

East Lothian Council Countryside Rangers

September / October 2023

MUD in your EYE



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Mud In Your Eye

September - October 2023

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Editorial

It's hard to believe we are almost at the end of another summer season, and it won't be long before we say goodbye to the swallows and hello to the sound of pink-footed geese in the sky! That being said there is still plenty of wildlife to see and enjoy over the coming months. In this edition you will hear about some of the great work that has been taking place in Dunbar to help hedgehogs, as well as the usual great features. Enjoy!

We'd love to hear from you!

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

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 East Lothian Council Countryside Rangers

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



Helping Hedgehogs in Dunbar

By Jen Walker,
Pledgehog Project Officer

Photo: Jen Walker © Gill Walker @ Esoterica



It was only a few years ago that I began to think about hedgehogs. I've always been interested in nature and wildlife gardening and thought that I had made my 'new build' garden into a hedgehog haven. But I was puzzled at the lack of spiky visitors! I began to feel that making improvements to my own garden in isolation wasn't enough to make any significant difference to the hedgehogs in my local area. I also found out that they had become classed as 'at risk of extinction in the UK' which made me more determined to try and help them.

My first step was to set up a Dunbar Hedgehog Group on Facebook, which gathered lots of interest. People started to chat to each other about hedgehogs and the first few sightings were reported. Little was known at this point about where they were, so I started

recording any sightings that the group reported. The online '**Big Hedgehog Map**' run by Hedgehog Street (a joint initiative between The British Hedgehog Preservation Society and People's Trust for Endangered Species) seemed like an excellent tool for this, as it allows you to search by postcode and see if there has been a hedgehog seen near you. It also lets you add any sightings (alive or not) which allowed me to produce a Dunbar hedgehog map. The added benefit is that all the data is then used by the conservation organisations that monitor hedgehogs throughout the UK.

Many other local people started to express interest in finding out if they had any hedgehogs visiting their gardens or outdoor spaces. Of course, as hedgehogs are nocturnal, they are very elusive, so I secured some initial funding from Dunbar

Community Council's 'Community Benefit Fund' to buy 3 night-time trail cameras and tracking tunnels to lend to anyone in Dunbar who wanted to do some detective work. This resulted in several new sightings and increased people's enthusiasm to make their gardens more hedgehog friendly.

At the end of 2022, I teamed up with Naomi Barnes from Sustaining Dunbar. We put a project together with the aim that our community would take positive steps to increase the numbers of hedgehogs in our area by improving habitats, linking gardens and as a result also connecting neighbours. **The Pledgehog Project** officially began in 2023 when Dunbar and East Linton Area Partnership provided funding, allowing me to work around a day each week as the project officer.

Even though I am only partway through the project, I have already built up a better understanding of hedgehogs in Dunbar, identifying hotspots and any areas that lack sightings. This year the trail cameras have been set up in 11 different locations with 9 of them recording hedgehogs (including at Dunbar Primary School Nursery Beehive Garden and Lammermuir House Care Home). So far 22 people have reported seeing a hedgehog with 14 locations having regular hedgehog sightings (a pair of hedgehogs were even seen mating on camera!).

Here are some other highlights:

Friends of Winterfield Park have sought advice about making the park hedgehog friendly and alongside East Lothian Council, have made lots of habitat improvements; hedge and tree planting,

new areas of wildflowers and a hedgehog area where branches and dead wood can be piled with some evergreen planting and shelter.

I've really enjoyed working with staff at Lammermuir House Care Home to make hedgehog friendly improvements to the garden and to encourage more nature-related garden activities for the residents. A water station has been set up, a hedgehog house hidden in a sheltered location and one of the trail cameras has been used to record footage of a visiting hedgehog to the great delight of the staff, residents, and their families.

