



## **ORIEL DAVIES GALLERY**

**Following WALKING NEWTOWN'S  
'Short Stroll 9 Let's Play, Newtown Route'**

### **MINDFUL WALK ~ CREATIVE ADVENTURE 10 ACTIVITIES**

**As part of Where the Severn Smiles  
a project promoting  
wellbeing and nature**

Created by

***doodlebug***

aka Artist Rebecca Finney

*Commissioned by Oriel Davies in partnership with Open Newtown.  
Part of a Welsh Government funded project 'Where the Severn Smiles'  
Connecting people to green places in and around Newtown.*



Hello! I'm an artist whose art is based around land, place and nature. I am delighted to have been invited to suggest some activities based on the Let's Play stroll around Newtown park. This is such a charming space to spend time in. It is full of interesting aspects ~ trees, plants, the river, wildlife, views & constructed features; great places to sit/think/create.

The route is short, so it is possible to walk it frequently ~ taking time to notice the difference the seasons, weather conditions and times of day make to your surroundings. There are some lovely safe play spaces along the way, ideal for adults looking after children ~ you could do the activities with the youngsters or leave them to play and find a creative space for yourself close by.



The activities in this pack are not aimed at a particular age group, you don't need to have any artistic experience. There is a mixture of exercises, some just to look, listen and notice; some with making marks; others playing with materials that you find on your amble. I have designed activities with places along the Let's Play route in mind, though you could easily take the materials and ideas along on any walk to make it a creative adventure.

Please don't feel that you have to do ALL the activities in one go. Try some looking/listening first, warm-ups, and then when you have tuned into your surroundings you will feel in a good frame of mind to get doodling. Tailor selected activities to suit the weather conditions or the amount of time you have – you could have a short mindful stroll or an afternoons creative adventure. I can't promise that you'll be better at art after practising these activities (though you probably will), but you will definitely look at the world around you with fresh eyes; notice more, experience more, enjoy more.

To try the activities outlined in this booklet you will need some basic materials to work with, something to draw on and something to draw with. I have listed some other materials that you might find useful for your walks and to continue back at home. You don't need to have anything too fancy to still get some great results!

**As part of the project Oriel Davies are supplying a sketch book and materials pack free.  
Order online ~ available at the gallery or by post ~ Limited stocks**

## **Materials**

**Surface to work on:**

- ~ **A5 sketchbook** e.g. Seawhite staple bound, for drawing/collage & capturing shadows
  - ~ **Loose sheets of file paper** that you would use in a printer.
- You could recycle paper that has printing on one side
- ~ **Piece of thick card/small clipboard**

**Framing device:**

Viewfinders for framing views & images (easy to make by cutting a small square or rectangle out of A5 sheet of card), phone/camera to frame images

**To draw with:**

- ~ **solid lead/graphite pencil & a chunky pencil** for drawing & rubbings
- ~ **water-soluble graphite/pencil crayon** for rubbings or filling in outlines to make inky washes with paint brush or water brush pen
- ~ **Wax crayons** for rubbings and adding colour
- ~ **Soft pencils 2B, 4B, 8B, rollerball pen, biro, or felt tip** for drawing & doodling
- ~ **Paint Brush or Water Brush Pen** with a broad round tip for adding water to water soluble pencils to make washes (can be used with coffee/tea/paint/ink too)

**Plus:**

Double barrelled pencil sharpener to keep things to the point  
Small white eraser for drawing a blank  
Small safety scissors for snipping leaves/cutting for collage  
Pritt Stick for sticking  
Small bulldog clips to keep things in place

**All the materials I have suggested are tonal (in black & grey) you may like to add a splash of colour of your choice with felt tips, pencils, crayons, paints, inks, strong tea/coffee....**

**The gallery shop sells a range of good quality materials that would be perfect for these activities:**

Seawhite staple bound sketchbooks A4, A5 & A6  
Koh-i-Noor Progresso solid lead pencil  
Faber Castell 9000 Jumbo 2B  
Stabilo Woody water-soluble pencil crayon

**Useful items and tips:**

I pack my field sketching materials into a small bag for a short stroll or pop it into a backpack if out with children/for a whole day, so they are easy to access and don't get muddled in with lunch/frisbees/hats/gloves etc! I also take...

