



Newsletter for East Lothian Countryside Volunteers

October 2017

Unlike summer and winter so often seem to do, autumn rarely disappoints. Flocks of Pink Footed geese always put a smile on my face, beautiful autumn colours, weird fungi, seal pups... I could even mention moth hibernation. But enough of that! What's been happening in the world of volunteering? We had a brilliant volly jolly last weekend: good company, interesting presentations and an afternoon catching plants and looking at bugs and seeing Amisfield Walled Garden. Thanks to Duncan for organising and Neil for catering. Avocados were not lacking. We also learnt a bit more about the formation of our new charity East Lothian Countryside Volunteers (ELCV). You can read more about it in this edition, but thanks to the dedication and hard work of a small group of volunteers we now have charitable status! This will enable us to apply for grants and have more of a say in the direction our volunteering takes. For those who don't like change, fear not! nothing will noticeably change in your day to day volunteering activities. BUT for those who would like to get more involved or have ideas for projects or tasks that volunteers could take on the opportunity is there and we very much hope that you take advantage of it. Exciting times and I'm looking forward to using our new status to achieve positive things for volunteers, wildlife and people of East Lothian.

Conservation Volunteer tasks scheduled in October:

New faces always welcome! If you would like to join in with a group for the first time, please get in touch with the relevant ranger to confirm details.



Wed 4th & Sun 15th Oct Aberlady John; jharrison@eastlothian.gov.uk
Thurs 5th October Yellowcraig Dave; dwild@eastlothian.gov.uk
Thurs 19th October Path Warden team task dpriddle@eastlothian.gov.uk
Tues 31st October North Berwick Sam; sranscombe@eastlothian.gov.uk
Tues 31st October Levenhall Nick; naitken1@eastlothian.gov.uk
Wed 25th October Dunbar CVs Tara/Laura; dcv@eastlothian.gov.uk

Upcoming events for volunteers!

All welcome. For more details or to secure a place, please send me an email: kbaird@elothianmail.net
Thursday 5th October Fungal Foray with Sam Gifford. 9:30am
Thursday 19th October Brushcutting training. This will form part of the Pathwarden's team task, but all volunteers are welcome.
Saturday 18th Nov 19:30 Masonic Hall, Haddington. QUIZ night. Teams of up to 6 people (if you don't have a team, just turn up on the night and join one). Which group will be crowned ELCV brain of 2017?



CONGRATUALTIONS to the Path Wardens!!

Their important work maintaining and promoting East Lothian's path network has earnt them the accolade of Community Paths Group of the Year from Paths for All "Creating a walkable Scotland"
Well done to the many volunteers involved.



Please send in ideas or content for the next 'Best boot forward' to kbaird@elothianmail.net
Apologies for any omissions, inaccuracies and typos.

Volunteer activity

Many thanks to all the volunteers who took part in our eider monitoring project this year. We had 42 eiders nesting plus common terns, oystercatchers, ringed plover, pied wagtail, shelduck and skylark.



© Katty



Hedge weeding at Levenhall



Dunbar Conservation Volunteers taking down the tern fence at the tip of Spike Island. © Liz



Removing Russian Vine & Sycamore from Castle Hill and Coo's Green, N. Berwick



Taking a break for a spot of birding (sandwich terns and a Black throated diver) at Yellowcraig © Liz



Volly Jolly line up
© Abbie



Buckthorn trimming at Yellowcraig. Not sure what's happened to the volunteers!

VJ Bug Hunt at
Amisfield ©
Abbie



Family Volunteers at Levenhall



A new bench on North Berwick Law.
Thanks to everyone involved.

The Year of the Red Admiral

Words and pictures (next page) by Abbie Marland

Red Admirals have had a record summer, despite wet weather conditions causing problems for other butterflies. Results from the Big Butterfly Count show numbers rose by 75 % compared to 2016. More than 73,000 of this striking species (*Vanessa atalanta*) were spotted by the public during the three-week survey.

Indeed it has been The Year of the Red Admiral, with East Lothian enjoying a veritable feast of these lovely butterflies. As I write, they are busily feeding up on flowering ivy to see them through winter. And yes, in case you are doubtfully reaching for the textbooks, Red Admirals do indeed now hibernate here, producing a first brood in Spring. Added to a milder climate regime and the usual influx of this species from continental Europe, 2017 may be the pattern of the future.

