

East Lothian Council Countryside Rangers

March - May 2024



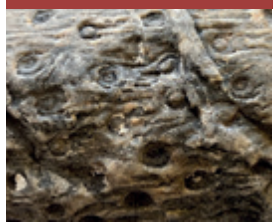
# MUD in your EYE

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# Mud In Your Eye Mar-May '2024

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## Editorial

Well, we have done it....we have made it through winter! The days are getting noticeably longer and signs of spring are all around us.

It's a busy time for wildlife so there will be plenty for us all to observe when we are out and about. For some it's time to migrate; we will bid farewell to birds such as whooper swans, fieldfares and pink-footed geese, but instead say 'hello' to swallows and, a bit later in spring, swifts. Wildflowers will also start to appear, early flowering plants such as primroses, cowslips and dandelions all providing a burst of colour and a well needed nectar source for some.

It is also a time of change for East Lothian Countryside Volunteers, with a new Chairman of Trustees who you can learn more about in this edition and ways you can help them.

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

Email [ranger@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:ranger@eastlothian.gov.uk) or follow us...

 @ELCrangers

 @elcrangers

 East Lothian Council Countryside Rangers

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




# ELCV needs you!

**The East Lothian Countryside Volunteers (ELCV)  
charity needs you to contribute.**

Within the ELCV path wardens, butterfly, bird, flora recorders, sheep lookers, pony counters (the list goes on!) or the regular Ranger led events throughout the County, there are so many volunteers with a wealth of talents, skills and interests.

ELCV has been successful for gaining funding otherwise not available to the East Lothian countryside department for many different projects in the last few years. Many recent trustees who have done such a good job have been replaced by a new group, although Dave Q has returned and Terry Page remains as the Secretary. Well done to all former trustees, many continue to support us actively.

We now need new ideas for projects from all areas of interest to propel us, so if you have an interest and/or a project you would like to promote and drive forward then please join us. Projects from all over the County and different themes are vital to us.

**Mud in Your Eye #59**  (Sep-Oct '22) included a comprehensive account of the charity and its projects at that time but new ideas and projects are needed and new trustees are very welcome from established and new countryside volunteers.

**If you are interested then please get  
in touch via the **ELCV website**** 



The Centenary Conference of  
East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society is being held at  
St Mary's, Haddington - Saturday 11 May 2024, 9.00am  
Tickets can be booked via [Eventbrite](#) 

# EAST LOTHIAN THROUGH THE AGES

Sponsored by McInroy & Wood

- 09.00-09.30** Registration
- 09.30-09.35** Welcome (including a brief history of the Society)  
*The Honorary President - The Duke of Hamilton and Brandon*
- 09.35-10.15** The historical significance of the place-names of East Lothian  
*Dr Simon Taylor, Reader (Celtic & Gaelic), University of Glasgow*
- 10.15-10.55** Hillforts of East Lothian  
*Professor Ian Ralston, University of Edinburgh*
- 10.55-11.05** Questions (sessions 1 & 2)
- 11.05-11.25** *Tea/coffee*
- 11.25-12.05** The impact of the Romans on East Lothian  
*Dr Fraser Hunter, Principal Curator of Prehistoric and Roman Archaeology, National Museums of Scotland*
- 12.05-12.45** The changing wildlife of the East Lothian coast  
*Stan da Prato, East Lothian Naturalist*
- 12.45-12.55** Questions (sessions 3 & 4)
- 12.55-13.40** *Lunch*
- 13.40-14.20** Medieval East Lothian in its North Sea world: an archaeological assessment  
*Dr Brian Ayers, University of East Anglia*
- 14.20-15.00** Grand Designs & Gracious Living: The rise of East Lothian's mansion houses  
*Ailsa Fortune, East Lothian based researcher*
- 15.00-15.10** Questions (sessions 5 & 6)
- 15.10-15.30** Cutting of the Centenary Cake ...with Tea/coffee
- 15.30-16.10** Innovation and change in East Lothian agriculture: some examples from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries  
*Dr Heather Holmes, Independent researcher*
- 16.10-16.50** The Powerhouse of East Lothian: A Brief History of Coal and Industry  
*Nicola Moss, Curator of the National Mining Museum Scotland & Dr Melanie Johnson, Director CFA Archaeology*
- 16.50-17.00** Questions (sessions 7 & 8) and Conference Closure

Scottish Charitable Incorporate Organisation: SC052295

# New Chairman of Trustees for East Lothian Conservation Volunteers

“ It’s taken me ten years to step up to the mark but I’m so pleased I have. ”

This is what John Hardy, the new chairman of Trustees of ELCV, said recently at a coffee and biscuit break at a path task at Thorntonloch.

