

# The Tale of *Ghillie Dhu*



## Activities to accompany The Tale of Ghillie Dhu

The story can be told as a stand-alone activity or as a resource for older primary students to read, but deeper learning can come through delivering/reading the story alongside other woodland activities. A selection of accompanying activities is presented here to dip into. Even if you are not near one of Scotland's rainforests or even a wood, some of these activities can still be done in or close to most school grounds – looking at the mosses and lichens that are found in your surroundings. The age ranges on the activity sheets are just for guidance.

### **This activity pack includes:**

- Information for teachers and educators
- Scottish curriculum links
- Activity 1 - Story and song
- Activity 2 - Up close and personal
- Activity 3 - Ghillie Dhu's wardrobe
- Activity 4 - Ghillie Dhu homes
- Activity 5 - Ghillie Dhu trail



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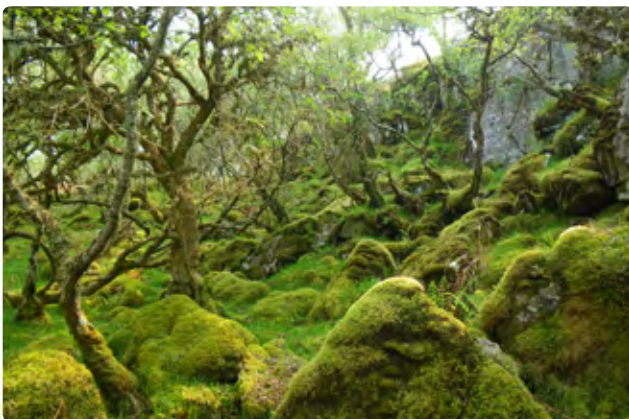
## Information for teachers and educators

### The habitat

Scotland's rainforest is a kind of temperate rainforest which is found all along the west coast of the UK, reaching right down to the south-west of England. These woodlands include oak as well as ash, hazel and birch.

Temperate rainforest is a rare habitat worldwide – rarer even than tropical rainforests. These mainly coastal forests have a special 'oceanic' climate which is wet and mild due to landscape and warm ocean currents.

The combination of high rainfall and stable mild temperatures makes Scotland's rainforest very humid, which allows for the growth of some really special residents – the lichens, mosses and liverworts, and filmy ferns. It is these plants, which seem to cloak every tree and boulder, that give the forests a magical and mysterious feel.



It is not surprising then to find out that Scottish folklore surrounds these enchanted places and as well as the miniature plants that live here, there is the equally diminutive Ghillie Dhu. He is a forest guardian sprite from the rainforest of west Scotland, who knows them like the back of his hand. So much so, that his clothing is made of moss and foliage from the woods. Who better then to guide us through the forests and help us learn more about their secrets?





## Miniature residents

These special plants are called lichens, bryophytes (the mosses and liverworts) and filmy ferns. As well as maintaining humidity levels necessary for the health of the forest, the smaller plants of the rainforest also assist soil formation, reduce erosion and provide food and shelter for invertebrates. Some of these rainforest species are very rare in the rest of Britain and Europe, but the west of Scotland is a 'hotspot' for them.

**A lichen** is unique because it is at least two organisms in one; a fungus and a photosynthetic partner. The photosynthetic partner (usually an alga) is able to convert energy from the sun into food (by photosynthesis) for the fungus and itself. The fungus in turn provides the body of the lichen. This protects the alga inside, allowing it to live out of water. This is known as a symbiotic relationship; meaning that both organisms benefit from living together.

Lichens don't have leaves and stems like mosses and liverworts; instead they have a vegetative body, known as a thallus. Some lichens are able

to convert ('fix') atmospheric nitrogen into a usable nutrient to benefit their growth and the growth of surrounding plants. Lichens have been used by humans for hundreds of years in the manufacture of perfumes, textile dyes and medicines, including the preparation of laxatives, expectorants and healing pastes.

