

THE LINK

Outdoor Learning Special Edition



YouthLink
Scotland
The national agency for youth work

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INTRODUCTION

"Between every two pines is a doorway to a new world." John Muir, Scottish naturalist, explorer and conservationist.

John Muir, the father of the modern conservation movement, believed that everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play and learn in, where nature heals and gives strength to body and soul. The language we use today to talk about learning in the great outdoors may have changed but the spirit of John Muir's vision lives on.

The value of the youth work sector in relation to outdoor learning cannot be underestimated; it has been an integral part of youth work practice for over 100 years and provides so many growth and learning opportunities for young people. It is a rite of passage for our younger generation to explore the countryside and wildernesses in Scotland and beyond.

Taking learning outdoors as recognised within the governments 'Outdoor Learning Strategy' brings the Curriculum for Excellence alive, through seeing, doing and sharing new experiences as well as acquiring new skills. Outdoor learning contributes to young people's health and wellbeing both mentally and physically while connecting them in a special way to their immediate environment and to the wider world and its issues.

As the National Agency for Youth Work we believe that all those providing outdoor learning both formally and informally/in and out of school time should be working in close partnership. The achievements of young people in all settings should be acknowledged, recorded and valued.

The entire sector has much to offer from residential centres to camps and water based activities through to hill walking, climbing, environmental projects and of course a myriad of sports related activities. Our members provide masses of opportunities at home and abroad in collaboration with schools and independently of them.

Outdoor learning has something for everyone so let's encourage our young people in this instance to GO WILD and get involved in the great outdoors.



Jim Sweeney

CONTENTS

Page 3 – If I could walk 500 miles	Page 18 – Map reading made easy	Page 35 – Watching your garden grow
Page 4 – Learning the ropes	Page 20 – The Great Scoutdoors	Page 36 – Green benefit
Page 5 – Sailing into the wind of positive change	Page 22 – A journey of opportunity	Page 38 – The wild gang
Page 6 – Encouraging wild behaviour	Page 24 – Great outdoors means great outcomes	Page 40 – Ground for learning
Page 7 – John Muir case studies	Page 26 – Under Canvas	Page 41 – Ocean adventure
Page 8 – The field at the heart of it all	Page 28 – Artistic ammunition	Page 42 – Flexing some conservation muscle
Page 9 – In the footsteps of our ancestors	Page 29 – Play on the Links	Page 43 – Keeping Scotland beautiful
Page 10 – Beyond the expedition	Page 30 – Putting down roots	Page 44 – Navigating life's path
Page 12 – The road less travelled	Page 31 – Seeing the wood for the trees	Page 45 – Taking a leap of faith
Page 14 – Freedom to explore	Page 32 – Harvesting a successful crop	Page 46 – Change is blowing in the wind
Page 16 – Conserving our heritage	Page 34 – No boundaries to wilderness	Page 47 – Get the kids outdoors



If I could walk 500 miles...

Girlguiding Scotland's Long Distance Walking Challenge on the Isle of Arran

Twenty-four volunteers from across Girlguiding Scotland had great fun travelling to the Isle of Arran in Summer 2013 to complete a five day, long distance walking challenge which consisted of four days walking Arran's Coastal Path and one day climbing Goatfell. Girlguide Linsey shares her experiences of the walk:

Having travelled by ferry, from Ardrossan to Brodick, our challenge began with everyone full of energy and enthusiasm. Leaving behind our first views of Goatfell, the first stage of our challenge saw us walking from Brodick pier to the pier at Lamlash, via the historic ruin of Dun Fionn and the stunning views at Clachlands Point.

Our base for the week was Corrie Croft Bunkhouse, situated high up on the slopes of Goatfell, so our second day started with a short journey to Lagg where we then followed the coastal path, via the Black Cave, to Kildonan Hotel. This route involved negotiating some impressive and somewhat challenging boulder fields

as well as an interesting scrambling route across a rockface to avoid the rising tide. After a short rest stop at Kildonan, we then headed to Whiting Bay for the next stage of our journey, walking via the Giant's Graves, an Iron Age fort and the impressive Glenashdale Falls to Lamlash Bay.

Day three began at Lochranza where we followed the footpath inland and uphill before heading down towards the remains of the once thriving coastal community of Laggan and its isolated Lagan Cottage, then it was back onto Arran's Coastal Path which we followed, past the Fallen Rocks, to the lovely beach at Sannox Bay. Here we enjoyed a quick dip in the chilly sea before finally arriving at a much welcomed tearoom and our finishing point.

Our fourth day saw us heading up to the summit of Goatfell which is described as the "roof of Arran". Taking two different routes, one group headed up through the boulders, following the more



Girlguiding Scotland
girls in the lead

"touristy" route whilst the other group headed up the steep ridge path across north Goatfell. Helping one another in true Guiding spirit, both groups successfully reached the summit. Once Goatfell had been conquered, we headed back down the tourist route, through the gardens of Brodick Castle.

An early start saw day five begin at Blackwaterfoot. Here we followed the Coastal Path once again, this time heading to the prehistoric site of Machrie Moor. Along the way we stopped at King's Cave, believed to be the cave that Robert Bruce sought refuge in and had his famous encounter with the spider.

Taking part in this challenge was a huge achievement and an exciting experience for all those involved. Well done to the entire Isle of Arran team for completing the challenge!

www.girlguidingscotland.org.uk



Learning the ropes

Traditional crafts and skills bring the generations together in South Ayrshire's Coastal Communities

In 2009 the Scottish Fisheries Museum in Anstruther Fife, started an initiative to reintroduce the inter community rowing competitions that for many years were a strong part of life in the coastal communities of Scotland. This project also had an additional purpose of resurrecting the building of traditional coastal rowing skiffs, which was a feature around the coastline over the past few hundred years.

The aim of the Scottish Coastal Rowing Project is to provide a relatively inexpensive entry to the sport by using a design, now known as the St Ayles Skiff, which can be built by the communities who will be rowing the boats, rather than buying completed boats from professional boat builders.

South Ayrshire Council Duke of Edinburgh's Award development Worker, Vincent McWhirter, is taking this project forward by promoting and developing this initiative in all the local coastal towns, with schools and communities in Troon, Maybole, Girvan, Ayr, and Prestwick involved. Sponsorship has come from private companies, individuals and South

Ayrshire Council has already enabled wood and materials for four boats to be purchased and built.

Since May 2011 pupils and enthusiastic members of the public, have completed four boats so far.

The Troon boat was the first boat to be built in 2011 with an enthusiastic group of mostly retired men working over five months starting in May with local Duke of Edinburgh's Award Silver candidates. The pupils helped build their first boat in the evenings and during school holidays, which after a local competition was called "Marr Voyager".

Other schools followed soon after with Carrick Academy in Maybole, launching "Carrick Maid" in June 2012; Troon with "Ailsa Lass" in October 2012 and Girvan Academy launching their's in June 2013. All boat building projects worked with volunteer members of the public and with pupils completing their Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Troon, Carrick and Girvan now have established coastal rowing clubs which row every week with clubs competing at several coastal rowing events throughout Scotland including the first World Championship in Ullapool in July 2013.

www.scottishcoastalrowing.org





Sailing into the wind of positive change

A group of young people from Perthshire have gone on a personal journey which has taken them over land and sea, a journey that has changed their lives for the better

The “Walking Tall” project was made up of nine young people aged between 16 and 19 years of age. All the young people have been affected by long-term unemployment and developmental needs.

The group took part in the personal development programme led in partnership by Perth and Kinross Council Youth Services and the Tall Ships Youth Trust, developing vital team working skills while dealing with their own individual issues which ranged from homelessness to drug and alcohol misuse.

Tasks undertaken by the group during the six months of the project included weekly volunteering at the Bield at Blackruthven farm and taking part in team activities like cooking and sports.

In order to earn their places aboard the Tall Ship, and take what would be for many of them the biggest challenge of their lives, the group had to show dedication and commitment. Leaving Perth on 1 September, the group headed on

the long journey to Portsmouth for a week’s adventure on a 72ft Challenger yacht. All the young people knew it was going to be a tough week as they sought to overcome their particular personal challenges and fears.

Colin Hay of PKC Youth services said it had been an enlightening experience:

“It was great to see from the very beginning that the team were willing to offer up help and support to each other, they all showed each other respect and encouragement from the very start and it was clear to see all the hard work building up to this day was already paying off. Soon we were all on board and settled in. We were introduced to the Skipper, first mate and the two watch leaders who would be teaching us the ropes”.

The group spent a great week on Challenger 4 sailing to a number of different destinations including Alderney, Sark, Poole and Cowes. Each member of the team



took the time to appreciate the experience that saw them cook, clean, navigate, act as look out on fog watch, steer the yacht, fish, climb the mast, swim in the sea, talk and support each other. Everyone involved pushed themselves and refused to give up or let the team down. It truly was a wonderful experience to witness.

All nine young people on the “Walking Tall” project completed their Competent Crew Certificate. Due to their hard work and volunteering eight of the group have now moved into positive designations ranging from college to employment. All have grown as individuals in confidence and belief in themselves. We would like to wish them all well for their futures which are now all a little brighter”.

<https://tallships.org>



Encouraging wild behaviour

Outdoor Learning is an approach. It's not a subject, or an activity, or a programme. It sounds a bit obvious to say that it's the learning that comes from spending time and doing things outside.

The John Muir Award is a scheme to help people of all backgrounds connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places – and as such it's a tool to support Outdoor Learning approaches. It offers a structure to combine time outdoors in natural settings with creative, adventurous and shared experiences. Achieving an Award requires: Discovering a wild place(s), actively Exploring it, doing something to Conserve it, and Sharing these experiences – over at least four days.

Outdoor Learning takes place in a wide spectrum of settings – from school grounds and local parks to outdoor centre grounds, rivers, coastlines and remote mountain ranges – in which a vast array of activities can be used as vehicles for learning. A framework such as the John Muir Award can help give some coherence and focus to this rich diversity of opportunity. Many youth workers/leaders, teachers, rangers, volunteers and parents formally, informally, and perhaps inadvertently, use outdoor learning methodologies – and many appreciate a helping hand along the way.

The origins of the Award are rooted in youth work. There was a sense in the mid-1990s that 'conservation' was a minority interest (a feasibility study showed less than 0.1% of 12-24 year olds were involved) yet Scotland's uniformed and youth organisations attracted half a million young people each year. The John Muir Trust (the wild land charity that runs the Award for free) saw the benefits of blending 'youth work' approaches (facilitation, awareness, understanding, creativity, personal and social development) with a conservation ethos, with the aim of integrating a stronger environmental agenda in both formal and informal education.