John has a general background in countryside and recreation issues. Having left school in Newcastle upon Tyne, he completed a geography degree at Manchester, a teaching certificate in geography and outdoor activities at Bangor, before teaching for 35 years in three different schools in Cheshire and Edinburgh. Particularly interested in caving, mountaineering and glacial landscapes he organised many school residential field courses, visits, camps and expeditions in England, Wales and Scotland’s Highlands and Islands and participated in Expeditions to Norway and Iceland. He and his wife, Louise, chose to retire to Dunbar near the coast, where they soon became members of several of the volunteer groups led by the ranger service.

He gained much of his interest in the countryside from his mother and father who both volunteered in Northumberland in the National Park Voluntary Wardens (Rangers) and other countryside organisations, so he is very much following in their footsteps!

The weather and climate of the “Garden of Scotland” also encourage his interest in vegetable growing. He is always keen to get out and about in the countryside and the County, in order to promote the balance of use of our countryside for active and more passive pursuits alongside nature conservation.

We wish him well in his new role!



John Hardy

John Hardy and other volunteers at Dunbar Conservation Volunteers



John and volunteers after a Path Warden task at Athelstaneford



# Heavens Above

## Planet watching will take a back seat this Spring as most are not visible in the night sky.

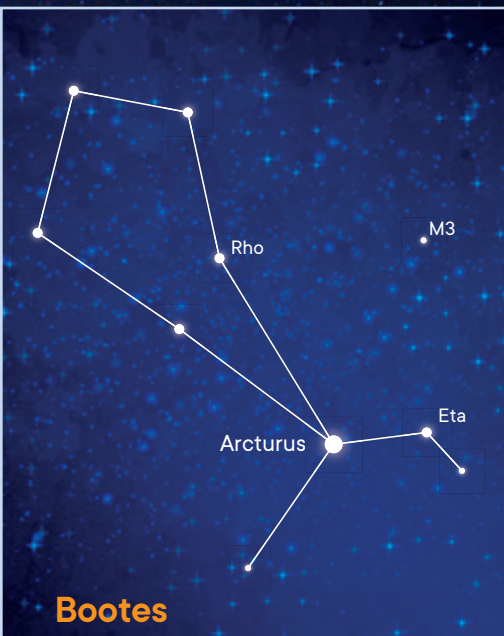
It is the last chance to get a good look at Jupiter, however. The easiest time to spot it is on March 13th, when it will sit right next to the crescent moon. Take a look on March 14th as well, when the moon will sit half way between Jupiter below right and the Pleiades above left. The Pleiades appear as a grey smudge to the naked eye, but looking through binoculars you can see the large number of stars in this cluster.

Leo and Bootes are classic Spring constellations visible well into Summer.

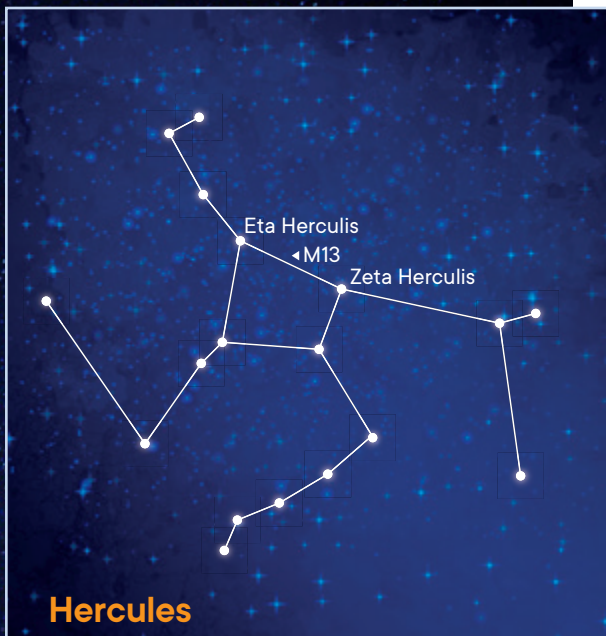
Leo, unusually for most constellations, actually looks like the crouching lion it is supposed to represent. You can find it by first locating the plough which looks like a long handled saucepan. If the saucepan leaks, it will drip onto Leo's back. The most visible part of Leo is the head end of the crouching lion forming a shape known as The Sickle (a sort of backwards question mark). The brightest star, Regulus, lies at the bottom of the sickle. Regulus is a blue-white star with an unusual bulge due to the fact that it spins round in just 16 hours!







