SINNG volunteers scoops star prizes!

Our volunteers have been very successful winning awards recently. Jay Minuti was awarded the Plymouth University Award for Cornwall College Student of the year at the recent graduation ceremony. Her academic success was noted as well as her commitment to SINNG & her STEM ambassador work. Very well deserved.

Tracey Twomey won the Green Award at the Cornwall College Student Star Awards. Tracey has shown a huge commitment to volunteering with SINNG both at practical events & STEM workshops. Amy Jones was runner up in the same category. Congratulations to you both.

The SINNG team has been nominated for an award at the upcoming Staff Star awards. This is testimony to the huge number of hours volunteers put in to the project. Well done to you all.

SINNG project coordinator Nicola Morris has been awarded the prestigious title of STEM ambassador of the year award for the South West for her work promoting science technology engineering and maths.

Nicola, along with colleagues from Cornwall College Newquay & student volunteers from SINNG, educate young people about invasive non-native species, the impacts they have on the environment and the damage they cause to waterways. Nicola was one of only five people in the South West to be given the award at the ceremony held as part of the Big Bang South West event at Exeter University. Nicola said “I love being an ambassador and project coordinator for SINNG. I enjoy educating others about our environment. It is a real passion, so to receive an award for doing something I enjoy is fantastic”.

Dr Andrew Smart head of Cornwall College said “Nicola’s work as a project coordinator for SINNG is inspiring. Nicola and her team of Newquay students have visited many schools and have attended lots of community events to help educate children and the public about the hazards of invasive non-native species. Nicola is a key member of the team at Cornwall College Newquay and really deserves this award.”

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Boscastle Festival
By Jay Minuti, SINNG Volunteer

SINNG volunteers had great success at Boscastle Food, Arts and Crafts Festival in Valency Field, helping represent some of the wide range of talents and interests around the village.

The sun stayed out and the rain stayed away making the festival a great success with over 3000 happy (& warm!) visitors. Alongside apple pressing and archery, the SINNG road show was part of the festival’s ‘Green Scene’ which as a festival first, hosted a series of fun and interactive learning events along the banks of the river.

The Green Scene area attracted hundreds of visitors of all ages over the weekend and SINNG volunteers manned the stand to educate the public in a fun and friendly way and offer heaps of advice on invasive species. Lots of interactive activities proved to be a success with the visitors including the ‘Alien Invaders’ game which was played with visiting children, a mobile pond with freshwater for invertebrate identification using microscopes, invasive pond plant identification and information and advice on gardening without invasive species.

The entire weekend was a huge success with lots of interest from the public on a range of different topics connected with invasive species. People visiting the stand went away armed with information booklets and leaflets to assist them in the management of their gardens and ponds - without the use of harmful invasive plants. Visitors were encouraged to send in their own reports of any invasive plants and animals found in the area to the SINNG recording page; http://www.sinng.org.uk/submit-a-report/

The event ran wonderfully and was exceptionally well organised enabling the SINNG team to do what they do best, encourage interest and supply essential information on the topic of invasive non-native species removal for the good of our native wildlife and ecosystems. SINNG would like to thank Malcolm Baker and the Green Scene team at the festival for all their help and support making for a fantastic weekend.
Cracking conservation course coming to Cornwall College!

Starting from September 2014,
For anyone eligible over 16,
Exceptional staff and SINNG expertise;
Enhance your understanding of species,
Mitten crab, mischievous mink,
How do they threaten natural synch?
Develop prowess in practical skills,
Explore and examine our Cornish hills,
Wondrous wildlife, scenic sea,
Nowhere else beats Newquay
It is the perfect study location,
for Coastal Ecology and Conservation

For more information contact: 0845 22 32 567

Or visit the website: http://www.cornwall.ac.uk/courses/coastal-ecology-and-conservation-city-guilds-90-credit-diploma-level-3
Field work

Join us for our regular fieldwork sessions at various locations around Cornwall.

Our practical tasks are an essential element of SINNG's work & they are always great fun.

If you have not attended one of our field sessions before please do come along for an afternoon or even a couple of hours.

Work experience hours can be signed off.

Details of sessions are on the noticeboard or check emails for updates.

Ponds & pasties in St Kew

By SINNG Intern Suzie Kenny

SINNG volunteers travelled to Rose Cottage in St Kew and in return for instruction in aquatic plant identification & pond maintenance spent the afternoon assisting with the clearance of Trevor Renals (Senior Technical Advisor on invasive species, Environment Agency) wildlife pond. A variety of plants were removed including *Typha latifolia* and *Juncus effusus* both of which are native.