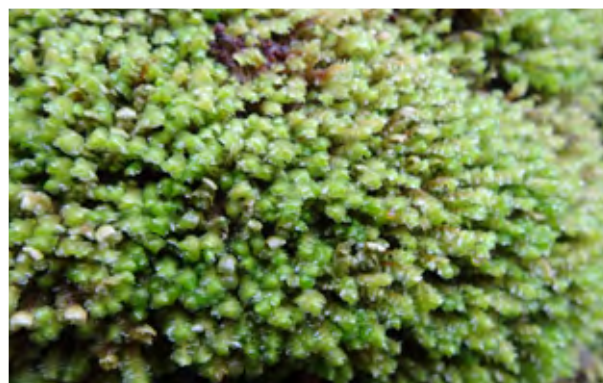
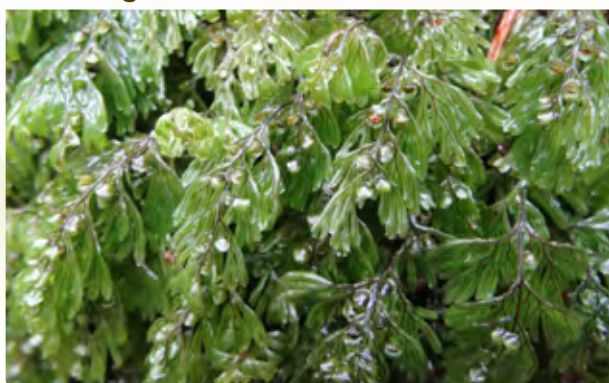
**Bryophytes – mosses and leafy liverworts** are small green, non-flowering plants and have been around for over 400 million years. Mosses have small leaves that grow all around their stems, whereas leafy liverworts have two ranks of leaves either side of their stem. They both reproduce by releasing spores into the air from special capsules. The UK has over 1,000 species of bryophytes.

**Filmy ferns** are a very small type of fern and are restricted to rainforests around the world. They are non-flowering, just like the mosses and liverworts, and they also reproduce by spores. In fact, they are often mistaken for a moss or liverwort. The fern family has been around since before the dinosaurs and has survived the mass extinctions on Earth.



▲ **A lichen** – Tree lungwort

▼ **A filmy fern**



▲ **A liverwort** – Western earwort

▼ **A moss** – Slender mouse-tail



# The Tale of *Ghillie Dhu*



## Scottish curriculum links

Ghillie Dhu Story				
Activity	Topic	Early – Pre-school – P1	First – P2 – P4	Second – P5 – P7
Story & song	Literacy & English	LIT 0-01c, LIT 0-02a/ ENG 0-03a, LIT 0-04a, LIT 0-07a/LIT 0-16a/ENG 0-17a	LIT 1-02a, LIT 1-04a, LIT1-07a	LIT 2-04a ENG 2-12a, LIT 2-16a
	Expressive Arts	EXA 0-16a, EXA 0-17a	EXA 1-16a, EXA 1-17a	EXA 2-16a, EXA 2-17a
	Sciences			SCN 2-02b
Up close & personal	Literacy & English		LIT 1-10a, LIT 1-26a, ENG 1-31a	LIT 2-10a, LIT 2-26a, ENG 2-27a, ENG 2-31a
	Expressive Arts		EXA 1-03a, EXA 1-04a	EXA 2-03a, EXA 2-04a
	Sciences		SCN 1-01a	SCN 2-01a
Ghillie Dhu's wardrobe	Literacy & English	LIT 0-02a/ENG 0-03a	LIT 1-02a	LIT 2-02a
	Expressive Arts	EXA 0-02a, EXA 0-05a	EXA 1-05a	EXA 2-05a
	Health & Wellbeing	HWB 0-23a	HWB 1-23a	HWB 2-23a
	Numeracy & Mathematics	MNU 0-01a, MNU 0-20a, MNU 0-20b		
	Sciences	SCN 0-01a	SCN 1-01a	SCN 2-01a
Ghillie Dhu homes	Literacy & English	LIT 0-02a/ENG 0-03a, LIT 0-09a, LIT 0-09b/LIT 0-31a	LIT 1-02a, LIT 1-09a	LIT 2-02a, LIT 2-09a
	Expressive Arts	EXA 0-02a, EXA 0-05a, EXA 0-06a	EXA 1-05a, EXA 1-06a	EXA 2-05a, EXA 2-06a
	Health & Wellbeing	HWB 0-23a	HWB 1-23a, HWB 1-24a	HWB 2-23a, HWB 2-24a
	Sciences	SCN 0-15a	SCN 1-15a	
	Technologies	TCH 0-12a, TCH 0-14a	TCH 1-12a, TCH 1-14a, TCH 1-14b	TCH 2-12a, TCH 2-14a, TCH 2-14b



