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Summer 2008
 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Summer 2008 newsletter from the Ayrshire Forest Cluster.

Woodland Education News

A number of cluster group members have been involved in woodland education with primary schools around Ayrshire, we still need details and photographs from these to be able to promote the wider work of the group.

Sorn primary have been particularly active since it was confirmed the school is no longer under the threat of closure and have been visiting Sornbank Plantation as part of an 'enchanted forest' project.



Forest School Sub-Group Launched

A new Forest School Sub-group has been launched under the watchful eye of Peter Downes at Kelburn Country Centre to oversee the progression towards official Forest Schools being developed by the Ayrshire Forest Cluster. This also includes new members from Arran, as reflected in the fact that our logo has been modified to include the Isle of Arran!

Demise of CSV in East Ayrshire

Due to funding problems, there is no longer a CSV Give and Take project in East Ayrshire which has unfortunately seen one of our members, co-ordinator Anne Gold move to a different post. Many of the CSV volunteers had achieved some notable contributions towards FEI work around the area, something that will be very much missed.

New Forest Cluster Banners

We now have two new banners for any of our members to promote the cluster at events, one is a general Ayrshire Forest Cluster Banner, while the other is to promote Forest School. Contact us to book these out for events. There are a number of other things we are looking at for small ways to identify our members at events, from small flags to bunting or small signs.



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Artists Charcoal

We have been producing artists charcoal from some of the leftover willow at Sorn and these have been available for sale at events. Please contact us if you are interested in having any FEI merchandise for events in the future.



Youth Groups

The youth group in Sorn have expressed a keen interest in helping to harvest the willow crop, together with Yipworld in Cumnock.

Survivor 2008

The survivor project with Yipworld has once again taken place, this time at Pinclanty Forest. Further details and images are in this newsletter.

New Woodland Interpretation Panels

New educational panels have been delivered for Auchlin Mine Wood near Skares and Lainshaw Woods, Stewarton and are being installed.

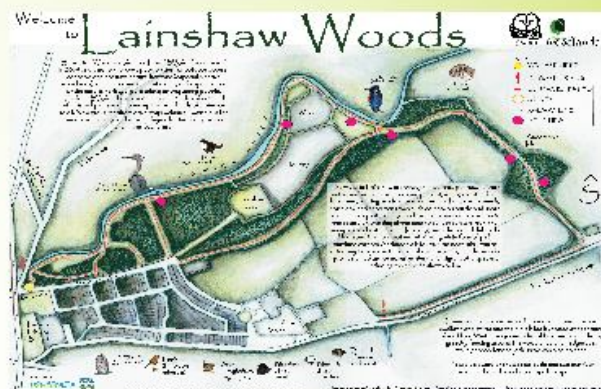
Website Contact Details

As discussed at our last meeting, we will be emailing members with a form to fill out to have short profiles, a photograph and contact details on the website for schools to contact our members direct. This is entirely voluntary and is only for our members who are happy to have their details promoted in this way.

Original Artwork and British Clip Art

Bored of searching for clip art to find only giraffes, mockingbirds and western californian scrub jays? - there is a new site which is dedicated to UK wildlife clip art and can be found at: www.wildbritart.com

We also have a lot of original artwork of UK birds, mammals, trees, seeds, insects and wildflower species which can be used as long as they are credited.



FEI Networking Day 2008

The FEI and Forest School networking day will take place on the 13th and 14th of November at Dalguise, Perthshire. Day 1 will focus on woods, forests and climate change, day 2 is getting creative with Forest School. In the past, we have had 2 places available free of charge for cluster group members so please contact us if you are interested in attending as a representative of the Ayrshire Cluster.

Arch Network Trip.

