



Community Connections

North Berwick Coastal

March 2022

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

One of the March birth flowers is the daffodil which represents rebirth, hope and new beginnings.



'View from the top of the Law' by Ruth Fraser

Happy Spring!

We made it! March 20th is the start of spring, which means winter is almost officially over. After what feels like months of hibernation, we are certainly looking forward to the change in season.

It's almost time for nature to awaken around us as we start to feel the sun's warmth again, the first buds of cherry blossom appear, and the evenings get lighter, and I for one, cannot wait! Springtime can really lift the spirits. From shoots bursting through the soil, to birdsong reaching a peak, the sights and sounds of the natural world 'waking up' or starting afresh surround us.



And of course, daylight savings starts in March which means that we spring forward our clocks by an hour and we've got more time in the day to enjoy the daylight. The clocks change on the last Sunday of March (27th), moving forward by one hour. There may still be a bit of a chill in the air but this marks the beginning of British Summer Time (BST).

Imagine a gender equal world.

A world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination.

A world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

A world where difference is valued and celebrated.

Together we can forge women's equality.

Collectively we can all **#BreakTheBias**.

As well as celebrating the start of spring, we look forward to marking [International Woman's Day](#) (IWD) on Tuesday 8th of March. IWD has been observed since the early 1900s and this year's theme is **#BreakTheBias**. It's a chance to celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness against bias, and take action for equality.

- Ruth Fraser

Connections on the brain: International Women's Day and Tins of Sardines

It's springtime, and we're looking forward to **International Women's Day** (8th March).



I'm emerging from post-festive brain-hibernation and perking up a bit, so here are some thoughts on women's brains (starting with this one).

Mine has been malfunctioning for some time. My memory's rubbish, I'm double-booking and the inbox is overflowing (metaphorically and literally). Sometimes I worry about Alzheimers.

Did you know women are twice as prone as men? (See separate piece, quoting a recent Alzheimers Scotland article in more depth.) Research continues. There's a genetic component, but apparently lifestyle factors can prevent or slow the process – like diet, movement, and sleep.

Or could mine be post-menopausal brain fog instead? That's a whole other emerging topic. Starting HRT is helping a bit, and I'm sleeping better (hoorah!).

Or this could be a mild case of dyspraxia, a neurological disorder

that affects coordination and can present challenges with fiddly fine-motor-skill tasks, sports, handwriting, and/or (as in my case) just getting your act together. It's in the family, and I've learnt a lot about what helps them - then began to realise we had some 'challenges' in common.

The Community Connections staff team (now 5 of us, hooray!) have been discussing neurodiversity, as it's now understood, including dyspraxia, dyslexia, autism, and other interesting patterns of brain-wiring. We thought we'd start talking about these things here, and we'd love your thoughts!

It's dawning on me that everyone has some kind of challenge (or diversity?) with the way their brain works. Maybe we each need a personalised toolkit of learning and life-coping strategies. Maybe in 20 years, we'll no longer think of these differences as 'disorders' or 'problems'. We (hopefully) no longer imagine dyslexia means laziness or lack of intelligence. It seems dyslexic brains can even be 'rewired' in some respects, with targeted interventions, imaginative approaches to learning style, and new technology.

I'm reading that Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, if triggered in very early childhood,

manifests differently from adult-onset (forgive the jargon in this piece, but it's shorthand) - another kind of different brain wiring. And 'small' traumas count too. I had a few. You may have too. Specific newer types of therapy can help with this - a hopeful sign. Wait, there's also an epidemic of 'brain inflammation', which contributes to dementia, stress, poor decision making, and even crime... but it can be made better by changing factors like our diet. I recommend 'How to Build a Healthy Brain', by the wonderful psychologist [Kimberley Wilson](#). A Bake-off finalist, but there's more to her than cakes.

Women's brains are often ridiculously overflowing and struggling to take care of a million "life admin" tasks too (research discovery: nobody can multitask successfully, women included). We can't keep carrying it all, and it needs sharing out. So let's be compassionate and forgiving with each other's mess-ups and mistakes.