# The Tale of *Ghillie Dhu*



## Activity 1 Story and song

Early Years/Primary  
(Age 3-12)

### Learning objectives

- I can name some rare plant species that live in a unique Scottish habitat.
- I understand that Scotland has an important natural and cultural heritage and that this gives me a sense of place.
- I know that the forest provides shelter, clothing and food for all its inhabitants.
- I can use listening and enquiry skills, as well as actively participate to aid my understanding.

### Actions

Actions throughout the 'Story and song' can make it more interactive for the children.

**Rainstorm activity:** start with a slow clicking of the fingers for the raindrops as the rain starts – now rub the palms of your hands together, then start clapping as the rain gets heavier until lastly stomping with feet on the ground. Now go back to clapping, then rubbing and lastly clicking fingers as the rain shower passes away and then listen to the sounds of the birds and animals.

**Make up actions** to the song that the children can do whilst singing it.

### Suggested discussion areas, questions and activities

#### Early Years – P5

Use the story to pose questions to the children throughout the storytelling, depending on the age of the children.

- Has any one heard of 'lichen' before? Do you know what it is?
- What do you think Ghillie Dhu could make his new coat out of? What materials would you make a coat out of from the forest? Why?
- How does the forest (essentially the plants) provide for Ghillie Dhu? For example, his clothes, food, shelter; everything he needs. This can be related to what the forest provides to all woodland creatures.

- Ghillie Dhu takes just enough of what he needs from the forest for his new wardrobe. What would happen if he and other forest fairies took more than they needed? He uses the forest sustainably because he knows it is a special place that needs looking after, so that it can provide him with his clothes, food, home and playground for the future.
- Can you remember the different types of plants that make up Ghillie Dhu's wardrobe?  
**Trees:** trousers (leaves); shoes (bark); hat and buttons (seedcase and nut)  
**Lichen and liverworts and filmy ferns:** coat with decorations  
**Fern:** belt  
**Flower:** decoration
- Ghillie Dhu knows the small plants are just as important as the large plants and the creatures. The forest needs all of them to function properly. And his wardrobe needs all of them for him to be clothed properly!

#### Upper Primary – P6-7

- Read the story as a literacy activity.
- Research the plant species of Scotland's rainforest before or after a forest trip (a selection is at the back of the Ghillie Dhu story book). Consider how these plants have benefited society.
- Use the music score to learn and perform the Ghillie Dhu song.