Children at Dunbar Primary School Nursery have gained insight into hedgehog activities and have enjoyed seeing video footage of a hedgehog caught on the night-time trail camera in the new Beehive Wildlife Garden near a shelter that they helped to make. Nursery staff report that this is bringing the children real joy and a burst of enthusiasm for bug life and hedgehogs. Recently, I organised a visit from Rory Crawford, who has presented various animal related children's TV programmes, who joined the children on a minibeast hunt which



Night vision camera image of a hedgehog eating an earthworm

caused great excitement. New habitats have been created that are good for hedgehogs as well as lots of other wildlife. Many people that I have talked to at events have been enthusiastic about creating wilder areas in their gardens to encourage more insect life, which will also provide more food for hedgehogs and have taken home native wildflower seed packets to help create these areas.

Taylor Wimpey have revealed that hedgehog highways (a 13cm squared gap in the fences) are included in the plans for their new Belhaven Way housing development in Dunbar. This is fantastic news as it will allow hedgehogs access routes to an area that would potentially be out of bounds. They also made a financial donation to the project which has been used to buy materials for the talented people at Dunbar Shed to build around 30 hedgehog houses for local people to buy in return for a small donation.

A resident in West Barns has also become particularly interested in making improvements to her garden to benefit hedgehogs and has enjoyed using the project's trail camera. As well as building log piles under her hedge and leaving shallow dishes of water out she has connected the gardens surrounding her with hedgehog highways and has been the driving force behind many residents in West Barns getting involved in the project and making their gardens more hedgehog friendly.

She said, *'In May 2023 I found out about the Pledgehog project from a friend and the idea of helping the declining population of hedgehogs*

struck a chord with me. I gauged enthusiasm among neighbours for joining forces and adapting our gardens to make them more biodiverse and welcoming to wildlife. We invited Jen from the Pledgehog Project to my garden to learn about all the practical things that we can consider. After this some of us proceeded to create 'hedgehog highways' in our gardens to better interconnect them and to help hedgehogs access a bigger area safely. Borrowing an infra-red camera was exciting and it revealed that we indeed had a hedgehog in our garden. Over the course of the month, we captured over 20 videos of our hedgehog feeding and roaming our garden and it has been nothing short of exhilarating. I shared the videos with my family, friends, and neighbours and 'hedgehog updates' have become a new theme on our neighbourhood What's App group. It's been a great pleasure working with Jen and contributing to the project in a small but memorable way'.

I hope you've enjoyed reading a bit about the Dunbar Pledgehog Project and that I've inspired you to make some changes (however big or small) to your garden or outdoor space that encourage nature and hedgehogs. If you feel like I did a few years ago that your garden can't make much of a difference to the fate of hedgehogs, I'd like to reassure you that it really can!

To find out everything you need to know about helping hedgehogs and the big hedgehog map visit hedgehogstreet.org  and to keep in touch with the Dunbar Pledgehog Project see sustainingdunbar.org 

Heavens Above

One of the best constellations for viewing right now is Cassiopeia.

The five main stars forming part of the constellation make up the classic W shape, which is high overhead at the moment and very easy to find. From left to right, the stars are Segin, Ruchbah, Gamma Cassiopeiae (Its scientific name, it has no other known name), Schedar and Caph. As mentioned in a previous article, many of the stars names are derived from Arabic. A lot of the historical information we have on the night sky comes from Arabic scholars who spent a lot of time viewing the stars and planets and recording their observations.

Cassiopeia was the Queen of Ethiopia in Greek mythology, condemned to circle around the heavens forever by Poseidon for daring to state that she was more beautiful than his sea nymphs. She is often depicted sitting a throne combing her hair. The Arabic names reflect the different parts of the constellation. Ruchbah is derived from the Arabic word for knee and Schedar from the Arabic word for breast.

Cassiopeia sits along the Milky Way, for those of you in areas dark enough to see it. One of the consequences is it contains quite a large number of deep sky objects including star clusters and nebulae. One is called the Pacman nebula, because of its resemblance to the computer game character. You will need a good pair of binoculars at least to see any of these objects.



The Pacman Nebula

September Full Moon



Other things to look out for in September & October:

- On the **29th September** the full moon will appear just after sunset low on the eastern horizon. Due to an optical illusion it will appear much bigger than it really is.
- The **21st October** marks the peak of the Orionid meteor shower. The moon will be in the first quarter so will not be too bright, so with a dark enough night sky you may be lucky enough to see up to 25 meteors per hour. The shower is due to the Earth passing through the dust trail left behind by the famous Halley's Comet.
- On the **28th October** there will be a partial lunar eclipse. This is when the moon passes into the Earth's shadow. It will peak at 9.15pm. Let's hope for a clear sky!