Seems spring really is waking up this brain a wee bit. I haven't grasped all of this or implemented it all yet, but it's a stimulating start. Please talk to us about all this – you have things to say, too. For now, let me recommend one thing. A tin of sardines. Trust me.

- Carol Stobie
(Project
Manager)





NEW TEAM MEMBER!

We're so pleased to welcome **Charli Prime** as NBCCC's new Compassionate Neighbours Coordinator. Charli's email address is compassionateneighbours@nbc-communityconnections.org and her mobile number is 07360 587369. Charli's working hours are Monday afternoons and Tuesday mornings.

'Since moving to North Berwick in 2005, I have been in full-time teaching posts which have left very little time for connecting with the wider North Berwick community.

I am delighted to now be part of North Berwick Coastal Community Connections and look forward to meeting current Compassionate Neighbours with a view to building a team of dedicated, empathetic volunteers.



Using my coaching skills, passion for inclusion, integrity, and experience in building teams, I am confident that a safe environment for encouraging compassionate conversations about death and dying can be created and sustained.'

Befriending Update - Lisa Brownlie

I don't know about the rest of you, but I am sitting patiently waiting for sunnier, brighter, warmer weather! It certainly feels like, during the last few weeks, the wind and the rain have not left us.

I hope that our Buddy Walkers have still been able to get out walking, when it has been safe enough to do so, and enjoyed the benefits of fresh air!

As always, we are receiving referrals and a few new volunteers have started with us. I would like to welcome them to NBCCC and I am really looking forward to working with them all.

I really hope that in March, we have opportunities to get out walking in our lovely surroundings, and helped by the weather, we'll be able to enjoy the joys of spring and the ever-changing countryside.



Things to look forward to in Spring



*** Sunny Skies**

Arrival of spring means our bodies get more exposure to sunlight. Our brains respond by producing mood-boosting hormones.

*** Eat the Rainbow**

We can look forward to spring fruit and vegetables. Seasonal fruit and veg include rhubarb, artichoke, beetroot, carrots, cucumber broccoli, and radishes. Delicious!

*** Migrating Birds**

Spring in Scotland marks the return of many migrant birds coming here to breed over the summer months. Migrants, like the swallow and house martin, are a familiar sight returning to the same nest year after year.

*** Open Windows**

After months of cold weather, we can finally open up the windows in the spring and let the fresh air come on in. Everything smells crisp and feels so much better.

*** The Great Outdoors**

Getting outside for anything will make a difference - sitting in the garden, walks, picnics, adventures, or a lovely stroll along the beach with the sun beaming down.

Pancake Day

This year, Pancake Day takes place on Tuesday 1st of March. The day, known to Christians as Shrove Tuesday, isn't always on a fixed date and changes every year depending on when Easter falls. It always falls on the seventh week before Easter and the day before Ash Wednesday – beginning the period known as Lent.

Shrove is the past tense of the word shrive, which means to present oneself to a priest for confession. The day, being the day before the Lent fast begins, is for people to gain penance from God before they begin fasting. Shrove Tuesday is also a chance for people to enjoy rich and fatty foods as a last celebration before fasting begins.

Pancakes are traditionally eaten because they were a way to use up the rich foods people have (such as eggs and milk) before they went bad during the long fast. The ingredients are also said to represent the four pillars of the Christian faith; eggs for creation, flour as the mainstay of the human diet, salt for wholesomeness, and milk for purity.



Top pancake flipping tips:

- Use a non-stick pan, greased with a little oil
- If the pancake doesn't come away, give the pan a gentle shake
- Be confident when flipping the pancake over!

In Eastern Europe, a pancake is known as a **blini**, while in Greece and Cyprus they're referred to as **tiganites**. In Japan, they're known as **okonomiyaki**. Whereas, in Austria, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia they're either called **palatschinke**, **palačinka** or **palacinka**.

