

# CRAIL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

June 2013

### Denburn Park

The field at Roome Bay Avenue, often referred to as the Sheeps' Field and owned by the Society, has a beautiful display of wild flowers in a small area that Kathleen Main created some years ago as the beginnings of a meadow (the landward end beside Roome Bay Avenue. The most prominent as I write, are echium vulgare (viper's bugloss or blueweed) a tall spike carrying blue flowers, with a patch of pink and white campion (see below). It was encouraging also to see bees on the viper's



bugloss (see above), as there is so much discussion of the loss of bees. (Photographs by courtesy of David Mann)

Editor

### Denburn Wood

Denburn Wood has suddenly exploded into life in the last couple of weeks, the warmer spell of weather having really accelerated the growth. The trees are now mostly in full leaf, very late, and the undergrowth is still full of bluebells. The wood is really looking very pretty just now, and the birds are singing their hearts out. It really is such a peaceful retreat to just sit and

listen.

Victor Reynolds has, as always, come to the rescue and repaired the steps leading down past the well to the wooden bridge over the burn. The old wood supports had rotted away and the path had turned into a bit of a mudslide. The steps are now safe and useable.

Thanks as always to our stalwart volunteers. We have been lucky to have had some new additions to the "Denburn Diggers" recently which is a huge help. Remember, 1st Saturday of the month at 10.00am if you would like to join in.

Sue Holt, who runs the after-school Wildlife Watch Club has been down with the children from Crail Primary School to make bumblebee nests, a very worthwhile project bearing in mind their declining numbers. If you spot one of the nests, please make sure to leave it in place, though we won't tell you where they are! HB

Sue reports: "University of Stirling researchers have found that the shop-bought bumblebee nests are rarely used and that home-made underground ones can be more successful. The

children of Crail Primary Wildlife Watch after-school club made bumblebee nest holes in Denburn Wood by burying 22cm diameter terracotta pots about two thirds underground, almost upside down with the drainage hole tilted slightly to one side as an entrance for the bumblebees. Bumblebees (apart from carder bees) don't collect their own nest linings but just fluff up the nest linings of small mammals or birds that used the nest before them; we almost filled the pots with dried moss, dried fine grass and horsehair to act as a lining. Nest holes like the ones we made often aren't used by bees until after they have been occupied by small mammals, such as voles or wood mice. It seems to have been rather a late year for bumblebees and there were certainly still queens prospecting for nest sites the day we made the nest holes; we enjoyed bumblebee watching and saw buff-tailed bumblebees, early bumblebees and common carder bees. There are no signs of our nests being occupied yet this year- perhaps the best we can hope for is small mammal occupation followed by bumblebee occupation in a later year.

We only put a couple out as we ran out of time and the pot of one has already gone AWOL, but even the lined cavity left behind could act as a nest...

Weather permitting, Wildlife Watch club plans to go pond dipping in Den Burn this week. It's teeming with sticklebacks, so should be fun."

"The children of Crail Primary Wildlife Watch after-school club have enjoyed Denburn Wood over the last year. We've done bird spotting sheets, had a nature treasure hunt for signs of spring (catkins, frogspawn, water crickets, etc.), pond dipped (catching, in order of descending abundance, pond snails, 3-spined sticklebacks, caddis fly larvae, freshwater shrimps, ramshorn snails, water crickets, midge larvae and stonefly larvae), done mini-beast trapping (pitfall trapping, (gently!) beating hazel bushes onto sheets, sieving soil and crawling insect traps), autumn leaf identification and collection for making window hangings, a sensory nature trail (where we looked at, touched and sniffed wildlife and thought of ways to describe it, including speed writing mini-poems) and installed bumblebee nest holes (from inverted clay pots lined with dried moss, grass and horsehair- no occupation yet but we did see buff-tailed bumblebees, early bumblebees and common carder bees prospecting in Denburn Wood)."