- ~ Plastic bag ~ to sit on if damp outside, protect work from rain, carry finds home
- ~ Magnifying glass to get a different perspective
- ~ Mobile phone to use as a device for drawing/capturing images (not scrolling!!)
- ~ Pocket guidebook to identify plants & wildlife
- ~ Tissues, wipes and hand sanitizer

## Activity ~ Warm Up

**Weather Conditions ~ Any**

**Materials ~ pen/pencil and paper (optional)**



Your warm-up starts with a sit down!

Find somewhere to settle for a few minutes, there are lots of benches to sit on, try sitting at one of the benches under trees/by the river and benefit from their restorative effects whilst relaxing.

Take time to pause and focus on your surroundings ~ let the world turn around you for a moment. Look up to the sky, through the trees; look down on the ground - try crouching to get a child/dog/beetle eye view, look all around ~ what can you see?

Close your eyes for a few moments and listen carefully ~ what can you hear?

Select a few words to describe what you have noticed & record in your sketchbook, the words could be added to drawings later.



## Activity ~ What do sounds look like?

**Weather Conditions ~ Any**

**Materials ~ pen/pencil, paper**

Have you ever tried drawing sounds? Listen carefully, try to isolate the different sounds you hear. Can you think of lines/shapes/patterns that express the sounds?

Try doing this with your eyes closed ~ yes, for real ~ go on ~ give it a go!

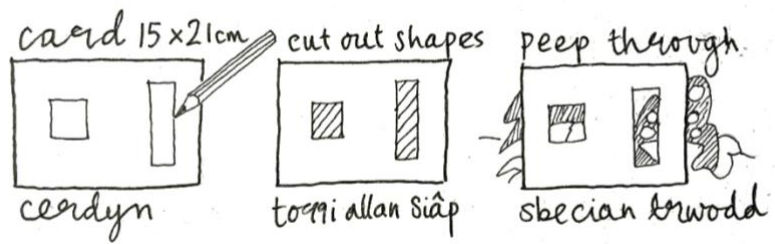
This may not be the easiest exercise, not even for the most experienced artist as usually we draw what we see BUT does have the benefit that it is purely subjective. It's fun to try and you don't have to show anyone – though if you do this in a group it will be interesting to compare results.



### Activity ~ Framing A View

Weather Conditions ~ Any

Materials ~ Viewfinder



A viewfinder is a very useful tool, it helps to focus on views and details by isolating what you are looking at and cutting down on the visual noise in the background. Use your viewfinder to investigate your surroundings on the walk.

Look up above you, down on the ground, crouch down, peep through branches, look under, look over, look all around.

See how you can 'frame' a view and how the view alters as you hold the viewer up at arms-length and then bring it towards you.

How do the different shaped frames alter what you can see?

You can also use the viewfinder to explore shapes and textures around you ~ be a visual detective using your viewfinder as you would a magnifying glass, hunting images instead of clues.

### Activity ~ Draw a View

Weather Conditions ~ most  
except heavy rain or strong wind

Materials ~ viewfinder, pen/pencil  
and paper or sketchbook



Find somewhere comfortable to sit & a place to rest your paper.

Draw the same shape that you are looking through on your viewfinder onto a piece of paper.

Look for a simple composition through your viewfinder ~ you could frame something in the distance or find a detail closer to you ~ look for strong shapes and dynamic lines. Holding the viewfinder up with one hand try copying what you can see onto the paper ~ you will need to keep the viewfinder steady and keep looking back & forth from view to drawing.

Start with very simple views or compositions, if that works for you, try something more elaborate.

## Activity ~ Shadowplay

**Weather Conditions ~**  
sunny, not too windy

**Materials ~ Paper**  
clipped to board or  
sketchbook,  
pen/pencils, ink/coffee,  
water-brush, camera



I am fascinated with shadows, I love the way the sun draws round an object leaving an intriguing ephemeral shape, the absence of the object. Ideal conditions for this activity are on a sunny, still day; though it is possible to do when it is windy with fixed/heavy objects or experiment with chasing shadows across the page.

### 1 Looking for shadows

At its simplest, just take time to focus on shadows cast on the ground by trees, plants, the geometric shapes in the concrete of the skate park or cast by railings.

