

## COTSWOLD WAY DISCOVERY

This series of activity sheets supports the Cotswold Way Discovery resource.

The Going Wild activity sheets for families will help transform every trip to the Cotswold Way into a fun-filled adventure. They have been devised by Jo Schofield and Fiona Danks of Going Wild ([www.goingwild.net](http://www.goingwild.net)) - authors of Nature's Playground, Go Wild, Make it Wild and Run Wild, published by Frances Lincoln.

There are 10 simple activities that require minimal preparation and equipment.

**MAKING BIRDS NESTS  
STICK AND CLAY CHARACTERS  
MOBILES AND WIND CHIMES  
HOBBY ANIMALS  
FAIRY AND WIZARD WANDS  
CROWNS AND MASKS  
IMAGINATIVE SCAVENGER HUNTS  
CAMOUFLAGE GAMES  
WIND FLAGS  
BOWS AND ARROWS**

Please note that anyone taking part in this activity does so at his or her own risk.

The Cotswold Way and the authors do not accept any legal responsibility for any harm, injury, damage, loss or prosecution resulting from doing this activity.

Leave wild places as you find them.

Please respect the Countryside Code.

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## MAKING BIRD NESTS 1

Nests provide shelter and warmth and, most importantly, a safe place for adult birds to lay and incubate eggs and rear their young. Some species build incredibly intricate, finely woven nests, delicate and light yet strong enough to hold and protect the eggs and nestlings.

Nests made by human fingers can't compete with the complex structures created by birds, but it's fun to have a go, using whatever materials can be found.

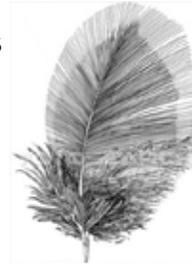


### What to take with you

- Perhaps a few chocolate eggs

### What to collect

- Bendy twigs for weaving
- Grass, moss, feathers etc to line the nests



### How to make the nests

Show the children a photograph of a nest, or better still have a look for a real bird's nest, taking care not to disturb it. What materials are used?

### How are they put together?

Encourage the children to collect nesting materials such as twigs, grasses, stems, rushes, mud, moss, lichen, feathers, and sheep's wool.

The materials have two main functions: to provide support and to insulate. Just imagine how difficult it must be for birds to collect nesting materials; how many journeys must they make to collect everything they need?

Weave and thread twigs or stems together to make the base of the nest, and then line them with soft beds of moss, grass and feathers. The nest could be any design – large or small, open or covered – so long as it holds together.



## MAKING BIRD NESTS 2

A bird would weave the materials roughly in place, then sit in the centre of the nest and turn round and round, pushing downwards and outwards with its breast to create the right shape.

Encourage the children to imagine their fist is the bird's body; perhaps by turning it and applying gentle pressure, they might be able to create a cup-shaped nest.

Place the nests in trees or shrubs, or perhaps in a hedgerow or wall; find a place that is protected and safe from predators.

Although a real bird won't be tempted to use the nest, perhaps a few chocolate eggs might magically appear, especially if it is nearly Easter time.

If the nests are sturdy enough, take them with you on an Easter egg hunt and see if you can fill them with eggs found along the trail.

For an alternative to the birds' nest, how about making a giant nest for a dinosaur? Use sticks and other natural materials and make the nest in a clearing, perhaps using stones to represent eggs.