We are familiar with Red Admirals, and perhaps too with those red/yellow/black stripey & spiky caterpillars, which feed on nettles. But what of the transition from caterpillar through to butterfly? I took an opportunity in August to rear some caterpillars and see them through. In the first few weeks I was able to watch them construct simple leaf "roll-ups", within which they fed before moving on to the next spot. However, as they grew to full size, each one abandoned this simple architecture and embarked on a quite marvellous exercise to create a final chrysalis chamber.

This seemed to be the blueprint: Ascend to the highest point of a nettle where there are at least 3 leaves and a sprout. Nip part way through each leaf stem until they tilt downwards. Stand upright on the back legs and describe several aerial arcs. Next, from the spinneret (by the mouth), establish attachment points for the silk threads. Each of these little pads took 7 or 8 turns of the head to apply. One pad would be inside a leaf, the other on an opposite leaf point. Three lines of silk for each pair of pads, then the caterpillar ran its front legs along them creating a final string, which was then tensioned and hinged midway. After several repeats working across the space, the silk lines formed a lattice of diamond shapes, pulling the leaves into a chamber. The caterpillar then ate the enclosed sprout and hung itself upside down by a final sticky pad, looking like a figure 6.

A few days later, the hung-up caterpillar changed into a brown chrysalis with gold spots. This metamorphosis was secretly quick, and the old head and front feet were shed as dried fragments. Nearly a month elapsed. Then overnight the gold spots turned yellow, the chrysalis became translucent, with thin black tracery and a strong red band where the new butterfly was showing wing colour. The chrysalis split and a pair of antennae appeared, testing the best escape route from the leaf chamber. A final push, and the new butterfly appeared. In the first few minutes, just a body with tiny furled wings. After an hour or so of gently pumping liquid to inflate its wings, the butterfly released the remaining excess bright red drops. More wing hardening, then opened full and (with warmth and sunshine) up and away for the first flight and hopefully something to eat.

My garden has no flowering ivy, so I collected some to provide nectar. However, I needn't have worried, as the Red Admirals cleverly sourced some sticky (fungal?) sap on a willow branch, basking in between long feeds. How do I know these butterflies are indeed the ones reared at home? Well, of course, I can't be sure! But it's very highly likely....and would be nice.

A Red Admiral: from caterpillar to butterfly



The New East Lothian Countryside Volunteers Charity **– a message to all volunteers from the Chair**

On August 23rd, we received confirmation from OSCR, the Scottish charities regulator, that the East Lothian Volunteer Path Wardens charity could change its name and expand its work to become the East Lothian Countryside Volunteers (ELCV). The ELCV Steering Group, which first met in December 2016, held monthly meetings to achieve this. On September 27th, the Steering Group met to elect a Board of Trustees from which Office Bearers were drawn.

The main business for ELCV is to secure funding for projects, equipment, training and whatever the various volunteer groups feel that they need. In addition, ELCV will assist groups in promoting the work that volunteers are doing. This will be useful in stimulating support for our work. Greater awareness of what we are doing will also encourage people to volunteer for the various groups.

The East Lothian Council Countryside Team supports much of the volunteer effort which is of crucial importance. However, we are seeking to encourage volunteers to get more involved in the development and nature of their volunteering.

To help this, and in line with good charity practice, we have established ELCV as a “two-tier” structure, so one tier - the ELCV Board - is accountable to a second tier – the wider body of ordinary members - through elections and annual members meetings (AGMs). Many volunteers probably don’t want to be on a committee but may well want a say in what we do and how we do it. So, becoming a member gives you a proper opportunity to do this. Volunteers who aren’t members can still be involved but will not be able to vote at AGMs.

We think that the more volunteers that join as ELCV members the better. It is completely free to join, though there will be a simple procedure to follow, by email or post, so we can have a proper register of members.

If you have any questions please speak to any of the ELCV board members (details below) or email me at daoldham@btinternet.com

ELCV Office Bearers

Dave Oldham - Chair; Kate Odling - Secretary; Dick Gill - Treasurer;

John Laws - Membership Secretary; Dave Quarendon - IT Coordinator

ELCV Trustees

Abbie Marland; Anne Pearson; Colin Buchanan; Jane Campbell; Mike Sharp & Peter Wells

Volunteers who wish to become a Member will be able apply to the Membership Secretary by email or letter. There will be no fee to pay. Further details will be announced in due course.



