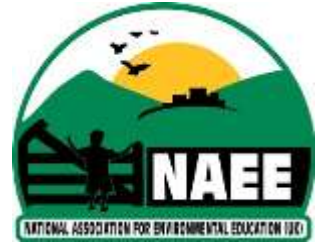




# Countryside Jobs Service

Focus on Environmental & Outdoor Education

In affiliation with NAEF UK - the National Association for Environmental Education (UK)



19 May 2014

## Spotlight on Environmental Education

by Sue Fenoughty, NAEF Executive, with contributions from fellow executive members: Gabrielle Back, David Fellows & Henricus Peters.

NAEE – the National Association for Environmental Education – is an educational charity founded by a group of teachers over 50 years ago to promote environmental education (EE) and education for sustainable development (ESD). Despite the many educational changes over the years, NAEF's main role continues to be the provision of support for teachers delivering environmental education in our schools.

### What is Environmental Education?

In 1990, Environmental Education was introduced as a cross-curricular theme in the National Curriculum. It encompasses both the built and the natural environments, through its 7 topics: Climate, Water, Energy, Plants & Animals, Soil, Rocks & Minerals, Buildings, Industrialisation & Waste, and People & Communities. Although it was dropped from the curriculum six years later, opportunities still exist to develop the 'environment' aspect of current subject areas, notably in science, geography, technology, and history especially through local studies where pupils can investigate how people lived in past times and their impact on the environment through the ages.

### An approach for teaching and learning

The approach used for teaching and learning about the environment starts in the Early Years/Foundation Stage of a child's education with 'knowledge and understanding of the world'. The child's own local environment is the teaching and learning resource: here the child learns about the environment (knowledge), in the environment (knowledge and skills) for the environment (developing caring attitudes for the environment). By exploring their immediate surroundings, young people can begin to develop a sense of identity and pride in their area, and a deeper understanding of the need to care for it. As they get older, this local environmental knowledge helps them to understand and appreciate environmental issues on a more global scale and equips them to make informed decisions about the Earth's future.

At the beginning of the new millennium, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was introduced into the National Curriculum but it was non-statutory. It was given a boost in 2006 when the government launched its Sustainable Schools Strategy (S3), exhorting schools, by the year 2020, to follow the recommendations laid down in the Strategy's eight 'doorways'. In 2009, NAEF published its second edition of 'Positive Action' explaining how Environmental Education is the 'green corridor' giving access to the eight

'doorways', by helping pupils and staff alike to understand the environmental reasons behind the need for us all to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle. S3 was scrapped a year later, in 2010, by the Education Secretary.



Year 4 pupil from Slade Primary School investigating plants at the Botanical Gardens. (H.Gregory, NAEF)

Despite these two enormous setbacks, there are still schools across the country determined to become 'green' schools, encouraged by non-governmental organisations such as EcoSchools. Two years ago, thanks to generous funding from a Birmingham family, NAEF set up a project to give bursaries to inner-city schools for pupils to spend a day at one of the city's outdoor learning centres, which include a working farm. Recent increased charges at the centres resulted in fewer visits from the inner-city schools, but the bursary scheme has stepped in to help these schools, and is proving to be very successful. To date the scheme has given over 500 city children, across all phases of education, a day away from the city streets, investigating nature first hand, and also seeing where their food comes at the farm centre.

An increasing number of schoolchildren are growing up in urban environments but with no experience whatsoever of the natural environment – a term coined in 2005 as 'nature deficit disorder' by Richard Louv in his book 'Last Child in the Woods'. The NAEF Kenrick project is part of a growing movement to address this dire and urgent educational need.

The following are extracts from teachers' reports of their pupils' visits to two of the outdoor learning centres, funded by the NAEF Kenrick Project bursaries:

1. Small groups of GCSE students from St Paul's Community School visited Martineau Gardens over several weeks as part of their GCSE studies. 'The overarching goal of the school is to combat disadvantage, and support pupils who have been excluded, failed or alienated by large mainstream schools. It seeks to reconnect pupils with the mainstream, and enable them to succeed and achieve.

It's been a delight to see pupils who struggle with academic subjects being enthused to come to lessons learning science through practical experience at Martineau Gardens.

Success is already evident. A recent Ofsted inspection remarked how this curriculum had really changed pupils' enjoyment of science. Pond dipping at the Martineau Gardens provided pupils with real life field work. Here they also prepared beds with composted leaf litter in poly-tunnels and thinned out plants around the gardens. These activities provided opportunities for classroom-allergic pupils to shine and engage with skills that could begin a lifelong passion for gardening.



**GCSE students pond dipping at St. Paul's Community School.**  
(H. Gregory, NAEF)



**A visit by Greet Primary school to Mount Pleasant Farm.**  
(H. Gregory, NAEF)

2. Greet Primary School is in the densely populated Sparkhill district of Birmingham's inner city where many children spend their early lives unaware of the countryside beyond. A favourite topic of year 4 pupils is 'food and farming' beginning with a visit to Mount Pleasant Farm, Worcestershire. The farm visit is a truly eye opening experience for them, from seeing the wide range of animals to being in such an open and green environment. The hands-on activities are something they talk about for weeks after, including 'milking the cow,' which led to one pupil deciding on a new career choice; "I want to be a farmer".

#### **Closure of Outdoor Learning Centres**

But this is now going to grind to a halt. In March, for budgetary reasons, Birmingham City Council decided to close its Outdoor

Learning Centres (OLS) providing adventure and/or environmental studies activities for the city's schoolchildren; this means redundancy notices for OLS staff at the end of this summer. This decision mirrors other local authorities, especially as many of their schools become academies or free schools, and

therefore out of local authority control and support. The effect of the OLS closures on Birmingham's urban schoolchildren will be devastating, robbing many of them of the often life-changing opportunities to investigate and understand and therefore appreciate the natural environment!

NAEE has been aware for some time about the decreasing opportunities in schools for environmental education, despite the growing need for children to reconnect with their environment. These case studies illustrate how EE can remain a vital part of schools which value the cross curricular, hands-on experiences gained by visits to environmental and farm centres. But the increasing pressures on school budgets make visits of any kind beyond the means of many schools, especially in deprived areas with low income families. Another drawback is the lack of status attached to education about the environment. The core curriculum subjects, especially English and Maths, have become the main concern for schools and how to improve their pupils' results in the national tests, and thereby raise their OFSTED rating.

These are difficult times for NAEE and the future of environmental education. The Association will continue to offer Birmingham schools Kenrick bursaries for visits to environmental centres and farms. But this is just one area of the country and NAEE needs funding to spread the environmental education message into all the country's schools as it did in the 1990s, when hundreds of schools were members and every local authority had its own Environmental Education inspector. The worry today is where will our children and young people gain the all-important knowledge, skills and attitudes to equip them to understand and make the right decisions about environmental issues in the future, when our planet is in their hands?

For more information, and to join NAEE, go to [www.naee.org.uk](http://www.naee.org.uk)

Sue Fenoughy was formerly Advisory Teacher for Environmental Education, Birmingham City Council Education Dept

**Want to learn more about endangered wildlife**, from British hedgehogs to African wild dogs, and how to help? Our wildlife charity has an archive of free environmental education resources to download to use with primary schools and youth groups. For activity ideas visit [www.ptes.org/education](http://www.ptes.org/education)

**'Water Voles' by Ruth Street**

The book is designed as an information book for primary school children but it also has a much wider appeal. It is illustrated with full colour photographs and covers life cycle, adaptations, threats and conservation, including a local case study. Price £4.99. Available from [www.street-country.com](http://www.street-country.com)

**A chance to invest in the future of our wildlife!** Bug Storeys needs a £70k investment to reach more schools. Visit [crowdcube.com](http://crowdcube.com) in June and see how Bug Storeys sources funds from philanthropists, city investors and people like you. Contact [sandra@bugstoreys.com](mailto:sandra@bugstoreys.com) or 07896 561001 for more information. Spread the word.