Bootes is depicted as a herdsman, in this case herding the bear Ursa Major. The main stars form a kite pattern with the brightest star, Arcturus, at the bottom. You can find it by following the curve of the handle of the plough (actually the tail of the bear) down to what should be the next bright star. Arcturus is Greek for 'Bear Guard'. Arcturus is a red giant and the fourth brightest star in the sky. It is 37 light years away, which lets face it is still a long way, but in astronomical terms is just across the street from us. Unlike the Sun, Arcturus has stopped fusing hydrogen in its core and is now starting to fuse heavier elements. It is coming to the end of its life and will probably end up as a white dwarf star, although that will still be many millions of years away. Interestingly, on 27th May 1933, four telescopes focussed light from Arcturus onto photoelectric cells that were used to turn on floodlights at the Chicago World Fair.



Another Spring constellation worth seeing is Hercules, which lies North-East of Bootes. The centre of the constellation is an almost square shape of four stars known as the Keystone. Lines of stars radiate from this asterism and represent the limbs of Hercules. He actually appears upside down in the night sky.

Along the right hand side of the keystone lies a cluster of Stars known as M13. This is the brightest globular cluster in the northern skies. It is one of the oldest parts of the Milky Way galaxy and contains hundreds of thousands of stars. The stars are densely packed and can sometimes collide to produce new stars. It is 23,500 light years away, which really is a long way away, so you will need a small telescope to begin to pick out individual stars, but it is still clearly visible through a pair of binoculars.



# Fossils (part 2)

**Fossil remains are fantastic indicators of ancient environments, as well as just being plain brilliant.**

*Calamites*

*Photo - Dave Dunford*

As outlined last time, many of the fossils found in East Lothian show us that, during the Carboniferous Period, much of the area was covered by warm, shallow tropical seas. However, another group of fossils commonly found in the county suggest a very different world existed alongside this.

Plant fossils are fairly abundant in these parts – indeed without the Carboniferous plants we wouldn't have all the coal that formed such an important part of the county's economic and social history. Coal is formed when plants die and are buried, compressed and heated to eventually form solid rock. This process follows a number of stages in which peat and brown coal (lignite) are first formed, before the creation of hard, black coal. The whole thing can take tens, or hundreds of millions of years to complete.

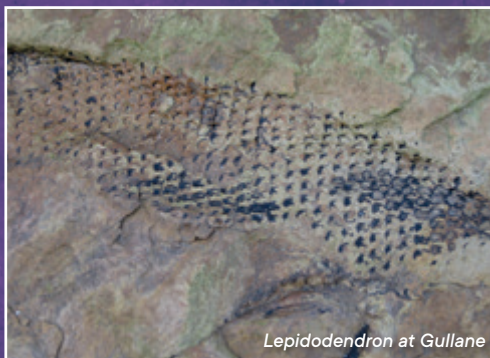
As a result, it's not unusual to find fossilised plants alongside coal seams. These can take the form of spectacular fern-like leaves but are more usually the roots or bark of trees. Actually, these are not trees as we would recognise them today, but rather belong to a group of plants known as the *Lycopodiopsida* (bit of a mouthful). Modern club-mosses are relatives of these and can be found in Scotland, but they tend to be small plants, lurking in wetlands, rather than the Carboniferous giants. Various bits and pieces of lycopod fossils had been found separately, but it wasn't until complete stumps and roots were found together that it was realised that these were all parts of the same tree. The remains of bark can be seen in fossils called *Lepidodendron*, which show diamond-like patterns indicating leaf scales along the trunk and branches. In contrast, the roots



(*Stigmaria*) bear circular markings, where smaller hair-like rootlets emerged from the main body.

