

The Outdoor Partnership NEWSLETTER



Club Focus - Tamar River Sailing Club

This Dinghy Sailing Club is an active and enthusiastic club on the East bank of the Tamar, just South of the Tamar Bridge in Plymouth.

With around 270 members and lively and well supported yacht, dinghy and cadet sections, and yachts racing weekly over the summer months, this is indeed a busy club! So when they came across six individuals who were keen to get involved and volunteer with the club, they were welcomed with open arms!

By working closely with Stuart Jones, their new development officer in Plymouth, they were able to put together a programme to support the training and development of these new volunteers, who had some, but fairly limited, sailing experience. Stuart, being highly experienced in helping sailing clubs, was able to identify a source of funding to get the volunteers trained sufficiently, and created an autumn training plan for them, alongside the club. This involved getting all six volunteers trained through the necessary First Aid, Safeguarding, Power Boat handling and RYA Dinghy instructor courses, with an aim to get them ready and raring to go by spring; all set for a summer of sailing in 2024.

With a hugely popular Children and Youth programme, these new volunteers will be invaluable to the club to allow this programme to thrive and grow. It's also great to see that two of the new volunteers are young people themselves (16-18 years old), meaning the youngsters involved get some brilliant role models to look up to, and to perhaps follow in their footsteps later on, strengthening the future of the club and their volunteers for the next generation.

Swansea Bay Region

It was great to be a part of the 3 day Adventure Festival at Yr Egin in Carmarthen last week. Sioned Thomas and Bethan Logan attended on the Friday and set up their stall. They then had the opportunity to watch the fantastic film 'Adra' by the Cold House Collective about the climbing scene in Llanberis. This was followed by a talk from Danielle Sellwood, from Find it Film, all about inclusivity in the film making industry. After lunch there was a talk from Tori James, the first Welsh woman to climb Everest!

Sioned said, "It was fantastic to hear all the speakers and listen to them speak in a panel group discussion. On Saturday I got to do a talk about how I got into the outdoor industry, and my work with The Outdoor Partnership. I also showed 2 short films created by the students at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's Adventure Filmmaking course about our work. A huge thank you to Yr Egin for staging such a brilliant event! We look forwards to next year!"



News from our Regions

Gwynedd

We start this newsletter with the Gwynedd region, and with Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle school at the top. During the week of March 18-25 this year, the Gwynedd Schools' Canoeing Competition was held for the second consecutive year. With the expertise of Jonathan Davies from Canwio Cymru, and financial support from the Nuclear Restoration Services, teams from years 9 and 10 competed for the 2024 Champions title.

They were fortunate with the weather with some warm and sunny days helping the competitors to perform to a very high level. Each day started with a briefing on the order of the day, followed by a paddling session and warm-up on land. Everyone then entered the water and had time to get used to the boat before the timing started.

The competitors were given two opportunities to race over a distance of 100m with all the times added and then divided by the number of team members. At the end of the competition there was time to hold crazy races and to try out performance boats such as the surfski.

It soon became clear that it would be tight between the three leading schools and the times reflected this, with mere seconds between 1st and 3rd places. Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle were this year's victors, clinching the title from Ysgol Friars in 3rd, with Ysgol Ardudwy coming 2nd. Hopefully, a number of the competitors will decide to join the North Wales Calm Water Paddling Club having had a taste of the sport.

Thank you to Jonathan and the volunteers from the North Wales Slalom Club and Conwy Canoe Club for their help throughout the week.

In other news, the Gwynedd Wellness Walks programme continues with two First Aid courses running through March. The volunteers only have their Lowland Leader Assessments left before they will be qualified and ready to start leading their own walks.

There were three activity days for children at Plas Menai, with funding from the Gwynedd Youth Services. All three days were fully booked and were enjoyed by over 50 participants.

Finally, All Afloat funding has been secured for Dyfi Yacht Club to deliver another series of learn to sail sessions for local children. Planning work will start in April between the Club and the Outdoor Activities Development Officer for Gwynedd.