**Stirley Community Farm is an exciting** Yorkshire Wildlife Trust project combining farming and conservation on our 240 acre site in the beautiful Pennines. We offer an exciting and varied programme of education activities for schools, based in our innovative super insulated Passivhaus Cre8 Barn. Visit our website: <http://www.ywt.org.uk/stirley-community-farm> for more information.

**Playground Instruments made using reclaimed materials.** Tuned percussion for parks made from locally sourced green wood. Workshops with all ages to make tuned percussion. Please contact Will Embliss [willembliiss@gmail.com](mailto:willembliiss@gmail.com), 78 Devonshire Hill Lane, London, N17 7NG. Website [www.willembliiss.co.uk](http://www.willembliiss.co.uk) 07946 625957

**Funding high quality Adventure Learning** is becoming more and more difficult. To address this Widehorizons developed Adventure Learning Partnerships, a new initiative which embeds Adventure Learning into a school's Curriculum whilst ensuring that support is provided to access funding, particularly for the most disadvantaged children and young people. 0845 6006567, [www.widehorizons.org.uk](http://www.widehorizons.org.uk)

**Dorset County Council's Outdoor Education Service** continues to offer a huge range of outdoor education opportunities in this wonderful county from four diverse centres. Including: experimental archaeology, camping, sailing and kayaking on the World Heritage Jurassic Coast and superb environmental education. Call 01305 224517 or visit: [www.dorsetforyou.com/outdoored](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/outdoored) for more information.

**The Centre is located on the Start Bay** coast and surrounded by Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve. The Ley is the largest natural freshwater lake in the South West. It is separated from the sea by Slapton Sands (a barrier beach and shingle ridge). The surrounding coastline, nearby coastal towns and Dartmoor National Park provide unrivalled opportunities for field courses. <http://www.slnnr.org.uk/>

**Brownsea Island offers an exciting** and varied Outdoor Education programme, running group sessions to discover habitats, coastal erosion, island life, art and more. Our 24 bed hostel is available to hire, enabling groups to take full advantage of all the island has to offer. For more information please contact: [brownseagroupbooking@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:brownseagroupbooking@nationaltrust.org.uk)

**1World-Kids is a children's guide** to climate change and the world. We talk conservation, & look to help children understand the correlation between what we do and the impact our actions have upon the rest of the world. Visit: [www.1world-kids.com](http://www.1world-kids.com) Mail: [hello@1world-kids.com](mailto:hello@1world-kids.com)

**Widehorizons is a leading charity provider** of Adventure Learning in the UK. We offer a wide range of teacher training courses for staff involved in outdoor education who would like to introduce outdoor learning or develop further their current programmes and educational visits, training over 600 teachers every year. 0845 6006567, [www.widehorizons.org.uk](http://www.widehorizons.org.uk)

**The Living Seas Centre** offers an exciting education programme focused around Yorkshire's marine wildlife. Pupils can go on a Seashore Safari, become Seabed Explorers, learn about our Waves of Waste or scour the beach as Seashore Detectives. For more information contact us on [livingseas@ywt.org.uk](mailto:livingseas@ywt.org.uk) or call 01262 422103.

**Froglife is a leading UK conservation** charity protecting amphibians and reptiles. We have an active and varied education programme including everything from reparation sessions for Youth Offenders to formal training for ecological consultants and much more in between. Please visit our website [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org) for more information and free downloadable resources

**Want to know how the flooding affected** our freshwater ecosystems in 2013? Wondered if there was more to marine ecology than dolphins and whales? We have two great posters that cover both topics and in 2014 will have new wallcharts on Urban ecology and What pollen tells us about climate change. [www.britishecologicalsociety.org](http://www.britishecologicalsociety.org)

**The Ocean Explorer Centre** is a new and innovative visitor and outreach centre of the Scottish Association for Marine Science near Oban. Explore how the oceans work through our interactive exhibition with underwater observatory, cinema, events and workshop programme including guided walks. See [www.oceanexplorercentre.org](http://www.oceanexplorercentre.org) for details

**Skelton Grange welcomes you to learn**, volunteer and play in the natural environment at our award winning eco-centre and nature area in Leeds. Join our volunteer teams. Learn a new skill such as willow weaving, wire bird sculpture or bushcraft in our great new course programme. Visit us at: <http://www.tcv.org.uk/skeltongrange>

**OASES has been successfully delivering** and promoting outdoor learning and global sustainability education for over 15 years. Our highly qualified and committed team of Outdoor And Sustainability Education Specialists work together to provide consultancy services and/or funded charitable support to schools and other education providers. Contact: [www.oasesnortheast.org.uk](http://www.oasesnortheast.org.uk) or 03000 260535

**Our free, downloadable educational resources** feature curriculum friendly activities to encourage outdoor learning such as our popular bee scene survey. \*New meadow resources\* have also just arrived featuring wild flower ID, habitat distinction, mini-beast surveying and much more! Please sign up to our schools newsletter for free resources to come to you: [www.wildaboutplants.org.uk/england/schools/](http://www.wildaboutplants.org.uk/england/schools/)

**Simonsbath House Outdoor Centre** provides day and residential courses to schools and special interest groups through the year alongside running a variety of outdoor and environmental courses and is always happy to run joint courses with other like minded organisations. Contact Louise Flagg 01643 831382 [www.shoc.info](http://www.shoc.info)

**We use our 13 acres of exotic animals**, Tropical House rainforest, minibeasts and reptiles in our classrooms and even our wartime allotment to inspire visitors about conservation from preschool to university level with workshops covering a range of topics from geography, biology to WW2 history! LOTC badge venue. [www.newquayzoo.org.uk/learning-zone](http://www.newquayzoo.org.uk/learning-zone) 01637 873342

**Garden Organic's education work aims** to get more people growing organically. We work with schools, colleges and those with special educational need to access the benefits of growing food and engage in hands on, practical activity. We do this through our training, project work and inspiring demonstration gardens. Visit [www.gardenorganic.org.uk](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk)

**Free Range Classrooms** A National and International reputation as one of the most effective and innovative teams in the UK. Over 20 years experience of leading award winning outdoor provision. Sessions: One offs/ long term projects. Wildlife Areas: Design, construction. C P D: Training on cross curricular outdoor learning. Fundraising: Help and support. <http://freerangeclassrooms.weebly.com/> [lm.enviroart@homecall.co.uk](mailto:lm.enviroart@homecall.co.uk)

**Outdoor Learning on the Jurassic Coast** Durlston Country Park NNR is a superb outdoor classroom, with a wealth of opportunities to bring learning to life As a key gateway to the Jurassic Coast and National Nature Reserve, Durlston offers students an unforgettable day. Visit [www.durlston.co.uk](http://www.durlston.co.uk) for more information

**Thames Explorer Trust - River Education Programmes 2013 - 2014** Investigating The Thames And Its Surrounds. The Thames Explorer Trust has been running for 25 years. We are an environmental education charity that raises awareness of the river through a range of educational activities. 020 87420057, [info@thames-explorer.org.uk](mailto:info@thames-explorer.org.uk), [www.thames-explorer.org.uk](http://www.thames-explorer.org.uk)

