

East Lothian Council Countryside Rangers

November / December 2023



MUD in your EYE

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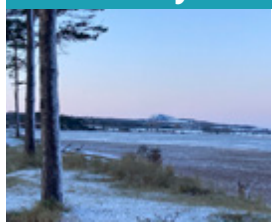
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Wildlife



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Heavens Above





Mud In Your Eye

November - December 2023

Welcome to the 66th Edition of *Mud in Your Eye*.
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Editorial

Despite the change in weather, there is still plenty to see and enjoy in the countryside at this time of year. Glorious autumn colours, cold fresh breezes on sunny days and winter waders gathering on our shores. A lot of our resident bird species are joined by visitors from overseas and can be very active, trying to find enough food to get them through the winter. Birds such as redwings, fieldfares and waxwings can be spotted feasting on berries.

So it might be colder outside, but get wrapped up and see what you can find in your local area, then you can return to the warmth of your house, sit back and relax reading some of the articles or tackle the quiz in this latest edition.

When the time comes, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We'd love to hear from you!

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 East Lothian Council Countryside Rangers

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



New Volunteer Group for Longniddry & Gullane



We are pleased to announce that we have a new, roving volunteer group that will shortly be swinging their scythes and mattocks into action in the Longniddry to Gullane area. This group will be led by Countryside Ranger, Meryl Norris, and she is keen to recruit existing and new volunteers to join!

The group will take place on the **3rd Tuesday each month** between 10am - 1pm. The tasks and location will vary each month, but you will be assisting with various practical tasks such as; scything, sea buckthorn control, path upkeep, beach cleans etc. and butterfly transect monitoring opportunities are available.

If you are an existing volunteer then please contact Meryl directly to be added to the mailing list:

mnorris@eastlothian.gov.uk

If you are new to volunteering, but are keen to join this, or another, volunteer group, then please contact Countryside Officer, Dave Wild, to be signed up:

dwild@eastlothian.gov.uk

We look forward to hearing the hard work of the group in the coming months!

For more volunteering dates, see the diary on page 15.

Heavens Above

The next few weeks are a good time for planet watching.

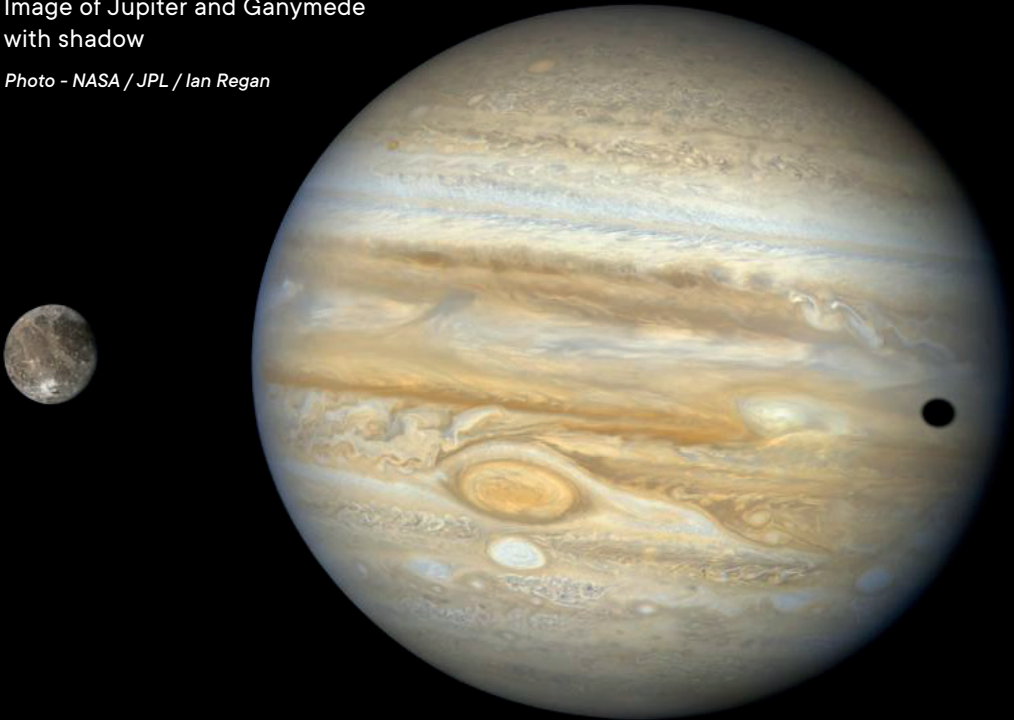
The most prominent will be **Jupiter**, which reaches opposition on the evening of November 2nd into November 3rd. Being fully illuminated by the sun, it will appear very bright in the night sky. Jupiter will be in the faint constellation of Aries in the eastern sky. With a standard terrestrial telescope, you should just be able to make out the Galilean moons Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto.