Winter Whereabouts - Scottish Seabird Centre

Great Skua

Known as the 'Bonxie' in Scotland, the great skua is a powerful piratical predator with a penchant for puffins. They spend winter touring the coasts of Spain and North-West Africa and like to scavenge behind fishing vessels. The Bonxie will attack other birds, stealing their food and makes good use of its size (up to 58cm long) and weight (up to 2kg). Even humans aren't safe as this stout herring gull sized pirate chases off any unwanted visitors!



Photo © Emily Burton

Razorbill

Like their auk cousin the guillemot, razorbills winter out at sea. Many will head for the Atlantic or North Sea, however, some will opt for a winter break and visit the English Channel before returning to their rocky ledges in late winter. The razorbill specialises in diving for fish, particularly sand eels, but is also happy to harass a puffin into giving up its catch. Global warming is increasingly affecting their food source as waters warm. The razorbill is currently an amber listed species.



Photo © Emily Burton

Guillemot

This penguin-like, deep-sea diving specialist, feeds on fish, crabs, and molluscs. They spend winter out at sea where they like to limit any flying but do sporadically return to the breeding colony's rocky ledges where they chase off competitors, confirm their relationships, and secure the best spots prior to April when the breeding season starts again.



Photo © Susan Davies





Eric Melvin is an established and respected local historian who has explored, researched, and documented his home city of Edinburgh. After a long and varied career in education, he now enjoys retirement in Scotland's capital by sharing his love and knowledge of history with the wider public.

In his talk, 'Edinburgh and the Act of Union', Eric will examine the tumultuous and still controversial events leading up to the Act of Union.

From October 1706 until January 1707, the terms of the proposed Union with England were fiercely debated in Edinburgh's Parliament Hall with some sessions lasting far into the night. Was Scotland on its knees with a begging bowl? Was Scotland bullied into submission by its more powerful English neighbour? Or were Scots desperate to take advantage of the wealthy trade and career opportunities of the expanding English colonies? Drawing from contemporary sources, Eric intends to give us some informed answers to these key questions.

The meeting will be held on Zoom, starting at 7pm for 7.30pm, on **Tuesday 23rd March** to which visitors are most welcome.

Museum members will automatically receive a link to join the meeting. Visitors can email Ian Goodall at friends@coastalmuseum.org to receive their special link.



North Berwick Pipe Band
Bingo Fundraiser
Thursday March 3rd 2022

North Berwick Rugby Club
Dunbar Road
Bingo plus Raffle

Eyes Down 7.30pm

SCONE CAFE RETURNS WED 2 MARCH, 2 - 3.30pm

(please note change of time we'll pilot)



Bass Rock Community Group Beach Cleans

We are running monthly beach cleans and the March one is **Saturday 12th**. It takes place between 2 - 4pm. You are most welcome to join us!



Please look at our Facebook page to check where we are litter picking. We are also asking people to point out bad areas to us and we will do our best to clean them. People are free to join us at any litter pick as pickers and bags are provided. If we have to cancel or change the location it will be on FB the day before.



North Berwick in Bloom (NBIB) is very excited to have been selected to represent Scotland in the **Britain in Bloom** competition 2022. We know that we can count on the support of everyone in the town to have everything looking wonderful for the judges' tour at the end of July. We look forward to working with all our NBIB friends and many other groups committed to showing off our lovely Scottish seaside town.



Hamish: kneeling, second from right

Hamish McMenemy, 10, who has ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), is climbing the **North Berwick Law** every day in March to raise money for CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). Hamish, of Lady Jane Road, got the idea when he climbed the Law with his friends and told his mum Jane he wanted to climb it for charity. Jane said: "He was wanting to do something for charity; we mentioned CAMHS and he said: 'Let's do something for that.'" He and friends from his primary six class will now challenge themselves to climb the Law every day in March to raise as much cash as possible. CAMHS is an NHS-run service that helps treat young people with a variety of challenges.



Amazing photo from Robert's garden of a partial albino blackbird, which is lucky to have survived into adulthood because its bright white head makes it highly visible to predators.