Other plant fossils found in East Lothian include *Calamites*, related to modern horsetails. These take the form of long strap-like leaves or rounded and heavily ridged stems. Sometimes delicate fern-like leaves can be found, such as *Neuropteris*, still showing the structure of veining.

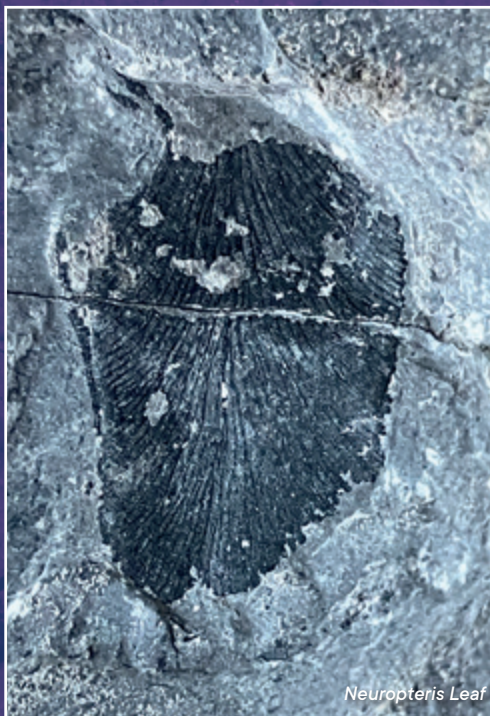
All of these fossils indicate an environment resembling modern coastal mangrove swamps, with areas of dense vegetation cut through by rivers and numerous smaller waterways. As with many coal producing areas, the strata in East Lothian show a cyclic variation between terrestrial coals and sandstones, and marine limestones – a structural pattern known as a cyclothem. These are thought to have resulted from global fluctuations in sea level over the course of thousands of years. Although the rocks that we can see were formed in tropical conditions, much of the Carboniferous world was subject to glaciation. As the ice sheets advanced and retreated in response to changes in temperature, so sea level rose and fell, producing the characteristic back and forth in rock types. Ironically, many of the modern habitats that closely resemble ancient coal swamps are under threat from sea level rise due to (you guessed it) the burning of fossil fuels.



*Lepidodendron at Gullane*



*Stigmaria*



*Neuropteris Leaf*



A hedgehog seen one summer evening at Winterfield Golf Course  
(Photo - Brian A Turner)



# Prickly Progress

By Jen Walker  
from Sustaining Dunbar's  
Pledgehog Project

It can be extremely difficult to see a wild hedgehog, as they are very elusive creatures. However, last year more East Lothian residents in Dunbar managed to see them.

This is mostly thanks to our project which has been encouraging locals to look for signs of them in their gardens, as well as lending out night-time cameras to try to spot them.

It has been fantastic to look back and to count all the reports of hedgehogs. There have been over 50 sightings (in different places) of hedgehogs in 2023, which is more than double the sightings of any previous year. Hedgehogs have also been recorded regularly on camera in the grounds of Dunbar's Lammermuir House Care Home and Dunbar Primary

School Nursery's 'Beehive' wildlife garden, where residents and nursery children have been thrilled to watch the footage.

Although this is positive news, it's important to say that this doesn't mean that there are suddenly more hedgehogs in Dunbar. They can travel around a mile each night, so some of these sightings will most likely be the same animal.

In the Spring, as hedgehogs come out of winter hibernation their thoughts will turn to breeding. Amorous males will travel long distances, around a mile a night, in search of female partners. However, the road to love can be a rocky one and hedgehogs face many man-made barriers in their environment.



As well as making it difficult for a hedgehog to find a mate, these obstacles can cause populations to become isolated which could reduce genetic diversity.

Hedgehogs are now classed as 'at risk of extinction' in the UK.