**Derbyshire Wildlife Trust offers school** visits and inset training at our education centres in Matlock Bath and Carsington Water as well as on our nature reserves. We can give you the skills to improve children's learning, concentration, health and well-being. Contact us on 01773 881188 or email [enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk)

**Somerset Wildlife Trust provides inspiring** outdoor learning experiences for schools. Offering curriculum linked sessions for key stages 1 to 4, we can bring learning to life through hands on, engaging activities on our stunning nature reserves across Somerset. For more information have a look at our website: [www.somersetwildlife.org/education-learning.html](http://www.somersetwildlife.org/education-learning.html)



**A new project from Tees Valley Wildlife Trust.**

We are offering Tees Valley schools not just support with growing food but also with range of other environmental activities including wildlife gardening, using your school grounds and eco-schools and much more.  
For more information visit <http://bit.ly/1uUfQeS> or Steve Ashton 01287 636382

**'Motivational Learning in Inspirational Environments'**

- Bespoke Residential & Outreach Programmes
- Adventurous & Environmental Learning for Young people
- CPD Staff Training; Forest & Beach Schools, LoTC, NGBs, Outdoor First Aid
- DofE and much more...get in touch to discuss your requirements:  
email: [nyols@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:nyols@northyorks.gov.uk) website: [www.outdoored.co.uk](http://www.outdoored.co.uk)

**Teaching and learning in the real world....**

The UK has a long and rich tradition of teaching and learning outdoors. A common understanding of outdoor education, however, may still rely on images of teenagers 'building character' as they haul heavy rucksacks up windswept, rain-lashed mountains. In practice, outdoor learning has always been a very broad field that draws on a wide range of values and traditions. These include some of the earliest incarnations of what we might today consider to be environmental, ecological, or even sustainability education.



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

An intimate, personal connection to the landscape and coastal areas of the UK is central to an understanding of our country's history, culture, and natural heritage. It is vital for the planet and our young people that we maintain this tradition of learning outdoors and encourage educators to champion the exploration and enjoyment of the wide range of learning experiences that exist within urban and rural landscapes alike.



**Holyrood Park, Edinburgh** (University of Edinburgh)

Readers of this journal are well-versed in the issues that threaten the ability of human beings and other species to flourish and, in some cases, even survive on the planet. The most prominent of these is climate change, but other threats include loss of biodiversity, impacts of manufactured chemicals, health, financial and social inequalities and related concerns of human well-being and economic stability. Such global environmental change and a commitment to social responsibility are daunting to address -- both personally and through professional practice. Educational experiences that integrate concepts of global citizenship, sustainable development and ecological

connectedness can help learners face these issues in positive ways. Such educational aspirations cannot rely on book and desk learning alone.

Outdoor learning experiences are fundamental to a broad, inclusive form of education; they offer countless opportunities to stimulate, inspire and connect teachers and learners of all ages. Additionally, such concrete experiences can encourage those involved to care for the communities that they engage with -- communities of the natural and human worlds. That which we have no contact with or experience of caring for, we are unlikely to care about -- whether it be on a local or a global scale. In recognition of this, recent developments in the structure of the national curriculum in Scotland have embedded outdoor learning and learning for sustainability at the heart of every child's education from age three to 18.

**Outdoor Education at the University of Edinburgh**

For four decades, the Outdoor Education section of the University of Edinburgh has been at the international forefront of providing postgraduate degrees in all aspects of outdoor education. They offer three postgraduate programmes in Outdoor Education, Outdoor Education and Sustainability Education, and Learning for Sustainability. Whilst each programme has a particular focus, they all incorporate an

experiential approach and the academic aspects of each programme draw upon students' personal experiences wherever possible.

The three MSc programmes attract applicants from a variety of backgrounds and who hold a range of practical and professional qualifications. Those who enroll on the programmes include recent undergraduates from a range of disciplines, older professionals looking for a change of career, outdoor instructors seeking to develop their theoretical or ecological understanding, and those from a scientific or environmental background who wish to understand more about the pedagogical possibilities open to them. This diversity creates a rich teaching and learning environment where students can learn from fellow students and from the programme staff.

### Postgraduate qualifications

As being a professional in this field demands practical involvement and outdoor teaching competence, the MSc Outdoor Education and MSc Outdoor Environmental and Sustainability Education both comprise a Professional Development Programme, where students can gain instructional training in a range of outdoor activities. The MSc Learning for Sustainability does not include a separate practical dimension, but instead more subtly weaves indoor and outdoor teaching in local and urban spaces into its courses. All three programmes foster a critical and reflexive ethos, where programme members are encouraged during courses to analyse their existing practice in relation to the theories and concepts introduced.



Urban outdoor learning on the Royal Mile, Edinburgh (University of Edinburgh)

This approach enables students to more deeply consider personal, social and environmental issues and examine ways in which meaningful responses to these complex circumstances can be developed through individuals, schools, and communities.

The dissertation offers students an opportunity to identify, reflect upon and explore a topic that has implications for professional development. This includes projects related to on-going professional practice and projects with a range of partner organisations. This approach may be especially useful for those who chose to combine their studies with full-time work.

### Gaining Experience

Those who are considering embarking upon or developing their career within outdoor learning would be encouraged to gain some practical experience by volunteering or gaining seasonal work within residential centres, environmental organisations, youth groups and the education sector.

### Jobs and careers in outdoor learning

Careers can be developed within educational, community, environmental, cultural, and heritage sectors. Employment opportunities exist through schools and local authorities, within field studies centres linked to governmental and non-governmental agencies (such as Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland), and within residential and community based outdoor centres.

The range of employment opportunities is widening, as outdoor learning and learning for sustainability becomes more central to lifelong education for children and adults, schools and communities. What better way to transform the 'real world' that exists outside the classroom than by teaching and learning within it?

Please visit our website for more information: [www.education.ed.ac.uk/outdoored](http://www.education.ed.ac.uk/outdoored)

Or for specific postgraduate programmes details please contact:  
 MSc Outdoor Education: [simon.beames@ed.ac.uk](mailto:simon.beames@ed.ac.uk)  
 MSc Outdoor Education and Sustainability Education: [simon.beames@ed.ac.uk](mailto:simon.beames@ed.ac.uk)  
 MSc Learning for Sustainability: [beth.christie@ed.ac.uk](mailto:beth.christie@ed.ac.uk)

**Hill and Moorland Leader** and Mountain Leader Summer courses based at the John Muir Trust in Pitlochry Perthshire. For details of what we offer go to [www.high-expectations.co.uk](http://www.high-expectations.co.uk) or email Steve Spalding [mail@stevespalding.plus.com](mailto:mail@stevespalding.plus.com) and request course details.

**Simonsbath House Outdoor Centre**, Simonsbath, Exmoor is hosting a free training day on Friday 30th May 10am – 4pm. Munching Caterpillars Workshop is designed for those working in environmental education and offers information and ideas for KS 2 pupils running moth, butterfly and caterpillar activities. Booked through [munchingcaterpillars.org](http://munchingcaterpillars.org).