On November 10th from about 17:15, **Ganymede** will pass in front of Jupiter and with a bigger telescope it will be possible to see it, as well as its shadow falling on the surface of Jupiter.

Jupiter will remain visible for some weeks so there will hopefully be plenty of opportunity to get a decent look at it.

Image of Jupiter and Ganymede with shadow

Photo - NASA / JPL / Ian Regan



Lunar Occultation of Venus

Image - BC Sky At Night

On the morning of the November 9th, there will be a lunar occultation of **Venus**. This is when the planet appears to move behind the moon before emerging on the other side some time later. Venus will begin to disappear behind the moon at about 10:40 just left of the moons South Pole, before emerging about an hour later to the

lower right of the moon. Venus should be quite bright, even at this time of the morning, so you don't even have to get up in the middle of the night to see this. **Saturn** will be close to the moon on 20th November in the evening and should remain visible through to mid December when it begins to drop towards the horizon.

Geminid Meteor Shower

If planets are too dull for you, then the Geminid meteor shower peaks between 13th and 15th of December. It's best seen around one in the morning. Meteors can occur anywhere in the night sky, but they largely appear to originate in the constellation Gemini in the east.

Merry Xmas and a happy new year!



Glaciation

(Part 2)

Raised beach, Winterfield, with former cliff in background.

The last time round (MIYE Issue 65) I described some of the aspects of the landscape that resulted from the effects of glaciation several thousands of years ago. These were largely caused by the erosion and deposition of material by slow moving ice sheets and glaciers. However, we can also find features that were caused by dramatic changes in sea level associated with glacial periods.

Nowadays, one of our major concerns with regard to climate change is the resultant rise in sea level. (Well, it's a major concern alongside wildfires, drought, storms, increased rainfall and general death and destruction).

Conversely, during the most recent glaciation, a large amount of the Earth's water was locked up in ice and sea level dropped dramatically, perhaps by as much as 120m. At this time the English Channel and large areas of the southern North Sea would have been dry and were probably very hospitable to humans and other wildlife.

However, things are, inevitably, a bit more complicated than that. The areas of land which lay under massive ice sheets were pressed down by the enormous weight of this ice. Thus, whilst sea level was considerably lower, the affected land

also lay at lower levels than today. As glaciation ended and the ice melted, vast quantities of water returned to the sea, flooding huge areas of land and isolating Britain from continental Europe. As the weight of ice was removed, the land surface also started to rise, albeit slower than the rise in sea level. The result is a complex interaction between absolute, global sea level changes and those caused by localised alterations in the land level. The former sea level changes are known as **eustatic**, the latter are **isostatic** – just to get technical for a minute. Northern Britain is still rising as result

of this isostatic rebound. The result on the ground are coastal features – cliffs, shore platforms etc – at a range of different heights, both above and below current sea level. Obviously, those below sea level are difficult to spot, what with being underwater, but those that have been left high and dry by isostatic rebound can be seen around the coast.

Coastlines which have been abandoned by changing sea level (or at least not by the sea) are often referred to as relict, or fossil coasts. Relict cliffs are found all over

*Relict shore platform & cliff on Jura.
(Photo - Oliver Dixon – geograph.org.uk)*





Close up of raised beach deposits at Barns Ness


Scotland, usually appearing as steep slopes just inland from active coastal features. They're often much more heavily vegetated than active cliffs.

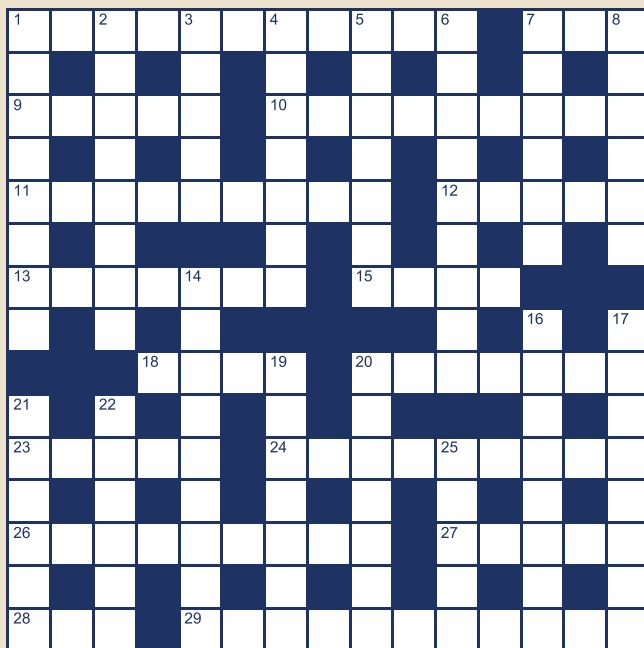
One of the commonest elements of relict coasts is the raised beach. These consist of wide, flat areas of former beach or rock platform several metres above present-day sea level. They're a major part of our coastline (even if we don't always realise it) and make for excellent golf courses.