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Coventry

Coventry successfully applied for funding through one of their stakeholders, Think Active, to enable them to run a This Girl's Adventure program in conjunction with the School Games Organisers and Warwick University Climbing Hub. The first cohort is looking to start in May, with a second cohort starting in September, each running for 8 weeks and giving 16 females aged 16-18 from deprived areas of the city the opportunity to engage in climbing, an activity in which they aren't often represented, and which has several significant barriers.

They hope to create a new community of young female climbers in the city, as well as connecting the participants to the wider climbing community, with the ultimate aim of getting some of the young people trained and qualified as climbing instructors and leading to a lasting legacy in Coventry.

Coventry was recently successful in a funding bid with Voluntary Action Coventry – as part of this application, they were at the Potters Green Community Fair, representing the Outdoor Partnership and running some engagement activities to raise awareness of who The Outdoor Partnership Coventry is – “Guess the Weight of the Rucksack” was very popular, with a very wide range of answers! They made lots of new connections with organisations and volunteers in the city. They are participating in a second community awareness day happening on May 8th at Jubilee Crescent Community Centre and look forward to seeing as many people as possible attending.



Gwent Region

It's been a busy start to 2024 in Gwent, with a great variety of projects being facilitated to increase access to outdoor activities for all. During the Easter holidays, their young carers' adventure programme supported over 60 young people from Gwent to experience climbing, paddling and caving. The bad weather didn't stop them getting out and, thanks to the team at Caerphilly Adventures, they got to explore some amazing places along the way.

In partnership with Crosfield Outdoors, they delivered a women's night navigation course on the Bloreng to celebrate International Women's Day. It was a fantastic evening of off-piste bracken bashing to find micro features on the map, while raising over £200 for the Longtown Mountain Rescue Team.

The Adventure Therapy programmes with the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service, Adferiad and Gwent Integrated Autism Service are due to begin in May, so there are many more exciting opportunities to come!



News from our Regions

Ayrshire

Everyone had a great day at the River Ayr on Sunday 17th March, with the official opening of the new River Ayr access steps and the St Ayles skiff naming ceremony with Dame Katherine Grainger. The boat has been a three-year project and started in 2021 with local volunteers and pupils from Ayr Academy. It was a Covid period project supporting mental health, social isolation and skills development. The new Ayr Skiff named “Selkirk Grace” will join the six other Ayrshire boats built over twelve years and supported by The Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme and The Outdoor Partnership from 2020. A second skiff which is nearing completion will be launched after the school exams are over in June.

The River Ayr access project has been five years in the planning and development from the early days of the Come and Try sessions at the river, offering canoeing and rowing and sculling with the Scottish Rowing Association. It's a fantastic joint project with multiple partners, including Thriving Communities - Community Learning & Development South Ayrshire, Active Schools, Scottish Rowing, Kyle Kayak Club and the University of the West of Scotland

They are looking forward to future rowing and water sports developments on the Ayr. The Selkirk Grace skiff will be based at South Ayrshire Council's Dolphin House Outdoor Centre for young people to get on the water.

The Outdoor Partnership, Ayrshire are also very happy to receive funding from Hillhouse Quarry and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award along with TOP Ayrshire Adventure funding to deliver a 5-day adventure sailing Gold DofE residential course for Ayrshire DofE pupils. The June voyage will start in Inverkip in Ayrshire and sail for the next five days around the Mull of Kintyre and up on the west coast of Scotland to the fantastic “Gateway to the Isles” town of Oban. Young people will explore the Firth of Forth, the Inner Hebrides, Isle of Islay, Jura and Mull before departing at Oban. Pupils will experience sailing on “Taiping” (a sixty foot trans-Atlantic yacht) and receive instruction in navigation, sail training, helming and teamwork. The yacht will sail in areas of natural beauty and will see Scotland's magnificent marine life with bottlenose dolphins, basking sharks, whales and puffins.

TOP Ayrshire also wish to thank Ocean Sailing Scotland for a very generous charter discount, along with our other funders which enable their young students to experience this great opportunity.



