



CRAIL MATTERS

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Crail; The Jewel of the East Neuk.

There but Not There in Crail

The Community Council are delighted to announce that Crail has been awarded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, a 'There but not there' figure for Crail's commemoration of the 100 year anniversary of the ending of the First World War. You can find further details of the Trust at <http://www.covenantfund.org.uk/>. The Community Council are currently working with other interested organisations in Crail to develop details of the memorial event, which will take place on Remembrance Sunday which this year falls appropriately on the 11th of November. The Community Council will also be placing a memorial bench at the War Memorial to commemorate this anniversary, and funding has been received to generally clean up and paint the area around the War Memorial. A number of people and organisations have very generously given time, funds and resources to help complete this work. Crail Matters will, as Remembrance Day approaches, publish details of the 44 men from Crail who died in the First World War as well as accounts from other communities of their commemoration activities.



From Dolphin Spotting to Shooting Star Spotting

Hopefully, you will have managed to see some dolphins during the past week, now it's time for shooting stars. The Perseids will burst out into balls of flame this weekend between the nights of Saturday, August 11th, and Monday, August 13th so you still have time to do some shooting star spotting this evening.

The annual Perseids meteor shower starts to produce individual shooting stars each year around mid-July before it builds in intensity. The meteors are bits and pieces of space rubble broken off from the speeding comet Swift-Tuttle so, by around mid-August, the Earth crosses paths with the comet's orbital debris trail which spectacularly intensifies the meteor shower. During the peak, the Perseid shower can produce up to 100 meteors an hour. Past meteor showers have been known to even produce up to 200 meteors zooming across the sky every hour. This year astronomers are hoping to see anywhere between 50 and 60 shooting stars an hour, or around one every minute. This year's shower is expected to be particularly dazzling thanks to the darkened New Moon phase of the lunar cycle. Astronomers advise looking for the meteors after midnight and just before the break of dawn when the Earth is closest to Swift-Tuttle's orbit. Between midnight and dawn the shower's radiant, its apparent point of origin in the sky, will be pretty high up. The radiant will appear to come out next to the Perseid's namesake constellation, Constellation Perseus.

You do not have to worry about finding the constellation in the star-lit night because the Perseids will burst out in every

direction imaginable. The fireballs can and will appear in the sky randomly, so the best thing to do is to lie back comfortably and absorb as much of the open sky as possible.



Sky & Telescope senior editor, J Kelly Beatty advised: "Relax, be patient and let your eyes adapt to the darkness. The Perseids will put on a great show. The good news is you can do this with nothing more than your naked eyes." The meteors are incredibly fast moving and trying to spot them with a telescope or high-powered binoculars would only complicate matters. Just be aware of any local light pollution from lamps and buildings that might make the skies brighter during the peak. Quiet outdoor areas with unobstructed views of the horizon, such as fields and big open parks are usually a good bet when looking for a meteor viewing spot. If you head out, remember to pack something warm for the night, snacks, drinks, blankets and give your eyes up to 30 minutes to adjust to the dark of night.

Denburn Dispatches

Another fine day on August 4th saw a good turn out for the monthly Denburn tidy up. Fortunately the shade there and a slightly cooling breeze kept the temperature bearable.