**Hedgehog Street** (a partnership between The British Hedgehog Preservation Society and the People's Trust for Endangered Species) reports that we have lost a third of our hedgehogs since the Millenium. They believe that one of the main reasons they are struggling is because our fences and walls are becoming more and more secure.

I'd like to ask you to think like a hedgehog and look at your garden or outdoor space to see if hedgehogs could travel through them. They only need a 13 cm squared gap, the size of a CD case, which can be cut into the bottom of a gate or fence (or even dug underneath) to let them move around. Even better if you can do this between you and your neighbours gardens to create a Hedgehog Highway around the neighbourhood.

A local resident, Lindsey Budge, recently had her fence replaced by East Lothian Council and asked for a hedgehog gap to be included which the team happily did. She said -

*"I saw a hedgehog in my garden for the first time last year thanks to borrowing a feeding station and night-time camera from the Pledgehog Project. It was brilliant to know there is one in the area and I'm keen to make my garden a good place for hedgehogs. It's fantastic that my new fence has a gap to let them in. If you're getting a new fence don't forget to include a hedgehog highway too!"*



Jen Walker, Sustaining Dunbar's Pledgehog Officer awareness raising at an event at Lammermuir House Care Home.



Hedgehog highway and Rosie Veitch.



Hedgehogs reproduce between April and September but the period of greatest activity 'the rut' is in May and June where males attempt to woo a female in lengthy courtship encounters with lots of ritualised circling and snorting. The female eventually adopts a special position with her spines flattened to allow mating.

If you are lucky to see a hedgehog, wherever you live, it can be easily plotted online on the Hedgehog Street's **Big Hedgehog Map** [↗](#). You can also look at the map to see if a hedgehog has been seen near you.

### Here are three top tips of things you can do this month to help hedgehogs.

#1 - check if there's a 13 cm gap in and out of your garden (the size of a CD case) and if not then cut (or dig) a hole to allow them to get in and out or to travel between neighbouring gardens.

#2 - check that your garden is safe for hedgehogs, remove any hazards like netting, uncovered drains or areas that they can get stuck in. Make sure any ponds have a sloping side for them to escape if they fall in (or fit a ramp or chicken wire to help them get out). Avoid chemical use and always check long grass before strimming.

#3 - pile up any twigs, branches, logs and leaves in a sheltered, undisturbed place which is in the shade all year round. This might be

used for shelter or even to nest or hibernate in.


Please also look at our **Pledgehog Project website** [↗](#) to find out how to make your garden a safer environment for hedgehogs, and ideas for other wildlife friendly improvements.

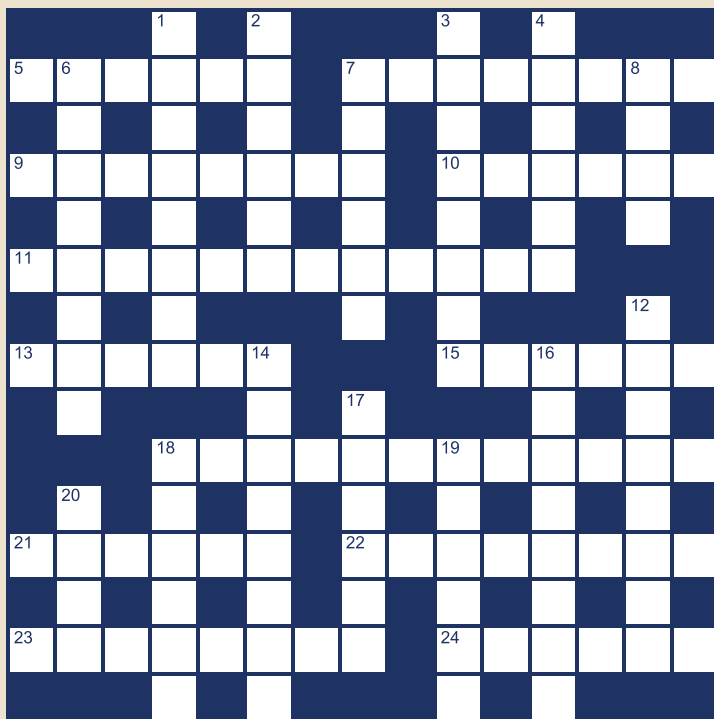
The Dunbar Pledgehog Project has been run by Sustaining Dunbar throughout 2023 thanks to funding from the Dunbar and East Linton Area Partnership and Belhaven Brewery. It hopes to find new funding for the rest of 2024 to continue to engage with the community and to build new partnerships and initiatives to benefit hedgehog conservation.

