



Community Connections

North Berwick Coastal

September 2021

To our members and volunteers having a birthday this month, we wish you a very

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY!**

The September birth flower is the aster which represents love and daintiness.



'Brand new day' by Ruth Fraser

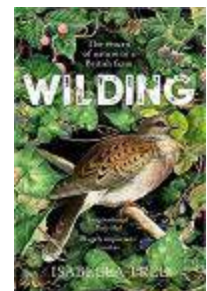
A month of New Beginnings. Is September the new January?

January might be the start of a new calendar year but September can be a great time for a fresh start, new routines, and a chance to make a change for the better. The sticky heat of the summer has given way to a breezy brightness with evenings still light enough to enjoy a lovely walk. September can feel fresh and exciting; a month to make your own - to do the things you want to do, maybe you could: form a new habit, gain a new skill, or finishing something important to you. It's all about settling into a new beginning.

There are a wealth of benefits to trying something new. From physical benefits such as improving executive functions and the number of brain cells to more psychological benefits that have surprisingly wide-reaching effects on how you see yourself and interact with others. Heriot-Watt University Ageing Lab tells us, it's activities that involve a combination of physical, mental, and social elements that seem to be particularly beneficial – and the key is finding one that is a good fit for you. *"What might make a change in my thinking skills might not make a change in yours,"* says Prof. Gow. *If you're more engaged in the task, it's been shown that you get more cognitive benefits. So if you are trying something new, try incorporating elements that make it social, active, and mentally challenging."*

For me, September is a time to take a breath after a busy summer, the children are back at school and I have a bit of time to reset and to think about what is coming up next. There's lots to do around the house, healthier meals to cook, the garden is in need of some TLC but I think I might start with reading a book that I've been meaning to start all summer 'Wilding: The Return of Nature to a British Farm'. It's National Read a Book Day on the 6th of September, perhaps that will help me to do it!

- Ruth Fraser



Time to have a go at that new skill - even if your brain feels dodgy

September's the time for embarking on new skills. I still get as excited about that as I did when running adult education classes. But then I remember how nowadays my brain feels like a countertop overloaded with dirty dishes which often wobble and fall off the edge. I'm intrigued by [Channel 4's Can I Improve My Memory?](#) in which



celebrities practise memorising a daunting new topic, from bird species (Amber Gill, 24) to 90s Hip-Hop (Len Goodman, 77) using techniques taught to them by memory experts. The Mastermind-style questions challenge at the end of each programme proves they've all done brilliantly, against the odds, most scoring full marks. "Ha," I scoffed. "Not me. I can't even remember the cat's name some days. I once turned up for an interview a week late.." (True story.) "I could score top marks in a 'How many things can I forget I've to do in the course of a day?'"

competition. Who are all these people? How can this possibly help someone as brain-scrambled as me?" It's true that there's a difference between setting out to memorise the solar system for a glamorous TV show and getting your act together to phone a friend when you said you would (a massive struggle for me lately). And many of us in NBCCC are seriously struggling with memory issues for reasons from stress to early dementia.

But what if there were something to be learnt here, even from a glossy bunch like this? Memory Expert Ed Cooke shares tips behind their success. Apparently, the key to improving your memory boils down to four points: paying attention to certain information, connecting and associating with what you already know, using your imagination and endless repetition (no getting away from that one, sorry!).

The Visualisation—Association techniques shown in the programme seem pretty elaborate - but evidently they work. And they might even help me keep my appointments, strangely enough. But before I get serious about learning something new, first maybe first I'd better address the stress?

....Ah, but it seems learning a new skill can be a stress reliever in itself. (Dang!) The podcast I've been listening to while running (another desperate attempt to address the stress), Just One Thing with Dr Michael Mosley, features Professor Alan Gow of Heriot-Watt University's 'Ageing Lab', and his research shows tackling a whole new skill, such as life drawing or speaking Japanese, can be enormously beneficial to us, no matter what our age (nope, you can't get out of it that way either).



So I've run out of excuses. Time to start that learning habit again. I'll wish you luck with your new learning and you can wish me luck. Will it be Advanced Jigsaw Techniques? Medieval Ukulele Cantatas? Or perhaps how to recognise more than one tree? I'll let you know...