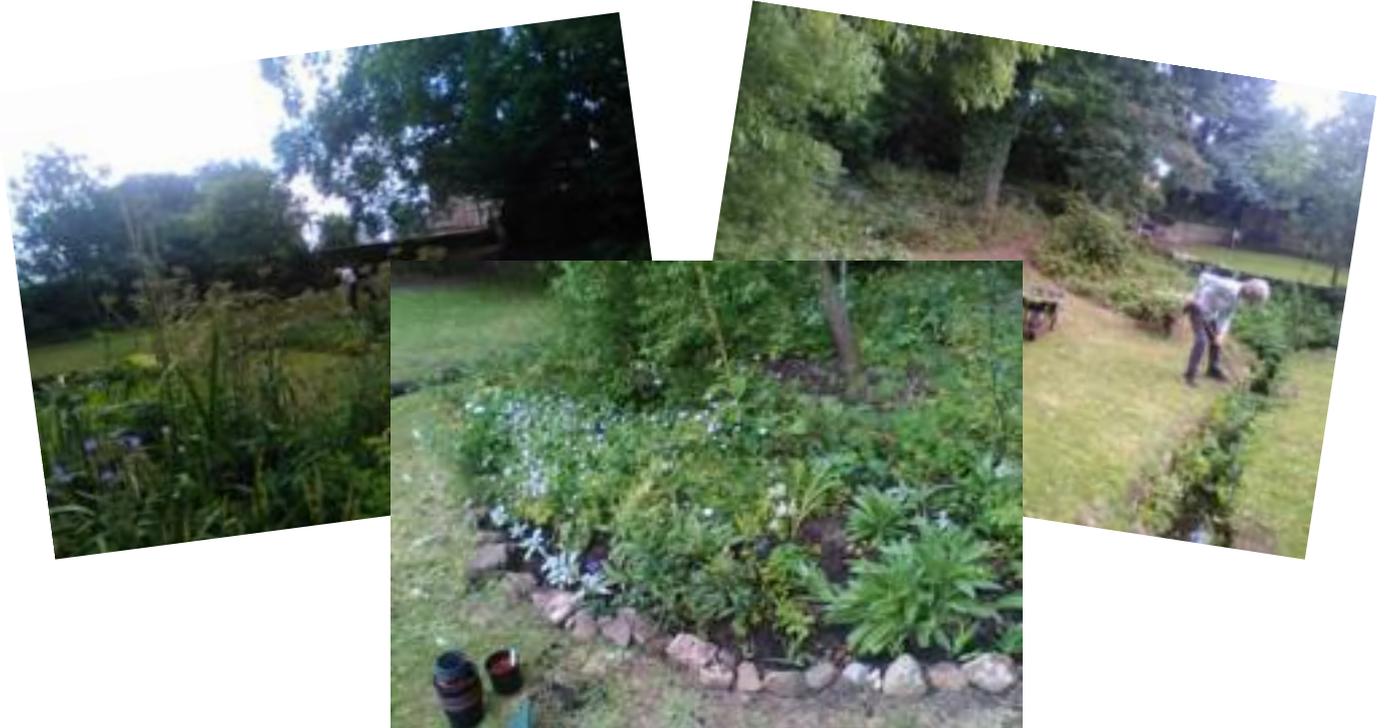
Between the 8 or so of us we raked, litter picked and weeded paths, cut back over hanging vegetation, weeded the flower bed and planted some new perennials then top dressed them with sludge dug out of the burn in earlier months. Two of the blokes did some path repairs ready for new surfacing later in the year. Logs, stick and boulders that had somehow made their way into the burn or beds were removed.

Although there is less in flower now, there are still some pretty pink geraniums and blue cranesbill (their wild relative) to see plus it looks like the cornflowers may flower again soon and there are plenty of seed heads everywhere.

Sadly a dead adult sparrowhawk was found beyond the compost heaps and young sparrow hawks were heard calling when, presumably, their remaining parent came to feed them – I hope they survive.

So thanks once again to all volunteers. We'll be back again on Saturday 1st September at 10am. No gardening experience necessary! I hope we'll see you there.

Some of our volunteers hard at work and the flowerbed rejuvenated.



Safer Communities

The Safer Communities Team would like to recruit volunteers to assist us with a new initiative in Fife called Adopt-A-Street. By working together in partnership, communities and the Council can help prevent a build-up of litter and encourage everyone to care about their own neighbourhood and/or their special place.

We can provide a litter picker and hoop to all volunteers who sign up for the scheme and you can choose the area you care about and want to adopt. If you are a community group, we can supply you with up to 10 litter pickers, 5 hoops, bags and gloves.

This scheme is open to anyone who wishes to participate in helping clean a place they care about. It might be your street, your local park or simply a path that you use regularly.



The Council will continue to clean public places but by working together we can all help to keep Fife a beautiful place to live and visit. We are hoping to host an event in the near future with speakers from the voluntary organisation “Leithers Don’t Litter” who have inspired us to look into supporting local initiatives such as this. If you would be interested in attending this event, volunteering or if you would like some additional information, please contact us at Safer.CommunitiesTeam@fife.gov.uk



WILD CRAIL

Will Cresswell,

with Photographs by John Anderson



I have been away for most of the last two months – Nigeria, Namibia, Botswana and Italy. I feel disconnected from Crail as a consequence although the consolation has been the chance to see a lot of new birds and lots of Crail rarities – particularly in Italy where they are just common garden birds. One day I will see a bee-eater flying over my garden.