Glaciation (Part 1)

Scotland can be a chilly place, but at times over the last couple of million years it's been a whole lot colder.

Glencoe
© Malcolm Lightbody

During that time the Earth has been in a period of glaciation, which has included spells of intense cold, known as stadials, and warmer periods called interstadials. We're currently in an interstadial, but may well see a return to colder conditions in a few thousand years. How these natural cycles will interact with anthropogenic climate change I'll leave to greater minds than mine.

The last stadial reached its peak around 25 000 years ago. At the time Scotland, along with northern England, Ireland and most of Wales was covered in a vast ice sheet. After a bit of toing and froing, retreating and re-advancing, this ice sheet eventually disappeared about 9 000 years ago. However, the effects of glaciation can be clearly seen in the landscape around us.

One result of glaciation is a coating across large sections of northern Britain of a material known as till. This consists of all sorts of stuff, made up of rock eroded and transported by glaciers and later deposited as the ice melted. It often contains large lumps of rock within a very fine-grained matrix and, as a result, used to be known as boulder clay. This latter term has fallen out of use a bit, as some tills contain neither boulders nor clay.

The erosional power of moving ice can be pretty impressive and has resulted in steep-sided U-shaped valleys carved by glaciers – Glencoe being a classic example. Closer to home, we can see features such as crag and tail. These occur when moving ice encounters an outcrop of particularly hard rock which

is relatively resistant to erosion. The ice is diverted around the outcrop, all the time eroding and removing the softer material round about. The resulting steep face which bears the brunt of the ice forms the crag. The more erodible rock behind the outcrop is often protected from being worn away by the ice and forms a long tapering tail on the lee side. Edinburgh's Royal Mile is built on the tail of Castle Rock's crag. Here in East Lothian, North Berwick Law is a good example of crag and tail. Anyone who's travelled out of the town via the Heugh Brae has passed up and over the Law's tail.

A similar (ish) formation goes under the superb name of a *roche moutonnée*. Like the crag and tail, this features a mound that has been scoured by ice,

but it lacks the tail. Instead the down-slope has a steep, jagged slope as a result of rocks being plucked from the surface by the ice. Roches moutonnées are generally smaller in scale than crag and tail formations - Yellowcraig is a local example.

There is some debate about the derivation of the term *roche moutonnée*. It is thought to date back to the 1780s and was coined by Horace Bénédict de Saussure, a Genevan mountaineer, geologist and explorer. He thought the formations resembled wigs that were fashionable at the time, which were smoothed over with mutton fat. An alternative explanation is that the outcrops look like sheep's backs in shape and texture. Personally, I prefer the wig thing.



North Berwick Law's 'tail'

Meetings with Moths

Discovering their Mystery and Extraordinary Lives, by Katty Baird

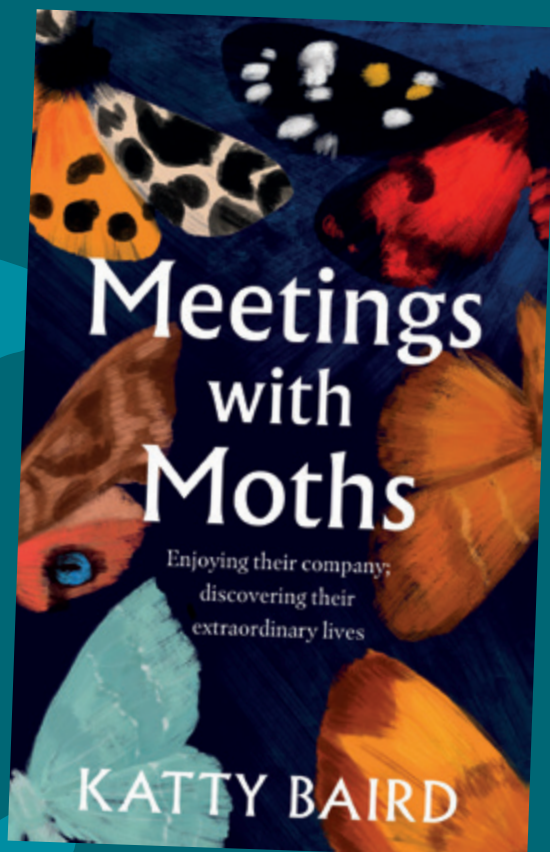
Katty Baird's delightful new book is perfect for those of us who love the subtle beauty and variety of moths, but know little about them.