Using a camera, you can make interesting images by focussing on the shadows isolated from the objects casting them.

Use a sheet of paper attached to a board or a sketchbook angled so a shadow is cast upon it. Move the paper around to create different designs and compositions across the page. Again, you can focus in with a camera to make a photographic drawing.

### 2 Capturing Shadows

Find somewhere it is possible to place your sketchbook onto a firm surface with a shadow cast across it. My favourite subject is plants and leaves, I like to move the page around until I get a shadow cast that I am confident I can trace. Using a pen or pencil trace around the outline of the shadow.

### Tips

- ~ When capturing shadows have the sun in front of you so you don't cast yourself as a shadow (though you could make yourself a shadow subject!)
- ~ When drawing shadows, put your hand onto the paper to keep it firm and draw from the bottom to the top of the paper to avoid casting extra shadows with your hand and pen.
- ~ Collect some objects to make shadow drawings from when you are sat in a comfortable sunny spot (leafy) twigs, pinecones, stones, seed-heads etc.
- ~ Try out different drawing tools to draw your outlines with ~ pencils, biro, rollerball, felt tip and think about which ones feel nicest to draw with and which effects you like best.
- ~ Have a go at infilling your outlines to make solid shapes. I prefer making inky shadows so use a water brush to go over water soluble pencils, or fill using diluted paint/ink/tea/coffee.
- ~ If you are working with young children, try tracing some shapes that they could colour in with crayons or felt tips.

## **Activity ~ Becoming a Creative Hunter Gatherer**

**Weather Conditions ~ Any**

**Materials ~ bag/box/envelope to store finds, safety scissors**



When out on walks I pick up things that catch my eye ~ leaves, pebbles, feathers, seed-heads, dead insects (much to my children's disgust!) etc. These objects can be used for activities when out and about, drawing & land art, or taken home to carry on working with. Once you have made the intention to collect, you start noticing interesting things in your path. Try theming your collection to one thing, leaves or pebbles, and look for the differences and similarities between them. You could try making a collection of leaves and see if you can identify which trees they come from.

Remember to collect responsibly, you can find lots that is on the ground ready to collect ~ if collecting leaves from trees, use scissors to snip. Wildflowers are protected, you are allowed to pick/snip off 1 in 20 blooms from an area (save some for the wildlife), but it is illegal to uproot them and illegal to pick from private gardens.



## **Activity ~ Making An Impression**

**Weather Conditions ~ Dry**

**Materials ~ pencil (solid lead), wax crayon, paper**

This activity combines drawing with the sense of touch.

Find a fairly flat textured object (tree trunk, wood, stone, bricks, tarmac), or place a textured flat object (leaf, plant) onto a flat, firm surface such as a piece of card or sketchbook.

Place a sheet of paper over the object and hold it firm. Place your drawing tool side on, flat on the paper and rub across the paper surface, start gently and adjust the pressure you use as the textured drawing appears on the paper.

### **Tips**

- ~ Try out different textures with different drawing tools & thicknesses of paper.
- ~ Make a tree collection of leaves and trunk rubbings.
- ~ Make a patchwork of texture on a page by moving the paper around over the object and working into the drawing.
- ~ Cut out the texture drawings and make a collage: leaves could turn into creatures or be trees in a landscape or play with making patterns on a page.



**Activity ~ Continuous line ~ taking a line for a walk**

**Weather Condition ~ any (if you have an umbrella!)**

**Materials ~ object to draw, paper, pen/pencil**

The artist Paul Klee famously said that  
"A drawing is simply a line going for a walk".