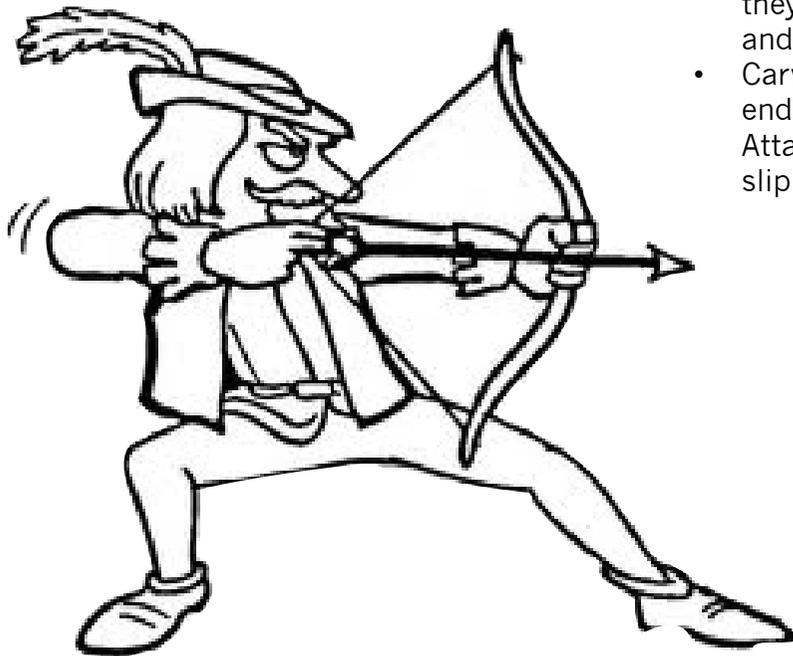
### REMEMBER THE COUNTYSIDE CODE.

**Do not disturb nesting birds.**

**Do not take nests, even if they are empty.  
Some birds use the same nest more than once.**

## BOWS AND ARROWS 1

A bow and arrow brings imaginary games to life, adding a tingling sense of excitement and adventure to every expedition. Perhaps the children will become hobbits or elves tearing through the woods in search of orks, or Robin Hood and his gang of outlaws lying in wait to ambush a passing carriage – who knows what adventures await along the Cotswold Way!



### What to take with you

- String and thread
- A sharp knife

### What to collect

- Green wood stems, perhaps hazel or willow. The wood should be bendy and strong without knots.
- Some thin straight sticks for arrows; use dead sticks collected from the ground.
- Some feathers.

### How to make your bow

- Young children will need adult help, particularly when cutting the wood and tensioning the bow.
- Cut the stem to the required length, adjusting it to your size. Shorter bows are safer as they have less power but they perform well and are easier to use.
- Carve notches about 2cm/3/4in from each end or choose a stick with a fork at one end. Attach the string around one notch using a slipknot or use a bowline around the fork.



## BOWS AND ARROWS 2

### Making your bow cont..

- Pull the string tight so the bow forms a wide arc. Tension the string by wrapping its loose end a couple of times around the other notch, securing it with a strong knot such as a couple of half-hitches (as illustrated).
- Ensure the knots are tight and secure so the bow does not spring out of position. Make sure you can feel tension in the string and bow as you pull the string back even slightly.

### Making arrows

- To make feather flights, cut a section of feather about 8cm/3in long and tear some of the long barbs off each end of the quill, leaving a central section of about 4cm/1 1/2in still entire. Split the feather in half along the quill to make two sections. Place one section on each side of the end of an arrow and attach by winding cotton thread around them, securing with a knot.
- Make a target to aim at; only fire arrows at the target.



### Safety and environmental tips

**Always supervise children when they are using knives.**

**Bows and arrows should be used with care, under adult supervision.**

**Never aim arrows at people or animals.**

**Make sure everyone has laid down their bows before going to collect their arrows.**

## CAMOUFLAGE GAMES 1

- Camouflage games are a different way to play Hide and Seek and they are also a great way to increase your chances of seeing wildlife. Remember to plan your outfits carefully before setting off for the Cotswold Way; choosing non-rustly clothes in muted greens and browns with no bold outlines or logos will increase your chances of blending in with the natural surroundings.

### What to take with you

- Netting such as onion sacks or loose-meshed garden net from garden centres; make sure you will be able to push stems and leaves through the mesh. Cut the netting into lengths of at least 1m/3ft and cut a hole in the middle of each length so everyone can pull them over their heads to make a poncho. Scissors for cutting materials and raffia or wool

### What to collect

- Loose natural materials such as grasses and leaves for costumes.
- Mud or green face paint.