- Carol Stobie
(Project Officer)



Memrise, a language learning app, states that the secret to developing a powerful memory comes down to these 4 characteristics:

- **Attention:** Pay attention to particular information over others
- **Imagination:** Use your imagination to bring the material to life
- **Repetition:** Repeat, repeat, and repeat and recall
- **Connection & Association:** Connect and associate what you're trying to remember with something you already know

<https://www.memrise.com/>

Befriending Update - Lisa Brownlie

Can you believe another month has passed since our last update? It has been a busy time here and we have had to close our waiting list ... for now. However, we are constantly receiving new enquiries from potential new volunteers, which is encouraging and exciting! More new befriending relationships have been flourishing throughout August, while others go from strength to strength.



For me, thinking about new beginnings, last week my children both started their new school year, with lots of nerves, excitement, and anticipation of what the next year will hold. Watching on as a mum, I share these feelings as I see them change and grow into their own person, excited to share their new experiences with them. I'm really looking forward to returning to The Gospel Choir this week. Whilst this is not a new skill or experience, it feels a bit like it as we haven't sung together since the start of the pandemic. I feel nervous and excited about it and I am curious as to what it will be like, and it will be slightly different as we will have to sing wearing a face mask!! I can't wait to get together as a choir and belt out some fantastic tunes.

NBCCC receives £1000 McCarthy Stone Foundation Grant!

The McCarthy Stone Foundation has given North Berwick Coastal Connections a welcome boost with a £1000 grant after we were nominated by a local volunteer.

In our charity's first two years we've helped more than 80 socially isolated adults connect into local networks, new friendships, and purposeful activity. Alongside social prescribing and community referrals, new Covid-response services have been added, and we're seeking to further expand to introduce peer support, specialist volunteer training, and new partnerships. Core activities, such as the Scone Café, workshops, speakers, and intergenerational meet ups are all now returning with the easing of restrictions.



L-R Lisa Brownlie, Margaret Purves (NBCCC volunteer), Carol Stobie, and Lesley Kelly (Tantallon Court manager)

The £1000 unrestricted grant from the McCarthy Stone Foundation will support plans to further develop services in the coming months and support key members of staff and volunteers to cope with the increasing demand. Carol Stobie of North Berwick Coastal Connections said: *"We are thrilled and honoured we are to receive this award from the McCarthy Stone Foundation. It means so much to hear that we were nominated by one of our much-loved Community Connections volunteers, and that it's an award for the whole of the UK - we had no idea, and are quite overwhelmed! The award is enormously heartening and makes us feel we have real hope of developing our work into the future."*

The McCarthy Stone Foundation is the independent, registered charity of the UK's leading developer and manager of retirement communities, McCarthy Stone, which has a development in North Berwick, Tantallon Court. Graeme Marsh, Foundation Manager at the McCarthy Stone Foundation, said: *"We had many compelling nominations from across our communities, but our trustees felt that North Berwick Coastal Connections was the perfect example of a community-led charity making a real impact in their local area and were delighted to award them the £1000 grant."*

Beautiful Lime Grove Community Garden



Lime Grove community garden now has 23 volunteers on its WhatsApp group and a number of other volunteers and groups that offer assistance when needed. Since covid restrictions lifted this year we have had a number of groups involved in helping with the garden, 2 of the local North Berwick Scouts groups have helped put down the woodchip path, planting seeds and plants. The Bass Rock Community Group have helped erecting and painting

the shed, Men's Sheds have fixed up the benches. The regular volunteers have painted the bench and have maintained and weeded the garden.

We had a weeding 'what to and how to weed' workshop run by Libby from North Berwick in Bloom recently and we have the Primary school After School Club coming to build bug hotels on community day. It's in the pipeline for a community services group organised through the Council

coming to help level the front of the garden off to start the next stage of the garden. We have had funding from "Volunteering Matters Action Earth" for the plants at the back of the garden to encourage wildlife and biodiversity.

The local Rotary Club is purchasing and donating a couple of fruits trees and we have had many plants and donations from neighbours and locals. We hope to encourage local walking groups and more people to come and visit the garden and for it to be maintained and used as a space to meet new people, relax and enjoy the view as well as learn new skills in. We have also had donations and help from a number of local businesses: a tree felled by Gullies tree surgery and donations and help from Caledonian Horticulture.



Heros All by Euan Macmichael

Heros All

I was just eighteen when i enlisted
 and Bomber Command that i enrolled,
 Whatst up above the war persisted
 but would end soon, that we were told.
 Straight into training we would go
 Our boyish looks no longer show,
 as the days fly past and now at last
 we get to know our future fate.
 As to different bases we would go
 filling in the empty spaces
 of fates that we'd never know.