**Growing Schools and the School Farms Network** have joined forces this year with the award winning Phoenix High School and the charity Flame, to produce their annual conference for July 11th 2014. This year the conference is aimed at all school professionals, teachers, farmers, community groups and other providers who have a passion to develop food growing. [www.flamecharity.org/conference](http://www.flamecharity.org/conference)

**www.firstaidacademy.co.uk** Delivering Outdoor First Aid courses throughout the UK Fun Dynamic and up to date trainers. Courses also at your venue. Free phone 0800 9992716 Quote Discount code CSJ for 10% reduction

#### Learning for Biodiversity training

Do you want to gain skills to teach the new primary curriculum? We have developed an innovative course based on scientific skills, taxonomy and biodiversity. If you would like to book a group for specialised training on this please contact [enquiries.ef@field-studies-council.org](mailto:enquiries.ef@field-studies-council.org) or call 020 8502 8500

**Working for climbers, hill walkers** and mountaineers, the British Mountaineering Council has lots of resources to help you get the skills you need to help enjoy the hills and mountains. For starters you can book onto one of our range of subsidised Active Outdoor courses ([www.thebmc.co.uk/activeoutdoors](http://www.thebmc.co.uk/activeoutdoors)) and check out the skills channel on BMC TV ([thebmc.tv](http://thebmc.tv))

**FSC offers a wide range of training** courses for people with a professional and vocational interest in the environment to develop skills in environmental surveying, identification, monitoring and assessment. Courses include animal and plant identification at all levels, habitats, conservation, NVC and teacher training. See [field-studies-council.org](http://field-studies-council.org) or call 0845 3454071

**EarthCraftuk CIC offer Levels 3, 2 and 1 (QCF)** Forest School training, plus supporting CPD and outdoor First Aid training. Based in 300 acres stunning ancient woodland between Canterbury & Faversham in Kent. Contact Clair Hobson: Email: [info@earthcraftuk.com](mailto:info@earthcraftuk.com) Website: [www.earthcraftuk.com](http://www.earthcraftuk.com)

**TCCT Training Centre, the home** of UK's first Sea Green School®, provides 5 star courses and training to individuals wanting to combine marine environmental education and conservation to support the delivery of the national curriculum. For further information on these exciting & engaging courses <http://bit.ly/1rMGyBP> or Heather Carstens 01803 520022

#### Environment and Wildlife Courses

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Beechcroft House, Vicarage Lane, Curdridge. Hampshire. SO32 2DP. Website: [www.HIWWT.org.uk](http://www.HIWWT.org.uk) Tel: 01489 774406 Email: [Courses@hiwwt.org.uk](mailto:Courses@hiwwt.org.uk)

**Bridgwater College, pioneers of the forest school** ethos, leading the way in outdoor learning since 1993. We offer a range of Forest School training opportunities for teachers and practitioners wishing to deliver inspirational, innovative outdoor learning programmes. To find out more email [eatonh@bridgwater.ac.uk](mailto:eatonh@bridgwater.ac.uk) or phone 01278 441365

**Our animal and land courses** at Hartpury have a strong conservation focus and offer exciting work placements, including at wildlife trusts, the Blue Cross, RSPCA, Forestry Commission, National Trust and RSPB, giving students the experience they need to embark on their dream career. We also offer excellent outdoor education courses. [www.hartpury.ac.uk](http://www.hartpury.ac.uk)

#### Access To Farms

Training (OCN-accredited) and support is provided to farmers and others wishing to work with schools and other groups on farm visits, whether in rural or urban environments, for quality educational experiences. Qualification also allows a farm to apply for the LOTC Quality Badge. [www.cevas.org.uk](http://www.cevas.org.uk)

**Explore the south west shore** with Natural Connections and Blue Miles 'Teach on the Beach' programme. The workshops will be in May and June and will give teachers the confidence to maximise the cross-curricular learning opportunities a "blue space" has to offer. For more information and booking <http://bit.ly/1IHwK9>

**Plymouth University's "The Experience of Outdoor Learning"** MA module considers the theoretical background, benefits and practical application of this increasingly important subject in formal and informal education. Participants deepen their own experience and critical thinking in relation to the subject and develop their own practice. Contact [robert.cook@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:robert.cook@plymouth.ac.uk) for further information

#### Bridgwater College Somerset

National Forest School Conference 'Making The Dream A Reality' Saturday 14 June 2014 9am - 4pm. We are 21 this year come and join our celebrations at our bi-annual conference. For more details email [eatonh@bridgwater.ac.uk](mailto:eatonh@bridgwater.ac.uk) or phone 01278 441365

**Members of the Association of Mountaineering Instructors** should be your first port of call for adventure training in the mountains, crags or sea cliffs! All our members hold the UK's nationally recognised Mountaineering Instructor qualifications (MIA and/or MIA) and subject to professional standards including code of conduct and compulsory CPD. Look for the AMI logo! [www.ami.org.uk](http://www.ami.org.uk)





**The Forest School Association** is the professional body and UK wide voice for Forest School, promoting best practice, cohesion and 'quality Forest School for all'. [www.forestschoollassociation.org](http://www.forestschoollassociation.org)

**Wwoof UK** links organic farmers and growers with enthusiastic volunteers who want to learn new skills. We are currently looking for new host farms, who are willing to pass on their skills. For more information please go to [http://www.wwoof.org.uk/join\\_as\\_host](http://www.wwoof.org.uk/join_as_host) or contact [amanda@wwoof.org.uk](mailto:amanda@wwoof.org.uk)

**19/9/14 Introduction to the John Muir Award** - Brockhole, the Lake District Visitor Centre. 1 day.

A course for Teachers, Assistants and all who support learning outdoors with school pupils. The John Muir Award can provide an environmental focus for curriculum studies and extra curricular activities, from Year 5 onwards. Find out about the Award and how it works. Gain ideas and share good practice in using the Award to support Outdoor Learning in your school and get some simple ideas for taking learning out of the classroom. Cost: £40 inc. lunch.

Contact: Graham Watson [cumbria@johnmuiraward.org](mailto:cumbria@johnmuiraward.org) / 01539 792653



## Get into LINE! (Learning In Natural Environments)

There is a real buzz around providing more opportunities for children to connect with nature and to learn in experiential ways that engage and maintain their interest. Just look at the other articles in this issue and these photos from our project for some great examples! But we are also keen to build a strong body of evidence about the process of building sustainable practice in outdoor learning. The



Natural Connections Demonstration Project is being led by the Institute of Education at Plymouth University and is funded by Natural England, DEFRA and English Heritage. To make sure we gather the necessary evidence to inform future work, it is both a delivery and evaluation project that aims to:

1. stimulate the demand from schools and teachers for learning outside the classroom in natural environments (LINE)
2. support schools and teachers in building LINE into their planning and practices
3. stimulate the supply of high quality LINE services for schools and teachers.



Empty Classroom Day, Plymouth July 2013. © fotonow CIC/ Natural Connections.

The 3½ year-long project (September 2012 – March 2016) is involving around 200 schools and between 200-500 volunteers in the South West of England in learning outside the classroom in the natural environment (LINE). Primary, secondary and special schools are included within five areas of high multiple deprivation: Plymouth, Torbay and Devon, Cornwall, North Somerset and Bristol with around 40 schools in each of these hubs. Generally, 'Beacon Schools' that are already successfully engaged in LINE work with a cluster of around seven schools each. The process is being carefully evaluated as the hope is that methods of increasing engagement will be rolled out nationally using lessons learned through this project.

So far around 120 schools have been involved in our activities and we recorded around 4,500 children taking part in LINE activities during November 2013. The different hub leaders in the five hubs are developing distinct approaches that will demonstrate different pathways to successful enhanced experiential learning for children. Addressing this issue through schooling means that potentially all children will have the opportunity to develop a love of nature and to be taught in ways that suit their learning styles.