### How to make camouflage capes

- Weave or tie natural materials such as bracken, grasses, leaves and twigs in to the netting. The children may need adult help, as this can be quite fiddly.
- Drape the completed capes around the children's shoulders.
- Daub mud on faces to add to the disguise and improve the camouflage effect.



## CAMOUFLAGE GAMES 2

### Hide and seek

- The challenge is to use camouflage to hide, instead of hiding behind something.
- Choose a stretch of the Cotswold Way for the game; it is important that everyone knows exactly where the chosen section of path begins and ends.
- Either split in to two teams or have one seeker while everyone else goes to hide just off the path.
- The hidiers should conceal themselves by lying, sitting or standing in harmony with the natural shapes and contours of the place. The seekers then walk along the path to see how many hidiers they can spot.
- The seekers should not leave the path, and once they reach the end, any undiscovered hidiers come out of their hiding place triumphant!

### Camouflage capture

- This game is best played in woodland or an area with a lot of bushes and shrubs. One child or adult is chosen to guard a central point, which the other children have to try to creep up on and capture.
- The better the camouflage and the more slowly they move, the more likely they are to succeed. Use natural features for cover, trying to blend into the background.

- If the person at base spots someone they call out that person's name and he or she has to go back and start over again.
- The game ends when one person reaches the base.



### Safety and environmental tips

**Play camouflage games in a reasonably defined area and decide on a central meeting point that everyone is aware of.**

## CROWNS AND MASKS 1

Here is a way to make an autumn walk into a celebration. These colourful crowns decorated with exotic autumn leaves, feathery ferns and shiny gem-like berries are quite as beautiful as real jewel-encrusted crowns.



### What to take with you to make a colourful crown

- Thin cardboard (such as cereal boxes) cut into strips about 5–6cm/2–2 1/2in x 50cm/20in, with double-sided sticky tape attached along one side of each strip.
- Hole punch, wool and extra double-sided sticky tape

### What to collect

- Collect coloured leaves and seeds from the ground while going for a walk

### How to make your colourful crown

- Provide each child with a strip of prepared card. Peel off the outer layer of double-sided tape to expose the sticky surface beneath. Curve the card round your head to make it fit, then stick the ends together with tape.
- Decorate the crowns by arranging natural materials on the sticky surface.
- Extra things can be added using extra tape or the wool, or by threading stems and leaves through holes made with the hole-punch.
- When everyone has made a crown, find a good place to stop for a picnic and a ceremonial coronation!



## CROWNS AND MASKS 2

### What to take with you to make a Venetian mask

- Cut some eye masks out of card or plastic (eg; from an old milk container). Stick double sided tape over the mask, then cut out the eyeholes. Double sided sticky tape and scissors.

### What to collect

- A straight stick about 30cm/1ft long.
- Selection of leaves, berries and feathers.

### How to make your Venetian mask

- Stick leaves all over the mask, including around the edge to decorate
- Add other details, perhaps feathers, petals or ferns.
- Tape the stick down the middle of the mask or on one side (the right hand side if you are right handed) and use it to hold the mask in place.



## SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL TIPS

**Do not collect poisonous berries**

**Do not touch any fungi**

**Do not damage trees or shrubs**



## FAIRY AND WIZARD WANDS 1

Make a star wand then decorate it with pretty feathers or seeds to make a wand fit for a princess or a fairy. Or how about finding a really special stick to make your own wizard's wand like Harry Potter's, ready to get you out of all sorts of tricky situations?

### What to take with you

- Raffia, wool, some ribbon or double sided tape.
- A sharp knife and some sandpaper

### What to collect

- For the fairy wand - a freshly cut thin bendy stick, preferably willow or hazel, at least 1m/3ft long
- For the wizard wand – choose a special stick from the ground and break it so it is about 40cm/15in long. Take your time to choose the right one; it must feel right in your hands.