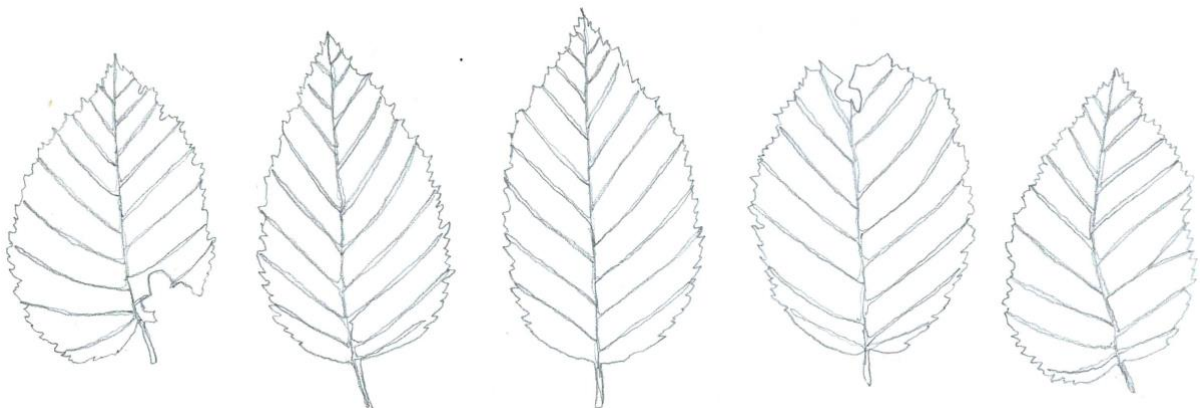
This activity is a lot about looking - which is a foundation to drawing.

I recommend starting with a leaf or a small plant. Find a comfortable place to sit with paper and drawing tools. Place the object on a sheet of plain paper, take some time to look at the object you will draw, look at its overall shape ~ is it long and thin, round, smooth, jagged? Observe the outline, interior lines, textures.

Once you have familiarised yourself, select a pen or pencil and make a drawing of the object without taking your pen off the page ~ you will probably need to go back over some lines to get all the details in, this gives the resulting drawing a particular and quite charming character.

### **Tips**

- ~ Find 5 leaves from the same tree to draw, pay attention to the differences and the similarities. Do some of the leaves show signs of being nibbled by insects? Try to include these into your drawing.
- ~ Experiment with different drawing tools to draw your outlines with ~ pencils, biro, rollerball, felt tip and think about which ones feel nicest to draw with and which effects you like best.
- ~ If you find it hard to get going with this technique, trace round a shadow shape and practise going around it without taking the pen off the paper.
- ~ Once you feel more confident, try making continuous line drawings of different subjects: a view, the graphic lines of trees in winter, a portrait.
- ~ Try making a drawing only looking at the subject and without looking at the page at all (not even a peep) until you have finished it!





**Activity ~ Land Art**  
**Weather Conditions ~ Any**  
**Materials ~ collectings from walk**



**Land Art** is made using materials found in the landscape to make artworks in the landscape. You will need to do two things.

**First** gather materials to make an artwork (see Collecting), it could be a collection of similar objects, pebbles, leaves, flowers, or a selection of treasures you have collected along your walk.

**Secondly**, choose a place where you can settle down to create. Do you want a clear, flat space or perhaps to make something that flows across tree roots or is nestled into them. The place you make the work becomes part of the art.

### **Tips**

- ~ Experiment with different themes and approaches. Geometric shapes, spirals and patterns. Making outline shapes to fill with a different material. Faces & creatures.
- ~ Balancing pebbles is zen fun. How high can you make a tower? Try making a row of towers. These are enjoyable structures to make drawings of too.
- ~ Mini-nature sculptures inspired by my son. Whenever he is in the garden, I find little assemblages of acorns, twined grass, pebbles stuck into berries balanced on the edges of walls. Fairy scale artworks.
- ~ On a windy day you can make leaf sculptures on the ground by pinning the leaves down with bits of twig or thorns or weight them with pebbles.
- ~ Experiment with scale. A group of people could work collaboratively to make a single largescale artwork or bring lots of mini-nature sculptures together to form a small but perfectly formed Land Art exhibition left in the park to share with others.

**Look up images of work by land artists Andy Goldsworthy, Richard Long, Richard Shilling, Jon Foreman online for inspiration**

## Activity ~ Nature Table

### Weather Conditions ~ Any

**Materials ~ collectings from walk  
+ art materials of your choice**



Whenever I have been out for a walk (even to the shops) I come home with a pocketful of leaves/feathers/nutshells, there is always a natural treasure that catches my eye. At home I keep a corner of a table and a window-sill free to display my finds, some get kept for a day, some for months, even years (I have quite a few pet pebbles).