Katty is well known to many East Lothian Countryside Volunteers, as she is one of our own. She can be spotted out and about, opening moth-traps and identifying their dozy denizens to interested groups.

In her book, she takes us along on her adventures, seeking out moths in woods and on hills and bogs. She meets other moth enthusiasts as she goes, and negotiates with her children, who are sometimes keen on her activities and sometimes quizzical.

Katty also introduces pioneering moth experts of the past, among them Alice Blanche Balfour (1850-1936), an East Lothian lady who amassed an impressive collection of specimens which is now in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Katty's passion for moths and delight in the great outdoors is evident on every



page. She writes, '*Mossy greens, conker browns, cream, chocolate and deepest black; add stripes, swirls and splotches and you have some of the most striking wildlife Britain has to offer.*'

A colour illustration reveals the shining wings and absurdly long antennae of the Green Longhorn. Then there is the Elephant Hawk-moth, clothed in 'punk-pink and camo-green'; and the Canary Shouldered Thorn, with its bright yellow fluff and feathery antennae.

Science runs through the story too, but always presented in a way that non-scientists will understand. We learn about metamorphosis and pheromones



Traprain Law, where Katty caught a rare Northern Rustic moth (below)



Northern Rustic (*Standfussiana lucerneae*)

and natural selection, as well as the many ways that moths deter predators, including posing as bird droppings.


Katty concludes her book on the summit of Traprain Law, with the Exmoor ponies just discernible in the mist. Here she catches a moth never before seen in East Lothian: a Northern Rustic. *'It is soft and furry and looks warm and cosy in the morning's damping, with perfect wings coloured in indistinct gradations of grey like the mist around us. I coax it onto a grey, lichen-encrusted rock where it blends in seamlessly. It isn't colourful, it isn't showing much charisma, but I love it.'*



Canary Shouldered Thorn (*Ennomos alniaria*)

Hopefully *Meetings with Moths* will win the many readers it deserves.

Meetings with Moths is published by 4th Estate in hardback with colour and black-and-white illustrations, and is also available in paperback and on Kindle.



Sea holly is great for butterflies and bumblebees

Wildlife Gardening

September

Gardening is often about preparation, so get ordering your spring bulbs now.

These are so important for emerging bumblebees, needing an early nectar source, so if you can get them ordered and planted out, you can get to put your feet up, knowing that spring is sorted.

Just like August, don't be too keen to tidy up. Plants like **alliums**, **honesty** and sea hollies are great for butterflies and bumblebees and once they have

flowers, leave the seed heads for the birds to pick over.

Now is the time to cut back that longer area of grass that you might have left for the wildflowers and small mammals. If you want to encourage the wildflowers next year, cut the long grass and compost the cuttings away from the area. This means that the soil underneath doesn't get too nutrient rich. Why not scrape some vegetation back, to show some bare earth and plant some **yellowrattle**, a native plant that parasitises grasses and this can help encourage other wild plant species to grow. Plus it is beautiful.

Starling adult and
juvenile feeding



Yellowrattle



October

Try leaving some of your windfall apples on the ground or even leave some on the tree for the birds. All animals at this time of year are stocking up their winter fat levels so leaving some apples on the ground will help the birds and the small mammals in your garden.


Resist yet another cut of the lawn to help starlings, magpies and rooks in their search for leatherjackets in the ground under the lawn. Leatherjackets are the pupae of daddy-long legs and the birds sticking their beaks into the lawn may leave wee holes, but these holes will help aerate your lawn in the autumn.