Another innovation we are trialling is to work with the countryside and wildlife conservation sector and with other environmental sector organisations so that skills, expertise and knowledge can be



Empty Classroom Day, Plymouth July 2013. © fotonow CIC/ Natural Connections.



transferred between schools and the sector to their mutual benefit. We are asking organisations to share volunteers so that they also spend time in schools supporting LINE. This will increase teachers' knowledge related to outdoor environments and their learning opportunities but it will also help volunteers from the environmental sector utilise green knowledge and skills while gaining valuable experience of working with schoolchildren and the curriculum. These organisations may also attract new members and volunteers through increased awareness.

For more information, please email [Natural.Connections@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:Natural.Connections@plymouth.ac.uk) to get regular updates through our newsletter or visit <http://www.growingschools.org.uk/about/natural-connections> and scroll down to watch our video.

Sue Waite | Associate Professor (Reader) | Plymouth Institute of Education | Faculty of Arts & Humanities | Plymouth University, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA | 01752 585341

## Empty Classroom Day 2014

Empty Classroom Day is happening this year on Friday 20th June 2014. Last year outdoor, farming and sustainability organisations from all over the UK used Empty Classroom Day to promote the work they do all year round. Organisations involved spread the word, signed up schools, provided resources and hosted events for students, making the day a dynamic and rich learning experience for everyone involved. Once again this year we are looking for a wide range of organisations to get involved. This nationwide (and hopefully global) event is an opportunity to share good work and educational resources to capture the minds and imaginations of children everywhere. With the recent progress and increase of interest in outdoor learning and play we are aiming for a record number of schools to sign up. Last year we had support from organisations all-round the country and are looking to further these partnerships, and form new and mutually beneficial relationships with other organisations.



The aim of Empty Classroom Day is simple; to encourage schools, wherever they may be, to sign up so at least one class spends one lesson on the day learning outside. This can be spent doing anything from;

- tree-climbing to pond-dipping
- maths to making mud pies
- picnicking to picking vegetables

Last year organisations worked with schools, delivering workshops and hosting school trips, as well as being hugely helpful in encouraging schools to sign up for the day.

Empty Classroom Day was created by the London Sustainable Schools Forum (LSSF), a collective of teachers and environmental organisations in the capital to promote and celebrate all the good work happening in outdoor learning.

If your organisation would like to be part of the biggest outdoor event this school calendar, please contact Chris at [crobson@wildlondon.org.uk](mailto:crobson@wildlondon.org.uk) and let him know what you have planned or sign up at <http://bit.ly/1stG0mC>

**Environmental education at Crickley Hill** Country Park. Experience prehistoric sites dating back six thousand years, ancient beech woodlands, wild flower rich grasslands and some of the finest views in the South West. A warden is available to help with visiting groups. 01452 863170  
[countryparks@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:countryparks@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

**Wild Oak Woods is a 58 acre** site on the Solway coast 1/2 mile from Sandyhills bay. The site provides a range of fun activities for all the family. Hands On Environmental Education works from the site providing education and awareness services nationwide. Call Elspeth on 07747 042197 or visit [handsonenvironmentaleducat.com](http://handsonenvironmentaleducat.com)

**Our range of expertise and experience** includes camps, holidays and courses for the general public; education events and programmes for schools and youth groups; training courses for professionals working in the field of outdoor and environmental education and corporate events and teambuilding. Contact: [info@wildwise.co.uk](mailto:info@wildwise.co.uk), 01803 868269, [www.wildwise.co.uk](http://www.wildwise.co.uk)

**Learn more about local nature** - the following activities offer a variety of opportunities to experience wildlife first-hand: Volunteering, Events, Wildlife Watch Groups, Education and Community visits, Local Groups and Ecology Groups. Click on the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust website below for more information and contact details: [http://www.wildlifebcn.org/discover\\_learn](http://www.wildlifebcn.org/discover_learn)

**The National Trust for Scotland's Culloden Battlefield** - Conservation Event  
On May 31st from 10:00-3:00 come along and discover all it takes to look after the Culloden Battlefield! From Highland cows, to bug hunts and archaeology this is a great day for everyone! To find out more contact the visitor centre. 08444 932159 [culloden@nts.org.uk](mailto:culloden@nts.org.uk)

**Guided walks and environmental events** throughout the spring and summer months at Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door. Come and experience the beautiful Jurassic Coast. For a leaflet or more information please contact: [rangers@lulworth.com](mailto:rangers@lulworth.com), phone 01929 400155 or visit the website [www.lulworth.com](http://www.lulworth.com)

**Forestry Commission England** – learning opportunities in your forest  
The Forestry Commission manages more than 1500 woods and forests in England, which can provide amazing learning opportunities. We want to encourage everyone, everywhere to visit, and learn in and about the forest. Find out about downloads, ranger-led sessions and opportunities for education providers to work with us at [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-learning](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-learning).



### Love Parks Week 2014 Friday 25 July 2014 – Sunday 3 August 2014

We're raising awareness of the importance of parks and green spaces. Love Parks Week is a platform for hundreds of park lovers to join forces in the UK's largest celebration of green spaces.

This year Love Parks Week will be ramping up its fight for parks and to help do this, if you are thinking of hosting an event in a park or green space this summer, why not hold it during Love Parks Week and join in the celebrations.

For more information and to upload details of your event or find an event near you please visit [www.loveparksweek.org.uk](http://www.loveparksweek.org.uk)

## Why Run Events?

Why bother? They can take ages to prepare, be expensive to put on, use up valuable resources and if, when the day arrives it pours down with rain, can be a complete washout. But despite all this, Kent Wildlife Trust sees events as having a major role in helping it to achieve its key objectives. We deliver over 150 public events a year directly and at least another 100 supporting our Local Groups. This is before we even think about our direct education with groups of children visiting us for a school day!



One of the main objectives of the Trust is “to promote, organise, carry on and encourage study and research for the advancement of knowledge in the natural sciences <sup>1</sup>” and it has a comprehensive range of events scheduled throughout the year specifically designed to meet this objective. Of particular importance is the programme of Wildlife Study Days and, in 2012, the Trust ran 48 courses which were attended by 481 adult learners on a wide range of topics covering plants, mammals, birds, animals, reptiles and geology. This adds to the total of more than 6,600 participants during the 17-year life of the programme.



**Festival of Wildlife attracts a mix of families and nature enthusiasts** © Ray Lewis

We have a dedicated programme of learning opportunities at our visitor centres and also at schools with our outreach programme including Forest School which reaches over 11,000 children helping them to make a connection with nature. Hopefully, this will be the beginning of a lifelong love of wildlife and wild spaces.

A key part of the Trust's strategy is “influencing developments for wins for wildlife <sup>1</sup>” and this involves being able to influence key decision-makers to ensure that our views and the needs of wildlife are effectively represented. Events like the Tour de Fish coastal bike ride - which the Trust organised to highlight the importance of protecting marine wildlife - helped demonstrate the

popular support for creating Marine Conservation Zones. The event was very well attended, generated a lot of local publicity and events such as the bike ride helps to provide a focal point and voice for common interests.



Similarly, our series of Shoresearch and Seasearch events, approximately one per month at various sites around Kent's coastline, survey a wide mix of habitat types. Whilst great for families and specialists alike, the data gathered is also crucial in monitoring the health of our seas.