Since its launch in 1997, almost 100,000 Awards have been achieved in Scotland. Ninety per cent of take up is by under 24 year olds, and over a quarter of participants are from hard-to-reach or social inclusion backgrounds.

Because of its flexibility and accessibility, the John Muir Award is adapted to numerous settings and scenarios, and has seen a 25%

growth in the last year alone. In terms of Outdoor Learning, it's a tool to help combine thinking, feeling and doing (Head, Heart, and Hand) by supporting the user to package up a range of activities into a coherent whole – primarily in an outdoor, experiential setting.

There's exciting momentum around a range of topical themes at the moment – learning for sustainability, play, physical activity, health and wellbeing, children's connection with nature/Project Wild Thing/The Wild Network – which have lots of overlap with Outdoor Learning. Helping Scotland's young people to be active, outside, and connected to nature has never been more important, and youth work has a crucial role to play in this.

www.jmt.org



Case Study 1 – Benefitting people



The Backchat Youth Project is based in a Social Inclusion Partnership zone in Helensburgh. The group aims to promote positive views of young people locally and offers project participants experiences and qualifications that enhance their future prospects.

Project Leader Michael says: *“The John Muir Award creates opportunities and experiences that many of our members haven’t had the chance to enjoy before. It has opened new horizons by visiting new wild places at home and further afield. Many have camped for the first time too”.*

“The conservation work has made others take note. Our members are carrying out positive work, making their local community both better and safer to live in, and this is altering public misconceptions of young people”.

Terry, one of the Backchat members, is quick to point out that ‘fun’ is the main reason he has stuck with the Award project. *“I like doing stuff with my friends, and the local woods, which I never even knew existed before, are really cool. We get to go away and learn about nature and stuff. Glencoe was amazing, but I’m ashamed that human beings don’t take their rubbish away”.*

“Doing the John Muir Award has made me think about the future, mine and the world’s”.

Case Study 2 – Benefitting nature



Roots & Shoots Youth Group leader Justine Robertson used the John Muir Award to help young people connect with Ardersier Common (near Fort George), a Highland Council Site of Special Scientific Interest. The group aims to give young people the self-confidence to tackle issues and activities designed to improve their communities and their environment. *“We wanted to try and understand the biodiversity of our local common and the ways in which it is used by people and wildlife alike”*, Justine said.

The young people responded well to spending time at Ardersier Common, and quickly tuned into the nature on their doorstep, *“It was amazing with all of the calls we heard, the colours that stood out, and the trees, and berries we picked”* said John.

However, it was the finding of an extremely rare ‘wee beastie’ that fired the imagination of the group. *“We have found what has been described by experts, as a “significant observation” in the form of a Sawfly known as Cimbex luteus, something not seen in Scotland for a very, very long time”*, explained Justine.

“I feel extremely proud that so many people have taken an interest in our discovery”, said group participant Jessica. *“It was so great to be mentioned in glowing terms on the Highland Biodiversity Recording Group’s website, and know we’ve made a difference to nature”.*



The field at the heart of it all

Using the landscape is a core part of the programming at the National Trust for Scotland’s Culloden Battlefield and Visitor Centre. Culloden is the site of the last battle on British soil. Jacobites and Government soldiers met in a conflict that would play a large part in shaping modern Britain. The site is one of national significance and the terrain directly impacted upon the outcome of the battle.


Our programming reflects the importance of the field to the story of the battle. It gives fundamental context both to the Government and Jacobite story and is a powerful emotive tool as visitors are able to literally walk in the footsteps of history.

A visit to the Battlefield is fundamental to schools programming on site. In a typical visit Culloden’s Learning team walk the young people through the lead up to the battle and the key moments while reflecting on the landscape. Our programming for young people is active, exhilarating and dynamic. This is inclusive storytelling – they are asked to make choices, reflect on historical decisions, take part in key moments and question

everything. This technique is used in our informal programming as well. The learning team delivers private and public guided tours that focus on different elements of the Story of Culloden. History, archaeology and battle tactics are all part of our specialised tours – these can be pre booked or are part of our rolling on site programme of events. Again the key to delivery of these tours is the encouragement of critical thinking – it is not enough to tell the visitor, we ask them to discover along with us the story of the battle and its impact both historically and within a modern Scotland.


The response is positive. Young people develop empathy with the decisions that people in the past faced, their attention is focused and the physicality of the 30 minute walk around the battlefield engages with a multitude of learning styles. It is not unusual for young people who have difficulty focusing within the classroom to be enthralled by the battlefield and the stories that are explored there. Young men in particular appear to be captured by the story.

Contextualising history is fundamental to a real understanding of the past. At Culloden the landscape, the sense of place and the story combine to create a powerful learning experience that could not be replicated anywhere else.




Cùil Lodair Culloden

Experience the Battle of Culloden



A visit to Culloden gives you an insight into the brutality of this famous battle, which divided families and set clan against clan. The modern interactive exhibition lets you get to the heart of the action. Genuine characters from the battle bring the events to life, plus put yourself at the centre of the action when you visit the Battle immersion theatre.

 the National Trust for Scotland
a place for everyone

0844 493 2159
www.nts.org.uk

The National Trust for Scotland for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410



HISTORIC SCOTLAND
ALBA AOSMHOR

In the footsteps of our ancestors

Historic Scotland cares for over 300 attractions across Scotland, spanning over 5,000 years of Scotland's history and culture. Our prehistoric sites, castles, royal parks and abbeys provide unique and memorable outdoor learning environments.

Our sites are inspiring places for young people providing exciting opportunities for them to explore and discover their own heritage, engage with stories and characters from the past, be inspired creatively and learn new skills for life and work. Visits provide excellent opportunities for outdoor learning and experiences outside of a traditional classroom setting, which are linked to the Curriculum for Excellence, as well as national and vocational qualifications and offer fun experiences which promote health and wellbeing.

Education visits for schools, community and youth groups are free of charge and the Learning Services team provides resources and programmed activities to enhance visits to our sites. Free planning visits can be arranged to

enable group leaders to get the most from a visit and we can provide support with access for groups with additional support needs.

Our Learning Development Officers based on site at Edinburgh and Stirling Castles and regionally throughout Scotland work with schools, community and youth groups across the country and can provide advice and discuss ideas for potential projects. On site resources such as replica handling objects and costumes help bring the past to life and create fun and memorable experiences.

Visits to our sites can enable young people to learn new outdoor skills for work and life. The Historic Scotland Rangers run a Junior Rangers scheme and support the Duke of Edinburgh award and we promote traditional building skills. Our annual Keys to the Castle Competition in partnership with Springboard Scotland allows young people to come up with their own ideas about how our sites can be used to promote tourism in Scotland and an initiative at Linlithgow Palace enabled young

people to develop confidence and presentation skills through training as tour guides.

Our sites provide inspiring venues for the creative arts and we run a number of annual projects linking with national campaigns like the Big Draw and there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in exciting projects with professionals from across the creative arts.

New technology provides an excellent way to engage with young people and the new Learning Lab at Stirling Castle is fully equipped for young people to design their own exciting content using a variety of mobile devices to create digital records of their experiences.

So what are you waiting for? Visit our website to find out more about Historic Scotland sites in your local area and contact Learning Services to discuss booking a visit or how we can best support the needs of your group.

Learning Services.

E: hslearning@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

T: 0131 652 8155/8156 W: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/learning

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/learning

Beyond the expedition

Making the outdoors work for you

The expedition. It's the thing that young people mention again and again when they're asked about their Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE). So many midges! It was pouring rain! It was the greatest thing I've done! The opinions on it are as varied as the routes they take to complete them. The Expedition section anchors Outdoor Learning in the DofE programme. Young people get to experience Scotland's fantastic natural environment while developing core employability skills such as leadership, decision making and communication under pressure.

Because the DofE is a flexible personal development programme designed by each individual participant there are many chances for outdoor learning to take place outwith the expedition. For Cameron Wood, a modern apprentice with the City of Edinburgh Council, the expedition was just the beginning.

Cameron's an apprentice in Outdoor Learning and Adventurous Activities, based at Bangholm Outdoor Centre. His whole DofE programme includes elements of outdoor learning because

it is structured into his apprenticeship. For his Skill he coordinates and runs the Wildcats Club – a club to encourage children who want to get involved with outdoor activities. Cameron is keen to point out the professional benefits of the personal DofE programme. He explained that the work that he did inputting his outdoor physical activity – rock climbing – into the online recording system 'eDofE' has given Cameron a great structure for lesson planning for the club.

In addition to his planning and organisational skills, the DofE also helped Cameron develop his leadership skills in an outdoor learning setting.

For his Residential he acted as a helper and mentor to a

school group doing an outdoor residential at Lochgoilhead.

His work with both the adults in the group and the children helped him finish the week knowing much more about how to assist the teachers so that the kids got the most out of their outdoor activity week.

Cameron says his DofE experience: "fits really well with my outdoor learning apprenticeship because I'm learning outdoor skills that also help boost my job skills".

Everyone doing a DofE has the opportunity to participate in outdoor learning, but the skills that they gain from outdoor activities like an expedition extend.

Teamwork, resilience, leadership, problem solving and confidence are just some of the many skills young people acquire through outdoor learning with the DofE.





DofE

THE DUKE
OF EDINBURGH'S
AWARD

SCOTLAND

Developing young people
for life and work

Over 37,000 young
people are doing
their DofE in
Scotland right now...



...visit www.DofE.org/Scotland to find out why



twitter.com/DofEscotland



facebook.com/DofEscotland



youtube.com/DofEscotland



The road less travelled

The Iona Community offers a safe haven for young people to explore their personal and spiritual development



Camas is situated in an isolated bay on the remote Isle of Mull. To reach our 200 year old quarry men's cottages, there is the challenge of walking 1 ½ miles crossing rough track. An additional challenge is we are off grid; electricity is generated solely from our wind turbine and solar panels heat water. However for many of the young people the start of the challenge comes when making the decision to leave Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dumfries, Macclesfield or wherever home is and come here. Camas welcomes a wide range of groups, but our primary focus is working with those experiencing significant disadvantage.

Since the 1950's we have welcomed young people to experience what we have to offer and although times have changed the idea of Camas being a safe and simple space, away from the commotion of everyday life still remains key. It is a place of significant change and new possibilities for many people. It can give people a new way of looking at

what really matters and the opportunity to grow in confidence.

One thing that sets us apart and aids us in our goal is our Community approach. We encourage young people to make Camas home for the week, they share it with us, and for their stay they are part of a unique community. Through living together we share in common tasks, such as meals by candle light, washing up, tending the organic garden and feeding chickens. This approach puts value not just in the outdoor activities, but also highlights the individual contribution

to community, thus bringing people together.

