinking about bushes nearby because they haven't said where the toilets are!



Know your audience.

Visitors are believed to retain: 30% of what they read, 50% of what they see and 90% of what they do. This has implications for how we do our panels. In short, we need less text, lots of nice pictures, and suggested things to do.

Using 'Tilden's tips' good panels should 'provoke' people to engage with the subject (use provocative titles like "Pimp my Panel"). Having captured their interest it is then important to continue with clear, stimulating ideas that they can 'relate' to.

For example: Rather than describing forge work as 'hot' one could say, "the intense heat from the blacksmith's forge could be felt from the opposite side of the road". A gun "as long as three buses" is easier to imagine than one "15 meters in length". Pictures are even better!

It can also help people to identify with the information if a character narrator delivers it. This might be an historical figure speaking to us from the past. This works particularly well with children (and the child in all of us!)

Information must not be supplied but 'revealed' in response to genuine curiosity that is being generated.

Since visitors may retain 90% of what they do, we should also be encouraging them to, "see if they can spot a lizard" or "smell the bluebells?" and "make a rubbing of that cast sign" and so on.

Lots more to say but I've only got 500 words. You get the idea don't you?..... hope it wasn't boring.

Philip Rutt is a designer, illustrator and a director at ARC Creative Design Ltd.

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photo online

Don't forget to have a look at the online Training Section of countryside-jobs.com for lots more courses with relevance to Environmental education, and many more.

Training courses with a relevance to Environmental Education provision

All in 2009, one day events unless otherwise specified.

9 January and 7 May: Presentation Skills at Hartpury College For details: 01432 702479

debbie.probert@hartpury.ac.uk www.hartpury.ac.uk

15 January: Working with Schools on Sustainable Development Education in Manchester run by Environmental Trainers Network (ETN), BTCV For information: 0121 3592113 etn@btcv.org.uk www.btcv.org/etn

21 January: Greenwood Working with Teenagers at and by Bishops Wood Centre. To book: 01299 250513 bishopswoodcourses@worcestershire.gov.uk www.bishopswoodcentre.org.uk

23 January at Itchen Valley Country Park and **27 March** in West Sussex **Practical Task Leadership** run by BTCV Southern Central contact them on 02380 769719 SC-training@btcv.org.uk www.btcv.org/southerncentral

29 January: Early Years Adventures at Bishops Wood Centre as before.

2 February: A Way with Words: Writing about Places, Writing for Visitors a week long (5 days) course at Plas Tan y Bwlch. For information: 01766 772600 www.plastanybwlch.com

3 February: Introduction to Leading Environmental Activities with Primary School Groups & How to Meet Teachers Needs and **4 February: Working with Schools & Education for Sustainable** both by Bishops Wood Centre as before.

11 February: Working with Secondary Schools Through the National Curriculum at Bristol and **18 February Working with "Friends of.." Groups** at Doncaster both run by ETN, contact as before.

2 March: Advanced Storytelling by Bishops Wood Centre as before.

23 March: Education in the Countryside week long (5 days) at Losehill Hall contact them on 01433 620373 training.losehill@peakdistrict.gov.uk www.losehilltraining.org.uk

Forest Schools practioners courses

Level 1 on 13 July and Level 2 on 20 April at Sheffield. Level 3 19 January at Newtown, 23 February in Derbyshire, 9 March, 27 April & 29 June all in Sheffield and 14 September at Ulverston. Level 4, 26 January also in Sheffield. All course are for five days and are run by Archimedes Training contact them on 0114 2855534 www.forestschools.com

They also run a free taster day at Grindleford (Derbys) on 7 April.

The CJS team would like to thank everyone who has contributed adverts, articles and information for this Special Edition.

The next Special Edition won't be a Special Edition!

CJS Weekly Special Editions are being renamed **CJS Focus** in 2009.

The very first CJS Focus will be published in February 2009 and as usual will feature Volunteer work.

Details believed correct but given without prejudice. A4 side this Special Edition: 12