

# IOL National Conference MASTERC

The Strategy, Research and Leadership Masterclasses offered at this year's IOL National Conference touched on a range of subjects and 'hot topics' in current outdoor learning practice. These ranged from pedagogic approaches, outdoor learning, therapy and inclusion to practical skills and bushcraft technique, all of which can be related to the four areas of impact, touched on by Valerie Hannon in her keynote speech.

The Conference 2016 Masterclasses page on the IOL website has some downloads from presenters of Masterclasses.

Reported by  
Caz Decker



Global



National, community and local



Social and interpersonal



Intrapersonal

## Pedagogical Models for Outdoor Activities



*Developments in approaches to teaching outdoor activities in both residential centres and as part of the school-based curriculum.*

- **Presenter:** Graham French, Bangor University

**Overall aim:** This session allowed attendees to share in research findings concerned with the pedagogical approaches commonly observed in residential centres and those being developed for use in schools. Particularly important was the drawing together of the two strands of research to demonstrate how both components can support outdoor activities learning and teaching in schools. This allows outdoor practitioners, whether school or centre based, to tailor their approach to ensure one complements the other.

Delegates achieved an understanding of current pedagogic approaches to teaching outdoor activities used in residential centres; how outdoor activities can be delivered as part of a school-based curriculum and how residential centres and schools can support each other in the delivery of outdoor activities through a clear understanding of the pedagogical approaches in use.

## Urban Community and Outdoor Centre Partnership



*Lessons learnt from a successful and healthy long term partnership within a deprived BME community.*

- **Presenters:** Mark Williams & Adnan Zaman, Lindley Educational Trust

**Overall aim:** Sharing good practice and exploring innovative ideas of long term engagement

Delegates gained an understanding of the potential and benefits of long term community links, heard first-hand how Lindley Educational Trust successfully overcame cultural barriers and examined some examples of long term projects that involve centre staff and youth workers joining forces.

## The Findings & Implications of the Natural Connections Project



*The Natural Connections Project, its impact and how the project findings can be practically transferred to other situations, encouraging discussion around the methodology, impact and implications of the Natural Connections Project for the OL sector.*

- **Presenter:** Martin Gilchrist, Natural England

The Natural Connections Demonstration Project worked with 125 schools in areas of deprivation in South West England between 2012 and 2016. This major project supported teachers to use their local, natural green spaces for curriculum delivery, across all subject areas. The evaluation study and final report demonstrate the ways in which outdoor learning {OL} can impact on schools and pupils, and how a culture of OL can be generated, nurtured and sustained long-term. Further info and the Final Report can be found at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) – search 'Natural Connections'.

## Think Like an Olympian: Improve Resilience



*The psychological skills used by elite sportspeople that can be used by all of us to enhance achievement and personal resilience.*

- **Presenter:** Gwenda Ward

**Overall aim:** The social benefit of sport and outdoor activity is a hot topic, but research shows that merely taking part is not enough to build "character". This masterclass clarified the debate, identified the enduring life skills which can be overtly taught in the context of personal challenge, and discussed application in various contexts.

Delegates gained better understanding of mental toughness and its links to personal resilience, relevant mental skills and the ability to prioritise these in individual projects.

## A Can of Worms



*Demystifying Therapeutic Process in Outdoor Programmes.*

- **Presenter:** Andy Hardie, Venture Mor

**Overall aim:** As outdoor practitioners working on the edges and in the domain of emotional vulnerability, we have an ethical duty and responsibility to work within the boundaries of our skills and qualifications as much in this territory as we do in a technical one. This masterclass explored contemporary thinking and best practice, offering space to consider how, if and why this may, or may not, be a path for your organization to explore.

Delegates gained an understanding of parameters and characteristics of therapy, best practice approaches either side of the therapeutic boundary and developed knowledge of competencies and requirements for staff and programme content.

# LASSES - a review

## Leave More Trace



*Trends towards environmental citizenship in outdoor learning.*

- **Presenter:** Chris Loynes, University of Cumbria

**Overall aim:** To consider how to develop practice that engages participants as environmental citizens

Delegates reflected on personal practice, shared experiences and discussed ways of developing future environmental citizenship practice.

## The Science of Fire



*Making curriculum links when designing learning.*

- **Presenter:** Kev Palmer and the IOL Bushcraft Professional Practice Group

**Overall aim:** Looking at various well known fire lighting methods and grasping the chemical processes involved to make stronger links to the science curriculum.

The session involved a variety of ancient and modern methods.

## Much more than 'Studying Fields': The Broader Benefits and Potential for Field Studies



*An introduction to Field Studies and what Field Studies offers in the wider context of outdoor learning. The benefits for young learners, practitioners and providers and some guidance on the potential for introducing Field Studies programmes in a range of contexts.*

- **Presenter:** Tom Davis, IOL Field Studies Professional Practice Group

**Overall aim:** For anyone considering diversification of their Centre/Organisation, providing insight into how that might be achieved using Field Studies as a real example but with transferable suggestions in regards to approach.

Delegates gained an understanding of the breadth of provision that could be classed as 'Field Studies', awareness of the key challenges, barriers and benefits and insight into an approach to program development.

## Fun and Adventurous Analysis of Historical Spear Throwing



*Techniques & Making an Atlatl*

*Using spear throwing as a vehicle to practice the cycle of improvement.*

- **Presenter:** Nick Winder and the IOL Bushcraft Professional Practice Group

**Overall aim:** Making, then looking at the art of spear throwing and comparing how simple adaptations can increase the distance travelled.

Delegates gained knowledge of, made and used an atlatl, including a discussion about running sessions safely.



## Growth in Action



*Adventure sports and personal learning past the age of 65.*

- **Presenters:** Allison Inkster and Sharon Rosser. University of Central Lancashire

**Overall aim:** This workshop built on research into the social gerontology of the outdoors conducted at UCLan. The presentation showed that for some people retirement poses problems as their awareness of familiar places and routines change. However, for some involved in the serious leisure of adventure sport, this is a period of intra-personal growth in areas such as relationships with others, personal strengths, new possibilities, spirituality and an appreciation for life.

Delegates gained up-to-date knowledge of a changing demographic with an awareness of the positive role that adventure sports and the outdoors can play in the ageing process.

## We Believe in Inclusion – But Don't Want to Dilute the Adventure and Learning for the Other Participants



*The choices for including people with disabilities into mainstream centres.*

- **Presenter:** John Crosbie. IOL Adventure for All Professional Practice Group

**Overall aim:** To understand the range of philosophical approaches and delivery options for including people with disabilities into outdoor programmes without detracting from the adventure and quality of the experience for non-disabled participants.

Delegates gained knowledge of the different expectations of inclusion, a range of possible methods for including those with disabilities into outdoor programmes and an organisations' ability to justify their chosen position. ■



# The recent IOL National Conference

200+ Delegates  
25 Workshops  
18 Exhibitors  
11 Masterclasses  
7 Special Interest  
Gatherings  
2 Days  
3 Bushcraft Tents  
1 Keynote  
1 Boat  
0 Reasons not to  
come to the next  
one!



For reports of the Keynote and the Masterclasses at the Conference there are more feature pages in this issue of Horizons.