





# Mud In Your Eye September - October '22

Welcome to the 59th Edition of *Mud in Your Eye*. *In this issue:* 





## **Editorial**

I quite like this time of year as we start to move out of summer and into autumn; we say goodbye to the swallows but welcome the incoming sound of skeins of geese in the sky.

18-20

With the change in seasons we are also seeing a slight change to the design of Mud In Your Eye thanks to our new designer Stuart Graham. Roger may have retired, but he is still kindly writing the regular feature 'Heavens Above' from his new home in Yorkshire. We also welcome Richard's new feature 'Deep Time', focusing on the fascinating world of geology.

#### We'd love to hear from you!

**East Lothian Countryside Volunteers** 

Email ranger@eastlothian.gov.uk or follow us...

f East Lothian Council Countryside Rangers

Mud In Your Eye is published by East Lothian Council's Countryside Rangers





# A (career) change in the right direction

By Sandra Bird, Seasonal Countryside Ranger at Yellowcraig and Archerfield

I had worked in numerous positions within customer services, administration and finance, feeling rather despondent and the work relatively dull and unchallenging. Living in Hawick in the Borders, a married mum of two and working part-time. Could I retrain and if so, what sector? I would daydream, not of being whisked away by a knight in shining armour, but finding a job I could be happy in, the kind of job that doesn't feel like a job. (I was so envious of people who would say that about theirs). The job I was doing at the time ... wasn't it!

In 2019, I signed up to SRUC's
Distance Learning HNC Countryside &
Environmental Management and taking
their advice, became a volunteer with
my local council's Countryside Access
Service, Borders Forest Trust and
Scottish Wildlife Trust, for their "work"
days which helped me prepare for
various modules and assessments.

Over the length of my course, very few Ranger-type posts were advertised and all requiring much more experience that I had. There were even less opportunities in my local area. When Covid struck, volunteering opportunities ceased ... everything ground to a halt! My course was already online so, thankfully, at least I could focus on that. 2020 might have given us a crazy pandemic, but it also gave the UK the best of summers

When lockdown ended the outdoors became the only place EVERYONE could go, and they did - en masse!! The countryside saw a massive increase in visitors. Picnic areas once quiet, became hotspots. Forests, woodlands, beaches, country walks once rarely used, became busy with people desperate to get outside. It was fantastic that people had a new appreciation for the outdoors. But it also brought a



#### A (career) change in the right direction (continued)



massive increase in anti-social behaviour, littering, dirty camping, dogs worrying livestock and ground-nesting birds. People were just everywhere! The social issues of our towns and cities became the countryside's issues too. Local authorities had rerouted funding to other departments, so any Council which still had a Ranger service, were hammered in dealing with all these extra problems.

Covid highlighted not only how important Ranger Services were, but the protection and conservation of our green spaces. The education of others in their responsibilities when enjoying these green spaces became a priority too. The Governments (UK and Scottish) stepped in by providing extra funding and in 2021 with #greenrecovery and #betterplacesfund from @greenerscotland and @naturescot, @scotgov, and I began to see more Seasonal Ranger posts being advertised.

Success!! In June 2021 I became a Seasonal Countryside Ranger with East Lothian Council. The funding via NatureScot, through the Better Places



Green Recovery Fund, provided for 8 seasonal posts, our uniforms, waterproofs and safety equipment which I definitely put to good use. Based with the East team I had four beaches to patrol: Whitesands & Barns Ness, Skateraw and Thorntonloch, east of Dunbar. Over the season though, I made a point of working on other sites along East Lothian's coastline and some of the inland sights.

I enjoyed the variety of the job, and the full-time Rangers were so welcoming and incredibly encouraging, willing to pass on their knowledge and experience and great to work with. I was putting my hand up to jobs before I even knew what it fully was, and I relished every challenge.