Continued ►

# The Tale of *Ghillie Dhu*



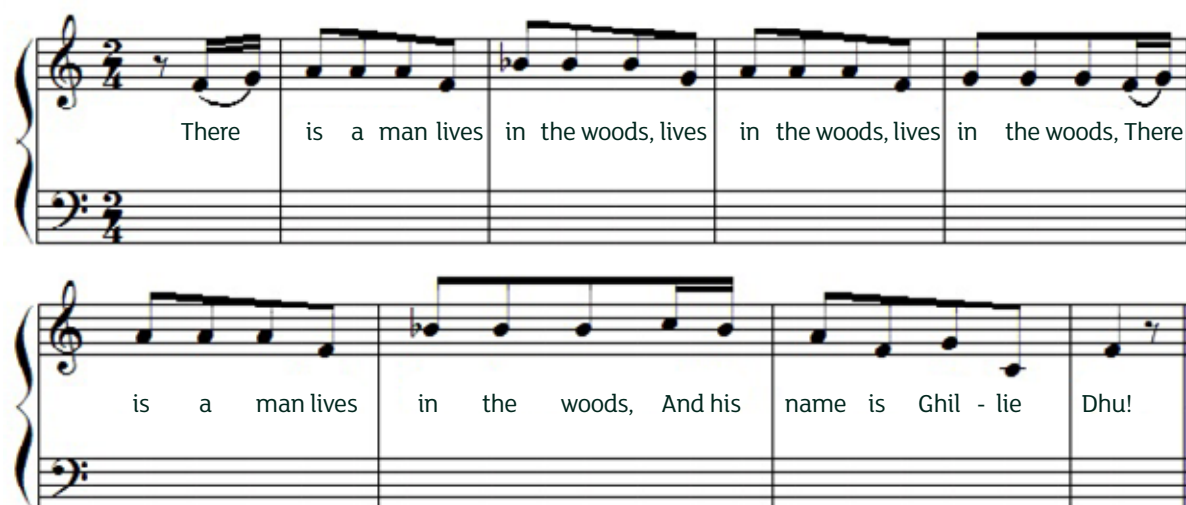
## Activity 1 Story and song

Early Years/Primary  
(Age 3-12)

### Song

This Ghillie Dhu song is based on the traditional Scottish song of *Aiken Drum*. Here is an example of the tune, which is the same for the chorus as well as the verse.

Children can be encouraged to make up their own words to the song as well!



Music score from Mama Lisa's World [www.mamalisa.com](http://www.mamalisa.com)

**There is a man lives in the woods,  
lives in the woods, lives in the woods,  
There is a man lives in the woods,  
And his name is Ghillie Dhu!**

#### Chorus

**And he plays upon a whistle, a whistle, a whistle,  
And he plays upon a whistle,  
And his name is Ghillie Dhu.**

And his hat is made from an acorn cup,  
an acorn cup, an acorn cup,  
And his hat is made from an acorn cup,  
And his name is Ghillie Dhu.

#### (Repeat chorus)

And his coat is made from lungwort, lungwort,  
lungwort,  
And his coat is made from lungwort,  
And his name is Ghillie Dhu.

#### (Repeat chorus)

And his buttons are made from hazelnuts,  
hazelnuts, hazelnuts,  
And his buttons are made from hazelnuts,  
And his name is Ghillie Dhu.

#### (Repeat chorus)

And his breeks are made from oak leaves,  
oak leaves, oak leaves,  
And his breeks are made from oak leaves,  
And his name is Ghillie Dhu.

#### (Repeat chorus)

And his belt is made from ferns, ferns, ferns,  
And his belt is made from ferns,  
And his name is Ghillie Dhu.

#### (Repeat chorus)

And his shoes are made from birch bark, birch bark,  
birch bark,  
And his shoes are made from birch bark,  
And his name is Ghillie Dhu.

#### (Repeat chorus)



# The Tale of *Ghillie Dhu*



## Activity 2 Up close and personal

Primary 3-7 (Age 6-12)

This activity can be split into two parts:

**Part 1:** Looking for lichens and mosses and predicting where they live

**Part 2:** Looking closely at a lichen or moss and creating a poem/drawing

### Learning objectives

- I can use my observational and creative skills to create a poem/drawing.
- I can discuss differences and similarities between plant species.
- I can use predictions to answer a simple scientific question.
- I can use descriptive words to create a poem.

### Additional equipment

- Magnifiers
- Paper
- Pencils
- Clipboards (optional)

Using the poem in the story:

'Lichens, mosses, liverworts,  
In shady woodlands grow,  
On bark of trees, on stone and rock,  
By gentle burns that flow.

Specklebelly and forest star,  
Mouse-tail moss and earwort,  
Where earth is wet and air is clear,  
You bring to us great woodland cheer!'

Read through the poem again and explain what lichens and/or mosses are and the differences between them – see 'Information for teachers and educators'.