Another important function of events is in raising the profile of Kent Wildlife Trust within the local community. The success of the Trust depends upon many things. It is reliant upon its army of volunteers for much of its day-to-day operations and conservation work. It needs to be regarded as a trusted advisor and wildlife expert by local planners and politicians, and it has to be seen to be both effective and active in order to maintain the support of its individual and corporate members - upon whose financial contributions it depends. Having a high and well-respected profile is therefore crucial and this is helped by high-calibre events such as the annual Festival of Wildlife - the only one of its kind in the South East - which last year attracted 1,600 visitors.



Shoresearch team recording marine life © Greg Hitchcock



Kent County Show in monsoon conditions! © Alison Riggs

Our visual presence at the Kent County Show also helps achieve this profile-raising. However, this presents a number of challenges, as we have to tailor our messages to suit a very wide range of audiences - from landowners to families, from specialists to novices, from new members to lifelong members. Our aim is for each visitor to go away feeling that they have learnt something new but with such limited space for the presentation, this represents quite a challenge - or should we call it an opportunity?

Although events are not intended to generate income, none-the-less, the activities of Kent Wildlife Trust would not be possible without sufficient funding. Many of the events, particularly the smaller, ones such as training days, do little more than cover costs, but some, such as the Festival of Wildlife, which raised £6,000, do make a useful contribution to the charity's funds.

To offset costs, sponsorship for events is sought at each and every opportunity. For example, the annual Cross-country Horse Ride is generously supported by a local firm of solicitors who are also corporate members.

developing events in other ways. A recent example of this was the creation of an illustrated leaflet to support a new series of walks from our Tyland Barn Visitor Centre.

Lastly, but not least, one of the most important reasons for running events is to entertain as well as inform as we strive to encourage everyone, young and old, to venture outdoors for days of fun.

The more people who see the countryside and its wildlife as a source of pleasure and enjoyment, the more they will want to protect it and care for it.

Note <sup>1</sup> From Charities Commission website

Mary Blackwell, Community Education Team Leader with help from Kevin Choy  
www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk



Launching a new series of walks from Tyland Barn visitor centre © Ray Lewis



## Reconnecting kids with Nature – it's essential

Andy Simpson is chairman of the Wild Network [<https://projectwildthing.com/thewildnetwork>], a collaborative movement whose aim it is to reconnect children and young people with nature.



There was a moment the other week that reignited my faith in humanity. Or, rather, my faith in the teaching profession of which I was once a member.

I was at Grafham Water in Cambridgeshire, giving a talk at a conference for the county's forest school teachers.

I'd come expecting a handful of teachers annoyed at having to give up their Saturday.

But the venue was packed out. Was full, in fact, with a waiting list to prove it. Over 140 teachers turned up to exchange ideas and share their love for getting children learning outdoors.

A local education chief was astounded. Like me, he'd never expected to so many teachers to give up their weekend for the learning outdoors cause.



**David Bond, director of Project Wild Thing, joins a Forest School session on the Isle of Eigg.** (Amy Rose / Project Wild Thing)

But why not? If you look at the studies – if you look at the science – learning outside the classroom makes sense. A 2011 review of the evidence by Natural England found that young people benefit dramatically from learning about and in the outdoors. The benefits are impressive; they include developing environmental and scientific knowledge, improving attitudes to other children, behavioural outcomes, social cohesion and school staff morale, health benefits, and creating a more attractive school to prospective parents.

My own love for the natural world was sparked by schoolboy trips to a residential field centre in rural Co. Durham. The field centre has long since closed down, but my love for the curlew I spied through binoculars there remains undiminished.

Last year, a study [<http://www.playforce.co.uk/healthy-children/>] commissioned by children's play company Playforce, found that over three quarters of children feel that the outdoor environment is not used enough by teachers during the school day. A fifth of them didn't play in natural outdoor spaces outside of school time.

Schools, clearly, are pivotal in ensuring that all children have outdoor experiences - 82% of the 2,000 people polled by the RSPB in 2010 thought so [<http://bit.ly/1fXtjyd>].

Children need to be outside, but we've seen a steady whittling away of green spaces around schools. In the past decade, successive governments have approved the sale of 318 school playing fields. Whilst a good number of these sales occur where one school closes or merges with another, the loss of each green space is a tragedy for children and nature. The new Free Schools are not even required to provide open spaces for their pupils, with the government allowing the schools to keep their students siloed in old fire stations, barracks and office buildings.

In the face of government cuts, shrinking provision and an unmet demand from children, it's easy to become disheartened.

But we shouldn't – there's far too much to be excited about.

Many people look to the past as the golden age of schools connecting children with nature. In fact, some of the most creative and effective teaching in this area is happening right now. It's just that there isn't enough of it.

I'm blown away by the kind of stuff that people get up to in schools now. 'Learning outside the classroom' or 'learning in the natural environment' now means exactly that. In all sorts of different subjects inspiring (and

inspired) teachers seem to be taking their pupils outside – recognising the benefits to be had from learning under the skies.

Large conservation bodies like the Forestry Commission are leading the way, using their sites as places to meet learning objectives from across the curriculum – rather than as just places to learn about trees. Field centres – like the Field Studies Council's new centre at the Olympic Park in East London – are taking innovative approaches to improving not just people's environmental understanding, but children's numeracy and literacy too.

Sponsored by Natural England, the Natural Connections Demonstrations Project in South West England is already showing the educational, behavioural and environmental benefits of building a city-wide network of schools to promote the cause of outdoor learning.

Meanwhile, forest schools are enjoying huge success. No longer really the preserve of a privileged middle class, forest school sessions can be found in swathes of schools across the country. In Merseyside, a new project is measuring the long term impact that attending forest school sessions has on children's physical activity levels.



**The midges start to bite at a Forest School class.** (Amy Rose / Project Wild Thing)

Learning outside the classroom is on the radar like never before. Comments from David Attenborough about the importance of outdoor learning and natural spaces in schools attract hundreds of comments on newspaper websites. When it was feared that

outdoor learning might disappear from the curriculum the coarse roar of complaint from conservationists and teachers changed the course of the debate.

For me, what's really exciting about this explosion of interest is the way teachers are taking the initiative and getting their pupils outdoors. Just last week I heard from a primary school teacher who'd taken her class of six year olds out into the tree cover at the end of their playground. Pegging a tarpaulin between a couple of the trees, she conducted the lesson outdoors.

As head of Youth and Education for the RSPB, I was involved in countless coalitions and campaigns to convince teachers and politicians of the value of outdoor learning. But I was never as excited about any of them as I am about the Wild Network, a new movement composed of over 6,500 organisations and individuals passionate about reconnecting young people with nature.

Launched in October 2013 with the release of a feature length documentary film, Project Wild Thing, the Wild Network brings together people and organisations from a fantastic array of sectors and backgrounds: education, conservation, health, marketing and more. That, for me, is what makes the Network different. We can never hope to reconnect children with nature if we keep the blinkers on and package nature up as something children develop a relationship with in schools, in nature reserves or for their health.

The Network is open to anyone who believes that children should be able to roam free, play wild and connect with nature. Find out more and get involved at <http://projectwildthing.com/join>.