Whilst clearing the pond volunteers had the opportunity to observe many interesting invertebrate species including water scorpions (*Nepa cinerea*) and caddis fly larva.

As well as having the opportunity to assist with the pond clearance, the volunteers learnt a great deal about the successful management of both native and invasive species in order to maintain a healthy pond. Trevor’s pond was the perfect place to learn as it is an example of best practice and is home to a variety of native plant species.

Overall the afternoon was a great success, Trevor’s pond was cleared, the volunteers learnt a great deal and were treated to free pasties and chocolate cake for their efforts!!

Marine Conservation students have fun at Springfields

1st yrFdSc Marine Conservation students did a fantastic job removing heaps of the invasive pond plant curly waterweed. While the group learnt a lot about the impacts of invasive species they also made the most of the chance to pull on waders, get stuck in & had a great time. John & Sue Couser have expressed their thanks for the students hard work & SINNG will be returning on Wednesday 20th November so do come along & join in the fun!

www.sinng.org.uk
College celebrates Biology Week with return of STEM club Saplings. By Suzie Kenny, SINNG Intern

Alien Invaders have arrived!!!!!!

SINNG volunteers have been working hard to produce new resources for our school workshops. The games have now been professionally printed & are being sent out to schools & youth groups across the UK.

SINNG pairs is always popular & with the new Alien Invaders game, developed by Tracey Twomey, we now have a range of games & activities to entertain & educate our young participants.

We have more resources under development & if you would like to get involved please bring us your ideas. We are now working with ARKive to reach an even bigger audience so this could be a great addition to your cv.

Saplings, the after school STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) club, held at Newquay’s Atlantic Centre, launched its new programme this week. To help celebrate Biology Week children from local primary schools came along and had a great time while learning about science. At the launch party kids were encouraged to get involved by writing their names in invisible ink (lemon juice), playing with “walking water” where water coloured with blue and yellow food dye walked down kitchen towel and mixed at the bottom to form green water. The session ended with a scavenger hunt around the Atlantic Centre looking for a variety of objects and was a great success.

Saplings is jointly run by FdSc Wildlife, Education and Media students and SINNG volunteers - all STEM ambassadors. In the months to come children will have the opportunity to learn about many different areas of science. Activities will include learning about invasive species and the effects they can have on the environment, looking at sponges, jellyfish & worms & special guests who will bring a range of cool science activities for children to take part in.

For more details of Saplings or to volunteer please email elaine.roll1@cornwall.ac.uk

If you want to become a STEM ambassador & help inspire young people in science there will be a STEM induction at Cornwall College Newquay on Thursday 21st November. Please email Nicola to find out how to register for this.
Brownies & Rainbows enjoy pond dipping

Brownies & Rainbows from Camelford had a great time with SINNG at their local pond learning about what lives there. As well as finding out about the invasive plants which SINNG have been busy controlling, the girls took part in a freshwater bug hunt & took great delight in finding out exactly what is living in the pond.

Right: Brownies taking a keen interest in the inhabitants of the pond

Big Bang South West 2013

By Suzie Kenny, SINNG Intern

SINNG certainly made a bang when they returned to the Big Bang South West at Exeter University this year. 2000 secondary school students from across the South West of England attend the yearly event which includes competitions testing their skills & knowledge in Science Technology, Engineering & Maths. They all had a great time taking part in the various activities organisations such as SINNG put on for them.

Our activities included playing the games made by SINNG (that’s right pairs aren’t just for primary school kids!!) and identifying both our native invertebrates and invasive plant species using microscopes. In addition both pupils & teaching staff picked up leaflets providing more information about the many different types of invasive species living among us.

Everything went without a hitch, the day was brilliantly organised and both the pupils and teachers were keen to learn more about invasive species and their various impacts. Once again the event proved very useful for networking & we have since been contacted by even more schools form across the south west asking about school workshops and our education packs, which we have currently finished putting together and are now sending out.

www.sinng.org.uk
Scouts shout out “there’s only one Stuart!”

The beautiful grounds at Pencarrow House, nr Bodmin was the venue for this year’s Kernow Jamboree 2013 – The international Scout & Guide Jamboree. Scouts, Guides, Explorer Scouts & Ranger Guides aged 10-26 from around the world including units from as far afield as Scotland, Cornwall, Canada & Africa camped on the estate & took part in a range of activities.