To get in touch with the project or to share any photos of hedgehog highways please email: [jen@sustainingdunbar.org](mailto:jen@sustainingdunbar.org)



# Quick(ish!) Crossword

The answers here are the same as the Cryptic Crossword (p16) – so if you get stuck you could always look at those clues! You can also click [HERE](#)  to complete online. (The solution is on p18)



## Across

5. Beach (6)
7. Cover with ice (8)
9. Hive occupant (8)
10. In flower (6)
11. Seen from above (5,3,4)
13. Gourd (6)
15. Manatee (6)
18. Very large edible berry (7,5)
21. Unreal picture (6)
22. Small antelope (8)
23. Furnace for melting stone (8)
24. Evergreen shrub (6)

## Down

1. Fragrant flower (8)
2. Can be eaten (6)
3. African tree (8)
4. Tree used in basketry (6)
6. Hot and humid (8)
7. Divers (6)
8. Walk briskly (4)
12. Poison treatment (8)
14. Climbing plant (8)
16. Cranesbill (8)
17. Puts fertilizer into the earth (4,2)
18. Lady bird with long tail (6)
19. Sharp spine (6)
20. Bird and fruit (4)


# Spring

by Christina Rossetti

Frost-locked all the winter,  
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,  
What shall make their sap ascend  
That they may put forth shoots?  
Tips of tender green,  
Leaf, or blade, or sheath;  
Telling of the hidden life  
That breaks forth underneath,  
Life nursed in its grave by Death.

Blows the thaw-wind pleasantly,  
Drips the soaking rain,  
By fits looks down the waking sun:  
Young grass springs on the plain;  
Young leaves clothe early hedgerow trees;  
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,  
Swollen with sap put forth their shoots;  
Curled-headed ferns sprout in the lane;  
Birds sing and pair again.  
There is no time like Spring,  
When life's alive in everything,






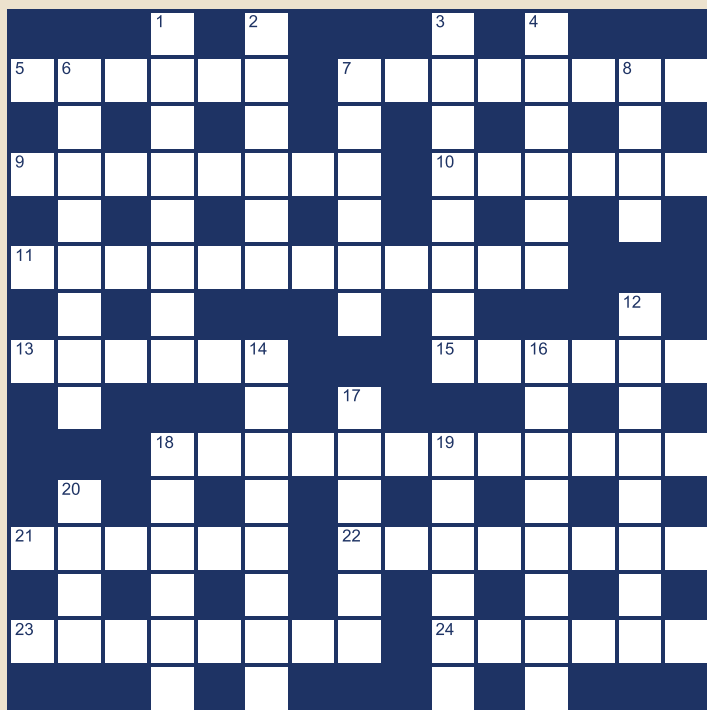
Before new nestlings sing,  
Before cleft swallows speed their journey back  
Along the trackless track –  
God guides their wing,  
He spreads their table that they nothing lack, –  
Before the daisy grows a common flower  
Before the sun has power  
To scorch the world up in his noontide hour.