From monitoring and recording various plant life, working with volunteers, clearing invasive species, strimming and access maintenance, bird counts to regular litter picking and patrols, meeting people from all parts of the country and from all walks of life ... a wandering quantum physicist being one of many memorable moments and increasing my ID knowledge, even whale watching!

Talking to every single camper was a priority, giving friendly advice on the Scottish Outdoor Access code (SOAC) and East Lothian's interpretation of wild camping (it's not family tents, solar panels and chopping down trees!)

Checking the Exmoor ponies, conservation grazers at Traprain Law, Haddington had to be one of my favourite jobs. Removing ragwort, dealing with damaged fencing, checking them for injuries and their water troughs were full and in good working order, just watching them graze and interact with each other was fantastic. It was only 4 months, but I packed a LOT in!

Over the winter I was busy with volunteering again and doing other short training courses with the hope of finding a longer contract or more Seasonal work as I found it challenging, rewarding and memorable. No looking back now!

In 2022 the Countryside Team were again successful in achieving funding support from NatureScot, through the Better Places Green Recovery Fund. @NatureScot #GreenRecovery #BetterPlacesFund and I was successful

in securing a second season with East Lothian Council Countryside Ranger Service. The funding has provided full uniform....even a bucket and hat as well as a trusty backpack. We received steel toe capped boots, more PPE, equipment and tools. The funding has been put to good use again and long may it continue for the much-needed services Rangering provides.

My 2022 season has me based at Yellowcraig & Archerfield...the busiest site in 2021 for what became known as "car-park" camping (which was actively discouraged). Starting prior to the school holidays has given a longer season. The summer weather is much more changeable and with other events and places opened to receive visitors, I am seeing the beaches (and car parks) quieter than last year. Not so many campers either, but it is still early doors. Most of the campers that we do see seem to be more in line with SOAC so perhaps our drive to educate last year is paying off. The Ranger Service have posted out videos on Wild Camping, podcasts, new signage and a car park app to give information on quiet and busy car parks to help ease any congestion.



Also new to 2022 we are hosting events along our beaches, and I have held rock pool events for primary schools and families, which will continue throughout the season. The permanent Rangers also have various Skill Sharing Sessions which Seasonals are encouraged to take part in. As well as First Aid, we have received training on the Health and Safety aspects of handling dead/dying birds with suspected Avian flu (another New for 2022 event!) and how to safely lift and dispose of them with correct PPE procedures. I have taken part in species surveys and monitoring, WebS counts and am responsible for various sand dune maintenance projects and I'm only 3 weeks into my contract!! So, it will be interesting to compare 2022 to last season in all aspects of my personal development.

If it weren't for the support provided by NatureScot, through the Better Places Green Recovery Fund for giving local authorities and other organisations the finances to be able to invest in Ranger Services, I know I would still only be daydreaming about this.

Cheers @NatureScot #GreenRecovery #BetterPlacesFund; @GreenerScotland @ScotGov









# Confusion Corner - Coveys to Covet

Hidden within the fields and their margins of East Lothian's farmland are two native birds of conservation concern that live their lives largely away from our casual gaze.

The larger and vastly more populous of the two, the grey partridge, is one of those birds who's sudden appearance from a flower rich field margin or tall grassland is likely to have you muttering something more explicit than its namesakes Alan's 'Aha'. One step too close and you are reeling from an explosion of wing beats while you simultaneously try to grab a glimpse of the beautiful russet colour of the tail feathers so rich in tone on tail and face they look like they've been dooking in a paint pot. These are intricately patterned birds when seen closely, but often all you are left to appreciate is a feather are two a fraction of the whole that's blasting to cover nearby.