We create a space where people feel safe in expressing opinions, if young people do not wish to take part in particular activities they are given a choice. One option may be to support staff in the kitchen. There is as much to gain from providing a meal for the community as kayaking in the bay. When people feel safe, comfortable and accepted then they are able to grow in confidence. We also offer space to reflect both as a group and individually. When people reflect on



time at Camas, their reflection can shape the subsequent actions and decisions they make. Building a community is based on nurturing confidence and acceptance, through this significant change new possibilities are achievable.

Camas' work has been mostly centred on the week long residential. However we see a need to work over the long term. Because of this we have developed The Camas Phoenix Programme, aimed at over 16's out of education or work.

Young people taking part will spend three weeks overall at Camas over one summer. This starts with an Expedition, leads on to Sustain Yourself and concludes with a Garden/Work week. Throughout this time participants will receive additional support from our Glasgow youth team. Our aim is that participants can develop confidence and feel empowered to move forward with the next steps in their lives, gaining support when it is needed.

We also recognise that some young people, in particular those not quite up to a residential in a larger group can gain huge amounts through expedition work. Last year we ran a four day expedition across the mountains of Mull and up the coast in an old wooden sailing yacht. The young people from inner city Glasgow learnt how to rely on themselves, support others in the group and focus on the fundamentals of life. They progressed so far that they attended a week residential – challenging but successful and now regularly participate in youth group activities such as cooking evenings and sports teams. It's made a world of difference to them!

For more information on what we do at Camas call 01681 700 367 or have a look at:

<http://iona.org.uk/island-centres/camas/>

<http://thecamadiary.blogspot.co.uk/>





Freedom to explore

Helen MacLeod, a Youth Work Assistant from Argyll and Bute Council Youth Services based in Dunoon and Steve Gillen, the Education Ranger for the Forestry Commission based at Glen Branter have teamed up to provide a John Muir Award at Dunoon Grammar School.

The Award is based in Corlarach, one of the local Forestry Commission areas in Dunoon and the students have been exploring this area through wide games, fire building, orienteering and geo-caching. In the New Year the conservation section of the Award will start with the students helping the Forestry Commission planting rowan, hawthorn, beech and birch trees and path clearing. There are also plans to start a new conservation project which the students are currently planning, however this is likely to take the form of wildlife surveys and

constructing a bird watching screen.

The idea behind this project is to increase the amount of outdoor learning happening within the school and also raise the profile of outdoor learning as a medium for youth work. The John Muir Award encourages an awareness of wild places and how to

conserve it and enjoy spending time in it. Through the John Muir Award the students at Dunoon Grammar School have had the freedom to explore wild places in a safe and exciting way.

This project would not have been possible without the partnership working between Dunoon Grammar School, Argyll and Bute Council Youth Services and the Forestry Commission. Both Helen and Steve, who are responsible for this project, have backgrounds in outdoor learning and using the outdoors as a medium for personal and social development. This previous experience enables the students to explore wild places in depth but also gain wider learning including increased communication skills, patience, team working and environmental education.

www.jmt.org or www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland



Tree of life

Signing up for a woodland-based training programme with Forestry Commission Scotland has helped young unemployed people improve their prospects

Within six months of completing the programme, half of the 274 people taking part in 2012/13 have gone on to college, volunteer roles or full time jobs.

Thanks to this success the project (established in 2011 to tackle unemployment among 16-24 year olds) has been extended into 2015, creating opportunities for around 650 young people. Joneen Clarke, Employment Skills Manager at Forestry Commission Scotland, said:

“Participants are given help with their CVs, interview skills, signposted to other courses for further training and receive advice on jobs to apply for within forestry and landscaping. We measure success in terms of the new avenues which the young people take within the first six months of completing the course – so we reckon we’ve done pretty well”.

Part of the Scottish Government’s national drive to tackle youth unemployment the training is delivered by social enterprise and third sector organisations across Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, North and South Ayrshire and Fife.

Participants work in groups that can include vulnerable young adults with learning difficulties or people who have served a custodial sentence and several all-female groups have been established to help encourage more women into forestry careers.

For a period of between 10-26 weeks, they are taught forestry and employability skills, such as chainsaw training, while they carry out forest maintenance tasks which can include scrub cutting, high pruning and landscaping work.

Cowdenbeath based ‘Living Solutions’ is one of the training providers working with the Commission and which delivers two Fife-based courses covering Callander and Blairadam woodlands.

Paul Cruise, Executive Director and Development Manager for Living Solutions, said:

“Our participants receive both soft and certified training. Soft skills development includes employability, team working, social skills and confidence building. They also gain certified training in the use of a chainsaw, emergency first aid, manual handling, Lantra woodchipping, use of a high pole powered saw, a foundation certificate in the use of chemicals and knapsack spraying”.

Craig Cessford, 18, from Dalgety Bay, left school at 16 because he was dyslexic and was struggling with reading and writing. Looking back on his experience, Craig said:

“It’s all about teaching young folk to adapt to working life, helping you to

understand what employers want and giving you the skills but also the confidence to make your life better. I now have a job working on the Dalmeny Estate and have also worked with Central Forestry. I hope to keep learning and get good experience and set up my own business in the future”.

Forestry Commission Scotland is part of the Scottish Government’s Environment and Forestry Directorate
www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland

The Skills Programme is delivered via a framework contract. Skills providers receive funding from Forestry Commission Scotland and are required to match the funding to deliver the programme. Skills providers include: Phoenix Futures; Living Solutions; Barnardos; Action for Children; Scottish Waterways Trust; East Ayrshire Woodlands; The Wise Group.





Conserving our heritage

For many young people the word heritage conjures up images of dusty books and musty buildings. But they couldn't be more wrong

Scotland has a wide and wonderful heritage, with young people at the heart of many projects across the country, conserving, learning about, and enjoying the wild and wonderful outdoors. And it's far from just books and buildings, people travel from around the world to enjoy the natural beauty that surrounds us, whether it's wild and rugged mountains, picturesque lochs or elusive native species, they are all part of our

heritage, and we are all collectively responsible for it.

Without support, natural habitats will disappear, landscapes will be eroded and animals and plants lost forever. That's why the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) believes it is vital to engage children and young people in its protection.

Getting involved in a Heritage Lottery funded project offers many

new experiences for young people, whether it's recording rare bumblebees, building mountain paths, learning conservation skills with new friends, producing artwork or developing apps and websites to share their learning, it's not only good for the environment, it's good for their CV, their health and their wellbeing but it's also good fun.

www,hlf.org.uk

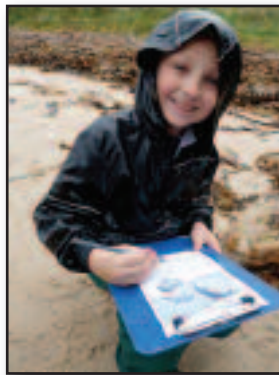


Batty about Bats

In 2013 young people from the Killin Youth Group took part in a Bat project, working with the Bat Conservation Trust and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Parks. The group combined learning about bats and their natural instincts and habits, with learning about local wild places. Camping and conservation went hand in hand for this project, which produced some excellent bat boxes, an adventure trail and a new sense of pride for the young people involved.

Becoming an 'ologist

Have you ever wondered about the people that work outdoors, and what their day-to-day work might involve? This was a question posed to a group of school children in Moray, who learnt about being an 'ologist' for a day. They discovered techniques used by mycologists (who study fungi), herpetologists (amphibians), entomologists (insects), lepidologists (butterflies and moths) and apoloigists (bees), amongst many others. They visited and learned about the natural habitats of their local area and Scotland's biodiversity. This 'have a go' project really opened up the eyes of the young people involved to the plight and importance of all of our endangered species, even the really little ones!



Wet and Wild

In Moray, an organisation called Wild Things! took to the water (well, the beach) to run a coastal heritage project with children. From stories and oral histories, through to coastal ecosystems this project explored all the aspects of heritage – highlighting the local traditions and environment in tandem. The project established a 'Coastal Classroom', and young people and their families got involved in all sort of outdoor learning workshops, and even achieved their John Muir awards as part of it. Everything was captured on a website so that all the hard work could be shared around other local coastal communities.

Young Roots

HLF has a dedicated programme, called Young Roots, which was set up specifically to help fund projects like these, getting young people from age 11-25 involved in their heritage. Funding is available from £10,000 up to £50,000 for youth organisations to work in partnership with a heritage organisation – bringing the best of both worlds together. You can read more about the Young Roots programme on the HLF website (www.hlf.org.uk/youngroots).



It is imperative to engage young people with the natural world around them so that they in turn can pass the precious legacy of our landscape onto the next generation in good shape. To find out more about how HLF can support projects, big or small, to help make that happen, contact Megan Braithwaite on megan.braithwaite@hlf.org.uk or 0131 225 9450.

Map reading made easy



One of the great things about Ordnance Survey maps is that they show the lay of the land and every cm of Great Britain is covered, so wherever you're going, we have the map you need. We can also help you to map read, an essential skill if you're out walking.

Scale

Ordnance Survey maps are drawn to scale, so there is a direct relationship between distances on the ground and distances on the maps. We usually express scale as a ratio, such as 1:25 000. This means that every 1cm on the map represents 25 000 cm (250 metres) on the ground. We show the scale on our map covers, for example 1:25 000, and also show it as 4cm to 1km, meaning every 4cm on the map = 1 km on the ground.

Top tip

With numbered scales, the larger the number, the smaller things will appear on the map.

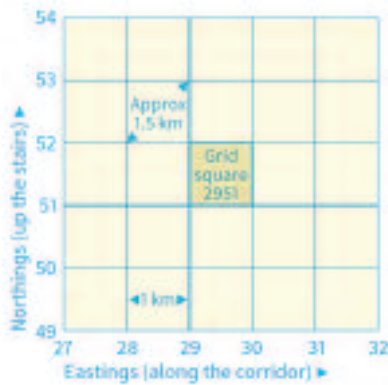
Grid references

Ordnance Survey maps are covered in a series of blue grid lines called the National Grid. These lines help you to pinpoint an exact location on the map with a unique number – a grid reference.

The vertical lines are eastings, they increase in value as you travel east on the map. The horizontal lines are called northings, they increase in value as you travel north on the map. A four figure grid reference will help you find any square on a map.