The Pinkfoots are back! ©Abbie



A comma filling up on nectar at Amisfield ©Abbie



A Dunbar Dunnock © Liz

Photo Gallery

More pictures always welcome!



Bug catches at the Volly Jolly bioblitz.
Clockwise: Hoverfly *Eristalis pertinax*;
Wasp *Diblastomorpha cylindrator* and
a crab spider *Xysticus cristatus*
©Katty

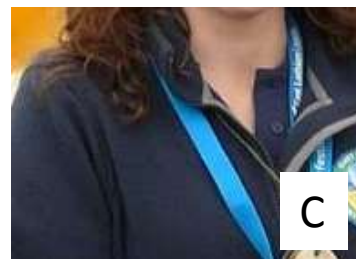


A Red Admiral trio ©Abbie

Who's who

Eagle-eyed readers will notice that this is the same Who's Who quiz that appeared a few months ago. However, due to the owners of the various body parts not even being able to recognise themselves last time, I have expanded the pictures a bit AND given the answers (on the last page).

Shameless re-using and recycling of content (and rangers).



Things to do



Poldark watch out!

Upcoming Sustrans volunteer tasks in East Lothian

- 18th October (10.30am-2.30pm) – Scything grassland, Pencaitland Railway Path
25th October (10.30am-2.30pm) – Scything grassland, Longniddry-Haddington Railway Path
8th November (10.30am-2.30pm) – Scything grassland, Pencaitland Railway Path

www.sustrans.org.uk/events

A Hike across the Pyrenees

This summer Duncan Priddle, Countryside Officer, achieved his long held ambition of hiking the entire length of the Pyrenees on the GR11, the famous long distance route that runs along the Spanish side of the mountain range.

Join Duncan as he presents an illustrated talk on the magnificent scenery, landscapes and wildlife as well as the practicalities and physical challenge of undertaking a 6-week trek.

Thursday 12th October at 7pm in the Star room,
John Gray Centre, Haddington



Free event with Donations to  WaterAid charity on the night.

Mud in your Eye! Have you seen the latest issue? You can read it online using the link below, or pick up a hard copy from various establishments and members of the Countryside Team. Well worth a read.
https://issuu.com/lauramdouglas/docs/03967_elc_mud_in_your_eye_34_sept_1



Why not join the next Ranger-led hike? “On the Edge”

A walk up from oak wooded valleys to Dunbar common on this varied and scenic circular 18km hike following steep and uneven paths and tracks.

When: Sunday 29th October

Where: Exact meeting place given on booking

Time: 10.00 a.m to 4.00 p.m

Cost: £5.00



The Last Page

Terms of Venerly

Using names to describe a group of animals can be traced back to the 15th Century (possibly earlier) when the hunting fraternity gave names to the groups of animals they caught. Hunting of prey was called 'venerly' and these collective names to describe the prey became known as 'terms of venerly'. Most of the original terms have since evolved or changed but inventing names for other groups of animals carries on. It is not always clear which are the 'accepted' terms, so none of this should be taken too seriously. Ideal! Anyway, using respected tomes such as the OED, I think I have found some established collective nouns for animals.

Can you match these animals to their noun? Answers below.

1. Cete	a. Skylarks
2. Labour	b. Jellyfish
3. Murder	c. Ravens
4. Smack	d. Goldfinches
5. Romp	e. Badgers
6. Exaltation	f. Moles
7. Unkindness	g. Woodpeckers
8. Descent	h. Otters
9. Bellowing	i. Crows
10. Charm	j. Bullfinches



Body Part answers

A: Jen, B: Dave, C: Laura, D: Richard, E: Duncan, F: Nick
A, G: John, H: Roger, I: Stuart, J: Tara, K: Sam, L: Leigh,
M: Neil, N: Jennifer, O: Nick M

QUIZ NIGHT!

Haddington Saturday 18th November 7:30pm

Battle with other volunteers and countryside staff to be crowned ELCV know-it-all of the year! Teams of up to six (come as a team or join one on the night). Email Thomas tom@tbower.plus.com as soon as possible if you would like to join in the fun. The more the merrier – hope to see you there!

Collective nouns answers: 1e; 2f; 3i; 4b; 5h; 6a; 7c; 8g; 9j; 10d

Where in EL?



Where in East Lothian did Liz take these pictures?



Last month's answers: Stevenson Bridge in Haddington and the Willow yurt at Archerfield