**Outdoor People** – helping others make it easy to get outdoors.

If you want to make it easy for people to get outdoors, Outdoor People can help. With associate experts in fundraising, project management, policy, social media and play we can help you reach the communities who need it most. <http://outdoorpeople.org.uk/consultancy/>

**The John Muir Award** is an environmental award focused on wild places. It encourages people to connect with, enjoy and care for the natural environment. The Award is suitable from an upper primary school level. Training is not essential to deliver the Award, but courses can be found at [www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org)

#### **The Wild City Book**

Do you live in a city? Then The Wild City Book is for you! It's all about having fun outdoors in the wild spaces near where you live and is filled with projects and games to bring nature to life for parents and children. Learn more at [www.franceslincoln.com](http://www.franceslincoln.com)

**Get Kids Growing!** Want ideas to get children interested in gardening and the outdoors? Looking for ways to set up a gardening club for kids? Needing inspiration to get your children outside? Then visit [www.littlegreenfingers.com](http://www.littlegreenfingers.com)

**Fields in Trust promotes people** getting active and having fun on over 2,500 public sites across the UK. Any event that takes place on a Fields in Trust site can be a Have a Field Day! Organisers get from Fields in Trust like goodie boxes and posters. Find out more [www.fieldsintrust.org/fieldday](http://www.fieldsintrust.org/fieldday)

**The Green Team is a voluntary organisation**, working with young people to improve and enjoy wild places. We offer a range of projects carrying out practical conservation and having fun. We are running summer programmes around Edinburgh for P4-7 and S1+. For more information visit our website [www.greenteam.org.uk](http://www.greenteam.org.uk)

**The Natural Health Service** provides a single contact point to well-developed services in the natural environment, proven to tackle a range of health and wellbeing issues. For more information contact us at [mail@merseyforest.org.uk](mailto:mail@merseyforest.org.uk)

## East Devon District Council Countryside Events

### Introduction to us

We manage ten nature reserves across East Devon, so we are fortunate in having an excellent range of venues for wildlife-themed events and educational activities. Our countryside work relies heavily on our dedicated band of volunteers who help with numerous practical tasks.

The Axe Estuary Wetlands is the site where we hold the majority of our events due to its facilities; Classroom, Information Centre & toilets. Two marquees and a pop up tent give us extra space when needed, and allow us the option of having a presence at external events – a sort of road show arrangement – giving us scope to engage with wider audiences.

### Plan, monitor and review

Following an in-depth team review of the previous six months of events, we plan our programme and publish our Events Guides twice a year; a bumper Spring/Summer edition, and a slimmed down Autumn/Winter version. This makes it more manageable to plan, and ensures we are able to distribute it before the programme actually starts. There is also a digital version on our website – [www.eastdevon.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/countryside)

The Events Guide is planned in conjunction with other countryside organisations we work with in East Devon. This has a number of benefits; we produce a very comprehensive and popular Events Guide, it focuses us well in advance on the events programme, and it allows us to avoid clashes - last year we discovered that both we and the National Trust had arranged rockpool events for the same day in neighbouring locations, so we combined forces for one event, which worked out well.

As a local authority it is vital that we keep council members up to date with the work we are doing and show them that it is worthwhile. We might know that an event has been successful in terms of people's response, happy faces etc, but we need to be able to demonstrate it with figures.

### Planning tips

- Book external course leaders well in advance, then organise internally run events around that. Our team members attend events run by external people alongside members of the public, to develop their own knowledge, so that they in turn can lead future sessions on that topic.
- Use skills, knowledge and interests of team members as a starting point for choosing events.
- Keep events fresh, interesting and varied, to suit a range of interests and abilities. It's important to come up with new ideas and drop events that are 'tired' or that haven't worked.
- Keep publicity varied, know your target audience and try to extend it. In addition to the events guide we use national and local websites, facebook and twitter, local newspapers (press releases are always more effective than adverts) and posters, as well as an ever-increasing mailing list.
- Allocate staff time sensibly in advance of events to allow for good quality preparation, and therefore high quality events.
- Prepare detailed written rotas to allocate responsibility and timing for practical tasks at events: signage, parking, etc.



**It's great to encourage an interest in nature in the upcoming generation – Sam and Jake made their nest boxes at our event in February.** (East Devon District Council Countryside team)



- Ensure events staff are easily identifiable by uniforms or badges.
- Review, even briefly, as soon as possible, particularly after a new event or flagship events. Assess success and note changes to be made.
- Have ambitions – we are striving to increase access for people with disabilities, and to improve links with public transport.
- Keep feedback forms short, visually appealing and targeted to get only the information needed. Act on feedback received.

### Some pitfalls.

- **Charging:** Costs for events vary. Some are funded through Higher Level Stewardship, others through donations or advance payment. Experience has shown that people are more likely to book and not turn up when they are asked for a donation on the day, rather than a set charge up front, and this can be frustrating, especially when places on an event are limited.
- **Booking :** It needs to be unambiguous when advance booking is required for an event – although some people can even misinterpret 'Booking Essential'! High numbers on a reptile ramble, for example, just don't work – opportunities to see wildlife diminish and a huge crowd around a reptile felt leads to negative feedback as people can't see what you've found.
- **Weather:** We are heavily dependent on suitable conditions, often for preparation as well as the actual event. For example, rain and setting a moth trap don't go together, and the welfare of living creatures is obviously our prime concern. Take contact names and numbers for a weather-dependent event where possible, and make sure people are clear beforehand that the event is subject to the weather.
- **Expectations:** A recent response to the question 'What can we do to improve future events?' on our feedback form for a reptile ramble was 'More snakes'. If only it were that simple! Where possible, broaden the scope of an event, so that plants, birds or insect life can compensate for uncooperative reptiles!



**Flooding.** This photo was taken of the driveway up to our classroom and information centre on 7 July 2012; the bug hunt we had planned on the Wetlands that day had to be cancelled. Even in the summer, you can't rely too heavily on the Devon weather (East Devon District Council Countryside team)

All the members of the team have a desire to pass on our own passion for the countryside to others, especially future generations, and whenever we hear that someone has been inspired by an event, it makes it all worthwhile.

Ghislaine Silvers, Information and Events Officer  
01395 517557, countryside@eastdevon.gov.uk

### **NAEE – the National Association for Environmental Education UK:**

A key network for anyone working in the environmental, outdoor education, sustainability fields.

- FREE to university students, plus opportunities for research and volunteering
- termly Environmental Education member magazine includes news, resources, schools case studies from the UK and around the world, latest books, websites, poetry.
- see your ideas and resources in print and shared with a growing network .... partners in Scotland, China, Pakistan, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, East Africa Malaysia.
- Visit <http://www.naee.org.uk/> ; also on twitter, facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest

For teachers, by teachers. Promoting Education for the Environment and Education for Sustainable Development



## The Impact of Nature's Classroom – How The Outward Bound Trust brings outdoor learning to life.



Founded in 1941, The Outward Bound Trust is an educational charity which helps young people to develop key life skills, such as resilience, problem solving and confidence, through experiential outdoor learning. The Trust operates out of five inspiring and adventurous residential locations in Scotland, Wales and England and one non-residential centre in Glasgow.

Appreciation of the environment is explicit in The Trust's approach of achieving learning through challenging adventures, where participants are immersed in the natural environment. The traditional and most widely used framework for outdoor education was socially and physically focused. However, The Trust has always adopted a more holistic approach where the environment is integral and central to its personal development courses, the locations it operates in and the overall ethos of The Trust.



**Team work skills from gorge scrambling in The Lake District**

At the start of a course, instructors assess each participant's attitude, aptitude and experience regarding the natural environment and throughout the young person's residential course participants are taken on an 'environmental learning journey'. The Trust's 120 plus skilled and fully-qualified instructors embed the practical application of theoretical learning models through outdoor experiential learning. Physical and social activities such as gorge scrambling, canoeing and overnight expeditions form the foundation from which instructors activate this effective learning process. Then, via debate and reflection, young people explore their own personal values and behaviours regarding the environment, enabling them to recognise opportunities to apply this new learning in their regular lives.