### Whittling your wizard's wand

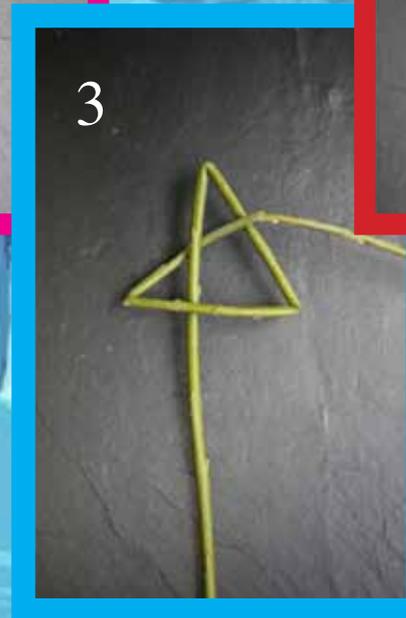
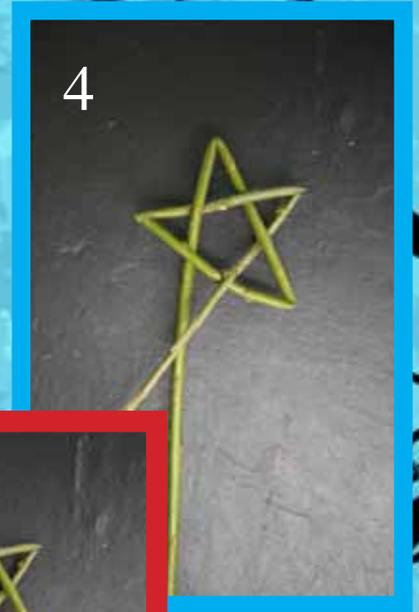
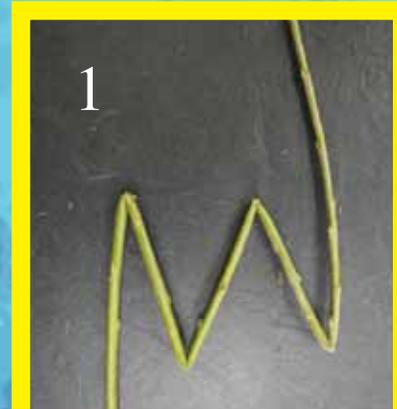
- Use a knife to scrape off the bark. You might wish to scrape off all of the bark, or to make patterns.
- Sand the wood to make it smooth if you wish.
- Carefully whittle the tip of your wand into a point.

- Alternatively, decorate any interesting stick with spiky or gruesome things you find on your walk using raffia, wool or double sided tape.
- Have fun making spells inspired by the countryside around you.



## FAIRY AND WIZARD WANDS 2

- About one third of the way up from the thicker end of the withy, gently fold it to make a kink. Make three more kinks, each one about 5-10cm/2-4in apart as shown.
- Straighten out the withy then make a triangle like a back to front 4 as shown.
- Feed the tip of the withy right through the triangle, teasing it through gently until you have made two points of the star.
- Loop the end of the withy round behind the right hand edge of the triangle and back through as shown; you should now have a star shape.
- Twist the thin end of the withy down the handle of the wand; tie a knot to secure. Look for natural treasures while you explore the Cotswold Way, then tie them or stick them on to your wand.



### SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL TIPS

**Always supervise children when they are using knives.  
Make sure they cut away from their other hand and that they  
are not sitting close to other children.**

## HOBBY ANIMALS

Have you ever had a hobbyhorse? This simple design is easy to make while out walking, and is guaranteed to send everyone galloping off for all sorts of adventures along the Cotswold Way! Just dig out the odd sock collection and have a go at making hobby animals such as deer, foxes and badgers or even a hobby unicorn or dragon.

Bring them to life with leafy ears, berry eyes, twig antlers or stick horns you find along the path, then jump on and have some fun; riding is much faster than walking!

### What to take with you

- Socks and some newspaper or straw
- Double-sided tape and string, pipe cleaners or twist ties.

### What to collect

- A sturdy stick about 1m/3ft long
- Smaller twigs and other loose natural materials

### How to make your hobby animal

Stuff a sock with scrunched-up newspaper or straw. Choose what animal you are making (this might depend on the colour of the sock) and shape the stuffed sock accordingly.