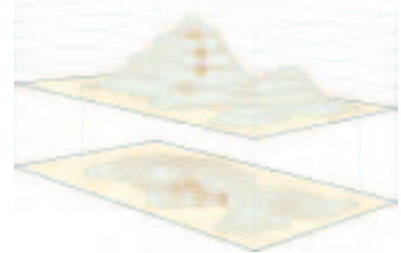
Top tip

Remember to go along the corridor before you go up the stairs.



How are hills and mountains shown on a map?

On OS Explorer maps, height and shape is shown using brown contour lines to help you visualise the landscape.



Top tip

The closer the contour lines are together, the steeper the slope.

Gentle slope



Steep slope



Before you put on your boots and grab your rucksack remember:

- Always take a map with you.
- Plan your route.
- Take the right equipment and clothing, and enough food and water.
- Tell someone where you're going
- Follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
- Have fun!

You can find out more about map reading, watch videos and download booklets at: www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/resources/map-reading

Are you missing something?

If you're on a trek or climb, always carry an OS map. It gives you all the detail you need to help plan the perfect route and day.

Helen

Helen Mackie, Search & Rescue Volunteer



ordnancesurvey.co.uk/yls

Get your OS Map | Paper | Online | Mobile

 Ordnance Survey®

With you every step of the way



The Great Scoutdoors

Allowing young people to take a risk is all part of life's learning curve

Scouting offers challenge and adventure to 42,950 members across Scotland. Outdoor learning is at the core of what we do, and our young people are encouraged to fulfil their potential by working in teams, learning by doing, thinking for themselves and making lifelong friends.

Through the adventure of Scouting, young people get to take calculated risks in a safe environment and have their first real taste of responsibility. We offer opportunities for young people to learn skills that they may not learn otherwise; such as survival skills, that not only teach them how to be safe in the outdoors, but how to lead, communicate and problem solve.

Isadora, an Explorer Scout from Aberdeenshire, said "My favourite thing to do with the Scouts is adventurous outdoor activities like white water rafting or attending big Scouting events. When I was at Snow Camp I learnt about survival skills, including how to dig a snow hole to survive in snowy conditions; this was great as we had to work in a team to do it and I don't think I'd have learned this anywhere else".

Getting out into the 'scoutdoors' provides for the practical

application of new skills through informal learning in an outdoor environment. To facilitate this we provide our members, and many more non-members from youth groups. Schools and community organisations, access to outdoor learning through adventure at our three National Activity Centres: Fordell Firs (Fife), Lochgoilhead (Argyll) and Meggernie (Perthshire).

Fordell Firs, the home of Scottish Scout Headquarters, is situated just outside Dunfermline. There are over 40 self-run and instructor-led activities available on and around the site, including archery, caving and climbing. With such a wide range of activities, young people are able to learn skills in a variety of areas during day or residential visits, whilst having fun, developing their confidence and enjoying the outdoors.

Set amidst magnificent West Highland scenery just over an hour from Glasgow, the Lochgoilhead Centre offers residential fully-catered and fully-programmed water and land activities as part of a complete adventure package. Programmes and courses provide fun, personal achievement, develop

specialist activity skills and awards, and support achievement of Curriculum for Excellence outcomes. The Lochgoilhead Centre is also an Approved Provider for Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions and training.

Meggernie can offer a range of adventurous activities or a more relaxing programme, and has a particular focus on environmental learning; the area is rich in flora and fauna not to mention features of glaciation and man's impact on the landscape. Groups can also take part in pioneering, orienteering and the study of wildlife.

Sean, an Explorer Scout from Fife, said "I think my favourite thing at Scouts is pioneering at camp as I really enjoy the problem solving involved and learning about new skills like knot tying. Through Scouting I have gained the ability to think quickly, build and design in a unique way, and feel confident that if something goes wrong I have the skills to be able to fix it. Scouting is a huge part of my life and I have thrived because of it".

Visit: <http://www.scouts-scotland.org.uk/> to find out more.

FORDELL FIRS

LOCHGOILHEAD

MEGGERNIE

www.nationalactivitycentre.org.uk

Scouts Scotland National Activity Centres

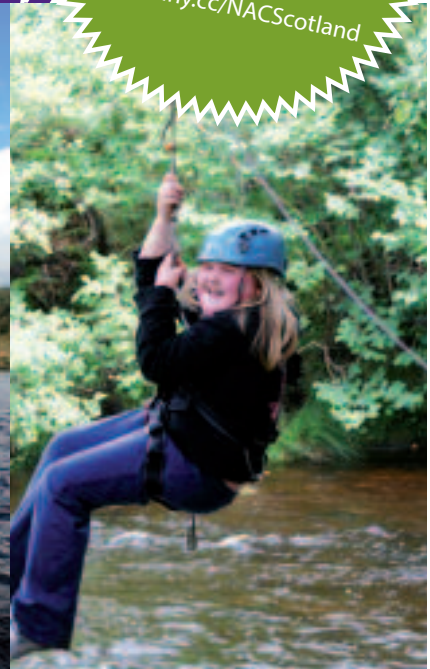


NATIONAL
ACTIVITY
CENTRES
SCOUTS SCOTLAND

SEE BEFORE
YOU BUY!
Watch our
introductory video at
<http://tiny.cc/NACScotland>



Prepare for adventure



Our National Activity Centres offer outstanding adventure in three stunning locations. Whether you enjoy the adrenaline rush of tree top experiences on **Fordeell Firs'** King Swing, the challenge of sailing on a fjord at **Lochgoilhead**, or the thrill of discovering wildlife and nature while camping in Scotland's longest highland glen at **Meggernie**, you'll have fun and be well looked after.

Each centre offers a range of adventurous and Scout activities, with different accommodation and catering options. Centre staff can tailor a specific programme to support you achieve your own programme outcomes, giving

you the freedom to also explore the surrounding areas. Prices are discounted for scout members, with special rates for larger groups and exclusive use. To secure your adventure call our Centres today.

FORDELL FIRS
01383 412704

LOCHGOILHEAD
01301 703217

MEGGERNIE
01887 866231



A journey of opportunity

Venture Scotland's vision is for vulnerable young people in Scotland to have happy and healthy lives and the opportunity to be the best they can be



The main service we offer is an intensive, outdoor-based personal development programme called 'The Journey'. The programme helps young people move from being inactive, isolated and disengaged to a place where they have established healthy new relationships and behaviour and are actively engaged in employment, education, training or volunteering.

The young people we work with are aged 16 to 30 and come from across Central Scotland. All are unemployed and most lead extremely chaotic lives, characterised by mental health problems, poor physical health and a lack of confidence and self-esteem, with many having been involved in destructive activities such as drug and alcohol misuse or crime.

Our programme encourages young people to step out of their comfort zone and take part in challenging outdoor activities, such as hill

walking, canoeing, weaselling and rock climbing. They also attend weekend and week-long residential trips to our Glen Etive bothy, where they undertake adventure and conservation activities

Volunteers are at the centre of our work. We have over 150 volunteers and each one brings their individual range of skills, life experiences and personal qualities. Here is one of our young people's stories: "When I joined Venture Scotland, I was unemployed and was spending a lot of time drinking alcohol to the point where I was relying heavily on it. Although I was living with my family, I had no relationship with any of them due to my drinking. With Venture Scotland, I absolutely loved being outdoors. On my favourite trip, we canoed for a couple of days down the River Tay then went to the bothy and did conservation work. I really felt like I belonged somewhere".

"I started working with a Volunteer Mentor who supported me with job and college applications. It was great having one person who was focussing on me and my development. I don't think I would be where I am today without their support".

"I completed a six month work placement and gained a place on North Glasgow College's Outdoor Pursuits course. It was very difficult to get into and I am so proud of myself. I'm now several months into the course and loving every minute of it. I've also developed a really positive relationship with my family again and I very rarely drink any more. My life has completely changed from where I was two years ago and I feel like I'm beginning to make something of myself".

FACTS

Last year

120 young people were supported by Venture Scotland

150 volunteers gave nearly 6,000 hours of their time

88% of those who completed the programme went in to work, education, training or volunteering with another organisation

Venture Scotland empowers vulnerable young people aged 16-30 to develop the skills, confidence and resilience they need to fulfil their potential and play a positive role in their communities.

Our 12 month programme is made up of four stages:

- **Challenge**
Set goals, work as a team, try new things.
- **Adventure**
Develop communication skills and self-confidence.
- **Leadership**
Become a leader and work on own initiative.
- **Community**
Make transition to work, education and training.

For more information on our programme and how to enrol, please contact admin@venturescotland.org.uk or phone 0131 661 6786.





An expedition in the great outdoors leads to great outcomes



Transforming lives through learning

Learning outdoors can be enjoyable, creative, challenging and adventurous and helps children and young people learn by experience and grow as confident and responsible citizens who value and appreciate the spectacular landscapes, natural heritage and culture of Scotland.

The journey through education for any child in Scotland must include opportunities for a series of planned, quality outdoor learning experiences. Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning is designed to help teachers, educators, Community Learning and Development (CLD) and their partners, including the youth work sector, plan such experiences to ensure that progressive and sustainable outdoor learning opportunities are embedded in the new curriculum.

Outdoor learning contributes to the Scottish Government's Strategic Objectives:

SMARTER – Outdoor learning encourages learners to understand the interplay and relationship between curriculum areas. This awareness promotes lifelong learning and develops critical thinking skills.

HEALTHIER – Learning outdoors can lead to lifelong recreation. Activities such as walking and cycling which are ideal for physical and emotional wellbeing contribute to a healthier Scotland. Scots have a reputation for adventure activities such as mountaineering and have achieved international sporting success in canoeing, sailing and ski-ing.

SAFER AND STRONGER – Outdoor learning activities span social divisions and can help build

stronger communities. Some organisations have therapeutic programmes where outdoor learning plays a central role. Children and young people have opportunities to develop skills to assess and manage risk when making decisions.

GREENER – Frequent and regular outdoor learning encourages children and young people to engage with the natural and built heritage. Scotland's countryside and urban areas provide ideal settings for children and young people to understand the global significance of sustainability issues and inform personal decisions that contribute towards a greener Scotland.

WEALTHIER AND FAIRER – The outdoors provides excellent opportunities to use a wide range of

skills and abilities not always visible in the classroom. Becoming aware of such skills can fundamentally change personal, peer and staff perceptions and lead to profound change in life expectations and success.

All staff at every level of involvement with the education of children and young people, both formal and informal, have responsibility to make the most of the outdoor environment to support the delivery of the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence.

The Vision

Our vision for outdoor learning in Scotland is that:

- all children and young people are participating in a range of progressive and creative outdoor learning experiences which are clearly part of the curriculum;
- schools, youth work settings and centres are providing regular, frequent, enjoyable and challenging opportunities for all children and young people to learn outdoors throughout their school career and beyond;
- teachers and educators embed outdoor learning in the curriculum so that learning in the outdoor environment becomes a reality for all children and young people.