Unlike the sedentary grey partridge that is content with eking out its existence

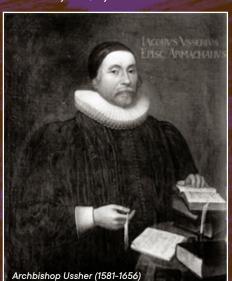
with the boundaries of a few fields the diminutive quail has much itchier feet. This rare and reclusive inhabitant of arable fields is right now journeying south on its treacherous long-distance migration to sub-Saharan Africa, over the rifles of the hunters that have had such an impact on their numbers over the centuries. The number of these skylark sized birds that make it here in late spring is highly variable from year to year, but even in good quail year seeing them in the wild them is a challenge. Not least because surveys have revealed only 500 calling males in the UK, with just 1/5th in Scotland! Even then, if you are lucky enough to hear the 'wet-my-lips' call, these pocket sized ventriloguists are incredibly hard to pinpoint, their call seemingly emanating from all around.

# **Deep Time**

Welcome to Deep Time, a new series of articles focussing on all things geological. In this first piece we look at the concept of deep time and one of the originators of the idea – James Hutton.

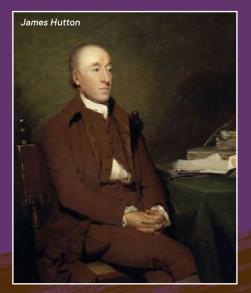
Deep time is a concept close to the heart of anyone interested in geology. It is, as the name suggests, essentially the idea of there having been a lot of time gone by since the formation of our planet. The term was originally used by American writer John McPhee in the early 1980s, although the idea goes back long before then.

The concept of the Earth being very old had been proposed at various times throughout history. In the 11th Century, scholars in both China and Persia had put forward the idea and no doubt one or two ancient Greeks would have agreed. However, European thought on the subject had largely been dominated, at least for the last two thousand years, by the bible. Christian



scholars usually didn't pin down the age of the Earth precisely, but it was generally agreed to be somewhere in the region of six thousand years. James Ussher, the Archbishop of Armagh, writing in the 1650s was a little more ambitious. Using his impressive knowledge of the bible, he calculated that the time of creation was the evening of October 23rd 4004 BC, which seems overly specific.

It was into this intellectual environment that the hero of our story arrived. James Hutton (1726-1797), despite being a trained physician, spent much of his working life as a farmer in the Borders. He gained a reputation for an innovative approach to agriculture and became interested in geology after observing the processes of erosion and deposition in action. Hutton began to focus his attentions on geological features known as unconformities. These consist of two masses of rock. one on top of the other, between which there appears to be a very clear discrepancy in terms of their formation. There will often be a series of strata aligned at a particular angle, which is overlain by younger layers at a very different angle. Hutton studied several of these, but it is the one at Siccar Point near Cockburnspath that has gone down in history as "Hutton's Unconformity".



At Siccar Point, Hutton noticed that the lower set of strata were almost vertical, whilst the overlying sandstones were close to horizontal. It was here that he had his real eureka moment and realised how the chain of events must have panned out. Firstly, the lower set of rocks (the "schistus" as Hutton referred to them) were deposited horizontally underwater. Then, as a result of earth movements they were tilted, and later uplifted and exposed at the surface. They would then be subjected to assorted erosional forces.



Later still, this exposed surface was again submerged under the sea and the overlying layers of sandstone were deposited on top. A further cycle of uplift, tilting and erosion occurred, producing the feature that we see today. Hutton knew that this whole must have taken a lot longer than a few thousand years. Furthermore, he realised that it was all the result of natural processes, not requiring supernatural intervention or a global flood.

At the time Hutton could have no idea of the actual age of the rocks he was looking at, or indeed the age of the Earth itself, but he was content with the idea that things were a whole lot older than widely accepted. He summed this up later by writing (magnificently) that "we find no vestige of a beginning – no prospect of an end".

Science moves on and we now date the formation of the Earth at about 4.6 billion years ago (take that Archbishop Ussher!) Terminology changes - modern geologists would refer to Hutton's schistus as Silurian greywacke.

However, so much is based on the work of Hutton, and later followers such as Charles Lyell, that he richly deserves the title of the Founder of Modern Geology.



