



NEWSLETTER

March 2023

Editorial

At last our Anniversary Conference went ahead. It was fitting that this should take place at bsj Wolfhausen, near Marburg which has been instrumental in the development of our EOE network.

In this Newsletter there are comments from the organiser and personal reflections from two participants. Plans are already underway for our next conference in Finland. We return after 12 years to the magic of the woodlands and lakes of the Youth Centre Metsäkartano. The conference theme tackles the vital questions of how we respond in OAE to the rapid changes and uncertainty we face in society and the threats to our planet.

The EOE network continues to flourish as individual and organisational membership grows. We thank our past chair, Irena Kokalj who steered the ship successfully through the Covid years. The new EOE Board was appointed in October 2022 and welcomes its new chair, Tomas Aylward from Ireland.

<https://www.eoe-network.eu>

Geoff Cooper, March 2023.

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**“The third attempt was a success”
– Comments on the 19th EOE**

**conference “Childhood & Nature”
in Marburg/Germany.**

Peter Wilde, one of the conference organisers writes:
Originally, the 19th EOE Conference was planned to take place in October 2020. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions the EOE Institute and bsj Marburg as the conference host were obliged to postpone twice. Finally, over 70 participants from 15 different countries came together from 19-21 October 2022 to take a deeper look into the theme of “Childhood & Nature”. There were more than 30 presentations, workshops and study visits that offered many interesting insights and led to discussions, inspiration and exchange of knowledge and ideas. At the same time there was a very warm and outstanding atmosphere that helped to renew contacts and to benefit from EOE networking. This was a special conference to celebrate 25 years of EOE and we took the opportunity to look back on decades of exploring adventure outdoor education and experiential learning on an international scale.



Josh Bennett, an environmental writer, educator and podcast host comments:

"Returning to Marburg and the bsj after many years of absence was a tremendous opportunity to tune into a familiar culture and place that I had once called home. It was a great time to revisit and renegotiate longstanding concepts, perspectives and themes that transcend in the world of Outdoor and Experiential Education. It was also a great opportunity to see how the field and practitioners have evolved particularly in these past few years of environmental and social change. With a renewed sense of the EOE landscape, I look forward to learning what progress and collaboration emerges at the gatherings in Finland, Italy and beyond!"



My Top Picks from the “Childhood and Nature” 19th EOE Conference.

Jari Kujala has been a member of EOE since 1998 and he was an active Board member for many years. Here he offers his thoughts on EOE and his personal “top picks” from the Conference presentations.

He writes: EOE is like a river where people and ideas come together and flow. There is deep respect for diversity; values are based on promoting equality and opportunity. He says that at the Marburg conference some questions emerged: How should we educate the kids? What is our/their future? Which routes should be taken? What about sustainability? My top picks below are about fresh ideas that gave me inspiration to go on. At EOE gatherings there are always unexpected experiences that emerge.

Dr. Jule Hildman, Benefits of nature engagement and transformative competencies. Learning for self, society, and sustainability.

Jule is a Senior Research Fellow in Moray House UK. She starts with a big picture of OAE possibilities of what it means to develop transformational competencies. In her overview she lists research findings on nature benefits on preoperative (2-7) and operational (7-11) childhood ages. She thinks that the goals of OAE are about finding responsible, meaningful, and sustainable lifestyles. There are many methods to achieve this. Firstly, one must get in touch with nature. It is a social space to listen and watch and this allows new ideas

to emerge. The goals could be reached in collaboration by being

reflective and critical with thinking. Nature engagement starts with direct contact with green space. The natural benefits are huge.

My takeaways: Jule’s presentation helped me to think of how habits of mind could be organised and used in task-oriented problem solving strategies.

Prof. Svantje Schuman “Nature as process of discovery in the mode of leisure”

Svantje is a professor of didactics and leisure time studies in general Education in Basel. Svantje proposes that children are increasingly becoming unfamiliar with the real experiences in the world of multiple choices and models. To make it clear where she is coming from Svantje expresses her position with the words, “experience is the mother of all educational processes.” Being and becoming educated in this sense means applying multiple methods of processing nature experiences. This process of identification leads to a totally new set of requests for services. The process itself starts from “crises of leisure”. (Oevermann, 2009) From the point of Schuman (2022, 427) the goal of education should be autonomy of the subject. The field of education cannot be standardised, it must be adjusted to the unique situation of the child. When a child encounters new experiences, he or she can point out emerging problems that are inherently perceived. The solutions are found autonomously. Svantje’s message is that this type of problem-perceiving and autonomously thinking is of central importance for further development of humanity.

My takeaways: I can easily find Svantjes' risk of leisure -theory to be used in crisis-crisis, decision-making and developing problem-solving. I think that there are specific impulses to be followed. I have already planned to use her theories for my "how to deal with failures workshop" in Aalto University.

Dr. Gregor Torkar "The Science Backpack: evaluation of the first years and plans for the future"

Gregor is associate professor for biology education at the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Education. He talks about the concept of open science communities where the goal is to make science more approachable and meaningful. In his presentation he introduces a Multipliers-kit that is used by preschool and primary school education. Based on their Slovenian school curriculum this serves as a method to develop specific scientific skills of observing.