Rationale

Curriculum for Excellence offers opportunities for all children and young people to enjoy first-hand experience outdoors, whether within the school grounds, in urban green spaces, in Scotland's countryside or in wilder environments. Such experiences motivate our children and young people to become successful learners and develop as healthy, confident, enterprising and responsible citizens.

Well-constructed and well-planned outdoor learning helps develop the

skills of enquiry, critical thinking and reflection necessary for our children and young people to meet the social, economic and environmental challenges of life in the 21st century. Outdoor learning connects children and young people with the natural world, with our built heritage, our culture and society, and encourages lifelong involvement and activity in Scotland's outdoors.

The core values and principles of curriculum design of CfE resonate with long-standing key concepts of outdoor learning. Challenge, enjoyment, relevance, depth, development of the whole person and an adventurous approach to learning are at the core of formal and informal outdoor learning. The outdoor environment encourages staff and students to see each other in a different light, building positive relationships and improving self-awareness and understanding of others.

Partnerships between staff in schools, youth work and other educational settings alongside other organisations will create working relationships that contribute to professional development for teachers and educators and construct clear pathways for delivering Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes outdoors.

Realising this vision will contribute to the wellbeing of our children and

young people and enable them to become resilient, responsible citizens and successful lifelong learners, who value our landscape and culture and contribute effectively to our local and global society.

Planning for outdoor learning

Achieving the principles of Curriculum for Excellence across all levels in a variety of outdoor contexts requires careful and comprehensive planning and knowledge of the experiences and outcomes. It is essential that all partners share a vision of the learning journey from 3-18 and beyond and there has to be clear communication between partners and amongst staff working across curriculum levels. Outdoor learning experiences can be particularly effective in supporting smooth transitions between stages. Planning for progressive learning experiences is aided when teachers and educators take full account of children and young people's prior experience of outdoor learning.

Developments in outdoor learning are underpinned and supported through Glow and by the Education Scotland outdoor learning online resource. This online resource provides support for all those involved in outdoor learning and provides detail on issues such as planning progressive experiences and selecting suitable locations.

www.educationscotland.gov.uk





Under Canvas



When William Smith introduced camping to The Boys' Brigade and as a leisure activity to wider society in 1886, he intuitively knew its impact on and contribution to the whole round development of young people. He knew that by providing a healthy and active outdoor environment and by giving opportunities for teamwork and leadership, individuals grew in self-esteem and confidence and developed a sense of responsibility for themselves and their peers.

When such activities were introduced over 125 years ago many were aghast at this innovation, but as in many other spheres Smith was ahead of his time and what was initially a novelty is now a fundamental building block of all youth work organisations.

Today not many of our camps will resemble those early days at Tighnabruaich, but this year most of Scotland's 450 BB groups will provide outdoor and adventurous activities to their members through a wide range of residential and non-residential activities. Over 10 thousand of our members will

experience this sense of adventure in a variety of contexts. Some may have their first night away simply staying in a church hall whilst others will be resident at an activity centre, others will be staying a weekend or week under canvas. These experiences will not only take place in Scotland, but around the world. Recent overseas events took place in the Far East, North America and in Africa. There are increasing numbers doing expedition work and BB has been a great supporter of DofE since its inception. Whatever the experience, for many, such ventures are the highlight of the Company's year and are eagerly anticipated.

Our programmes reflect learning in and from the outdoors whether it is the younger ages learning about their local community and the environment to the full range of outdoor and adventurous activities as they get older. Such activities are designed to develop independence as well as group work, decision making and confidence and support the development of positive relationships between adults and young people. As an organisation whose success depends on such relationships it should never be under-estimated that on a week's residential the leader spends as much time with the young person as during the rest of the year and as an organisation whose primary aim is sharing faith with young people such contact is invaluable.

Many of our leaders share with us that time spent on a residential is when they really got to know a young person. It is true also that through such opportunity some individuals really got to know themselves. Outdoor education is important not only for its direct learning outcomes, but also for the enormous indirect benefits it is able to offer to young people and BB will continue to build on its pioneering success.

Should you wish to find out more about our programmes, please email scottishhq@boys-brigade.org.uk or call 01324 562008.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS HERE

Craggan Outdoor Centre

by Ardeonaig, Loch Tay, Perthshire, FK21 8SU
Edinburgh, Leith & District Battalion

WWW.THEBB-EDINBURGH.ORG.UK

Registered Charity SCO04786

T: 0131 551 1200 E: office@thebb-edinburgh.org.uk

Craggan is situated on the south bank of Loch Tay in the beautiful countryside of Perthshire. It is located on the single track road between Killin and Kenmore, adjacent to the hamlet of Ardeonaig, approximately 7 miles east of Killin.

The centre is available for use by The Boys' Brigade and outside groups of all ages with ready access to many facilities in the locality and is well suited for water activities, hill walking and group holidays. Craggan was constructed in 1975 and extensively refurbished in 2006 with full disabled access including a lift.

Scott Lodge

by Braedownie, Glen Clova, Angus
Dundee & Angus Battalion

WWW.BBDUNDEEANGUS.ORG.UK

T: 01382 457567 E: info@bbdundeeangus.org.uk

Scott Lodge is our purpose built outdoor centre situated in the beautiful Angus Glens. The lodge can be booked for weekends or mid-week breaks or longer.

Situated in 2000 square metres of private ground on the east bank of the River South Esk at the head of Glen Doll, about 25 miles due north of Dundee, it is within the south east corner of the Cairngorms National Park.

The Lodge provides accommodation for a maximum of 32 persons and is divided into one large dormitory which sleeps 24 and two separate rooms, off the main dormitory, sleeping 4 in each. The building is fitted throughout with double glazed windows, gas central heating and a fully fitted kitchen. It has recently been upgraded for disabled access.



Artistic ammunition paints outdoor spaces in a colourful light

Voluntary Arts Scotland embark on a covert operation using guerrilla artfare your granny would be proud of

In February 2013, Voluntary Arts Scotland (the national development agency for the voluntary arts sector) launched its most ambitious craft project to date – inviting people across the country to be part of a secret mission. The result was a series of fantastic pop-up ‘CraftBombs’ in parks, school yards and high streets across Scotland, to celebrate the first day of Voluntary Arts Week.

Pupils from Renfrew High School were some of the first to take up the challenge and saw this as an opportunity to experiment with new techniques and materials in their lunch time Art Club. During the sessions, they made everything from pom pom caterpillars to felt butterflies.

Miss Cowell, Art Club facilitator, explains: “Crafting is a great way to get young people working together and helping each other. The students loved being part of a nationwide project and were proud to see their work displayed to the public at Glasgow Botanic Gardens”.

CraftBombing is a great way to meet new people, share and learn new skills and experiment with the creative process outside the classroom environment.

In Scotland alone there are an estimated 10,000+ voluntary arts and craft groups that meet regularly in cafes, community centres, village



halls and outdoor locations such as parks and forests to share their creative passion. From singing to sewing, drumming to drawing, there is an amazing range of creative activity just waiting to be discovered.

So for one week each year, Voluntary Arts Scotland invites groups to open their doors and invite new people in to ‘have a go’ and experience the benefits taking part in creative activity can bring.

Here’s our dictionary definition...

CraftBomb (verb) – *A temporary (or pop-up) display of art/craft in a public place as a celebration of one’s creativity and to inspire others.*

During the 2013 CraftBomb, Hannah Ford, Artist-in-Residence at

Reachout with Arts in Mind rallied together a group of staff and young trainees to work together on a CraftBomb for the railings outside The Makers Gallery in Alloa.

Say it Ain’t Sew, an informal sewing group run by Iona Barker that meets at the Hillhead Book Club in Glasgow, also got involved and made some wonderful creations for the CraftBomb flagship event in Glasgow Botanic Gardens.

Each year, Voluntary Arts Week gets bigger and better – so why not get involved in something really special. Hold workshops with children and young people indoors – then take your creations outdoors and show the world what you’ve achieved.

To download an information pack, visit www.voluntaryartsweek.org

Play on the Links



Play on the Links run by The Yard, with support from Inspiring Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council, was a pilot project which took place on Leith Links in Edinburgh. This pilot was the first stage in an exercise to look at ways to increase play opportunities in Edinburgh and, longer term, make effective use of 'brown field' sites in areas of multiple deprivation for play.

The focus was on supporting children's natural drive to play, ensuring that control of play remains with the children. The Yard staff who were involved, were all highly experienced in creating play from scratch that is challenging, interactive and engaging and there to support the children to play freely.

During the project the children accessed many more types of play than they would ever have been able to access through regular playgrounds including:

- a water slide made from tarpaulin and tyres and lots of soap and water;
- a handmade go-kart;
- bread making from scratch over a real fire;
- ball rolling using guttering, carpet tubes and plastic balls;
- crawling through a bit industrial water tube from the tram works.

Over the 10 days, almost 400 children up to the age of 13 came to play on Leith Links. In evaluating the project The Yard staff gathered feedback from parents and young people. They also captured the views of those who took part:

'Leith is hoaching with kids and they don't have that many quality play opportunities'.

'I loved the element of managed risk – the wheelbarrow down the hill,

the waterslide and the fire – brilliant'.

'Really appreciated having the opportunity to get together with other families in our community'.

The main outcomes from the feedback received were that pop-up play opportunities such as Play on the Links can increase physical activity and lead to improved health, create stronger community connections and increase integration with children from all backgrounds. For the children involved, free play enabled children to take challenges with educated risks – the fire pit being a great example of this, their social skills were greatly improved which increased their self-confidence, encouraged independence and supported the development of friendships.

The next stage of this project is to identify a 'brown field' site for a longer play session next summer. This will require not just the materials used and support provided in Leith, but also the creation of a low cost natural play area for the period of the project. For more information: www.theyardscotland.org.uk or www.inspiringscotland.org.uk

Putting down roots for a better future



Ten young unemployed people have planted the seeds for a career in forestry after completing The Prince's Trust's Get into Woodlands course at Dumfries House Estate.

Get into Woodlands, funded by the Wood Family Trust, ESF, East Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council and SDS, gave unemployed young people aged between 16 and 25 a chance to develop their skills and gain hands-on experience in the forestry sector.

Following a successful Get into Woodlands programme in England, The Prince's Trust Scotland joined forces with SRUC Barony Campus to run a pilot north of the border.