At Winterfield, near Dunbar, the lower lying areas of the course are on a raised beach, while the club house sits proudly on top of a former cliff.

Some raised beaches still contain seashells from when the beach was active. These are identical to modern species such as limpets, winkles and topshells. So, just as a few thousand years is a blink of an eye in terms of geology, it can also mean next to nothing in an evolutionary sense.

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 p14)



Across

1. Has lagoons (11)
7. Persistently annoy (3)
9. Persistently annoy (5)
10. Christmas decoration (9)
11. Type of maize (9)
12. Daisy (5)
13. Gathers a lot together (7)
15. Fruit of some plants (4)
18. Song bird (4)
20. Excessively polite (7)
23. Place of residence (5)
24. Enclosed in paper (7,2)
26. Young bird (9)
27. Supporting character (5)
28. Positive vote (3)
29. Goes from Crossgatehall to West Saltoun (7,4)

Down

1. White bird (4,4)
2. Beach near Torness (8)
3. Happening (5)
4. Fast-growing grasses (7)
5. Feels bitter (7)
6. The day before All Saints (9)
7. Gambler (6)
8. Aquatic birds (6)
14. Vulture for example (9)
16. Private feud (8)
17. Chewy biscuit (8)
19. Someone who lives between Iraq and Saudi Arabia (7)
20. Not the capital of Scotland! (7)
21. Aquatic insect (6)
22. Edible fungi (6)
25. Devoutness (5)

Wildlife Gardening



November

The tree planting season starts now so look for different native trees that will bring year round colour, flowers and fruit for birds. Why not plant a native hedge? Of if you don't have room for as much as that, consider hawthorn which is great all-rounder, blackthorn for early blossom in the spring and sloe gin in the autumn or elder with gorgeous creamy-white foam blossom and dark purple berries that the birds in the garden will gorge themselves on.

*Blackthorn blossom
Photo - Joran Quinten on Unsplash*

November

November is the time to split sedums and asters to get more plants without buying more. Sedums and aster are fabulous for bees and butterflies so if you want those in your garden look out for them at the local garden centres throughout the year.



Robin - Photo, Alison Stewart



December

The quintessential bird of Christmas time is the robin. Why not make a robin nestbox for next year? They love an open fronted box, quite unlike the classic bird box that is more of a blue tit's preference. Something to note though, robins are happy in human items that are left around the garden, so why not leave an old walking boot or an old tea kettle with the lid off hidden in the shrubbery, they may just be as happy with that!

Winter Sounds

by Terry Astley

The Walk

Down through the woods
And along the paths,
Underfoot, at every step,
The muffled crunch of frozen snow.
The creaking and the tinkling clink of breaking ice,
When walkers step on frozen pools.
The whistle and moan when north winds blow.
A cough, a sneeze,
A shivering chatter of the teeth,
The cry of pain as too cold fingers start to warm.
The slithering whoosh of snow from roofs
That lands below with heavy thumps
And then the scrape of shovels cleaning paths.
These are the sounds of the winter's freeze.

The Hill

Excited children on a sledge,
Over the edge and down the hill,
Sliding, racing where it will.
Then, whoops! A bump, then flying,
Upside-downing through the air.
Little snowboys and snowgirls
Laughing, crying, screaming,
Whooping with the joy of it,
Rolling about in the snow.
Then, up they get and climb the hill
To have another go.
These are the winter sounds that we all know.