Geology



With climate change a red hot issue we are rightly hearing about it in our everyday lives. So you may have heard about carbon capture.

This buzzword is often shown when promoting our forests and tree planting for the climate, and rightly so. Trees play a huge role in absorbing CO2 out of our atmosphere through photosynthesis, often called green carbon capture. In 2020 UK forests were predicted to have absorbed 20.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide.

#### What is Blue Carbon?

Our woodlands and forests, are not the only carbon capturing habitats that we have. Surrounded by the sea, Scotland has a wealth of blue carbon capturing habitats that are just as important as our green carbon capturing sources. Blue carbon refers to the carbon captured

by all metabolic processes and organic material derived from other sources and deposited and stored by organic or inorganic marine stores. Scotland's blue carbon habitats include salt marshes, sea grass beds, kelp beds, biogenic reefs, Maerl (red algae) beds and geological sedimentary stores.

#### Saltmarsh in East Lothian

East Lothian is home to blue carbon sources all along the coastline. Aberlade Bay and John Muir Country Park hold important saltmarsh. They not only provide a high biodiversity coastal habitat, create coastal protection from sea level rise and storms but they play an important role in climate mitigation

and sequestration. These saltmarshes have carbon-rich sediments constituting high priority blue carbon habitat. A study at Tyninghame shore, found that 8,655.43 tonnes of organic carbon (OC) was stored in the top 15 cm of soil and Aberlady held 3,777.82 tonnes of OC. This is very important data as it will help inform policy and management for continued sequestration and restoration of saltmarshes across Scotland.

#### Seagrass in East Lothian

Seagrass meadows are another hugely important ecosystem, providing ecosystem services like nutrient cycling, biodiversity and a capability for carbon sequestration. Despite the vital services and importance of this habitat, it has succumbed to extensive loss and degradation. Seagrass meadows where identified by the United Nations Environment programme as one of the least protected major marine ecosystems, with only 26% occurring within marine protected areas (MPAs). Major threats to seagrass habitats are destructive fishing actions, chemical run off, development

and climate change. There is capacity for Scotland's remaining seagrass meadows to contribute to carbon sequestration, though it is highly variable in the amount of OC that is stored. However, there is potential as it has been shown that seagrass vegetated sediments held higher OC than un-vegetated. Though there is still a lot of room to investigate the potential of seagrass meadow carbon sequestration in Scotland and how these ecosystems should be managed.

East Lothian's coastline is home to some locations of seagrass meadows at Aberlady and John Muir Country Park. Species along the coastline include **Zostera marina**, **Zostera noltei** and **Zostera angustifolia** (a type of **Z. marina**). The presence of these habitats is good news for East Lothian as they contribute to our coastal biodiversity, contribute to ecosystem services helping our communities and potentially help us respond to the climate emergency. There is also major development news, as the UK is set to create a full map of its blue carbon stores.



Climate Stories Climate Stories

# **Heavens Above**

This autumn is a great time to see the planet Jupiter. It is at opposition on September 26th, meaning that the Earth lies between it and the sun.

It also means that it will appear very bright in the night sky with, at least from our point of view, the sun shining directly at it. Jupiter will appear in the constellation of Pisces low in the southeast late on the 26th. Pisces is quite a faint constellation but the planet should be very obvious, being one of the brightest objects in the sky.

A small telescope will reveal its shape, but you will need a stronger one to see the classic cloud features, including the famous red spot. Jupiter has over 60 moons of varying sizes. The four known as the Galilean moons should be just about visible through a small telescope; lo, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto in increasing distance from Jupiter.

Ganymede is 3270 miles across and is the largest moon in the solar system, larger than the planet Mercury.

If staying up late to watch the night sky is a bit too much of a chore, then take a look over a morning cup of coffee at the new images being posted online from the James Web Telescope.