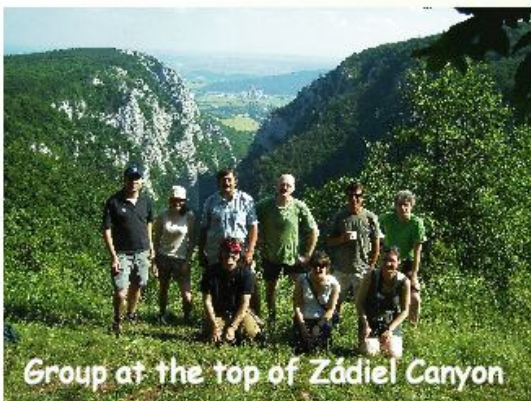
Eastern Slovakia, Mark Davies,
Secretary, Ayrshire Forest Cluster



Summer 2008

As part of the ArchNetwork nature exchange programme, I visited Eastern Slovakia in early June for a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding trip which looked at many varied aspects of woodland management, eco-tourism, woodland educational trails and aspects of the two UNESCO biosphere reserves within the region. After a slightly gruelling travelling day from involving Edinburgh, Birmingham, Bratislava and Košice airports, followed by a two hour minibus journey to Kezmarok in Slovakia, there followed some wonderful experiences of the slovakian landscape.

Day 1, after experiencing some beautiful areas of wildflower meadow, was a visit to Dobšina ice cave where the temperature dropped alarmingly as you descended and such an extensive cave system that would see you end up venturing into daylight in Hungary! This was followed by a stunning walk to the top of Zádiel Canyon, with sparkling burns, interpretation and stunning rock features.



Group at the top of Zádiel Canyon

The following day was one of the most amazing and breathtaking experiences i have known, with a series of cable car journeys to the summit of Lomnický Štít, around 8500ft! where your hair literally stood on end because of the static atmosphere and the long walk down provided amazing contrasts of luminous green lichen covered rocks, thick mist at times and snow covered pathways. The lower levels provided a complete contrast, with open parkland, areas of meadow and unusual coppicing examples.



Waymarking signs

There followed, in truth, a bit of a slog above the tree line in an unsuccessful attempt to view bears in the distance but did allow the sights & sounds of black woodpecker, nutcracker & traditional Slovakian sheep farming.



Lomnický Štít

Friday saw us venturing in to the very East of Slovakia, close to the border with the Ukraine, viewing the destructive power of the big storm in 2004 & the devastating effect this had on the whole woodland structure of the High Tatras mountains. Staying in Stakcin for the remainder of the trip, where communist tanks and monuments were still visible in the small town,



Storm damage in the High Tatras



Log stacks

A visit to an area of woodland where wild boar are raised offered lovely experiences of various bird species and wooden huts & structures! followed by a visit to a woodland education trail, where examples of traditional crafts were laid out along the route, including charcoal burning & horse logging.



Log cabin shelter



Charcoal burning



Salamander

There was also the amazing sight of orange and black salamanders slowly crawling their way through the forest floor together with violet & emerald green slugs, lovely birdsong and huge oyster mushrooms for breakfast!

The final day saw the plan to walk to Kremenec, the border of three countries, revised due to the weather, instead, walking through woodland to Riaba Skala or 'Grouse Cliff' where you have the strange feeling of walking along the border line between Slovakia and Poland, with spectacular views across the East Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, with the Ukraine also in the distance.

The forest paths are littered with lovely small features which denote drinkable spring water, something which is a nice touch in terms of eco-tourism, though it has to be said that it is clear that Biosphere Reserve status does not have quite the same level of importance that it could potentially have in Galloway & Ayrshire, as both National Park status and the Natura 2000 sites take precedence and the restricted access zones would understandably not work in terms of our access laws.



Survivor 2008

July 2008 saw the return of the Survivor project in partnership with Cumnock based Yipworld.com. After a successful visit to Glen Afton Woods in 2007, it was decided to move the project to Pinclanty Forest near Barr, where 10 young folk from Yipworld, together with leader Mark Kerr, Mark Davies and Alison Calcott from the Ayrshire Forest Cluster helped to create four stunning shelters built into the trees just off the top part of the new FEI learning trail.