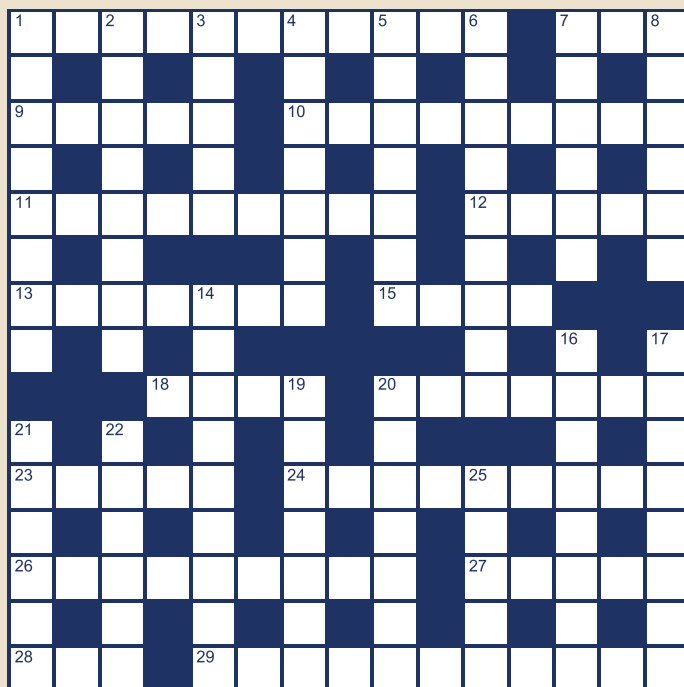
Why not build a hedgehog house for your local hedgehogs? [!\[\]\(003082e50e3009141f59bd5df831749f_img.jpg\)](#)

Hedgehogs are best fed with a complete hedgehog food and fresh water rather than bread and milk as we used to think.

Happy Hedgehogs [!\[\]\(faf942dc3e59ce8eb64b4ac481eca7e0_img.jpg\)](#)

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](#)  to complete online. (The solution is on p16)



Across

1. Helps at Traprain or North Berwick Law (4,7)
7. A title (3)
9. Spanish man (5)
10. Regained health (9)
11. Location of Volly Jolly in 2022 (4,5)
12. Mountain ash (5)
13. Get back (7)
15. Against voters (2)
18. Fleur-de-lis (4)
20. Jumper (7)
23. Roughly (5)
24. Something very similar (4-5)
26. Suffragettes burnt its church (9)
27. A stupid person (5)
28. American petrol (3)
29. Junior Ranger (5,6)

Down

1. It gets you in to secret places (8)
2. One having no equal (8)
3. Evergreen Mediterranean tree (5)
4. Vibrates with sound (7)
5. Starts (5,2)
6. Flows through Pencaitland (5,4)
7. Like mice (6)
8. A mouse, squirrel! ... (6)
14. American retro caravan (9)
16. Cuts the edges of paths (8)
17. Upper branches of a forest (8)
19. Type of ant (7)
20. Tube for swimming (7)
21. Insect, often found in boots! (6)
22. They are small songbirds (6)
25. Sound (5)

To Autumn


by John Keats

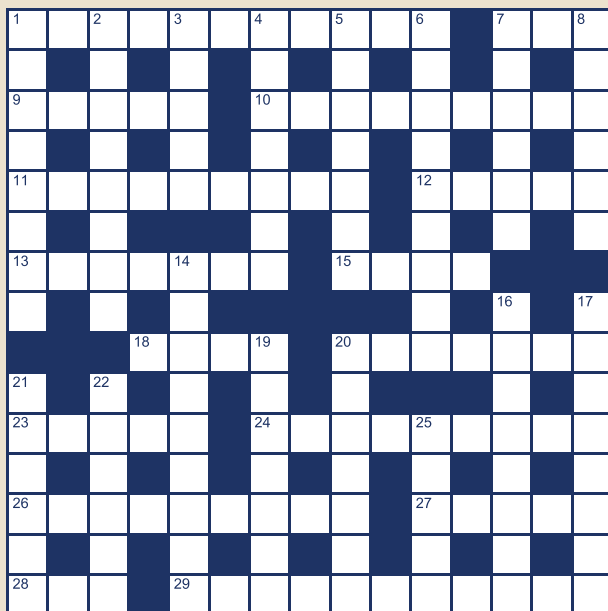
Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'erbrimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Aye, where are they?
Think not of them, — thou hast thy music too,
While barr'd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing, and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Cryptic Crossword