During the five-week training course the young people learnt about different aspects of forestry including tree-planting, maintenance and protection, safe chainsaw use, fencing and horse logging. Together they left a lasting mark on the Dumfries House Estate, planting 40 heavy standard trees for the arboretum.

Douglas Irvine, Senior Forestry Instructor supported by Andrew Treadaway, Forestry Lecturer at SRUC Barony Campus, and George Gemmell, Dumfries House Estate Forester, instructed the young people throughout their hands-on training.

As well as boosting their skills and confidence the young people gained an NPTC Chainsaw Maintenance, Cross Cutting, Emergency First Aid and put their knowledge to the test during placements with industry names.

Gordon Hill, Programme Leader for Forestry at SRUC Barony Campus, said: "We are delighted the Get into Woodlands Scottish pilot has been a success. The work completed on the course has been to a high standard and the key challenge for the forestry sector is to look at how we can create opportunities for motivated young people who want to succeed in this exciting and varied field".

Following the programme young people celebrated their success with a certificate ceremony, joined by family, friends and supporters from the forestry industry.

The Prince's Trust runs 'Get into' training programmes in a wide range of sectors to help young people get the confidence, skills and experience they need to kick-start their career. Three in four young people supported by the Trust move into work, education or training.

www.princes-trust.org.uk/scotland



Seeing the wood for the trees

Scott, aged 22 from East Ayrshire completed The Prince's Trust Get into Woodlands course at the end of 2013. Before he started the course, Scott says he didn't have much to occupy his time.

"I was just hanging out with my friends and drinking or smoking when I had the money" he says, "it was really hard to try and do something. I had been out of work for nearly five years and it was really depressing. I felt like I was stuck in a rut and was really de-motivated".

Being unemployed for five years meant Scott lost a lot of confidence in himself and struggled to find the motivation to change his situation but explains how he came across the course from The Prince's Trust: "It felt like it would be harder to get into a job the longer I was unemployed. I didn't really know what I wanted to do since I hadn't had much experience, but I also knew I didn't want to get a job doing something I wouldn't enjoy. I was put forward for a motor industry taster but I quickly realised that trade was not for me, and The Prince's Trust Get into Woodlands course came up at the same time".

"I really enjoyed the course, the type of work in general was ideal and I liked learning new skills. I liked getting to meet new people and to work with them as part of a team. The course helped me get back into a routine again, and it gave me a purpose. That was one of the main things about the course that really helped me".

"The trainers for the course were really good, and if you showed an

interest in learning more, they would help you a lot. The estate workers at Dumfries House were great too as they taught me a lot about working on an estate, and they were really good to get on with".

Not only did Scott improve his confidence and learn new skills, he impressed so much on the course that he has now been offered a job at Dumfries House doing Estate Management work.



Scott hard at work on the estate



Harvesting a successful crop

Scotland's young farmers are doing what they can to reverse rural depopulation and enthuse young people with a passion for country life

Eidh Robertson Photography



YOUNG FARMERS

The Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs, established in 1938, is the largest rural youth organisation in Scotland welcoming those 14 to 30 years of age.

The current vision of the association aims to ensure members have a dynamic and accessible organisation which supports them to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. As such the organisation is member-led, ensuring the strategic vision is directed by and for the members. This is important as it not just makes for an effective membership body, but it helps with the skills they need to lead and make decisions for their future. These life skills are vast

and this is evident by the hundreds of district, regional and national competitions that are organised each year.

Each region (East, West and North) has an Event Manager who works out of the National Office and supports the members as they propose, organise and deliver events that provide opportunities for social networking with other clubs throughout the movement. Some events see members practice or prepare entries for months whilst others just require a good turn out on the day. These competitions have been a core element of young farmers for the last 75 years and whilst some competitions have come and gone, others remain as strong today as they did in 1938.

There are opportunities to gain in confidence via speechmaking and debating competitions, or the chance to use skills that they may

have gained on the farm such as sheep shearing, prime lamb, beef and dairy cattle dressing to Agri Skills (health and safety quiz, crop identification, loading a trailer, wiring a plug, etc). Stockjudging sees members practice for months and is one of the most anticipated competitions in the yearly calendar with competitors grading cattle and sheep, justifying their decisions with verbal reasons.

However it is important to remember that whilst the roots of the association are with agriculture, there are a growing number of members who live in the rural sector but do not work or live on a farm.

For these individuals there is tug of war, hockey, netball, rugby and football where clubs put forward both men and ladies. Others are for the more artistic members from cake decorating, designing and making clothing to drawing, painting



and photography. Then there are those that do not require preparation such as ten pin bowling and curling to quiz's and team building exercises.

All in all these competitions add to an individual's personal development and when you think of the tens of thousands of young farmers who have gone through the movement and are now working in the industry, it is easy to recognise the positive contribution that is made by the movement.

Whether they go on to be rural leaders, start their own business or go back to the family farm, the knowledge and skills they gain through SAYFC will benefit each and every one of them.

www.sayfc.org



No boundaries to our wilderness

The Outward Bound Trust's mission is to unlock the potential of young people through adventure and discovery in the wild

Using Scotland's most inspirational environments, The Trust in Scotland delivers life-defining outdoor learning experiences to young people from P7 to S6. Outward Bound® builds confidence, resilience and enables young people to develop new skills for the classroom and their everyday lives.

To ensure that Outward Bound courses are available to young people from all backgrounds, the Trust raises and distributes bursary funding to part-pay for courses. In addition, The Trust has a number of fully funded projects.

The Trust in Scotland offers both residential courses at the Loch Eil Centre (close to Fort William) and bespoke specialist courses for more vulnerable young people, delivered locally by the instructor team based in Glasgow, 'Metro'. In each case, there is a tailored approach which meets the specific challenges and learning needs of individual schools and youth organisations.

Outward Bound works in partnership with local authorities, schools and youth organisations. In total, in 2012/13, approximately 6,500 people in Scotland participated in Outward Bound courses.



www.outwardbound.org.uk



HERE ARE A COUPLE OF PARTNERSHIP EXAMPLES FROM OBT:

- **Partnerships directly with schools and youth organisations** – The majority of the Trust’s work consists of delivering programmes for organisations that have specific outcomes. For example, we have a long-standing partnership with Springburn Academy: ‘The Transition Programme’ identifies and trains a number of their S4 pupils, who build relationships with and support the incoming S1 pupils through a number of Metro experiences, and provides all new S1s (around 180 pupils) with a shared experience in the form of a residential course at Loch Eil.
- **Partnership with Scottish Power: “Skills for Scotland’s Future”** – The aim of this project is to provide 48 young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in Glasgow with the skills and confidence to consider what choices they need to make to progress to a positive destination. It is built around an Outward Bound experience to enable the young people participating to develop their confidence, build skills and raise aspirations by taking part in adventurous activities in a challenging environment.



Watching your garden grow

A garden in rural Perthshire is where the seeds of opportunity are grown



Callander Youth Project Trust (CYPT) is an independent, voluntary youth organisation; we operate from a rural Youth Hub in Callander, covering some 400 square miles of the South Central Highlands of Scotland.

CYPT operates from a former hotel, which has been transformed into a Rural Youth Hub supported by a social enterprise. The premises consist of a youth hostel and cafe as well as function and meeting space. These facilities are used to generate income to sustain the project in the long term. The rural Youth Hub has a large garden attached to the premises with outstanding views over Ben Ledi.

This outdoor resource is the latest project which CYPT intends to develop. Plans have been drawn up to provide a growing area for fruit and vegetables which will be accessible by a wide range of service users. Indoor and outdoor areas will be developed including a poly tunnel and raised beds. A herb garden has been planned to provide herbs for the on-site kitchen. Young people will be able to develop skills in planting and growing their own food, as well as associated issues

such as composting, organic pest control, and planting to encourage pollinator species.

Once the garden has been established, outdoor cooking sessions will take place on purpose-built barbecues. Such sessions will not just focus on healthy eating, but also on eating ‘in-season’ to ensure the best quality and freshness.

The CYPT approach is innovative and unique, constantly evolving to meet the needs of young people living in the surrounding rural communities. Bespoke packages are offered to young people ranging from after-school study support, job searching tips, interview practice and techniques through to the SQA accredited Steps to Work course which is delivered directly from the Rural Hub in Callander. Young people can access a wide range of training courses on-site at the Hub; recent courses include World Host Customer Service, First Aid, Manual Handling, Bike Maintenance and Cycle Skills. In addition, CYPT offers a wide programme of community youth work including youth clubs and holiday programmes.

www.callanderyouthproject.co.uk



Green benefit

Working for the social, physical and intellectual advancement of the community at large with a focus on children and young people

Scottish
Outdoor
Education
Centres



For more than 70 years, Scottish Outdoor Education Centres (SOEC) has created and delivered outdoor learning programmes, and provided residential experiences for children, young people and others.

Every year we welcome 16,000 young people to our centres and provide over 100,000 learning days at our three outdoor centres: Belmont, Broomlee and Dounans.

Visitors include youth groups, groups with specific needs, sports teams, music ensembles, universities, corporate and overseas groups, and of course primary and secondary schools. Last year we worked with 165 groups and 1000 group leaders, as well as 152 schools supporting over 650 teachers.

What we do

Our programmes are designed to be exciting, challenging and relevant to every group. Programmes are always fun but aim to maximise every learning opportunity to enable young people to explore their potential.

SOEC tutors are educationalists with relevant degrees and backgrounds in teaching, youth work, social work and outdoor learning. Our tutors are trained to support group leaders and teachers

in the delivery of GIRFEC and Curriculum for Excellence outcomes.

Environmental programmes enable young people to experience and connect with the natural world. Young people leave with the clear view that Scotland's natural environment is enjoyable, accessible and relevant to them. Programmes can incorporate qualifications and awards such as the John Muir Award.

Activity programmes include off site activities such as kayaking and on site activities such as rope challenges and tree climbs. These facilitate the development of many qualities and skills such as confidence, team work, communication, resilience etc. These programmes can link to various awards (National Navigator) and sporting qualifications.

Does it work?

In 2013, independent consultants carried out a Social Return on Investment (SROI) Analysis of SOEC's work. The research determined the financial value to the social and environmental benefits of the work of the organisation. The research into our work concluded every £1 spent on our programmes with children and young people resulted in over £11 of social benefit.

How does it work?

- working through specialist trained outdoor educators capable of developing multiple outcomes.
- designing and delivering motivating, challenging and exciting outdoor programmes.
- the provision of safe and nurturing 'away from home' experiences.

The world is changing rapidly and children and young people need a well-developed set of skills, knowledge, values and qualities if they are to thrive and adapt. SOEC creates experiences that enable young people to develop these skills.