Push the stick in to the sock and then fix the open end of the sock to the stick with a twist tie, pipe cleaner or tape.

Using double-sided tape, stick on seed eyes, leafy ears and a twig mouth to bring your animal to life.

Depending on what animal you are making you could add twig antlers or a stick horn or tusk; attach by poking through the sock or wrap some string round the sock and tuck sticks through it.

Have fun galloping off to explore the trail on your hobby animal; how will it behave? If your friends have made different animals, how will they interact?



## SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL TIPS

**Take care not to trip on your hobby animals**



## IMAGINATIVE SCAVENGER HUNTS 1

Who can find the most unusual thing along the trail today? This might be a great way to start a lively hunt for the most weird and wonderful natural objects you can find. Or how about looking for and making an outfit for a fairy, a picnic for a squirrel or a suit of armour for an elf? Scavenger hunts can be done anywhere, and they are a great way to encourage everyone to look more closely at the natural world. They can even involve being creative or solving cryptic clues.

### What to take with you

- Collecting bags, plastic pots or tiny matchboxes or sweeties boxes
- Some paper or card
- Double-sided tape for scavenger sticks.

### Scavenging ideas

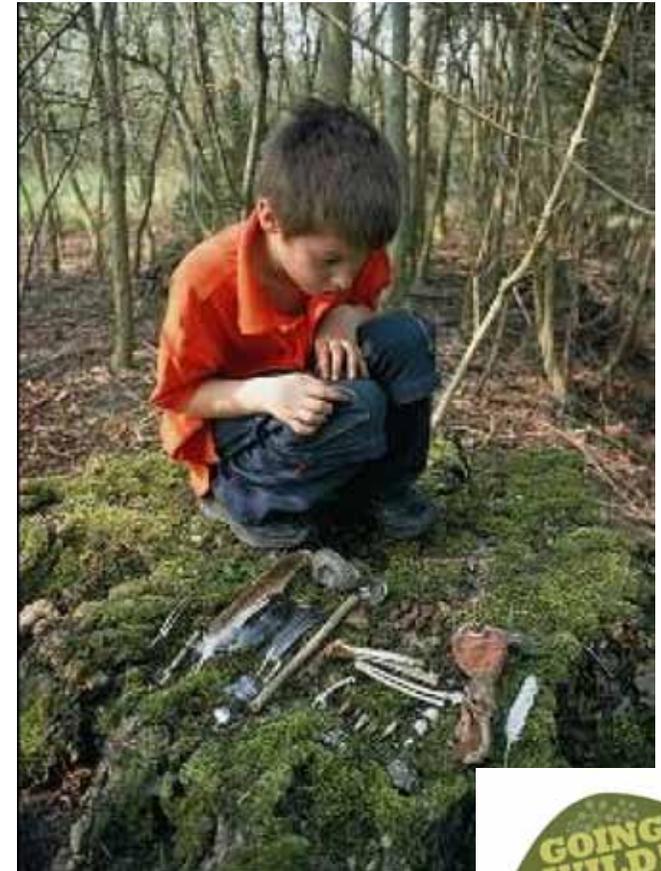
- Here are a few ideas for different versions of scavenger hunts to do while walking along the Cotswold Way. Can you come up with any ideas of your own?

### Competitions

- Who can be the first to bring back a feather, a shell or a chewed nut? Who can find the biggest leaf or the snail shell with the most stripes?

### Scavenging imaginings

- Hunt for a fairy's cloak or an elf's table, a hobbit's hole, a witch's magic potion or a dragon's lair? Using ideas from a favourite storybook or film and make up a scavenger hunt that leads everyone off in search of all sorts of unlikely treasures or places.



## IMAGINATIVE SCAVENGER HUNTS 2

### Miniature scavenging

Provide each child with a little container, such as a matchbox or a small raisin or sweetie box. How many natural things can they fit inside their boxes? Send them off to search for tiny items, such as a blade of grass, a pine needle, a small stone, a thorn or a seed. After about twenty minutes, gather everyone together and ask them to tip out their finds on to a piece of paper or card for counting. Perhaps they could try sorting their finds into categories.