### Part 1

- Ask the children where they would look for lichens and moss. '*On bark of trees, on stone and rock, By gentle burns that flow*'.
- Get the children to predict which substrate (on trees/ on stones and rocks/on ground and grass) will have more moss and/or lichen, and why. Moss generally likes shady/damp places and some, but not all lichens, like lighter/drier places. Also bear in mind that the shadier side of the tree trunk is generally north facing.
- Ask the children to look at these different substrates around them – can they find examples of moss and lichen growing? And can they answer their predictions?

### Part 2

- Get them to choose a lichen and a moss and have a closer look at them with magnifiers – what differences can they see?
- Do they remember some of the names of the lichens and mosses? '*Specklebelly and forest star, mouse-tail moss and earwort*'. They may also remember 'lungwort', 'script lichen', 'pixie cups' and 'featherwort'. Illustrations of these can all be found in the species list accompanying the story.
- After looking closely at their chosen lichen and moss, ask them to give each of them a descriptive name and explain to the group why they chose that name.
- Ask them to choose either the lichen or the moss and make up their own short poem for their specimen.
- If the children are having trouble coming up with a poem, they could try an acrostic poem for ease. Here's a good link for how to write an acrostic poem <http://www.poetry4kids.com/lessons/how-to-write-an-acrostic-poem/>
- Their vertical word for the base of the poem can be the new name of their plant or more simply the word 'MOSS' or 'LICHEN'.
- If there is time and using the magnifiers, the children can draw and label their newly named species!

# The Tale of *Ghillie Dhu*



## Activity 3 Ghillie Dhu's wardrobe

Early Years/Primary 1-4/5  
(Age 3-9/10)

### Learning objectives

- I can use my observational skills to better understand the world of plants around me.
- I can distinguish between different textures, different plants and parts of plants.
- I can understand the reasons why animals and plants are camouflaged.
- I can use my creative skills to make a collage.

### Additional equipment

- Collecting cards (find in this pack)
- Magnifiers

### In the classroom

- Ghillie Dhu colouring sheets (see below)
- Glue

Get the children to search for 'clothes' for the Ghillie Dhu by gathering natural objects from the forest floor including moss and lichen. Ask them to pick things up that are loose and not growing. Pupils can use the collecting cards attached to this activity to help them.

**The first child  
to find all  
items can call  
Bingo!**

### For Early Years

Collect 5 items for Ghillie Dhu's clothes

- \* Something straight
- \* Something soft
- \* Something round
- \* Something spiky
- \* Something green

### For Primary

- \* An acorn cup/hazelnut shell/pine cone – for his hat
- \* A piece of lichen – for his jacket
- \* A leaf – for his trousers
- \* A piece of fern – for his belt
- \* A piece of bark – for his shoes
- \* A piece of moss – for his bed

Gather the children round to see their items and check they are correct. There can sometimes be confusion over lichen and moss!

### Suggested discussion areas and questions

- What have they found and why did they choose their items?
- What words would you use to describe the texture of the lichen/bark?
- Why do trees need leaves? Does moss have leaves? Use a magnifier – let's look!
- Discuss why it is good for Ghillie Dhu to be camouflaged and relate this to why animals and plants in the woods are camouflaged. Could we camouflage ourselves? How? Let's try!

Once you are happy with their finds, use them to make a big Ghillie Dhu collage on the forest floor. Or, if in the classroom, use the Ghillie Dhu colouring sheets, gluing the items directly to the sheet.