After a few initial teething problems and once health and safety issues were covered and the group had their bearings about the location, the shelter building began, mainly using brush of spruce and some larch. We envisaged the guys and the girls maybe wanted to build separate structures! Instead, we ended with 4, one being a large open communal shelter, with 3 other small shelters, beautifully created around the trees with crawl through areas and sleeping quarters, resembling some form of ewok village in the trees! The guys demonstrated brilliant teamwork in creating the shelters and a small fire pit in the clearing was dug out, with dead wood collected for the evening and night.



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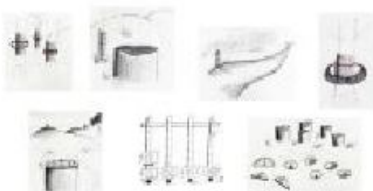
Pinclanty Forest Learning Trail

Worksheets for the Learning Trail at Pinclanty are complete and cover maths, literacy, environment and art, together with additional trail sheets for bird boxes and trees. These will be available as a downloadable resource on the website and it is hoped we can set a date in September or October for the official opening of the trail, once we have all remaining structures installed over the next few weeks. Further information and images are at www.eastayrshirewoodlands.co.uk/pinclantyforest.htm



Ayrshire Forest Cluster
Pinclanty Forest Woodland Learning Trail

Maths Trail



Ayrshire Forest Cluster
Pinclanty Forest Woodland Learning Trail

The learning trail is a short looped path, which ends from the car park and education shelter and crosses back down the main track, which provides access to the rest of Pinclanty Forest. The trail was developed with support from the Forest Education Initiative Partnership fund, together with Awards for All funding.



Each post along the trail can be used for different activities, for both formal and informal education. Worksheets are downloadable from www.eastayrshirewoodlands.co.uk for the different curriculum subjects. These include:

Maths Literacy Art Environmental Studies

Schools can arrange to pick up the relevant equipment/tracks by contacting:

East Ayrshire Woodlands on 01290 41073 on advance of a visit.

Additionally, there are informal woodland games along the trail, together with sensory rope trail further along the path.

Tree information panels are also along the route.

www.eastayrshirewoodlands.co.uk/education.htm

eastayrshirewoodlands@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

POST 8. BENCH VIEW



Look around you from the benches

Colour in the blank squares with as many colours as you can see in the.....

Sky

--	--	--	--	--	--

Trees

--	--	--	--	--	--

Vegetation - grasses, flowers, soil etc.

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Use grey pencil over the colours to create different shades if needed.

POST 4. BIRD SURVEY

Quietly and slowly walk in to the forest clearing, following the yellow marks on the trees so you can see the bird feeding station. Stand there for ten minutes and see how many birds you can count around the feeding station.

Try and identify any birds that you see (tick each one)

Coal tit <input type="checkbox"/>	Bluetit <input type="checkbox"/>	Great tit <input type="checkbox"/>	Robin <input type="checkbox"/>	Siskin <input type="checkbox"/>
Greenfinch <input type="checkbox"/>	Chaffinch <input type="checkbox"/>	Goldfinch <input type="checkbox"/>	Song thrush <input type="checkbox"/>	
Crossbill <input type="checkbox"/>	Wren <input type="checkbox"/>	Blackbird <input type="checkbox"/>	Linnat <input type="checkbox"/>	

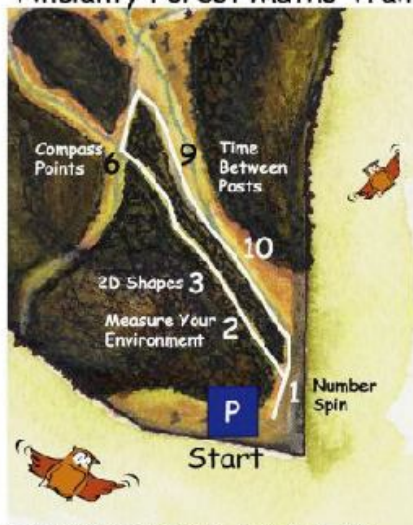
How many birds in total did you see?

How many different species did you see?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

See how many different birds you can find around your school grounds and find out the different things they eat

Pinclanty Forest Maths Trail



Post numbers 1,2,3,6,9 & 10