

MEMBER OF THE MONTH –FIELD STUDIES COUNCIL (FSC)

Field Studies Council (FSC) – out and about in Northern Ireland!



Who are we?

We are an environmental education charity providing informative and enjoyable opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to discover, explore, and understand the environment.” We do this through offering subject based fieldwork for exam boards, outdoor activities and training courses.

Anything exciting happening?

Yes, the FSC has been a delivery partner for the OPAL (Open Air Laboratories) project in Northern Ireland since 2014. OPAL (<http://www.opalexplornature.org/>) is a “UK-wide citizen science initiative that allows **you** to get hands-on with nature, whatever your age, background or level of ability”. Working in partnership with our delivery partners at QUB, the FSC has been involved in developing a wide range of activities and resources, including delivering the exciting range of OPAL surveys which allow **you** to get closer to nature whilst being able to collect important scientific data. With the focus of the delivery being in the greater Belfast area, being out and about meeting people is an important side of the project and this has seen us take part in nature events and workshops that give us access to a wider audience. For example, FSC and QUB successfully participated in the RUAS in 2015 and has recently delivered a number of workshops to targeted schools through the guise of Northern Ireland Science week.

School children participating in the OPAL project



At our field centre in Derrygonnelly, our education staff have had a busy start to the year. Apart from delivering our curriculum linked modules, the receipt of tree packs from the Woodland Trust has seen all hands on deck as local schools have been recruited to assist in some vigorous planting; the aim of our planting project being to encourage wildlife, protect our landscape against tree disease and to create lovely woodland areas for everyone to enjoy for years to come. Pupils and teachers from the two local primary schools, St Patrick’s PS and Derrygonnelly Controlled PS, participated in a cross community tree planting bonanza. Many of the species planted included oak, thorn and hazel. This was a fantastic way to get young people hands on with nature; learning through first-hand experience!



*Tree planting at our field centre in
Derrygonnelly*

So, just a flavour in terms of what we have been doing. If you would like to find out more about any of our schools programmes or the OPAL project, why not visit our website for more information (<http://www.field-studies-council.org/centres/northern-ireland.aspx>). We are always happy to hear from you!

Shannon McGrath & Avril McCollom