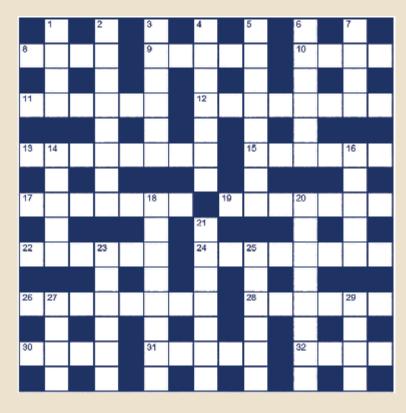
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The first to be beamed back was of Jupiter, which was used to test the equipment. Since then it has sent back spectacular images, my favourite being a deep space image which captured the light from a far distant galaxy that left there billions of years ago.



# Quick(ish!) Crossword

The answers here are the same as the Cryptic Crossword (p14) – so if you get stuck you could always look at those clues! You can also click HERE 1 to complete online. (The solution is on p20)



#### Across

- 8 Desert (4)
- 9 Oak fruit (5)
- 10 Flower (4)
- 11 Main building extension (6) 12/15/19 Littorally protected area (8,6,7)
- 13 See 1 Down
- 17 Spirit with blackthorn (4,3)
- 19 See 12
- 22 Sci-fi author (6)
- 24 Last performance (4,4)

- 26 Flowering climber (8)
- 28 Bird (6)
- 30/7 Was personally seen at Yellowcraig (4,4)
- 31 Like rough grass (5)
- 32 Rare [Scot] (4)

#### Down

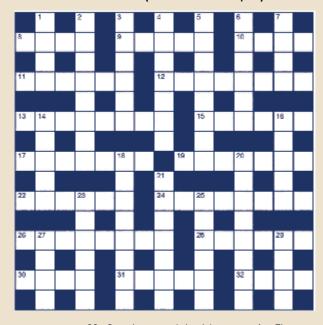
- 1/13 Ranger (4,8)
- 2 Citrus bush? (4,4)
- Typha collection gear (6)
- 4 Glacial till (7)

- 5 Feelers (8)
- 6 Blue flower (6)
- See 30 Across
- 14 Map collection (5)
- 16 Black bird (5)
- 18 Village in Musselburgh (8)
- 20 Elie to Crail (4,4)
- 21 The Leithies for example (7)
- 23 Glove (6)
- 25 Fisherman (6)
- 27 Religious leader (4)
- 29 AGM in Aberlady (4)

Heavens Above Crossword Corner

# **Cryptic Crossword**

The answers here are the same as the Quickie Crossword (p13) – so if you get stuck you could always look at those clues! You can also click HERE 1 to complete online. (The solution is on p20)



#### Across

- 8 Dry area is grim: overhot barren inhospitable - that's just for starters! (4)
- 9 A cereal tree fruit (5)
- 10 Apple's voice backing controls pupil (4)
- 11 Extension formerly in the middle of 28 (6)

12/15/19 Save elderberry nut area - well, it is littorally protected! (8,6,7)

- 13 See 1 Down
- 17 Legions are disposed to drink (4,3)
- 19 See 12
- 22 A sci-fi inventor merely or venerated leading author? (6)
- 24 Last bird sound? (4,4)
- 26 Climber I swear it is twisted (8)

28 Greedy person is back in rotten nagging form (6)

30/7 Father has odd view about Levenhall and Yellowcraig organiser (4,4)

- 31 Southern boundary of grasslike plant (5)
- 32 Rare for a French company (4)

#### Down

1/13 Barleycorn's first tweed on 19 runner (4,8)

- 2 Tall linden bush is a fraction of a millimetre, evidently (4,4)
- 3 Oddly we add pearls to waterproof boots (6)
- 4 State has gold remnant of ice age (7)