(It is very good news that Denburn Wood is being used to such good purpose. Well done Sue and also all the volunteers who have made it such a resource. Editor)

## **Planning**

### **Stewart Milne Homes**

In February of this year Stewart Milne Homes applied for permission to erect 62 terraced houses at the site adjacent to Caraille Green.

The houses are to be built under the National Housing Trust (NHT) Initiative for the Delivery of Affordable Housing. Stewart Milne have stated that there is no market for private housing in Crail and that they have gone down the route of building affordable homes in order to complete the development of the site.

Local residents are very unhappy that 62 affordable homes are being proposed when the original intention was to build a further 32 homes which were to be a mixture of villas, semi-detached and terraced houses.

The main objections to the proposals are:

- Large increase in number of houses
- Large increase in traffic and car parking provision
- Parking provision poorly distributed
- Reduction in open space and the provision of tiny gardens
- Likely increase in social problems
- Quality of design not to the same standard as the existing housing
- The development is contrary to Scottish Planning Policy (SSP) 2010 which states that:
  - the need for affordable housing should be met in the housing market area where it arises, and
  - the housing tenure should not be discernible from its design, quality or appearance

CPS is not opposed to the provision of affordable homes and sees some provision as necessary to the future wellbeing of Crail, however, we believe the development proposed goes well beyond any local need and does not comply with a number of key planning policy documents. A detailed objection letter has been sent to the Planning authority.

There have been more than 80 objections to the Stewart Milne proposals and the Planners have requested that Stewart Milne agree to an extension to the two month statutory period to determine the application; Stewart Milne have agreed and the application will be determined by the 14 August 2013.

## **FIFEplan**

Fife Council Planning Committee agreed in 2011 to prepare a single Local Development Plan for Fife (FIFEplan), replacing the current Mid Fife Local Plan, St Andrews & East Fife Local Plan and Dunfermline & West Fife Local Plan, all adopted in 2012.

This Plan will implement the Strategic Development Plans 'SESplan' and 'TAYplan', and provide a Fife-wide spatial strategy with policies and proposals for Fife's settlements. It will guide development over a 10 year period, and will be reviewed and updated every 5 years.

Consultation closed on the 10 March 2013 and the document proposed two large housing sites for Crail in addition to those already included in the Local Plan; these sites are located to the north and south of Anstruther Road at the western approach into Crail.

HD

## **Doocot**

'As many will know, the Doocot project had been on hold pending the possible transfer of a small area of land belonging to Mrs. Wilkinson. This got delayed due to the sale of the property. However, the new owner has in turn very willingly recently agreed to this gift of the area of land and the respective Solicitors are doing what is necessary. Whilst the proposals for the restoration of the Doocot have been finalised for some time (although not the proposed visitor centre aspect), the next stage which is the application for grant aid has been unavoidably held up as an essential to any such application is proof of ownership. The

committee hopes that we can again get under way in the not too distant future and that the next newsletter will have something more definite to report.

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## **Dates For Your Diary**

### **Collectables Auction**

As part of our fundraising efforts for this year, we are having another collectables auction. We held one 2 years ago and this was financially successful and much enjoyed by all.

The date for your diary is **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2013 at 7pm in the Community Hall.**

We will be auctioning around 100 lots.

We are looking for good quality items to auction. So if you have any

- Paintings
- Glass
- Jewellery
- Gold or silver items
- Smaller items of furniture
- Golf Clubs
- Collections of items

Indeed anything of good quality that others will wish to buy in our auction then please contact

David Jerdan, 44 Marketgate South. Phone 01333 450797 or email [david.jerdan@gmail.com](mailto:david.jerdan@gmail.com)

**Denburn Wood** volunteers for work party - 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month.

6<sup>th</sup> July, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 7<sup>th</sup> September and 5<sup>th</sup> October: 10am

If any one wishes to submit an item, photograph, or to suggest an idea for an item, for the next Newsletter in the Autumn of 2013, please get in touch with the editor.

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