Overall there were nine activity stations incorporated into a 6 day programme allowing scouts and guides to spend three hours in each. SINNG were responsible for the Eco zone alongside a science teacher visiting from Cambridge, Canada. Eco Zone activities included plant identification & abundance surveys, removing tree protectors and freshwater invertebrate surveys within the stream and pond. The site had previously been infested with Parrot’s Feather which had been cleared so we were keen to ensure that there were no remaining plants or any other alien plant invasions.

As well as learning about the impacts of invasive species the Scouts & Guides also learnt about the importance of good bio-security & demonstrated this well, cleaning all the equipment after getting rather muddy in the ponds. The mud was one of the reasons the children enjoyed our activities so much & many were heard to say “this is the best” & “science is cool!” Result! Nicola, Elaine and I represented SINNG & throughout the week 1300 children contributed to surveys of the ponds and stream as well as clearing fallen trees.

The week was a great success & detailed lists of plant abundance and invertebrates were drawn up & sent to Lady Molesworth St Aubyn & her estate team.

Report by Stuart Edwards

Editors’ note: Stuart omits to say that despite never having taught before he did a fantastic job running sessions & even had a fan club at camp!

Left; Sea Scouts making the most of the opportunity to get stuck in to some pond management.

Left; Stuart Edwards teaching a group of Scouts

Right; Nicola with an Explorer troop

www.sinng.org.uk
Your Chance to shine!

Question: WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM SINNG? We carry out plenty of work locally but if you ever had a hankering to work in the New Forest or write for a national publication this is your chance. Email me with your ideas & I will do my best to help make things happen.

We are working with ARKive & have plans to film with BBC Countryside so now’s the time to get involved.

Winter may be here but there is still work to do!! Check out the events page & let me know which you want to take part in. Don’t forget to keep an eye on the website & like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

Go Native For Cornwall!
By Stuart Edwards, SINNG volunteer

Alien invaders were the target for SINNG students who helped launch the new native pond plant range at Penrose Water Gardens, Shortlanesend. In a bid to reduce the impacts invasive species have on native wildlife a perfect partnership has been struck with the Gardens - SINNG runs community awareness and educational workshops, and regular student parties visit the gardens to remove any pesky invasive plants out-competing the beautiful lilies the gardens pride themselves upon. There are 5 aquatic plants which the government have banned from sale from April 2014 and others which whilst not subject to the ban also have an adverse impact on native species.

Penrose’s Go Native range marks an exemplary step in reducing the spread of alien pond plants by offering suitable substitutes for the invasive plants. Penrose now only sell native aquatic plants including Water Crowfoot (Ranunculus aquaticus) which is a great native pond plant.

Students armed with grappling hooks removed 30 wheelbarrows full of aliens such as Parrot’s Feather & Nuttall’s Waterweed. The mighty task involved gearing up into chest high waders and venturing into the ponds to remove as much as possible which were added to the compost heap in preparation for its future role in growing produce for the Lily Tea Rooms.

The launch week gave us chance to promote the new range of plants and raise public awareness & a display of games and information sheets were on show. This was manned by a student volunteer offering a friendly smile and advice to customers intrigued by the new range. It also gave the crew chance to leap into the ponds at their favourite gardens & tearooms.

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Diary of events

Those in **GREEN** are for SINNG volunteers who are STEM ambassadors. Those in **BLUE** are for all SINNG volunteers. A **Red P** indicates a public event.

**November**

20\(^{th}\) – Secondary school workshop at Trevisgals 8.00am-12.30pm

*20\(^{th}\) – Field work at Springfields pony centre St Columb 12.30-5pm (Minibus leaving college at 12.45 or car share later)

*21\(^{st}\) – Pond clearance at Chapel Amble nr Wadebridge 9-11. Clearance work in college pond 1-3pm.

21\(^{st}\) – STEM ambassador induction Please register first at [www.stemnet.org.uk](http://www.stemnet.org.uk) 5-7pm

27\(^{th}\) – Field work Penrose Water Gardens 1-5pm (Minibus leaving college at 1pm or car share later)

28\(^{th}\) – Clearance work in college pond 10am-4pm

**December**

3\(^{rd}\) – After School STEM club Christmas party! 3.30-5pm

11\(^{th}\) – SINNG school workshop at Penryn College 12-1pm

Email Nicola for details of transport which is provided for some events. If you are keen to help but can’t make a whole session please email as even a few hours will make a HUGE difference.

SINNG is you guys so please let me know which activities you are able to take part in. For more details about any of the events listed or offers of help please email:

nicola.morris@cornwall.ac.uk

More activities are being added regularly so please check emails for details.

[www.sinng.org.uk](http://www.sinng.org.uk)