There is no time like Spring,  
Like Spring that passes by;  
There is no life like Spring—life born to die,  
Piercing the sod,  
Clothing the uncouth clod,  
Hatched in the nest,  
Fledged on the windy bough,  
Strong on the wing:  
There is no time like Spring that passes by,  
Now newly born, and now  
Hastening to die.

*Photo by K. Mitch Hodge on Unsplash*

# 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](#)  to complete online. (The solution is on p18)



## Across

5. Leave a-shore (6)
7. Freeze at Gaelic mod (8)
9. He has a lot of money and is a maker of wax (8)
10. A beautiful lot of orange marigold heads are in flower (6)
11. Outlook of a frozen food producer? (5,3,4)
13. Squash or spoil the line (6)
15. Train gun dog to find sea mammal (6)
18. Strong affection for produce of exotic flower (7,5)
21. The Russian space station for a long time was an illusion (6)
22. This antelope, best kept in compound, is fine (8)
23. Kilim (a short length) woven produces calcium carbonate (8)
24. The entrancing allure of an honour (6)

## Down

1. Flower offered by the French seller (8)
2. Can be worn away, or not, but can be eaten (8)
3. African tree to flower in Devon and Cornwall in the beginning of December (8)
4. Could be weeping as a testament to the old wife (6)
6. It's very hot in the middle of March in the current environment (8)
7. Grasshopper carcass attracts a swarm of bees & birds (6)
8. Walk fast, or go backwards in the race (4)
12. Donate it as a remedy (8)
14. Waiter is re-trained as a climber (8)
16. After dead-head removal, dig manure, compost, and plant (8)
17. Stubbornly refuses to fertilize the earth (4,2)
18. Lady-bird has no right to preen, having a head of hair (6)
19. Want East Lothian backing for hedgehog defence (6)
20. It cannot fly during the Helsinki winter (4)

# Volunteer Diary Dates



**Remember to save the date!**

Where	Day	Date	Time
Friends of Yellowcraig	Thu	7 MARCH	09:30-15:00
North Berwick Conservation Volunteers	Thu	14 MARCH	10:00-13:00
Longniddry & Gullane area Volunteers	Tue	19 MARCH	10:00-13:00
Way out West	Wed	20 MARCH	10:00-13:00
Friends of Levenhall Links	Tue	26 MARCH	10:00-13:00
Dunbar Conservation Volunteers	Wed	27 MARCH	10:00-13:00
Friends of Yellowcraig	Thu	4 APRIL	09:30-15:00
North Berwick Conservation Volunteers	Thu	11 APRIL	10:00-13:00
Longniddry & Gullane area Volunteers	Tue	16 APRIL	10:00-13:00
Way out West	Wed	17 APRIL	10:00-13:00
Dunbar Conservation Volunteers	Wed	24 APRIL	10:00-13:00
Friends of Levenhall Links	Tue	30 APRIL	10:00-13:00
Friends of Yellowcraig	Thu	2 MAY	09:30-15:00
North Berwick Conservation Volunteers	Thu	9 MAY	10:00-13:00
Longniddry & Gullane area Volunteers	Tue	21 MAY	10:00-13:00
Way out West	Wed	22 MAY	10:00-13:00
Friends of Levenhall Links	Tue	28 MAY	10:00-13:00
Dunbar Conservation Volunteers	Wed	29 MAY	10:00-13:00

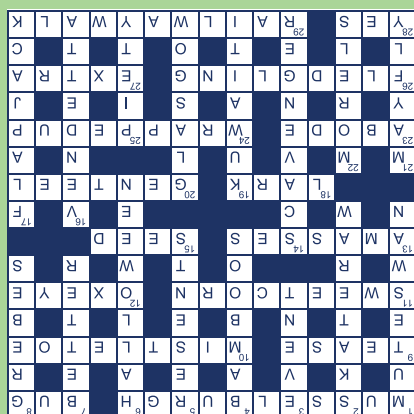
For information on all events please contact [ranger@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:ranger@eastlothian.gov.uk) 





Photo - Abbie Marland

## Crossword Solution




## Get in touch

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

Email us at [ranger@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:ranger@eastlothian.gov.uk) or follow us...

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 East Lothian Council  
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