Coming back from Italy on the 1st I was pleased to see common swifts again. The only ones in southern Europe were passing through, heading to Africa. Swifts – like cuckoos – really only stay up here to breed and as soon as they are done they head back home. The season starts earlier somewhere like Italy and it finishes earlier because the chicks grow faster on the better insect diet in the warmer climate. Swift chicks shut down their development in cool weather when the adults can't find enough food locally, so they take longer to fledge somewhere like Crail. But this summer must have been good for the swifts here so I don't expect their season to be that much longer. They might depart any day now - their usual departure in a cool summer might be mid-to late August.



Roseate Tern

The shore down at Balcomie and Fife Ness is alive again after its summer lull. There were lots of redshanks, curlews and dunlin on the rocky shore on the morning of the 4th. The usual flock of moulting goosanders has reconvened – it is usually to be found just as the coastal path gets to the north end of Balcomie Golf Course. From Fife Ness there were few auks to be seen but the gannets are working their hardest now, passing out and back in to the Forth to service their now very big chicks on the Bass Rock. There were lots of sandwich terns with their attendant noisy juveniles but the arctic terns passing have few young with them. The breeders on the May Island have had a few disasters this summer with herring gulls taking most of the eggs and chicks. There was a flock of (probably disconsolate) adults on the rocky shore just out from Balcomie Beach. Two terns passing to the north caught my eye – they were all white with a very definite black leading edge to the wing, and looking shape wise like a cross between sandwich and common terns – two adult roseate terns. A regular at this time of year for Balcomie, but always hard to find amongst all the other terns.

The yellow wagtails continue their residency down at Barnsmuir. There are now fledged juveniles with the adults, and they are feeding as a group at times in the horse fields. They are often away of course, feeding less obviously in the fields around, where they disappear with only their calls when they fly to another field giving them away.

A couple of years ago we put a pond in our back garden. We put local frog spawn into it for two springs but this year the spawn appeared all of its own (well I suspect the five large frogs that were in the pond in March might have had something to do with it). The pond has been full of tadpoles since, but while I was away they metamorphosed. And now we have a garden full of tiny frogs. We hope to repeat the trick with toads, but they seem to be taking a bit longer – there are half grown toads in the garden from the toad tadpoles we have put in the pond over the two years like the frogs, but not anything full grown like the big adult frogs that are now fully resident in our garden, and who are responsible for this year's froglets. It's so encouraging to create a place for frogs in the garden where there were none before. It's such a pleasure to see them jumping into the bushes or poking their heads out of the pond or hearing their soft croaking on a warm summer evening. Toads are even better – I love the fact that one of the tiny toadlets that made it out of the pond two years ago might grow into a huge toad that might still be eating slugs in the vegetable patch in 20 years time.

There were four shelduck juveniles down at Balcomie on the morning of the 5th. They were in a tight flock and not that long fledged so I should think these are locally produced birds and hopefully indicating that the pair that was around Balcomie earlier in the spring were bred successfully. The adults are away just now moulting in huge flocks – perhaps locally in the inner Forth or possibly as far away as Heligoland on the opposite side of the North Sea. They undergo this "moult migration" for safety in numbers while they become flightless when regrowing their flight feathers. The juveniles have just grown their flight feathers of course so don't need to go anywhere to moult.



Juvenile Shelduck



Great Skua

At Fife Ness on the 5th I saw my first skua of the autumn – a great skua flying right over the point. It is worth checking out any brown, large seabird in August. Before the juvenile gannets fledge in September any all dark seabird is very likely to be a skua. Arctic and great skuas are not that uncommon around Crail at this time of year but unless you look well out to sea with binoculars, or sit out at Fife Ness for an overflight by birds cutting the corner off as they pass along the coast, you will not see them.

Even if you never look at insects you won't have missed that there are a lot of hoverflies about. Crail is full of them and if you stop for long enough you can get covered by them, particularly if you are wearing a bright or flowery shirt. They mimic wasps and bees but they are very gentle and perfectly harmless. They are often the victim of mistaken identity. This is a shame because they are very beautiful close up and their hovering and

flying is second to none. And ecologically they are great – pollinating things and as larvae, many species eat aphids and thrips that are major plant pests. Some of the species in Crail are migrants as well. Spreading northwards as the summer progresses and arriving from the Continent. It's one thing to be amazed at a goldcrest, at 6 grams, crossing the North Sea, but something else to contemplate a hoverfly at a few tens of milligrams doing the same.