The answers here are the same as the Quickie Crossword (p12) – so if you get stuck you could always look at those clues! You can also click [HERE](#)  to complete online. (The solution is on p16)



Across

1. £25 cheque reportedly given by the Queen helps at Traprain (4,7)
7. Skier is oddly entitled (3)
9. Spanish man is older without one (5)
10. Felt better having put the lid on again (9)
11. Warns about the best-dressed, from head to foot, near Belhaven (4,5)
12. Borrow an incinerator to hold ash (5)
13. Get back amazing miracle (7)
15. Sounds like horses are against voters (4)
18. How apple talks back to flower (4)
20. Swear about the skin of a jumper (7)
23. Border around a round around (5)
24. See a thumbs-up to something similar (4-5)
26. Village which starts outside the church (9)
27. Job muddle holds back stupid person (5)
28. Talk at length of petrol in the US (3)
29. Nil errors? My mistake, ranger! (5,6)

Down

1. Dads foil secret sign (8)
2. Nun chose to become one with no equal (8)
3. Tree in Madagascar, obviously (5)
4. Heard rumble inside sound transmitter (7)
5. Starts to knock down door? (5,2)
6. A flower arrangement I never try (5,4)
7. Mice like to be quiet about the edges of walls (6)
8. Rat or dormouse - evidently names these principally have (6)
14. Caravan in America - is tram era over? (9)
16. Tool path warden uses to empty tea-maker in a slow boil (8)
17. Test rope configuration in forest canopy (8)
19. Warrior joins metal with one (7)
20. For swimming in Leknos, right? (7)
21. Insect which eats caterpillars - well digested, I wager (6)
22. Red over breast is normally seen fronting these (6)
25. Sound only half the audience gets at the start of the opera (5)

DUNBAR PLEDGEHOG PROJECT

Hedgehogs need our help,
they're struggling to survive.



By making simple changes to your outdoor space, you can create a safe haven for these adorable creatures. From adding hedgehog highway gaps to making your garden more wildlife friendly, every action counts.

If you have seen a hedgehog around Dunbar,
contact jen@sustainingdunbar.org or visit
www.sustainingdunbar.org/projects/the-pledgehog-project



DUNBAR
PLEDGEHOG
PROJECT



Funded by: Dunbar Community Council's
'Community Benefit Fund', Dunbar and
East Linton Area Partnership, Taylor
Wimpey and Belhaven Brewery.

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Volunteer Diary Dates

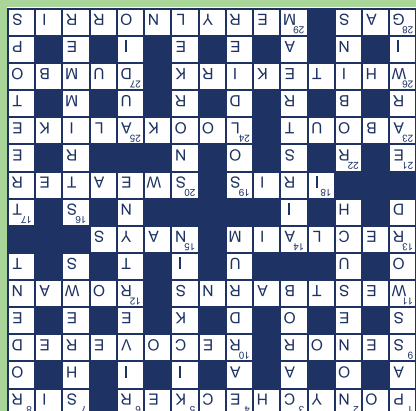


Remember to save the date!

Where	Day	Date	Time
Yellowcraig	Thursday	7 th September	09:30-15:00
North Berwick	Thursday	14 th September	13:00-15:30
Levenhall Links	Tuesday	26 th September	10:00-13:00
Dunbar	Wednesday	27 th September	10:00-13:00
Yellowcraig	Thursday	5 th October	09:30-15:00
North Berwick	Thursday	12 th October	13:00-15:30
Levenhall Links	Tuesday	31 st October	10:00-13:00
Dunbar	Wednesday	25 th October	10:00-13:00

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...

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