By Euan Macmichael

Bristol Blenheim →



Euan Macmichael is a local writer, artist, Gaelic student, member of Community Connections and (most importantly) Jacobite.

Summer Fun with the North Berwick Youth Project

As part of 'Get into Summer', a Scottish Government-funded initiative, this year we were extremely lucky to be awarded funding which enabled us to offer our summer programme completely free of charge. The summer programme ran over 7 weeks of the school holiday from June to August. We had 10 young people in per day and worked with 25 young people in total over the summer. The programme ran Monday to Friday with full days on a Monday and Wednesday, a half-day on a Friday, and trip days on Tuesday and Thursday. Activities and trip highlights included den building, BBQs, Edinburgh Dungeons, Foxlake, and Blair Drummond Safari Park.



NBYYP
NORTH BERWICK YOUTH PROJECT



*Butterfly spotting:
cabbage white and
small tortoise shell*

-Ruth Fraser

Mindfulness: "Learn to practise"



"Really enjoyed class...gentle and life changing!"

**Beginners group 6 week block
starts Tuesday 7th of September
Weekly from 1pm-2pm
Venue: Bleachingfield Centre, Dunbar**

**Intermediate group 6 week block
starts Tuesday 7th September via ZOOM
Weekly from 4.30pm - 5.30pm**

Join us for £3 per session

To book your place, please
contact Joyce via email:
joycemindfulness@gmail.com
Or phone 07910 962324



Photo Gallery



Fringe by the Sea 'Storm', telling the story of the oceans in crisis - photo by Liz Martin



At Home with Heritage Project: Discover and connect without digital!



Would you like to explore travel, cooking, Edinburgh history, music & art through the unique collections of the University of Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland & National Galleries of Scotland?

If you have health and social inequalities you may be less able to interact outside of your home or perhaps digital engagement is not accessible or suitable for you. Why not get in touch to find out more about the 'At Home with Heritage' project?

From October 2021 to May 2022 you'll receive a pack to your door, filled with activities for you to enjoy as you explore the themes set in each month. You'll also have the opportunity to share your thoughts on themes and feature your creative products at an online exhibition or At Home with Heritage Project book.

For more details please email PrescribeCulture@ed.ac.uk putting At Home with Heritage in the subject box. Deadline for sign up is Saturday 18 September, 2021

Coffee Connections at the Seabird Centre Cafe



During the lovely, sunny Coffee Connections on the 24th of August, the conversation turned to learning new things. Here are some examples of new things members have recently learnt:

- “I’m loving learning about the holistic approach to treating arthritis, I’ve learnt so much about the amazing human body.”
- “I recently learnt how to adjust the disc brakes on my electric bike. Riding the e-bike is like being on a magic carpet!”
- “I enjoy learning new songs to play as part of the ceilidh band I’m in, it might be a French tune or some new Klezmer music.”



Top tip: write out the words of a song to learn it - that seems to imprint the lyrics into my brain more successfully.



‘Flora’s Fund’ Campaign

An update from our volunteer Margaret:

Flora was diagnosed with stage 4 Neuroblastoma in April of this year. We are fundraising for further treatment that is not available on the NHS to keep her cancer away. Flora will undergo high-dose chemotherapy during September, keeping her in isolation for a minimum of 4-6 weeks. Not only is September Childhood Cancer Awareness month, but it is also Flora’s birthday on the 19th September so we’d like to encourage everyone to join our Donate £3 for Flora’s 3rd birthday campaign!

To donate by text, send “**FLORA**” followed by any whole amount up to £20 to **70085**. This will cost your donation plus your standard network charge. Alternatively, you can donate through her fundraising page:

www.solvingkidscancer.org.uk/Appeal/flora



Margaret’s beautiful granddaughter Flora

September Wildlife Watch by Ruth Fraser

September sees the transition from Summer to Autumn, the weather can still be warm but the shortening days bring change such as cold nights. It's the start of nature's season of bounty; with fruit, seeds, berries, and fungi becoming apparent, providing plenty of food for wildlife before the winter. Keep a lookout for wildlife all around us during this beautiful month of change.

Teasel



Teasel in its flowering stage

There are 15 different species of teasel. It is a tall plant, often reaching the height of a person. Their flowers are visited by bees when in flower, and birds when seeding, so make great garden plants. Birds, such as goldfinches, can often be seen alighting on the old, brown flower heads in autumn to 'tease' the seeds from them.