Spring is coming - photo by Robina Brown

Khlayre's story as a befriender

When you start a journey, you think you know the destination or outcome, and when I became a Buddy Walker I was still in that mindset. What fool me! On reflection, our initial bond was genuine, warm, easy (in a pleasing way), and conversation flowed. Our initial common interest was dogs, with my two little ones being made so welcome at 'J's' house when I called for her. There she would be on the doorstep, treats in hand, with Coco and Biba racing to get out of the car to get a treat and a cuddle. As weeks and months have passed, we still talk dogs (a lot...) but we talk family, life, current affairs, careers, health and well-being, and life in East Lothian (which is great as a newcomer to NB), and I have met her daughter which was lovely, having heard so much about her.

So perhaps I thought my destination would be one-way, I would give but not receive, and I was fine with that; but I come home after spending time with my lovely 'J' full of energy, chat, and words of wisdom. I love being involved in the community because I meet new, and different, people but I hadn't really expected to meet a new friend in the true sense of the word.

J's story as a befriender

June 22nd last year was the first time I met Khlayre, who became my buddy walker. When it was first suggested that I would benefit from having a 'buddy walker' or be involved in meeting other like-minded people over tea or coffee at the Seabird Centre – I knew the latter was not for me, meeting over coffee was something I knew I would not benefit from. Meeting at my own home on a one-to-one basis, chatting, going for a walk, coming back, and having tea in the garden was something I could cope with, enjoy, and benefit from. It's now seven months since my first meeting with Khlayre, and my life is so much better having Khlayre in it. I wait at the window on a Friday and at exactly 10.30am Khlayre and her two gorgeous little dogs arrive – what a welcome they give me – so does Khlayre!! I find her calming, always cheerful, and full of interesting chat. We talk about our families, national issues, and lots of chat about dogs. Conversation flows and is very easy – I am very lucky I have a good friend I know I can trust and depend on.



I admire Khlayre for the job she is doing – helping people in our community, especially at this time. Thank you Khlayre for all the help you have given me. I would also like to thank those involved in Community Connections who are doing a wonderful job – the magazine is full of such interesting facts and great photographs – please keep up the good work.

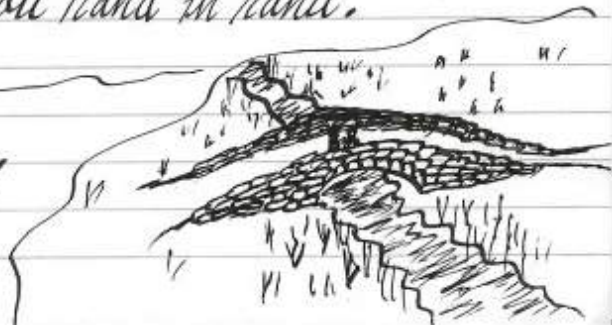
1 February 2022





What am i
 Born of stone was i, and steel and
 Brick and wood
 and in places even rope,
 i've spanned the Century, Crossed over decades
 kept armies apart and gave lovers hope.
 I've united island, big and small
 from the lowland to the highlands
 inviting families to meet their loved ones
 keeping lost souls, dreams alive.
 My feet have stood in many a river
 burns and streams and muddy ditches
 to always keep you safe and dry,
 And as long as my limbs stay ever stretching
 i'll forever join you hand in hand.

By Euan H. M.
Macmichael



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



Scottish Seabird Centre Events - book via website

www.seabird.org/events



As we march into spring, we're eagerly awaiting the return of the breeding seabirds. Small numbers of gannets have already been spotted diving around the Bass Rock. Our SOS Puffin work parties are heading out to clear the invasive tree mallow from the local islands this month, ahead of the puffins returning to their burrows to breed; and thanks to funding from NatureScot, our team will be hard at work upgrading and installing new cameras on the Isle of May and Craigleith. The upgrades will allow visitors to the Discovery Experience and our website to enjoy high-definition live streams from both islands as the seabird breeding season picks up.