The most likely falcon you might see every day in Crail is the kestrel. There are pairs likely breeding at Kilminning, near Saucehope and towards Caiplic. This means that sooner or later you will come



Hoverflies and Wasp

across a kestrel hovering along the coastal path, looking for a mouse or vole in the grass below. At least some of the pairs have bred successfully this year so there are more kestrels about now than usual. The only other falcons we regularly get in Crail are peregrines and merlins. Peregrines are large, bulky and short tailed, whereas merlins are small, very dashing and often reminiscent of a sparrowhawk on initial view. Merlins are commonest around Crail in August because of dispersing juveniles and hunt occasionally through gardens right in the centre. But if your falcon looks light and leisurely, and if it hovers then it will be a kestrel. They are often so concentrated on the ground beneath them when they are hovering, watching for the slightest movement below, that you can approach them within a few metres. They will pounce right in front of you and then suddenly shoot off, surprised themselves, when they shift attention from the hunt to their surroundings.

R.B.S. Mobile Branch Timetable

Tuesdays: St. Andrews Road Car Park, Anstruther – 2.15pm -3.00pm
 Thursdays: North Marketgate, Crail – 10.20am – 10.50am



Kestrel

Progress on Rail link to St Andrews.

The Scottish Government have announced funding to develop studies to improve local rail infrastructure. In particular, the Government has made available £40,000 to fund multi-modal transport appraisals to connect St Andrews to the main rail line. This opens up the prospect of a potential direct rail service between St Andrews and Edinburgh, which would undoubtedly provide a boost to economic and tourist activity not just to St Andrews, but the East Neuk in general. After years of campaigning for St Andrews to be linked to the east coast main line, Jane Ann Liston, convener of StARLink, said: "This is a great leap forward. It is a stamp of approval from the Scottish Government.

"As a prime national and international destination, being the home of golf and Scotland's oldest university, the historic tourist destination of St Andrews has suffered for years from the onslaught of increasing traffic clogging up the town.

"The StARLink campaign believes that the option of direct rail travel from Edinburgh, including the airport interchange, from Dundee to the town would significantly alleviate both the physical and environmental effects of too many cars in the small town with a medieval layout."



A Date for your Diary

The annual flu inoculations will take place at Skeith Health Centre on Monday, 1 October 2018

If you are:-

- Aged 65 or over
- A pregnant woman
- An unpaid carer of any age
- Work in health care

You are eligible to have the seasonal flu vaccine. Contact your GP Practice to book an appointment. The vaccination takes around 10 days to work and should protect you from the flu for another year.

The flu vaccine is offered to all children in Scotland aged 2-5 (and not yet in school) at their GP Practice. It is offered to all primary school children at school.

If you catch the flu, there are a number of steps you can take to help you recover. Firstly, stay at home, get plenty of rest and make sure that you drink enough fluid to keep yourself hydrated. Water is best, particularly if you have a high temperature.

RBS Community Liaison

RBS Community Liaison staff will conduct drop in sessions each Tuesday from 1000 to 1200 in Anstruther Lower Town Hall. Anyone with questions or concerns is welcome to attend.

**Crail Matters
Summer Publication**

Crail Matters will be taking a summer break – there will be no issue on Monday 27 August and 3 September. Copy for the final pre-summer break issue will need to be received 17 August for the issue of 20 August. Publication will resume on 10 September, with final copy needed by 7 September.

**Crail Mobile Post Office
Service**

Location - Along High Street
 Opening times:
 Monday 1400-1600
 Tuesday 1430-1630
 Wednesday 1400-1600

Contact your Fife Councillor?

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 cllr.bill.porteous@fife.gov.uk 01333 730837 or 07753982311
 cllr.john.docherty@fife.gov.uk 07718 66 89 96

Do you know any young carers?