**Crossword Corner** 

5 No Scots after an X can improve reception (8)

- 6 Flower goes crazy without nitrogen (6)
- 7 See 30 Across
- 14 Strong man has many maps (5)
- 16 Look up one variety of black bird (5)
- 18 Never ski around part of Musselburgh (8)
- 20 Seek tuna dish in Fife (4,4)
- 21 For isolated habitats land in the International Space Station (7)
- 23 Murderer cut head off cat and covers hand (6)
- 25 Fish measured by degrees with the end of a protractor (6)
- 27 Even, firm, calm prayer leader (4)
- 29 Clever! with no hesitation somehow gets council money (4)



# Rural Watch

We aim to ALERT you to:



Local crimes and emerging trends that may impact you and your community



Information on safety, resilience and community wellbeing



Prevention tactics to protect vour home and business



Approved "Secured by Design" products and recommendations



Advice on how to secure your property, equipment and machinery



The opportunity to share best practice





Sign up to Alerts to register www.ruralwatchscotland.co.uk



Neighbourhood Watch Scotland SCIO is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Charity Number: SC036510



## **ELPARC**

ELPARC members from the Police, Fire Service, and Countryside Rangers attended at Haddington Farmer's Market on the 30 July to promote ELPARC and offer advice to members of the public around fire prevention, water safety, and crime prevention, all of which are ELPARC priorities.

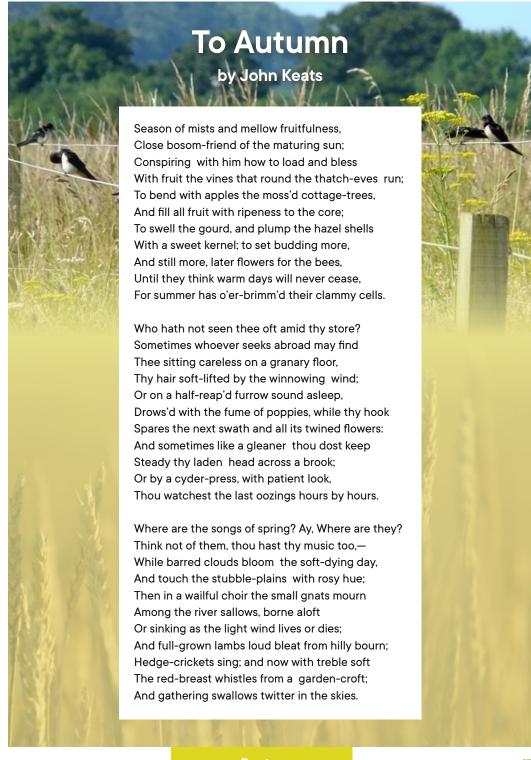
In East Lothian over the recent dry period we did see a significant rise in fires at our local beauty spots which could have been prevented with a little care. Always ensure that disposable barbecues are properly extinguished, as well as any other fire.

We have also seen a number of incidents in the sea where inflatables have swept people too far out and they have had to be rescued. Inflatables should never be used in the sea for this reason, and they are designed for use in the swimming pool.

There has also been a rise in fuel theft from rural properties, due to the rise in fuel costs. If you store fuel on your property:

- ensure a fuel management system is in place allowing for accurate recording of users and fuel used.
- Keep the tank where it is visible from a habitable building allowing for increased natural surveillance
- Reduce access points, locking and blocking any gates that are not in use
- Fit a fuel tank alarm, and use anti-siphoning devices

To receive crime alerts for your area and ELPARC news sign up to Rural Watch ☑. See Page 15 for details.



# **East Lothian Countryside Volunteers**

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No, sadly, this is not an article about a previously unknown species of rodent. It's about East Lothian Countryside Volunteers (ELCV or "Elcovol").