A nature table/sill/shelf is a great way to keep in touch with nature and keep fresh the memories of days out walking. It also means you can engage in a spot of creativity whenever you choose, whatever the weather ~ I like to do a couple of continuous line doodles with my morning coffee, especially if I am attached to the computer doing paperwork. It is a great focus away from the screen for 5 minutes and is relaxing and refreshing.

### Tips

~ Gather a few items each time you go walking. When you are home place them on a sheet of plain paper and photograph. Maybe try some of the land art ideas making patterns or systematic arrangements of objects. You could build up a visual seasonal record of your walks.

~ Try out some of the drawing techniques at your leisure.

~ On a sunny but windy day I put leafy sticks into pots on the table near the window and make leisurely shadow paintings (or use a desk lamp on dark days/wintery evenings). Have a go at painting the whole shadow without outlining first.

~Leaves quickly curl up indoors in the warm. You can keep them flat by pressing some between sheets of paper with some heavy books on top. Leave them for a couple of days and then they can be used for collage or to take rubbings from.

### ~ Mix and match ~

- Collage different elements to make a new drawing. (When you are sticking down pencil drawn cut outs, place a clean piece of paper over the top of the 'sticker' so you can press it down onto the paper without smudging the drawing).
- Make a continuous line drawing of a plant over a textured rubbing.
- Use a wax crayon to make a textured drawing then paint a coloured wash across the drawing with brush & ink/watercolour/coffee and see what effect you get.
- Add colour washes or block colours to continuous line/shadow drawings
- Add words that describe your walking experience to a drawing.

draw ~ experiment ~ play ~ create

## Benefits

OK, so apart from a nice walk and a creative play, what do I get from this?

Tons of health benefits!

Being around trees and water, spending time in green spaces, creative activities and walking are proven to have a positive impact on both our physiological and psychological wellbeing, boosting your mood, reducing stress and improving health.



"The mere sight and sound of water can induce a flood of neurochemicals that promote wellness, increase blood flow to the brain and heart and induce relaxation"

The Forest Bathing Institute

In both Japan and Korea there is an established practice of forest bathing (shinrin yoku). Research has shown that spending time amongst trees has such a positively beneficial effect upon people, it is medically prescribed for all sorts of physical and mental conditions. Spending just 15 minutes amongst trees and under their canopy can boost your immune system for a month. Pine trees (esp. Douglas Firs and Cypresses) are most potent for this therapy but deciduous woodland works too.

"Every study conducted so far has demonstrated reductions in stress, anger, anxiety, depression and sleeplessness amongst the participants. In fact, after just 15 minutes of forest bathing blood pressure drops, stress levels are reduced, and concentration and mental clarity improve."