A complex mix of outdoor learning experiences must be created if we are to provide linked pathways for every young person. There needs to be more emphasis on collaboration within and between sectors but we must rise to this challenge. If we ask young people to be prepared to meet challenges, so must we. After all, it is no more than our children and young people deserve.

www.soec.org.uk



COTSWOLD
outdoor

THE BEST ADVENTURES START WITH EXPERT ADVICE AND GOOD KIT

OVER 250 BRANDS FOR BIG ADVENTURES

With over 250 brands to choose from, including: The North Face, Rab, Berghaus, Salomon and many more, we offer the UK's biggest range of high quality outdoor clothing and equipment.

SUPPORTING YOUTH TRAINING

Cotswold Outdoor is proud to support outdoor groups such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Girlguiding UK and The Scout Association. Through expert advice, free kit talks, boot and rucksack fitting services in store and sponsorship of activity badges, we help to inspire a love of the outdoors in the next generation of explorers and intrepid travellers.



Rab

Berghaus

FIND YOUR NEAREST STORE AT
COTSWOLDOUTDOOR.COM



The wild gang



There are 5000 Army Cadets in Scotland aged between 12 and 18, and over 1000 adult volunteers, making it one of the biggest and best gangs around. When it comes to action, excitement and adventure, it's hard to find anything that beats the Army Cadets.

The origins of the Army Cadet Force (ACF) go back to the middle of the 19th century. The need to look after those orphaned by the Crimean War and the work of social reformers led to the raising of a wide variety of cadet units. In 1959 the Army reviewed the role of its cadet organisation and determined that the ACF would become an autonomous youth organisation whilst still maintaining a close relationship with the Armed Forces.

There are three strands to ACF training:

- Star System – a syllabus incorporating subjects such as map reading, target shooting, first aid and field craft
- Adventurous Training – providing challenge, improving fitness and broadening experience
- Vocational Training – Duke of Edinburgh's Award, BTEC and SQA awards.

Cadet detachments parade once a week where indoor training is provided to prepare the cadet for the outdoor phase of the subject. Detachments will assemble once a month at one of nine weekend training centres for centrally administered training, most of which is conducted on local training areas. Most cadets will also attend a two week annual camp where training cadres take place to assess

and verify training achievement.

The Star system delivers basic military skills to the cadet in a progressive fashion structured at four levels. The One Star cadet will complete approximately 100 hours of training of which 50% will be conducted outside of the classroom environment. The Two Star cadet will complete 78 hours of outdoor training, Three Star cadets 95 hours and finally the Four Star cadet will spend 80 hours engaged in outdoor activities.

ACF outdoor training will include activities such as map reading, field craft and competition shooting. Taking part in expeditions is a core activity with the expeditions

becoming progressively more challenging and of longer endurance. Many cadets also complete expeditions overseas and there are a number of cadet exchange schemes running with Commonwealth countries. First aid training will also begin at the One Star level with the Heart Start course and older cadets will attend the Youth First Aid course.

Once cadets reach the Three and Four Star level they will receive training as instructors and will begin to deliver One and Two Star training to junior cadets within their detachment. The instruction of junior cadets by their older colleagues is conducted under the supervision ACF adult volunteers and forms a fundamental part of the development of the cadet by instilling characteristics such as self-confidence and respect for others.

Although the core activity of the ACF is the development and training of their cadets the Cadet Challenge Outreach Programme has been introduced as part of the cadets' wider social responsibilities to assist disadvantaged young people from within their local community. This programme is aimed at socially disadvantaged young people with low self-esteem and who may be crime vulnerable.

Young people who join the ACF enjoy a structured training and development syllabus which provides fun, challenge and qualifications. They are given the chance to develop as an individual and learn to work as part of a team. They also develop awareness of individual responsibility, leadership and teaching skills that builds self-confidence, self-discipline and respect for others. Thus the ACF develops confident, motivated young adults who are better able to contribute effectively to both society and to the world of work.

For more information on the ACF or to find your nearest detachment go to www.armycadets.com





Grounds for learning

Challenge, enjoyment, relevance, depth, development of the whole person and an adventurous approach are at the core of outdoor learning



These words from a 2010 Learning and Teaching Scotland (now Education Scotland) document set the benchmark for us at Scripture Union Scotland, as we partner with schools, youth and adult groups to deliver residential experiences at our two outdoor activity centres, Alltnacriche and Lendrick Muir. This past year, we delivered 8,400 learning days of residential and away day experiences for pupils of all ages and welcomed over 100 groups on their own weekend residential.

Whatever the age and stage of a group of young people or pupils, we offer activities that will contribute to their development.

From a bear hunt in the woods for early years and away-day

workshops to get primary age children out for the day, right through to cluster group trips focusing on self-confidence and team building, and adventure-filled secondary residentials designed to stretch young people’s comfort zones – our programmes are completely bespoke.

There’s no “standard week” at Alltnacriche or Lendrick Muir! We want to support the outcomes you are looking for. For example, a city-centre school visiting our centres may focus on outdoor activities, but a rural school might be more inclined to take up the Explore Edinburgh option on a visit to Lendrick Muir.

Our programmes and activities are designed to help expand horizons,

whatever that looks like for an individual young person, having some fun along the way!

“It was brilliant being able to use the large grounds for wide games, bonfires and activities led by our team that we couldn’t do with the kids back home”. St Mungo’s Xplorers.

We’d love to talk with you and discuss how we could help you take outdoor learning and experiences to a new level for your young people at Alltnacriche or Lendrick Muir.

Find out more at www.classroomoutdoors.org.uk
www.scriptureunion.org.uk

My trip away with Ocean Youth Trust Scotland was absolutely amazing!

At the beginning I was slightly nervous about spending 6 days with a group of people I had never met. By the first evening those misgivings had disappeared.

I had gone in hope of meeting people around my own age with similar interests as me (something that I have always struggled with) and to my utter joy that is exactly what I found. The boating experience in itself was fantastic, but having people around that were so much fun and so full of life – including the staff – really made it a perfect holiday.

Sailing with Ocean Youth Trust Scotland also allowed me the chance to get away from some of the complications and restraints of family life for a time. I truly feel that I have grown and developed as a person over this period. I have noticed a world of difference in my confidence when communicating with others around

me and just simply being myself. There was such a range of fun and exciting activities that helped this process in a whole manner of ways: working as a team, applying new knowledge to scenarios that occurred, using initiative to get a job done quickly and effectively. All of these are skills I believe that I can relate to life in general. It was also lovely to view the west coast from a different perspective other than that of a stuffy, noisy car.

The sea staff onboard were also really inspirational. They all helped us feel like a proper part of the crew by encouraging us to try new and intimidating tasks that threw us out of our comfort zones. Due to their friendly and open attitudes, in no time the boat felt like

a second home and one that I was sad to leave. The crew will always hold a special place in my heart and abiding memories, not least thanks to their creation of a cockpit bath, which made only having a shower once in 6 days a little more bearable for the nose.

So yes, we ended the voyage rather smelly, still reeling from the shock/horror of cleaning the heads and cooking and cleaning for 14 people, but my experiences onboard were completely new and thrilling. The memories that were made are likely to stick with me for ever, along with my new life skills. Every single second was a pleasure and completely exhilarating, even when the railings of the boat were in the water and I was curled into a pathetic ball due to sea sickness. I have found that my time with Ocean Youth Trust Scotland has been so positive and life changing that I cannot end my voyaging and experiences with you now. I have applied to train as a bosun to carry on learning and developing even more and earning the opportunity to continue forwards with Ocean Youth Trust Scotland into the future as a fully committed member of Sea Staff.

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity for such an unbelievable experience. It has surpassed anything I could have hoped for!"

Thoughts from Ruth aged 15

Ocean Youth Trust Scotland

Adventure under sail
Inspiring young people



ARE YOU READY TO JOIN US FOR THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME?



Schools Programme 2014

In 2014 Ocean Youth Trust Scotland will be offering schools across the UK the opportunity to include offshore sailing as part of their curriculum.

Offshore sailing provides a unique environment to: build confidence; develop team building skills; break down social barriers and challenge students to do more.

With guidance from our highly experienced staff, each voyage will be tailored to the school's specific needs and aspirations.

Try a voyage this year, to see what it's all about with no commitment for 2014. You can even fly your own flag!

To book your voyage or for more information about availability in 2014, Contact Alistair:

Tel: 01475 722 722

Email: alistair@oytscotland.org.uk

www.oytscotland.org.uk



Flexing some conservation muscle



Since 2013 Education Scotland has been working with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to deliver their School Green Gym Programme. The sessions are designed to provide opportunities for pupils to be active, to learn about biodiversity, their local environment and to take part in practical conservation activities.

With funding provided by Education Scotland, four schools from across three different local authorities have been taking part in the School Green Gym programme. Over the course of this programme, pupils are physically active by taking part in practical conservation activities; they are learning how to use tools safely work together as a team and at the same time are learning about the environment. The Green Gym is a flexible programme – TCV staff worked together with the school staff involved to tailor a

programme to suit the needs of each school, taking into consideration the school grounds and local green spaces.

The Green Gym sessions either take place during class time or as an after school club. Usually each session lasts for around an hour to an hour and a half. At the start of the Green Gym session the group do some warm up exercises followed by a tool talk and then the Green Gym Leader takes pupils through the activity for the day. The session ends with cool down exercises. Throughout the programme the pupils are carrying out a range of activities such as food growing, gardening, creating and maintaining willow structures, biological recording, habitat construction and tree planting.

Some schools have commented on the positive impact the programme

has had on relationships with the local community.

In three of the schools involved pupils come from out with the local area; by taking part in conservation work in parkland and woodland in the surrounding area the Green Gym programme has helped to give the pupils a stronger connection to the local community. In turn the opportunity for the pupils to put something back into the local community has helped build positive relationships between the schools and local residents.

For more information on School Green Gym and the work of The Conservation Volunteers visit <http://www.tcv.org.uk/greengym> or contact David Graham: d.graham@tcv.org.uk

Getting Out There with Keep Scotland Beautiful

Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) is the independent charity which campaigns, acts and educates on a range of local, national and global environmental issues which affect people's quality of life. Promoting engagement through environmental activities outdoors is a highly effective way to empower young people of all ages to take action on sustainable development issues. There are many lovely examples of how KSB supports young people to connect more strongly with nature, with communities, with outdoor spaces and with local and global issues that impact on how clean and green our neighbourhoods are.

Climate Challenge Fund

Kyle Academy Bike Club in Ayr was awarded a Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) grant of £45,000 to run a pilot project that aims to reduce local car journeys and associated carbon emissions by promoting travel by bike as an alternative.