My takeaways: When I came back to Finland, I contacted straight away a planner in The Finnish Association of Nature and Environment Schools in Finland. I found out that they have already developed their own multipliers kit for the primary school students. Now we have some common understanding of how to use these tools to develop didactics of sustainable education.



EOE New Board 2023

The EOE Network held an AGM at the recent conference and members will like to know that you have a new Board to steer us over the next 2 years. They are:

Tomas Aylward (chair) Ireland

Richard Irvine (vice-chair)
Northern Ireland

Martin Lindner (treasurer)
Germany

Irena Kokalj (elected) Slovenia

Geoff Cooper (elected) England

Tanja Liimatainen (elected)
Finland

Chris Loynes (elected) England

Sibylle Roth (elected) Germany

Josh Bennett (co-opted) Norway -
to help us with virtual activities and
comms

Peter Wilde (co-opted) Germany -
as organiser of our recent
conference and a link with founding
member BSJ

Allesandro Bertolotti (co-opted)
Italy - as convenor of our conference
planned for Italy in 2024.

Our grateful thanks to Irena Kokalj
for chairing the Board for the last
few years! And best wishes to Tomas
Aylward as our new chair!

The Benefits of EOE

Tomas Aylward, the new EOE chair writes:

Here are a few reasons to join the EOE Network as an individual or organisational member:

- 1) Membership is free to individuals and organisations
- 2) By joining the network as a member you add weight to the voice of EOE when it advocates for education in the outdoors with other organisations and administrations across Europe
- 3) By joining you support the case for further EOE conferences for practitioners and academics to share their knowledge and practice
- 4) By joining you will have your say in how things should be organised and what priorities are set for the EOE Network

<http://www.eoe-network.eu/membership-application/>

Martin Lindner reports on the growth of EOE membership:

EOE members (report 2018 to 2023)

	Organisational members	Individual members	Members in total
September 2018	69	107	176
November 2020	89	133	222
September 2022	101	168	269
October 2022	103	174	277
March 2023	110	187	297

The EOE Network Facebook page now has over 1,400 members.

See: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/EOENetwork>

The European Network of Outdoor Centres (ENOC) a special interest group of EOE has over 300 members on its Facebook page. See:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/706196373082997>

Forthcoming EOE Conference at Youth Centre Metsäkartano, Rautavaara, Finland from 3-7 October, 2023

Theme: How to cope with the future?

What does outdoor and adventure education have to offer in this uncertain world?

Climate change, extinction of species and wars have created a world where it is difficult to trust anything or anybody. Uncertainty is affecting every individual, community and society. Global and local are now concretely blending and global events are affecting the way we buy our groceries, fill our tanks, and heat our houses. Reacting to crises and taking on board youngsters' reactions are big challenges to everyone working with young people. When we are building trust, we must be able to deal with our own emotions, to be safe adults and to open up hope for the future. There are special challenges in working with refugee youngsters and their



families. It is also a great challenge to give support to youngsters dealing with climate anxiety in a way that gives them tools to be active citizens and to build a more sustainable future.

With the theme "How to cope with the future?" we would like to invite youth workers, teachers, early childhood educators, social workers, therapists, immigrant social workers and researchers in the field to explore together how outdoor and adventure education and experiential learning could help to build sustainable future and to increase wellbeing.

We invite you to present your point of view, methods, ways of working, research and ideas relating to climate change and the environment and how we can increase holistic wellbeing and resilience. We would love to create a space where practitioners, lecturers and researchers meet and get to have a peek into each other's worlds.

Registration:

<https://zef.fi/s/uw86rqd4/>



Lasmuigh – A New Professional Practice Outdoor Journal for the Island of Ireland.

Stephen Hannon and Mairéad Cluskey write that they are preparing the third edition of Lasmuigh, a professional journal that aims to share good practice and research for those working in the outdoor sector on the Island of Ireland. The journal was set up to give a platform to recent research in this rapidly evolving sector and to create a greater awareness of the many innovative practices taking place across the island.

With a greater emphasis now on the importance of the distinctiveness of place and the acknowledgement in outdoor practice and research of each place's social, cultural, geographical, and historical richness it was felt that the time was opportune to launch this journal. It provides a means of communicating and celebrating good practice on the Island of Ireland and at the same time does not wish to become parochial or inward looking. In this context we would love to hear from those working outdoors in other countries and perhaps explore how we could share articles, ideas and experiences.

The name 'Lasmuigh' is the Irish word for 'outside' and was selected because it sidestepped the debate of outdoor education versus outdoor learning and was broad enough to be inclusive of all those who share the outdoor setting for experiences be they recreational, developmental, educational, or therapeutic. At an early stage of development, it was also decided to focus on a *professional practice* journal as there was probably insufficient material for a purely academic journal but also a requirement for something more substantial than a newsletter.

At a very early stage of development the issue of values became important and in discussion values were identified that are rooted in exploring encounters in nature that facilitate empathy and connection, which inspire engagement, challenge existing assumptions, and foster activism that is beneficial to nature and society.