Wildlife Anagrams

R P T E L E

L U R Q I R E S

E E L G A

O S U M E

L E Z H A

(answers on page 11)

Bottlenose Dolphin



Close up of a bottlenose dolphin

Late summer and autumn are busy times for bottlenose dolphins. After a 13-month gestation, the females give birth at the end of August into September. These dolphins are rarely solitary, usually spotted in pods of between 2 and 12, although larger groups have been seen. Bottlenose dolphins can be spotted quite close to the shore. Keep a lookout for their amazing, acrobatic behaviour, including tail-slapping, breaching, and interacting with boats. Scottish bottlenose dolphins are adapted to live in cold water and can grow up to 4 metres in length, much larger than other bottlenose dolphins around the world.

Get snapping: please send any photos of September wildlife you capture, for us to share in the October edition.

Scottish Seabird Centre Events

The Scottish Seabird Centre's popular online **Meet the Scientist** series is back for autumn and winter! At 7pm on 8 September, award-winning wildlife photographer, Steve Race will share his experiences photographing seabird colonies. From the Shetland Isles to the Farne Islands, Steve has been privileged to visit numerous seabird colonies around the British coastline. This is an online Zoom event and tickets are available to book online at www.seabird.org/events



Beach Clean Fridays: you can now borrow a beach-clean kit from the Scottish Seabird Centre every Friday between 10.00 and 16.00. Volunteering your time to clean-up the coastline is a great way to help improve marine habitats and protect wildlife. More information on how to get involved, is on their website: www.seabird.org/events/beach-clean-fridays

The Scottish Seabird Centre will be running their very popular **Holiday Club** over the October school holiday. Keep a look out on their website and social channels to find out more.

North Berwick's First Ever Window Wanderland

"Window Wanderland" is taking place in North Berwick 3rd - 10th of October 2021.

North Berwick Window Wanderland is a fun, family-friendly, suitable for all ages and abilities event where participants create illuminated (lit-up) displays in windows. You can use street-facing windows of your home, business, school, nursery, car, shop, or even your front door, or shed. A map showing the locations of the illuminated window displays will be displayed on the website to form an after-sunset walking trail for all to enjoy, transforming local streets into galleries. www.windowwanderland.com

If you have any questions please get in touch with Bex on 07824330031.

Here are some stunning examples of windows from around the world.



Community Links Worker for North Berwick and Gullane



Tara Broadfoot, Community Link Worker from **We Are With You**, is based in both the North Berwick and Gullane Medical Practices. Gullane every Wednesday and North Berwick every Thursday and Friday.

I can offer you a safe space to talk about issues that are stopping you living well and time to explore what changes and support you might need to help improve your health and well-being. All at your local surgery.

If you would like to be referred ask your GP, practice nurse or receptionist. They will explain how you make an appointment.



Wildlife Anagram Answers:
Petrel Squirrel Eagle Mouse Hazel

North Berwick Coastal Community Connections - *our current services*

Community Connections can meet you for coffee, chum you along on a walk and help you make the most of your days - in a Covid-safe but very companionable way!

Time to venture back to the cafe and reconnect with others, or make new friends? Say the word and we can help. Just contact Carol or Lisa if you'd like some more company, conversations and connections in your life. Please note that we have had to close our waiting list for Befriending and Buddy Walks at the moment, but hope it will be possible to reopen this soon - bear with us.



For weekly befriender phone calls and/or meet-ups: contact **Lisa Brownlie**, Befriending Coordinator, on Tuesday or Wednesday mornings. Telephone 07862 694842. Email: befrienders@nbc-communityconnections.org



For the following services: contact **Carol Stobie**, Project Officer. Telephone 07940 203380. Email: nbc-communityconnections@outlook.co.uk

- **Buddy walks** (weekly or one-off)
- **Monthly newsletter subscriptions**
- **Coffee Connections:** let us introduce you to new and veteran members at the Seabird Centre or other cafes
- **Volunteer applications**

To send any contributions to our newsletter, email newsletter@nbc-communityconnections.org or contact Carol to

North Berwick Coastal Community Connections has been funded by the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership, National Lottery Community Fund, North Berwick Trust & East Lothian Council.



October newsletter content request...

We welcome a range of content so please share your stories, your own photos, hobbies, news, as well as any events taking place across North Berwick and the Coastal Villages. Please email **Ruth** at newsletter@nbc-communityconnections.org by the 16th of September. Thank you.

'The one recommendation I'd make for everybody in the world is to be curious - always be curious, because then you'll never ever run out of things for your brain to go, 'Oh, how about that, that's interesting!'

- Sandi Toksvig