We are the charity that aims to promote and enhance the work of all the volunteer conservation groups throughout East Lothian, from Dunbar in the east to Musselburgh in the west. These groups include:

- **Dunbar Conservation Volunteers**
- Junior Rangers
- Friends of Aberlady Local
  Nature Reserve
- Friends of North Berwick
- Friends of the River Tyne
- Friends of Yellowcraig
- East Lothian Path Wardens

- North Berwick & Traprain Laws
  Pony Groups
- Wildlife, Plant, Bee & Butterfly Surveyors
- River Tyne Giant Hogweed Eradication Programme
- Friends of Levenhall Links



Some of the Elcovol trustees.

Left to right: Dave Quarendon (former trustee, continues to look after Elcovol website), Terry Page, Dick Gill (Chair), Eric McDonald, Anne Watson, Jenny Hargreaves (Countryside Rangers, not a trustee), Peter Wells (Treasurer).

There are around 370 countryside volunteers currently. The Council's countryside service organizes and directly supervises most work that the volunteers do. But ELCV aims to complement the work of the countryside service by representing volunteers, securing extra project funding where we can and otherwise assisting maintenance of the countryside and natural heritage within East Lothian.

Any volunteer may be an Elcovol (member of ELCV), and no subscription is payable. Members signed up or chose to be automatically enrolled when they became volunteers. If you are involved with any of the groups above, you are likely already to also be an Elcovol! The more members there are, the more clout we have when applying for funding.

The strength and importance of the volunteers' work been recognised independently by Paths for All, the national organisation, which named us (under our previous guise, the EL Path Wardens) as its Community Path Volunteers Group of the Year 2017. ELCV was also the winner of the Enhancing the Environment category in the Scottish Land and Estates Helping It Happen Awards in September 2020.

#### **New Elcovol Trustees**

As with any charity, a board of trustees elected by the members leads our work. At this year's AGM in June five of the existing trustees stepped down, five others remained, and three new trustees were elected (total eight trustees). As trustees, we are revising the business plan for the charity. This includes nine

potential improvement projects that Elcovol may assist, for example by fundraising:

- Linkfield Marsh Dunbar dry path
- Seafield pond Dunbar -
- improvement of water quality
- Levenhall floating island.
- Pencraig information boards
- Typha collection at Aberlady and North Berwick.
- North Berwick Glen information boards
- North Berwick Law (marsh area) board walk
- Tyne Giant Hogweed eradication
- Path maintenance across
  East Lothian equipment

We will appoint a trustee sponsor to support the development and hopefully completion of each of these projects. In addition, for each project we also need to

- 1) find a willing volunteer or group of volunteers from the local group to get involved in the project
- 2) engage closely with the responsible ranger. The trustees are aiming to meet with volunteer groups over the coming months.

If you would like information about Elcovol or have any questions please speak to any of the trustees you may already know (see Note\*) or email contact@elcv.org.uk 2 and we will get right back to you.

\*Note: You can browse our website homepage www.elcv.org.uk for more information about Elcovol. All the current trustees are named and pictured on the following website page www.elcv.org.uk/charity/trustees-4/ .

## **Volunteer Diary Dates**

#### Remember to save the date!

Where	Day	Date	Time	Action
Yellowcraig	Thu	1 Sep	10:00-15:00	Pirri-pirri survey and removal
North Berwick	Tue	20 Sep	10:00-12:30	tbd
Levenhall Links	Tue	27 Sep	10:00-13:00	Boating pond cut and lift vegetation in the butterfly habitat
Dunbar	Wed	28 Sep	10:00-13:00	tbd
Yellowcraig	Thu	6 Oct	10:00-15:00	Pirri-pirri survey and removal
North Berwick	Tue	18 Sep	10:00-12:30	tbd
Levenhall Links	Tue	25 Oct	10:00-13:00	Site management
Dunbar	Wed	26 Oct	10:00-13:00	tbd

For information on all events please contact ranger@eastlothian.gov.uk



### Crossword Solution



#### Get in touch

## We'd love to hear from you!

Email us at ranger@eastlothian.gov.uk or follow us...

- @ELCrangers
- @ELCrangers
- f East Lothian Council **Countryside Rangers**