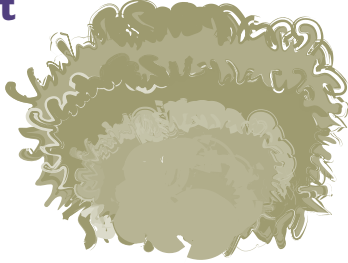
### Activity 3

## Ghillie Dhu's wardrobe

### Early Years collecting card

Collect 5 items for Ghillie Dhu's clothes

Something  
soft



Something  
round



Something  
straight



Something  
spiky



Something  
green



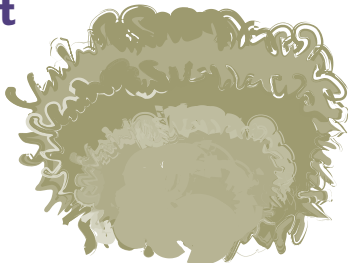
### Activity 3

## Ghillie Dhu's wardrobe

### Early Years collecting card

Collect 5 items for Ghillie Dhu's clothes

Something  
soft



Something  
round



Something  
straight



Something  
spiky



Something  
green



### Activity 3

## Ghillie Dhu's wardrobe

### Primary collecting card

Tick the box when you've collected each item

☐

**An acorn cup/hazelnut shell/  
pine cone** for his hat

☐

**A piece of fern**  
for his belt

☐

**A piece of lichen**  
for his jacket

☐

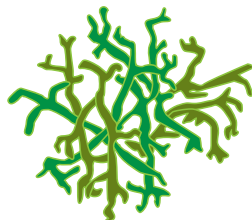
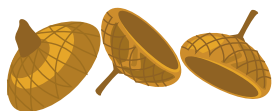
**A piece of bark**  
for his shoes

☐

**A leaf**  
for his trousers

☐

**A piece of moss**  
for his bed



### Activity 3

## Ghillie Dhu's wardrobe

### Primary collecting card

Tick the box when you've collected each item

☐

**An acorn cup/hazelnut shell/  
pine cone** for his hat

☐

**A piece of fern**  
for his belt

☐

**A piece of lichen**  
for his jacket

☐

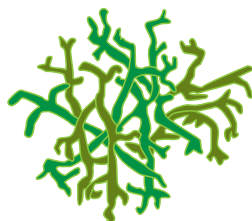
**A piece of bark**  
for his shoes

☐

**A leaf**  
for his trousers

☐

**A piece of moss**  
for his bed





# The Tale of *Ghillie Dhu*



## Activity 4 Ghillie Dhu homes

Early Years/Primary  
(Age 3-12)

### Learning objectives

- I can broaden my understanding of the applications behind technological thinking, including the nature of engineering.
- I can enhance my curiosity and problem-solving skills.
- I can develop skills in collaborating, leading, taking initiative and interacting with others.

In small groups, ask children to gather natural objects from the woodland floor in order to make a home for the Ghillie Dhu. Encourage the children to only use objects that have fallen to the ground – i.e. are not growing. Remind the children they can use different levels in the forest, not just the forest floor. They can really go to town with staircases, bridges, gardens and furniture if they have time!

### Suggested discussion areas and questions

- Where would be the best place to build a home?
- As a whole group, ask the children to come up with their own criteria as to what and where would make the best Ghillie Dhu home – i.e. does it need to be camouflaged? If so, why? Does it need to be sheltered? Protected from flooding?
- Children could have a go at designing their homes on paper before going out into the woods if time allows.
- The whole group could judge the best home once built, based on the building criteria they came up with themselves.
- How could they improve their homes if they had more time?
- What other materials could they have used?
- It's a good idea if the children get the chance to explain their creation to the rest of the group at the end – this is where you get to see how the children have used their imagination.



## Activity 5 Ghillie Dhu trail

All ages

### Additional equipment

- Printed waymarkers
- Laminating pouches
- Hole puncher
- String

Using the circular Ghillie Dhu waymarkers found in this pack (see below), a trail can be set up through an area of wood to be used in conjunction with the Ghillie Dhu story or as a stand-alone trail. Either way, the participants can actively search for the Ghillie Dhu in the forest. Laminating the waymarkers is best for durability in the rainforest.

### Ideas for trail

- Different sections of the story can be told at different points along the trail – e.g. combining the search for different Ghillie Dhu clothing items (activity 3) between markers.
- Create a trail with different rainforest activities set up at each marker.
- Create an orienteering trail where rainforest information has to be found or questions answered at each waymarker. The trail may benefit from participants having a simple map of the wood.
- Encourage children to create their own Ghillie Dhu trail with pieces of information or natural items to collect on the way!



## Activity 5

### Ghillie Dhu trail

Waymarker to cut out



## Activity 5

### Ghillie Dhu trail

Waymarker to cut out