We are the respite care officers for Disabilities Fife. Carers that are actively looking for families to help. Please feel free to contact us anytime by:
 Phone - 01592 203993
 Email - respite@disabilitiesfife.org.uk
 Website - YoungCarersRespite.com

Senior Carers Respite Fife

Senior Carers Respite Fife are pleased to introduce our great new service - Senior Carers Respite Fife. This is for carers 60 plus. We come to you and lend a helping hand. At a time that's convenient to you. This is a FREE service. For more information email Moira or Adele at respite@disabilitiesfife.org.uk or call on 01592 203993



The Crail Seagull

Did you ever wonder why there are no dead penguins on the ice in Antarctica? Where do they go? Well, wonder no more! It is a known fact that the penguin is a very ritualistic bird which lives an extremely ordered and complex life. The penguin is very committed to its family and will mate for life, as well as maintain a form of compassionate contact with its offspring throughout its life.

If a penguin is found dead on the ice surface, other members of the family and social circle have been known to dig holes in the ice, using their vestigial wings and beaks, until the hole is deep enough for the dead bird to be rolled into, and buried. The male penguins then gather in a circle around the fresh grave and sing:

"Freeze a jolly good fellow, freeze a jolly good fellow."

You really didn't believe that I know anything about penguins, did you?
ugh!!!!

I see my relatives in Kirriemuir are having trouble again with residents. There are press reports of a 'Gull Summit' being held. The problem seems to be mums and dads protecting their little ones - well you can't really blame them for that, can you? I've a relative in Montrose who flew by recently, and she said a lot of Gulls are moving to the area. Part of the problem, at least around Crail, is people feeding the Gulls - we are quite capable of finding our own food, and we don't need feeding, unlike some of the little cousins like the sparrows that I see around. I don't want to face a culling of Gulls round here, so please don't feed us. Save your kindness for those birds that need help, especially in winter.

Diversity Week Fife Performers

The organisers are looking for young performers to take part in Diversity Week Fife! Especially they are looking for singers, dancers, drummers or storytellers for the Annual Gathering and Fresher's Evening. Expenses will be reimbursed.

For more information and to sign up please contact on <https://centreforequalities.org.uk/>

Crail Community Council Notes

There was no Community Council Meeting in July, the next being 27 August.



Crail North to Boarhills Cycle Path

The Community Council have supported the creation of a cycle path along the old railway from Crail North to Boarhills, and are very pleased that the project has now received initial funding to prepare a feasibility study.

Crail Town Hall

The Community Council have been informed in the course of email correspondence that Fife Council appear to have extended the lease on parts of the Town Hall held by the Crail Town Hall Management Committee to include the whole of the Town Hall including the now vacant Library space. Whether or not this is a good use of a valuable resource, and how this is meant to fit into the Charrette process cannot be determined, as there has been no public consultation about the proposed use, the nature of the lease extension, or the reality and viability of any proposed use of the area. It is understood that a business plan may have been produced, but the Community Council have not received a copy, and it is understood that not all organisations in Crail that might have an interest have received a copy. That this has happened without any consultation is a matter of serious concern, and brings into question Fife Council's commitments to public consultation in matters related to Common Good properties, and incidentally is in breach of its own acknowledged policy on consultation on the use of Common Good property which has been a matter of custom and practice for some years. The Community Council are aware of other organisations that have expressed an interest in the old library area, and a public consultation may well have generated further interesting and productive proposals. It is also understood that this decision was made without reference to the elected Fife Council councillors. This information has only now become available; it raises very important issues of principle in relation to democratic processes and the genuineness of Fife Council's commitment to community engagement. Given the highly successful Charrette process that Crail has embarked on, it is important that actions are not taken that might compromise the openness and effectiveness of any proposals that might emerge. At this stage, the issue is not what use might be made of the Town Hall area (which may be highly desirable) but the principle of consultation and community engagement. More details will be made available in the coming weeks. Copies of the correspondence between Council officials and the Community Council will be made available - it is important that there is public awareness of the way this has been handled.

Material for inclusion in Crail Matters should be sent to crailmatters@gmail.com and received on Friday midday before publication. Any views expressed in Letters to the Editor are those of the author, and not of Crail Matters.

We reserve the right to edit copy for length and style. Submission does not guarantee inclusion.

© Crab Publishing 2018: Editorial Team this week: Helen Byres, Julie Middleton, Isla Reid, Valencia Sowry, Max Taylor, John Wilson