Grow Wild UK



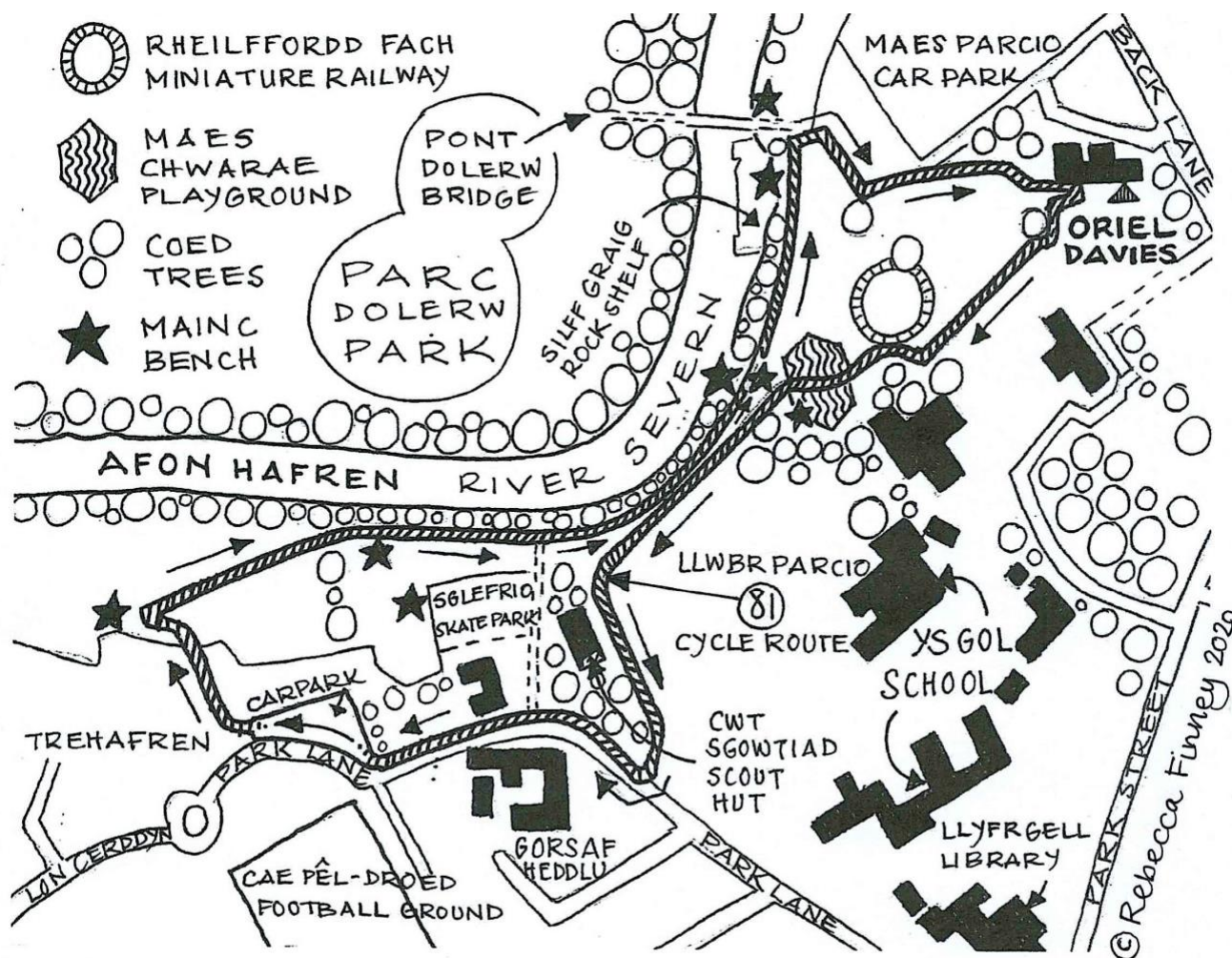
All this and the exercise you get from walking, vitamin D from sunlight, an increase to your mental faculties (better memory, processing) and general wellbeing from the creative activities, fun to have with friends & family, greater connection to the world around you ~ what's not to love!!

Instagram

If you would like to share your creative adventures, post your pictures with the tag **#wherethevernsmiles #mindfulwalkcreativeadventure**

Check out #greensketching #connectwithnature #sketchacrossthe world too





### **ROUTE - Walking Newtown Short Stroll 9 0.9 miles 25 mins**

<https://newtown.org.uk/discover-newtown/walking-newtown/short-stroll-9-lets-play>

The walk starts in the town park at the main entrance of the Oriel Davies Gallery. With your back to the gallery, walk diagonally right to pick up the paved path between the hedge and a mature chestnut tree. Follow this path past the large mound and the miniature steam railway track to the Newtown Play Park. At the end of the play park turn left to follow the school hedge and fence on your left.

Follow hedge around to the left to pass the Scout hut on your right and turn right at the road, there's a sign there pointing to the National Cycle path 81. The police station is across the road on your left and you will soon pass the Maldwyn Nursery and Families Centre and then the Air Training Corps building, both on your right. Continue on this paved path to pass the Latham Park football ground on the left until you reach a no entry sign with a fork of two paths and a gravel car park. (If you go straight on the footpath you would come to a roundabout and road leading up to the mountain bike track on Trehafren Hill.) Our walk, however, takes the right-hand option into the carpark. Continue to the end of the car park and follow the gravel path downhill to reach the playing fields and the paved path where you turn right.

You will soon pass the skate park and then the play park on your right. The river is on your left. When you reach the Dolerw Park footbridge go diagonally across the carpark and turn right after the public toilets of the bus station to the other entrance to the Oriel Davies Gallery and café. To get into the gallery avoiding the steps, continue on the pavement to circle around to the Gallery's main entrance where you started.