



Learning Without Walls Newsletter

May Edition 2019

**Annual Learning Without Walls
Conference 4th October 2019 at
Clandeboy Estate, Bangor**



This is a must for anybody serious about outdoor education.

Free for subscribing NIFSA Members.
£65 per person for non-subscribing members.

Learning Without Walls is the brainchild of Lady Dufferin, Patron of the Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA). The 2019 Annual Learning Without Walls Conference will open with a presentation from Professor Carmel O'Sullivan from Trinity College, Dublin. Workshops will be held in the beautiful grounds of Clandeboy Estate. Brian will give an update on new initiatives being rolled out in 2019 for members. Opportunities for

schools to showcase what they do and share good practice. Numbers are limited to 60, so book early. Places are restricted to 2 delegates from any one organisation. Environmental and educational organisations will have stands on display to inspire everyone. To find out more and register your place please click on the link below –

[Programme and Registration Link](#)

**Forest School visits to
Clandeboy Estate**



Clandeboy Estate has nearly 1,000 acres of beautiful woodland to explore. Why not come and have a forest school session with our experienced and qualified staff – Richard and Lorraine. A typical session lasts for two hours. Activities might include den building, woodland cooking, forest scavenging and much more

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If your organisation is a registered NIFSA Member it only costs £3 per pupil, non-members are £5 per pupil. For further information or to book please contact Richard on richard@learningwithoutwalls.net

NIFSA Membership

As a small independent charity operating in Northern Ireland we rely enormously on your membership.

Annual membership is £100 and we believe offers good value for money.

Follow the link to subscribe now!

<https://www.forestschoolawards.org/cgi-bin/main.cgi?page=NIFSAMembership;vat=1544014101>

What do you get for your membership?

- a) Reduced rate for Clondeboye estate visit - £3 per pupil (£5 for non-members).
- b) Access to Member's Section of the Forest School Awards website which gives information on outdoor lessons, research and much more.
- c) A section on the website exclusively for your own organisation.
- d) Heavily discounted forest school sessions at Clondeboye Estate, Bangor.
- e) Area to record Forest School activities and produce Eco-Schools Reports.

- f) Free attendance for 2 members to the annual NIFSA conference.
- g) Monthly Learning Without Walls Newsletter.
- h) Entry into the Nature Rangers programme to encourage you to do 6 Forest School sessions every year.
- i) Opportunity to train and mentor other staff within your organisation as Forest School Leaders for only £30 Open College Network registration fee.
- j) We are constantly developing new initiatives and forming new partnerships. We are currently working on an accreditation programme and other exciting programmes. Watch this space.

Forest School Family



Forest School Family events are held at the beautiful Clondeboye Estate on a monthly basis. Two events have taken place so far, with the next event taking place on Saturday 22nd June.

During each event there are lots of self-led activities to take part in, all based on free play as this is the best way for children to learn. Children can freely explore and discover new spaces which allows them to be imaginative and creative with their families. Why not have a go at den building, bug hunting, forest arts and crafts, use the

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swing and hammocks and play in the mud kitchen! There will be so much to do!

Our aim is to get as many families outdoors, so why not come and join in the fun!

Did you know that Forest School Family have our very own facebook page, keeping you up to date with all the latest events and some fun family craft ideas?

Follow the link below, give us a like and share our page with your friends.

www.facebook.com/NIFSForestSchoolFamily

International Mud Day will be held this year on 29th June. As soon as it rains, mud is everywhere, and it literally gets on everything. Mud is quintessential to the outdoors, and the outdoors mean fresh air and exercise. And so what if we get a little dirty?

Plenty of research has shown that coming into contact with a certain amount of bacteria is good for us, as it helps build up immunity, as opposed to living in a virtually sterile environment, which makes our bodies very vulnerable. So what are you waiting for? Let's get dirty!

Why not celebrate international mud day this year in your local park, forest or green spaces? There are countless ways to celebrate International Mud Day, but all of them have one thing in common: you have to get dirty.



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Take a look at the link below for some fab family muddy ideas.

<https://mothernatured.com/nature-play/mud-play-for-kids/?fbclid=IwAR3XjGnmV2bDuJK85ZK8IapEZ9BDJQRKMyd7lxMA0ypjESC0GzIkF8lsUs>

Clandeboyce Nature Rangers

Bugs, cygnets and dandelions!

This month at Clandeboyce Nature Rangers we have been enjoying the warmer weather (although not drier).

We were delighted to celebrate the new arrivals on the lake of seven new cygnets. We look forward to keeping an eye on them to see how they grow up of the next few months.

Foraging is one activity that the children loved getting involved with at the beginning of May after making some wild garlic pesto they were excited to see what else we could eat! Under careful supervision we pick dandelions and three-cornered leeks, brought them back to the forest and then cooked them in a tempura batter on the campfire. After some convincing it was a great success with the children, most saying the three-cornered leek was like eating an onion ring and confirming the theory that dandelions taste like dandelions.

This month we also welcomed two P1 classes from Glencraig integrated and Killmaine Primary, both groups were on the hunt for bugs around our forest space and then made their own bugs using natural materials. Some of the pictures were so creative and fantastic to see brilliant imagination.

Clandeboyce Nature Rangers were also delighted to host the International Play Association – NI branch Play gathering 2019. This was a fun-filled weekend of networking with play practitioners from across Northern Ireland. Participants even got to herd (imaginary) Clandeboyce cows!

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Our Summer Scheme has opened for bookings and we have had great interest so far. This summer we will be celebrating all things Clondeboye! Cows, painting, yoghurt and woodland will all feature. We will aim to spend 100% of our time outdoors in the forest on the Clondeboye Estate.

One of our more popular activities this month was creating stick men – the primary function for them is to guard our flourishing crops from any hungry critters that might be in the forest and so far they are doing a great job.

As we finish our first full year at Clondeboye Nature Rangers in the after-school we will continue to explore and investigate in the forest and look forward to see what the summer season brings – and also keeping an eye on our swans!



Networking workshop

We had a fantastic networking meeting on 23rd May at Clondeboye Estate, Lady Dufferin opened the event and hoped that this would be the start of an annual event. Representatives from public and voluntary sectors attended. We had delegates from environmental, education and health. Many discussions ensued but everybody was in agreement that Learning Without Walls is an important programme that could contribute significantly to encouraging children and young people to engage more with nature.



Lady Dufferin discussing some of the many issues at the Learning Without Walls networking meeting at Clondeboye Estate, Bangor.

Resources

Dublin City Council Parks and Biodiversity recently published this self-guided handbook for primary school teachers to facilitate the use of local parks as outdoor classroom. You can download it below:



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