Young people at Kyle Academy have taken an active role in this project which promotes cycling as a sport in a safe and challenging environment for the whole family. Cycle training, repair workshops and loan bikes are available to the community, while cycle trails with varying levels of difficulty have been created to

support the novice bike rider and develop the enthusiast.

The CCF is a Scottish Government programme that is managed by KSB. The Junior Climate Challenge Fund (JCCF) provides funding and support for local carbon reducing projects led by young people aged 21 and under.

Young Reporters for the Environment

Strong involvement in outdoor activities and participation in nature, community and place-based learning, leads to the formation of young people who are more aware of local and global issues, who demonstrate increased resilience and have the social and citizenship skills to take an active part in community development, environmental enrichment and planning. Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) empowers and encourages young people aged

11-21 to investigate and report on environmental concerns and challenges. Like the Eco-Schools Scotland initiative, it is coordinated internationally by the Foundation for Environmental Education and offers young people an international platform to highlight environmental issues. YRE participants in Scotland have been honing their skills in journalism, photography, ecology and literacy through reporting on conferences and events with an environmental theme.

Find out more about the Climate Challenge Fund and Young Reporters for the Environment:

www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org



Navigating life's path

SkillForce Scotland programmes help develop a young person's character, their confidence and self-awareness. At the end of that journey they are better prepared to take the next step in their lives

When Briony started on the SkillForce programme within Braeview Academy she found it hard to get on with her work and sometimes struggled with other characters in the class. Briony is a very confident young lady who has a big personality. This is sometimes what causes her to get into bother as she is quite lively during discussions and group activities and wasn't

afraid to challenge others. Briony has a natural ability for mental arithmetic and as such found that when we started doing our classroom based lessons on navigation that she really enjoyed it and she got to grips with six figure grid references, measuring distance and creating a route card without any problems.

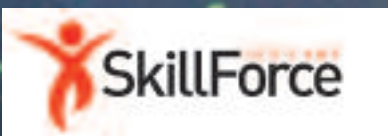
Briony gradually started to become calmer within class and learned to control how she spoke and her enthusiasm for activities. This helped her to achieve her work and she was now able to get along with everyone in class which helped her to complete all her activities. Briony was really looking forward to her Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and when we started the practice expedition she surprised everyone, including herself, with how much she enjoying it. She was a natural at all aspects of camp craft, she never once complained about carrying a Bergan and her navigation skills were improving at every stage.

On her qualifying expedition she was asked by the assessor where they were. The assessor had deliberately chosen a tricky part of the route as they could see how well Briony was doing. She took her time, looked at how much time had passed since the last check point, looked at all the features on the ground and related them to the map and then very calmly and confidently presented her answer and reasoning to the assessor. She was spot on and it was a pleasure to see how pleased she was with her achievement.

On her Duke of Edinburgh expeditions Briony's communication skills, leadership skills and team work skills dramatically improved and this had a positive impact on her classroom activities as well. Briony has come a full circle with SkillForce now and has entered 4th year at school as a more focused, calmer person who can work both on her own and as part of a team without any problems.

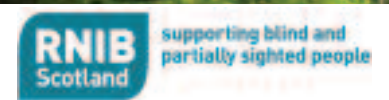
She has been a great success!

For more info on SkillForce Scotland's various programmes click: www.skillforce.org





Taking a leap of faith



Not being able to see the world around you should not mean a lack of opportunity and confidence, the Royal National Institute for the Blind believe in promoting independence of mind and a positive approach to living with sight loss.

Last summer, RNIB ran a 'Promoting Independence' summer camp at Broomlee Outdoor Centre nestled in the beautiful West Linton countryside. The residential was funded through 'Shared Care Scotland's Better Breaks Fund' and was arranged for 15 Young People aged 14-18 living with sight loss from across Scotland.

The focus was on confidence development, self-awareness, independent living and post-16 transition to Further or Higher Education or into work or training.

The programme was delivered as a combination of outdoor activities,

team games and training sessions which included workshops on developing confidence, assistive technology, cooking skills, independent travel, personal care, and employability.

Participants met at RNIB Head Office in Edinburgh on the Monday where we had a 'getting to know you' meet and greet. We then travelled as a group to Broomlee. It was easy street from there on in, with the group quickly bonding and working together, supporting one another in their various tasks throughout the week. As well as using the wonderful facilities at Broomlee we were able to enlist the support of RNIB staff and volunteers to deliver an individualised package to all Young People. They practised their cooking skills, by making two evening meals; learned to use assistive technology that will

support their learning needs at school, college or the workplace; they climbed trees, tried archery and the flying fox (death slide). Visitors to the Centre included RNIB's technology team, Guide Dogs for the Blind and Haggeye, RNIB Scotland's Youth Forum. All of this combined allowed our Young People to find out more about sight loss, learn how they could manage it and encouraged them to have a positive approach.

Great fun was had by all and we plan to run a similar event in next year. Click and follow for information on RNIB Scotland: www.rnib.org.uk/scotland and you can find details about Broomlee Outdoor Centre here: www.soec.org.uk



Change is blowin' in the wind



SYHA Hostelling Scotland and ScottishPower Foundation have teamed up to develop and deliver an innovative new employability learning project.

19 pupils in S2 and four of their teachers from two Glasgow City schools, Springburn Academy and Smithy Croft Secondary School, took part in a two-day, two-night residential at Rowardennan Lodge Youth Hostel.

For the vast majority of these children, who come from social and economic areas of disadvantage, the trip provided an opportunity to visit Loch Lomond and the National Park for the very first time.

Designed to inspire the youngsters to think differently about their future pathways within and beyond school, the programme used renewable technology as a loose theme to offer them a range of practical hands-on challenges outdoors, all with links to Curriculum for Excellence.

During an action-packed weekend, the young people constructed wind turbines, learnt about pressure

systems, as well as GPS navigation skills before walking up Ben Lomond to find a suitable spot to test them. Hill-walking was a first for the children, which was an experience they found both challenging and memorable.

“That was the hardest,” said Rebecca, “we had to keep walking to find the wind to do the test, we got so high up and it was amazing when it worked”.

More excitement was to come with a gorge walk, which allowed the young people to get into the current and feel its impact for themselves. They had previously created a hydro-electric device using an old bicycle wheel and empty milk bottles, which they carried upstream to test and explore different hydrological features.

Two volunteer mentors from ScottishPower were also on hand to help and encourage the youngsters throughout the weekend.

“As well as the learning there has also been lots of team-building going on,” said volunteer John Cunningham. “That’s part of what

we do every day, working with people you don’t know. The pupils have bonded really well despite not knowing each other 24 hours ago.”

Keith Legge, CEO of SYHA Hostelling Scotland, said: “Residential visits offer a unique experience, allowing young people to engage with teachers and fellow pupils at a deeper level. This intensive time away together allows them to build relationships and, crucially, to learn new skills that will equip them for life and work in the future.”

Ann Loughrey, executive officer and trustee of the ScottishPower Foundation said:

“Our partnership with SYHA enables young people to grow and realise their full potential through a range of challenging activities designed to encourage their independence and embed lifelong skills”.

For further information about SYHA Hostelling Scotland and how to get involved please visit www.syha.org.uk



Get the kids outdoors

Hostelling offers the perfect excuse to unhook young people from technology and get them out and closer to our natural habitat and creatures.

Scotland is a haven for spectacular wildlife of all shapes, sizes and species from mighty red deer and golden eagle to tiny wading birds and delicate butterflies.

Here are brief details of just a few popular places and species to look out for.

Flanders Moss (nearest youth hostel: Stirling)

Flanders Moss is the largest lowland raised bog in Britain and is now home to a fascinating collection of wildlife, including plants, flowers, trees, frogs, newts, birds, small mammals, moths and various beasties! In the past, large areas of peat to the east of the moss were dug up to reach the clay soil beneath for farming and ditches were then dug to drain it. However, in 1973, the Scottish Wildlife Trust bought a small part of Flanders Moss as a nature Reserve and this has been extended to create a National Nature Reserve (NNR). A tower has recently been added to

provide a bird's eye view over the whole area.

Visit: www.nnr-scotland.org.uk/flanders-moss/

The Lost Valley (nearest youth hostel: Glencoe)

The Lost Valley, or Coire Gabhail, makes a stunning location for a picnic. Allow two hours for the walk, but entice kids with tales of the Macdonalds, who were supposed to hide the cattle they had rustled from their neighbours there! Once in the valley, there are rocks to climb and you may spot eagles or red deer if you are lucky.

Visit: www.discoverglencoe.com/content/go_template.php?id=The_Lost_Valley

Knockan Crag (nearest youth hostel: Ullapool)

Knockan Crag (or Creag a' Chnocain, meaning 'crag of the hillock') has been developed as Scotland's first Geopark, owned and managed as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) by Scottish Natural Heritage. Lying 13 miles north of Ullapool, there is an unmanned visitor centre, open all hours throughout the year, with

information and interactive displays on the landscape and geology of the area, two circular trails for different abilities, a car park and toilets. You can teach the kids all about rock formation and the stunning landscape – and may learn a thing or two yourself!

Visit: www.knockan-crag.co.uk

Highland Wildlife Park (nearest youth hostel: Aviemore)

The Highland Wildlife Park allows you to see Scottish wildlife and endangered animals from around the world in a spectacular highland setting. As well as the UK's only Polar Bears, the park is home to Amur Tigers, Wolves, Scottish Wildcats and many other exciting carnivores. As well as birds, from the Capercaillie, to the Eurasian eagle owl, you can also see hoofed mammals (including camels and bison), monkeys, red squirrels, red pandas and many more.

Visit: www.highlandwildlifepark.org.uk

For further information about SYHA Hostelling Scotland or to book a hostel, please visit: www.syha.org.uk



Scottish
Outdoor
Education
Centres



You'll be amazed at how we can create programmes to meet your specific needs.

We provide programmes to develop confidence, improve team work, health and well-being, communication skills, excitement and achievement, enterprise skills...

Let us help you meet all of your GIRFEC and CfE outcomes.

We have experience of and welcome many types of group: university, youth, school, holiday and music are just a few.

"Our stay was excellent, as usual. We laughed all week, the food was excellent and plentiful, and for most of our young people, they achieved much more than they anticipated"

Dominic Everett RNIB

Our centres:

- Belmont, Meigle, near Dundee
- Broomlee, West Linton, near Edinburgh
- Dounans, Aberfoyle, near Stirling

**Scottish Outdoor Education
Centres**

Tel: 01899 221115
info@soec.org.uk www.soec.org.uk



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