The Bird

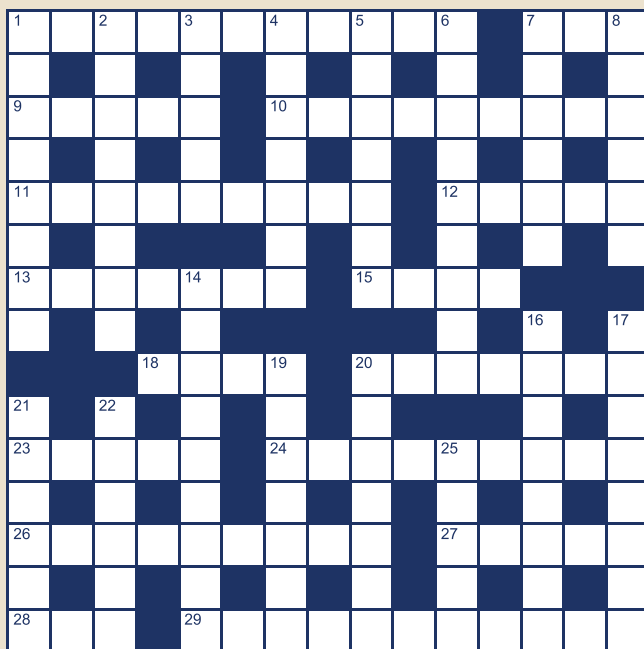
A robin sings its warbling song,
Perched in a snow-capped bush.
It sits with feathers all fluffed up
Against the cold and sings again.
Accompanied by the drip, drip, drip
Of melting ice that turns a trickling burn
Into a muddy, water-rushing race
To feed a rising river's roar.
These are the sounds of winter days.

The Cold

Now the biting cold returns
To turn one's breath into minute, misty shards of ice.
Green growth is hidden,
Lost from sight,
Transformed by the hoary frost
Adorning all things
With a glittering coat of spiky white.
Shining icicles hang from cliff and branch.
Then, as daylight fades,
Large snowflakes thickly fall
Through still, chilled air,
Covering the footprints on the paths.
And soon there are no winter sounds
To break the soft, white silence of the night.

Cryptic Crossword

The answers here are the same as the Quickie Crossword (p9) – so if you get stuck you could always look at those clues! You can also click [HERE](#)  to complete online. (The solution is on p15)



Across

1. Bulrushes (GM modified) located on the Esk (11)
7. Annoy an insect (3)
9. To especially annoy someone, exaggerate tips you give (5)
10. Toil meets trouble in the preparation for a green Christmas (9)
11. Scottish small company ran without a team leader at its centre but produces a type of maize (9)
12. Daisy, a cow, makes an agreeable aound (5)
13. Collects for a church service on Easter Sunday (7)
15. Saw a top player? (4)
18. Large boat flies (4)
20. Well-bred man retrieves shelter (7)
23. House abroad? Not a right finale to life! (4)
24. Closed the presentation of the present (7,2)
26. Young bird flew away to the heather around the end of spring (9)
27. Former art composition used in a crowd scene (5)
28. Vote for the end of royalty-free songs (3)
29. Was used for training, now for pedestrian pleasure (7,4)

Down

1. Emu wasn't re-incarnated as another bird (4,4)
2. Uncooked fish found near Torness (8)
3. Happening the day before the end of Lent (5)
4. Bambinos drop in, gather in a circle, and grow very fast (7)
5. Feels bitter about again being posted south (7)
6. Let drug into hen do at the end of October (9)
7. A more than good gambler (6)
8. Birds with tails of long, near blue, drab plumage feathers (6)
14. Refuse consumer with grievances about not having one (9)
16. Feud to end after victory by terror group - about time! (8)
17. Make a fuss over a sailor's biscuit (8)
19. Following the Koran, it sounds like you and I have to wait for an Arab (7)
20. From the village of Douglas go way up north to the city (7)
21. But it has to, to get airborne! (6)
22. Brought up in the Emerald Isle, romance mushrooms (6)
25. Pity about Easter holiness (5)

Volunteer Diary Dates

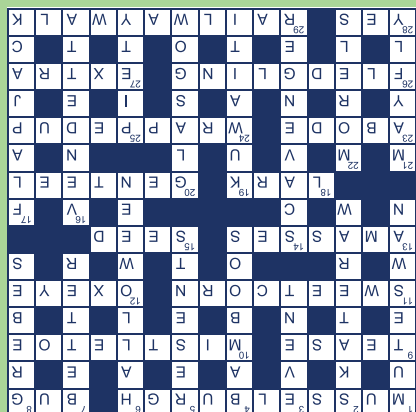


Remember to save the date!

Where	Day	Date	Time
Yellowcraig	Thursday	2 nd November	09:30-15:00
North Berwick	Thursday	9 th November	13:00-15:30
Longniddry & Gullane area	Tuesday	21 st November	10:00-13:00
Levenhall Links	Tuesday	28 th November	10:00-13:00
Dunbar	Wednesday	29 th November	10:00-13:00
Yellowcraig	Thursday	7 th December	09:30-15:00
North Berwick	Thursday	14 th December	13:00-15:30
Longniddry & Gullane area	Tuesday	19 th December	10:00-13:00
Levenhall Links	NO TASK		
Dunbar	NO TASK		

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

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