With each issue we have expanded both the journal and the readership. The journal and the accompanying Lasmuigh Podcast are free and no advertising is included. As a new journal we have had plenty of teething problems using free publishing platforms and free websites however we are finding our feet now. Central to our development has been a strong editorial panel consisting of experts in the fields of education, environmentalism, inclusion in sport and wilderness therapy from across the island of Ireland. We have been influenced in terms of development and set up by Horizons in the UK and Pathways in Canada

We welcome submissions that engage with the broad range of those who work in the outdoor sector including articles on research, professional practice, literature and book reviews, and poetry and artwork relating to the outdoor sector. We would be interested in hearing from potential contributors from across Europe. See:

<https://lasmuighjournal.mailchimpsites.com>



BOOK REVIEW- "Wild days - Outdoor play for young adventurers" by Richard Irvine, GMC publications.

Sibylle Roth, an EOE Board member, writes that the book is visually appealing and draws you in from its cover. It invites readers to take less time on screens and more in nature. It brings us back to the essential way of being outside with children.

I look at the book from two perspectives, first, as a mother of two who loves being outside and is always on the hunt for new and exciting activities and second, with the eyes of an outdoor education facilitator myself.

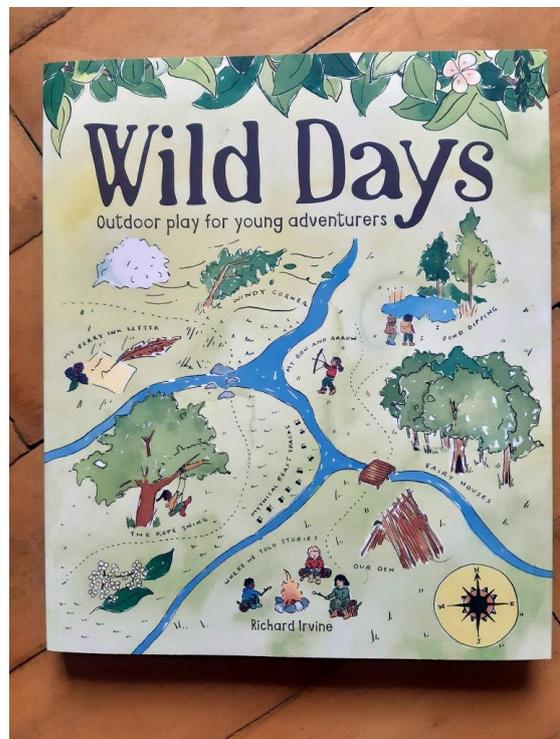
After the introduction, the book contains behavioural recommendations in the outdoors and some well-explained knowledge about materials, carving and knots. It is divided into three sections; making (contains all sorts of activities with natural materials); games and stories (with encounters with water, with fire and in the woods); and exploring (activities with greater educational content about nature and its elements, awakening your senses).

Each chapter is well thought through and is explained in easy to understand language (even if English is not your mother tongue), clear instructions are underlined with great animated pictures. I love that it is explained in a way that makes it accessible for everyone. For example, it encourages you towards sustainable living through borrowing and buying second hand.

It's written to show you how to grasp every opportunity on your doorstep, without fear, with curious eyes, but at the same time it makes you aware that you should be careful and considerate.

It is simple (already my three-year old felt drawn and intrigued by it) and yet very charming. I recommend it as a guide to celebrate the great outdoors with your children and young people as well as a good introduction for students to get an understanding of what outdoor learning through play can look like.

The book is currently available in English from GMC Publications, in German from L.V.Buch in Danish from Legind and in Czech from Grada.



Invitation for EOE AGM-meeting

Dear Members of the European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (EOE),

The Board of the EOE would like to invite all members to our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 5th October 2023, (6p.m.). The AGM will be held during the 20th EOE conference in Metsäkartano, Finland.

We are suggesting the following agenda:

1. Welcoming
2. Agreement to the Agenda
3. Report of the Board of the Institute and Discussion
4. Request for a change in the statute
5. Discussion of Future Perspectives and Future Conferences
6. AOB

Martin Lindner
(on behalf of the Board of the EOE)

Conferences and courses

Allesandro Bertolotti sends details of a conference on “Outdoor education: Rethinking places^[1] Transformative didactic perspective towards sustainable place” at Château-d’Oex Autumn University, 25-29 Sept. 2023.

<https://www.lessentiers.ch/evenement/outdoor-education-autumn-international-university-2023/>

Allesandro also describes a postgraduate course in Outdoor Education at the University of Bologna which began in this academic year. The course allows for the acquisition of specific expertise in both formal and non-formal education. Its duration is one full academic year, and the subjects taught are Outdoor Education Pedagogy; Developmental Psychodynamics and Health Psychology; Physiology of Body Development; Adventure Education; Law and Health; Human Body and Movement; Aesthetics and Landscape Education; and Outdoor Learning."

Planning is underway for the **2024 EOE Conference in Italy**. Updates on this will appear on the website and EOE Facebook page.

<https://www.eoe-network.eu>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/EOENetwork>