### Scavenging sticks

- Hunt for a special stick and then wind double-sided tape around in a spiral or in stripes. Collect tiny pieces of colour such as bits of leaves, blades of grass, fallen petals or fluffy seeds to stick on the tape to make a rainbow stick. Only collect small pieces of colour from commonly occurring plants or collected from the ground. Can you find all the colours of the rainbow? Who can collect the most different colours? What else can you find to stick to your scavenging stick?

### Kim's Game

- Remember that old party game where someone shows you a tray of objects for one minute then whisks it away and asks you to remember all of the things you saw on the tray? For a natural version of Kim's Game, show the children a collection of loose natural items collected along the path, then cover them with a coat and ask the children to go and collect one of each of the things they saw!

### SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL TIPS

**When collecting colours, be sure to collect tiny pieces and avoid picking whole flowers**



## STICK AND CLAY CHARACTERS 1

Look for the most interesting stick you can find; hold it in your hand then turn it around and look at it from all angles, giving your imagination a free reign.

Does it have legs, horns or wings? Could it be transformed into a funny little man, a fierce dragon, a prickly hedgehog, a crazy bird or a magical sprite?

### What to take with you

- Some clay (available from good toyshops and educational suppliers); or if you are really adventurous try collecting wild clay from clean ditches
- Raffia and masking tape (optional)

### What to collect

- Sticks and natural materials such as berries, seeds and leaves

### How to make your characters

Work the clay to make it pliable and then mould it into a weird and wonderful face for a monster or into the body of an animal.

Decorate with natural materials, using sticks and twigs to add details such as crazy hair, staring eyes, fierce teeth or sticky out ears.

Use raffia or masking tape to fix on arms and legs. Make clothes, fur or feathers from grasses, leaves or real feathers.

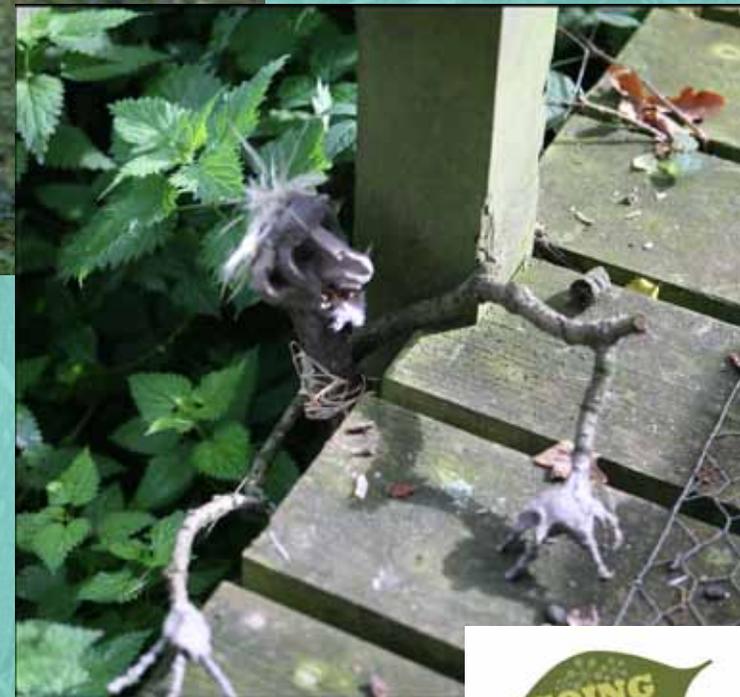
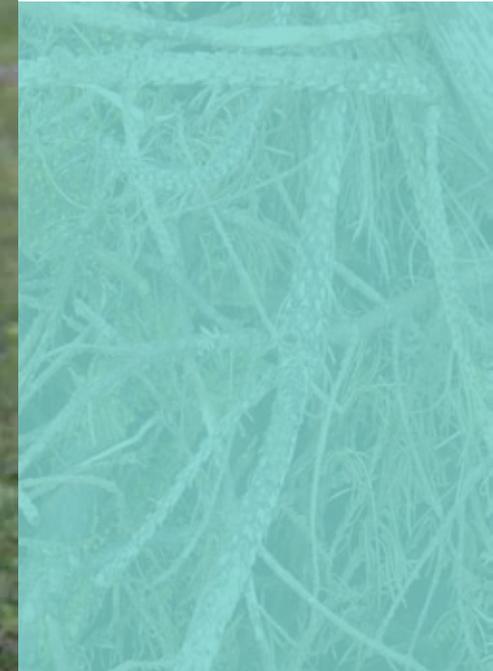