Social Beach Clean

Friday 4 March, 11am – 12pm

Our beach clean walks aim to remove marine debris from local beaches, whilst enjoying some amazing marine wildlife along the shoreline with like-minded people. We will only collect what we can reasonably carry back to the centre, where the waste will be sorted, recorded, and disposed of (recycling where possible). Friendly, quiet dogs are welcome, but we ask they are kept on a short lead throughout. This is a free event, but places are limited as it's a guided session.

Wildlife Walk

Saturday 5 March, 9am – 10:30am



Join our Conservation Officer for a relaxing 1.5-hour wildlife walk along the coast to find out more about the seabirds, shorebirds, and cetaceans that can be spotted around Scotland. Learn more about citizen science surveys, why they're important, and how you can get involved in collecting data to safeguard wildlife and marine habitats. Friendly, quiet dogs are welcome, but we ask that they are kept on a short lead throughout. These walks are for adults (16+) and cost £7.50 per person (discounts apply for Seabird Centre members).

Louise Welsh – Author Talk

Thursday 10 March, 7pm – 8pm



We're thrilled to welcome celebrated author, Louise Welsh, for our next author event. Louise will be talking to journalist Jennifer Crichton of The Flock about her new novel, *The Second Cut*, the compelling follow-up to her cult classic debut, *The Cutting Room*. There will be opportunity for Q&A and book signings after the event and the café will be open for light refreshments.

Tickets are £8 and can be purchased online at <https://www.seabird.org/events/39>

Local florist, Sandy Branches, will be returning to run a Mother's Day bouquet-making workshop on the 27th of March using locally sourced seasonal blooms; and look out for more details of our new exhibition coming at the end of the month.

Whether you come along to an event or pop in for a coffee we look forward to welcoming you.

March Wildlife Watch by Ruth Fraser

Spring is said to start at the beginning of March and the 20th of March is the Spring Equinox; the date on which day and night are of equal length. This month is a time of days getting longer and the spring sunshine bringing growth and greenery. There's lots to look out for when we are out and about.

Daffodils



Daffodils were brought to Britain by the Romans. They believed that daffodil sap would heal wounds. In fact, the opposite is true. The sap contains sharp crystals to deter animals from eating the flower and it actually irritates the skin rather than heals it. They are one of the first signs that spring has arrived, it makes sense that these beautiful flowers represent the first month of the season. I'm always amazed by the daffodils just on the left as you turn into Trainers Brae, North Berwick - they like to make an early appearance and seem to be the first to bloom in the area!

Razor shell



A walk along the shore after the recent storms may reveal some treasure. The razor shell is one of the more eye-catching burrowing residents to litter beaches after storms. It spends its life in a vertical tunnel, feeding on detritus when the tide comes in.

They can live for over a decade, steadily adding growth rings to their paired shells, which relate to tidal cycles rather than calendar years. Remember to try to pick up any actual litter you find!

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

Wildlife Anagrams

N J I U E P R

P E D I P R

O W O E K P E C R D

X L N Y

R B C I H

(answers on page 11)

Women and Brain Health

We've been reading a fascinating piece on the [Alzheimer Scotland](#) website. Here are some excerpts:



Women are disproportionately affected by dementia – by quite a staggering, and sometimes underappreciated, margin. Worldwide, women with dementia outnumber men two to one, and they are also twice as likely to care for a loved one with the disease.


Scientists are yet to fully understand the underlying causes of such a marked divide. It is widely accepted that historically women have been underrepresented in medical research programmes, at both the preclinical (animal) study stage, and in drug development trials...

... If we eat, exercise, and sleep well we can help keep our brains healthy and fuelled with oxygen and nutrients. No matter our age, we need to stimulate our brains by being with people and learning new skills. And it is crucial we manage stress to stay as calm as possible at home and work.



Maintaining good physical health – keeping blood pressure and BMI low – as well as being vigilant for hearing loss, air pollution and head injury are all part of the prevention plan...