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Central South Wales

There was a great day at the IOL Cymru Conference held at Atlantic College, Llantwit Major in Central South Wales. The Outdoor Partnership had a lovely stall, where they had some wonderful merchandise to give away and had time to chat to heaps of teachers and outdoor professionals about all things 'outdoors'. It was a full day with a presentation by Gethin, from Bangor University, on behalf of The Outdoor Partnership, on the upcoming Adventure Learning Framework. Leila Connolly (Development Officer for Central South Wales) was able to attend and check out some of the interesting and informative presentations and workshops on offer. Cardiff's Local Authority Outdoor Centre manager Andy Meek (who has recently retired, but will be forever active!) was presenting on behalf of AHOEC – providing high quality outdoor learning experiences. The AHOEC is an association of leaders in outdoor learning – most of these leaders hold senior positions in outdoor education provision across the UK. They discussed how they help group leaders to prepare and plan outdoor education-based visits by providing a measured and appropriate approach to the management of risk, an approach supported by RoSPA and the HSE. One local primary school from Barry, in the Vale of Glamorgan, had sent half a dozen teachers to attend, and hats off to them for giving up their Saturday to come to work on how to engage their students more with outdoor learning. Their motivated head of school wants to see all their students having the same outdoor opportunities and has a great team actively working on this vision.



With the schools still in focus, Leila also attended the Cardiff Local Authority Outdoor Learning Event, held in Forest Farm, Cardiff, and, according to Leila, "The day was spent discussing Outdoor Learning – theories, why and the benefits. Invited by Cardiff Commitment and the head of curriculum to present, I presented on Orienteering. It was in good contrast with the focus on forest school and outdoor learning. Engaging with a number of teachers from a variety of schools offered an insight to the varying amounts of outdoor learning happening in these different educational establishments. Central South Wales has a brilliant and active 'South Wales Orienteering Club' (SWOC). The club is run by volunteers and organises affordable and accessible orienteering activities all across the region. There is a national governing body of orienteering and, from the school yard, just like many other sports, it can lead all the way to international league competitions. There are qualifications to gain and there is a great community surrounding the sport. It's not an expensive activity to set up in schools and can be varied to have cross-curricular links, so therefore it is a no brainer, as it's a fun and engaging activity for all to do on school grounds, in the local park or further afield. It's time to help these schools get orienteering!"

News from our Regions

Mid Wales

The Short Breaks funded Amser project for young carers across Wales has just been awarded another year's funding and so it seems a great time to look back and celebrate the adventurous outdoor activities which have taken place in Mid-Wales so far. Over 300 outdoor opportunities were offered to young carers and their families across Powys and Ceredigion over the last 8 months. The Outdoor Partnership have been humbled and inspired to hear the young carers' stories and to see their resilience and enthusiasm as they get stuck into various activities and take a break from their everyday routine. They have done everything from paddleboarding to e-biking, climbing to snorkelling and there is so much more to come!

The Mid-Wales Outdoor Partnership also wish to thank all of their providers for making these activities such an enjoyable experience - Crosfield Outdoors, Llain Activity Centre, Adventure Beyond, Icy Expeditions, Ieuencid Cambria Youth Cyf/Ltd, Peggy Beer, Leanne Bird, Wellbeing & Adventure and Dynamic Rock, and to the referral organisations Credu and Gofalwyr Ceredigion Carers who have been promoting and supporting their activities for their young carers.

The Inclusive Climbing Club sessions have also been continuing at Llangorse Multi-Activity Centre thanks to funding from Sport Powys and the Austrian Alpine Club. TOP Mid-Wales also thanked Llangorse's fabulous team of instructors with special thanks to volunteers Dean and Delyth who have been crucial to the success of the club. It was great to see regulars returning and improving their climbing skills and to welcome some new faces as well. There are still some places left on sessions from now until June, check out their events page on the website for dates and to book.

If you fancy finding out about upcoming projects and events to get involved with, there will be a multi-activity adventure programme for adults with additional learning needs in Powys coming up this summer as well as a Disability Sailing Day hosted by Llangorse Sailing Club on 8th June 2024. All dates will appear on the events page in due course. There will be bushcraft sessions for refugees and their host families taking place in August in Ceredigion, as well as young carers' opportunities in Powys and Ceredigion, including outdoor first aid and other courses for older young carers in Ceredigion.