## STICK AND CLAY CHARACTERS 2

If you wish to make jointed arms and legs, use masking tape to join two sticks together.

Can you find a place to hide your characters, like this troll guarding a bridge? Perhaps you could take a photo of your character in it's hiding place and send it in to the Cotswold Way website!

If you have made a small creature or character can you make a home for him? Think about what he would eat, who are his enemies and friends and how he might camouflage himself. What adventures does he have along the Cotswold way? Why not write a story about him when you get home?



## MOBILES AND WIND CHIMES 1

Making a mobile combines the pleasure and excitement of collecting with making an autumnal keepsake to hang outside your window at home, reminding everyone of their autumn trip along the Cotswold Way long after winter has arrived. Try adding a few brittle seeds, or some pebbles to transform your mobile into a natural wind chime.

### What to take with you

- Wool or thread and some fine wire
- Bradawl, a tapestry needle and some scissors

### What to collect

- Sticks and loose natural materials, eg; seeds, berries, leaves
- Look for natural materials that might make a noise on a wind chime, perhaps pebbles, empty snail shells, hard seeds or crispy leaves

### How to make your mobile or wind chime

Choose some natural autumn treasures for your mobile. Make holes through hard seeds and nuts using a bradawl.

Tie a knot at one end of some lengths of string or wool, then use the tapestry needle to thread them through the seeds and other natural treasures.

If you wish, have a go at making some little characters such as a flying pig or an insect to hang from the mobile.



## MOBILES AND WIND CHIMES 2

Tie the strings onto a stick, balancing them carefully along its length. Tie some wool or string onto both ends of the stick to make a loop.

To transform your mobile into a wind chime, tie noisy materials along the stick; remember to hang them from similar lengths of wool because they will only make a sound if they knock together.

Take the mobile and/or the wind chime home and hang it outside a window where you can watch it and listen to it in the breeze. If you haven't found any noisy natural materials, try adding a few bits of metal (eg; ring pulls or can lids) instead.



### SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL TIPS

**Take care when using the bradawl and the needle or if you use sharp bits of metal on the mobile**

**Don't collect poisonous berries**

## WIND FLAGS 1

A walk on a wild and windy day can be a great experience for all the family, provided everybody is wrapped up warm. Although many families fly kites on windy days, small children don't really feel any degree of control over a distant diamond in the sky. These wind flags are a wonderful child-friendly alternative, bringing the wind's noise, movement and excitement right to your side.

### What to take with you

- Some long triangular flags cut from brightly coloured fabric or an old white sheet. The longer the tails on the flags, the more you will see and feel the wind.
- A rubber or wooden mallet and possibly an old wooden board
- Double-sided tape

### What to collect

- Sturdy sticks with blunt ends, about 1m/3feet long
- Some fleshy leaves



### Safety and environmental tips

Keep away from other people when waving wind flags around

## WIND FLAGS 2

### How to make your wind flag

- If you have white cotton fabric (an old sheet is ideal), a fun thing to do is decorate your flag with leaf patterns. Place a white flag on a hard surface such as a stone or a log, or on a wooden board. Arrange some leaves on the fabric and place another piece of cotton on top. Bash all over with the mallet; you will soon see detailed prints of the leaves. Peel off the squashed leaves.
- With adult help, attach the fabric to the sticks using double-sided tape.
- Now you are ready to run along the Cotswold Way and enjoy the wind as your colourful flags flap and flow behind you.