Susan Nicol (BSc Honours Environmental Science and Outdoor Education), Education Executive for Scotland (and ex Senior Instructor at The Trust's Loch Eil Centre) comments: "Sadly, we find many young people are disconnected from the natural environment. To help counter this we immerse young people into our environment, increase their knowledge, challenge their values and behaviours and transfer these lessons into participants' lives and their own environment."

The Trust extends and embeds environmental awareness into all areas of its work - each of its centres holds Gold standard environmental kite marks, which relate to its impact on the environment around the centre.

In December 2013, planning permission was granted for a new hydro scheme above The Trust's Loch Eil centre close to Corpach, which will provide a significant supply of renewable energy to the national grid as well as a long term, low impact and reduced cost renewable energy source to the centre. Set for completion in summer 2015, its impact on fish habitat, ecology and the environment will be absolutely minimal, and once constructed, visible impacts will be limited to the intakes, two small pipe bridges, the turbine house and outfall.

Being able to harness the power of the environment in a sympathetic and environmentally friendly way to generate power for the centre brings to life The Trust's ethos of the importance of environmental respect and awareness for employees and course participants alike.

All young people attending an Outward Bound® course have the option of working towards a John Muir Award – an environmental award scheme focused on wild places and encouraging awareness and responsibility for the natural environment, in a spirit of fun, adventure and exploration. In fact 2,926 young people who attended an Outward Bound programme in 2013 were involved in practical conservation activity at one of The Trust's centres and achieved a John Muir Discovery or Explorer Award.



**Scaling the heights of the Ledge Route, Ben Nevis**



To achieve a John Muir Award participants have to meet four challenges: Discover a wild place (in centre grounds, activity venues, surrounding mountains, lakes and seas); Explore these wild places (via a range of active, sensory and information-based experiences); Do something to Conserve them; and, Share these experiences (with friends, peers, parents and teachers).



Immersed in nature at Port nam Murrach, Rhu

some of the community based projects which have taken place include: refurbishing run down gardens in local hospitals, creating sensory gardens for mental health sufferers, building and installing bird boxes and planting bird loving flora in inner city childcare nurseries.

In conclusion Susan Nichol comments: "I believe it's imperative that we reconnect as many young people as possible with the environment by full immersion in the natural world." Susan recently took a group from North Lanarkshire to White Sands Beach in Smirisary near Arisaig, west of Fort William. One young lad upon arrival at the beach commented: "The reason this place is so beautiful is that there's nobody here to ruin it." Through his full immersion into this area of outstanding natural beauty, he had started to relate to the environment and had developed an awareness of the potential negative impact humans can have on nature.

On a daily basis The Trust's mission to unlock the potential in young people through learning and adventure in the wild is being realised. With this comes a very real awareness of the connection between all living things and the environment and its intrinsic importance to the health and well-being of future generations. To find out more visit [www.outwardbound.org.uk](http://www.outwardbound.org.uk)



Sea kayaking in the north channel, Loch Moidart

**The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC)** offers free information through its website: [www.lotc.org.uk](http://www.lotc.org.uk). Further support includes:

**LOtC Resource Packs:** Lesson plans for engaging activities outside the classroom. Each pack focuses on a different Key Stage. Subjects covered include English, science, maths and history. The packs contain 6 lesson ideas, a case study, and info on planning and delivering LOtC.

**CLOtC training includes:** opportunities for LOtC in the new curriculum; using LOtC for school development; LOtC and the Ofsted framework.

**LOtC Quality Badge:** This accreditation recognises good quality education and effective risk management for the provision of LOtC. [www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk](http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk)



**National Association of Field Studies Officers NAFSO** Advert text: NAFSO welcomes membership from those that are employed in, promote or support education through field studies. Current membership includes outdoor and field study centre staff, teachers and ex-teachers, and local authority officers. Drop in to our website at [www.nafso.org.uk](http://www.nafso.org.uk) or email [executive@nafso.org.uk](mailto:executive@nafso.org.uk) for further information. Help us keep fieldwork thriving





## Bungee Jumping in the Pass of Killiecrankie

The National Trust for Scotland was approached 5 years ago by a company, Highland Fling Bungee, with a proposal to start the UK's first permanent bungee jumping site. The plan involved fixing a jumping platform below the Garry Road Bridge which crosses the south end of the Pass of Killiecrankie; a steep sided river gorge in Highland Perthshire. Also to have a reception / check in area within the Trusts existing Visitor Centre a mile away at the north end of the Pass.



The Trust considered the proposal very carefully and based its conclusions upon the Trusts Statement of significance for the property which is summarised as follows; 'The properties prime conservation significance lies in its natural heritage (SSSI / landscape) and cultural heritage (links with the 1698 Battle). The property also plays a significant role in the local tourism industry'.

The Trust concluded that there would be no or negligible impact upon the properties primary conservation assets and while there would be a location specific impact, it would be more productive to engage with the operator, to actively find ways to reduce the impact of and be involved in finding solutions to any problems that the proposal may bring. It was also hoped that this approach would create an example of how the growing outdoor activity sector, can take conservation and the environment into consideration.

Following a detailed conservation and visitor impact survey the following specific conclusions were reached

- **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** The core bungee jumping activity would have no impact upon the Killiecrankie SSSI, the jumping and spectator areas being outside its boundary.
- **Cultural heritage:** All sites associated with the Battle of Killiecrankie would be unaffected by the proposals.
- **Wildlife:** The spectator area under the bridge being of relatively low wildlife value. This area's main wildlife importance being within the river and the trees and apart from some minor branch pruning these would be unaffected. There may be disturbance by increased numbers of people and sound, but since the area is already heavily used, with an adjacent railway line and roads this was likely to be negligible.
- **Visitor Centre:** While there would have to be some changes to the visitor experience within the confines of the Killiecrankie Visitor Centre to accommodate a jumpers reception area, this was deemed acceptable due to potential of commercial activity income within the trust shop and cafe franchise.



Jumping platform below the bridge  
(National Trust for Scotland)



Killiecrankie bungee jumper (Highland Fling Bungee)

- **Jumpers and spectators:** It would provide opportunities to engage with and get a conservation message across a new audience. Also because of the rent payable to the trust, a percentage of every jump would come to the trust supporting the conservation and visitor access of the Pass.

- **Economy:** This proposal would not only provide a rental income to the trust, but had potential to bring substantial benefits to the local economy.

The jump at 132ft is small by international standards but more than enough for most! Highland Fling Bungee started jumping in May 2011 and they will reach the 20,000 jump early

this summer. From the National Trust for Scotland point of view it has been a great success; it hasn't affected the conservation of the Pass and it's nice to hear the wood warblers still singing away in the trees closest to the jump, quite unconcerned. It has given a whole new range of people a taste of the natural beauty of the Pass and an awareness of the Trust, it has provided an income stream to help with our conservation work and makes a significant contribution to the local economy.

Any potential jumpers out there?!

Ben Notley  
NTS Property Manager, North Perthshire Properties  
<http://www.nts.org.uk/property/killiecrankie/>

#### **Calshot Activities Centre**

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The CJS Team would like to thank everyone who has contributed adverts, articles and information for this CJS Focus publication. Next edition will feature Volunteer Work, published 15/9/14.

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- Details believed correct but given without prejudice, Ends.