Anna Borthwick, Executive Lead, Brain Health Scotland



LOVE TO MOVE

Love to Move is a chair-based age dementia and Parkinson's friendly exercise. Especially designed to improve movement, motor function, memory stimulation, coordination and balance



**AUBIGNY SPORT CENTRE,
HADDINGTON**

Starting Monday 21st Feb 9:30-10:30 AM

£3 per Class, Carers free

Suitable for all ages and abilities

To book please ask at reception or call: 01620 820650

North Berwick Knit and Natter



We are a bunch of friendly knitters and crafters who meet every **Tuesday** between 5pm - 6:30pm at the **Auld Hoose** in Forth Street, North Berwick. No need to book, no fees, just come along and join in!

A local community based event to encourage knitters, crocheters, and natterers to come together for fun and to



Learn to practice Mindfulness for better health and a calmer mind

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

Beginners group 6 week block starts Wednesday 2nd March
Weekly from 1pm-2pm
Venue: Bleachingfield Centre, Dunbar

Intermediate group 6 week block
Dates to be confirmed- via ZOOM
contact Joyce for more info.

Join us for £3 per session

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



NORDIC WELLBEING WALKS

(Beginner + Intermediate class)

Walk your way to better health and wellbeing

Learn to Nordic Walk

Poles provided

Led by trained Walk Leaders

Tones the upper and lower body

And it's **FREE** to attend!!



Beginner sessions start Thursday 3rd March for 6 weeks 10am-11am, meeting outside the Aubigny Sports Centre

Intermediate sessions start Thursday 3rd March for 6 weeks 1pm-2pm, meeting outside the Aubigny Sports Centre
 you must complete the beginners class before the intermediate class

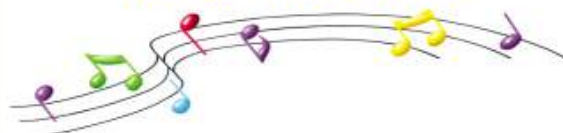
Phone Parvine on 07718 117585 or email pjazaveri@eastlothian.gov.uk to find out more and/or book your place. Limited spaces.



NORTH BERWICK



TUNES AND SONGS



Musicians, singers and listeners welcome !

Thursday 10th March 2022
 8.00-10.00PM

North Berwick Rugby Club
 Dunbar Road EH39 4DG

FREE admission and bar available
 For more info contact 07899957545

or

eddiemcf1953@hotmail.com

Wildlife Anagram Answers:

Juniper Dipper Woodpecker Lynx Birch



The NBCCC team:

For general enquiries, newsletter subscriptions, or signing up for our activities, contact **Lyndsey Gdulewicz**, Administration and Communications Assistant, on 07915 719342 (Mon morning, Tuesdays and Fri morning) or email: admin@nbc-communityconnections.org



For the following services, contact **Carol Stobie**, Project Manager, on 07940 203380 (Tuesday - Thursday) or email: nbc-communityconnections@outlook.co.uk

- Gatherings, Coffee Connections, Scone Café, and drop-ins
- Partnership activities and outreach
- Volunteer applications



For the following one-to-one services, contact **Lisa Brownlie**, Befriending Coordinator, on 07862 694842 (Tue or Wed morning) or email: befrienders@nbc-communityconnections.org

- Befriending (weekly calls or meet-ups with a volunteer)
- Buddy Walks (any length, any speed fine!) with a trained volunteer



For Compassionate Neighbours services, contact **Charli Prime**, Compassionate Neighbours Coordinator, on 07360 587369 (Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning) or email: compassionateneighbours@nbc-communityconnections.org



For newsletter matters, contact **Ruth Fraser** at newsletter@nbc-communityconnections.org

· Please send in contributions for the newsletter (we'd love your stories, pictures, recipes, quotes, letters, practically anything you'd like to share with other members!)

· Deadline for April newsletter: **17th March**



Current NBCCC Services Offered:

- * Scone Café weekly drop-in (resumes on Wed 2nd March)
- * Coffee Connections at local cafes
- * Befriending calls or meet-ups
- * Buddy Walks
- * Chumming to local activities, when available
- * 'Community Connections' monthly newsletter



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.



"The first blooms of spring always make my heart sing."

- S Brown