

# Elkstone Newsletter

25th Year: No. 9 (297)

June 2012

## Editor's Bit

Spring/Summer is a time for your editor to test ride his ancient motor cycles on the byways of Gloucestershire. The pleasure comes, not only from having an eighty-year-old machine running well, but also from observing the increase of goldfinches flying around the hedgerows. There are also more chances to see buzzards, red kites and other predatory species in the sky. May this be down to the less frequent hedge cutting?

*Reg – 22<sup>nd</sup> May*

Features	
Church Service Times Nature Notes Community Speedwatch	News from the Parish Council Diamond Jubilee Big Tea
Dates for your Diary	
ERG Walk for June - <b>Cancelled</b>	
Diamond Jubilee Big Tea – Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> June – 3.00 – 6.00 pm	
Regular Dates	
Waste & recycling	Food and garden waste - Fridays
Waste & recycling	All bags, bins and boxes – Fridays 8 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Watercolour Painting	Every Tuesday - Village Hall - 10am – <i>Yvette Levick 870485</i>
Indoor Bowls	Every Tuesday - Village Hall – <i>Trevor - 870246</i>
Deadline for next month's edition: <b>Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June</b> please	
The Elkstone web-site has current and past copies of the Newsletter – <a href="http://www.elkstonevillage.com">www.elkstonevillage.com</a>	
<b>Reg Eyre – High Beech – 870375 – <a href="mailto:reg.eyre@tesco.net">reg.eyre@tesco.net</a></b>	

## Services at Elkstone Church during June are as follows:

June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	2.00pm	Wedding
June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	9.30am	Holy Communion
June 7 <sup>th</sup>	12.30pm	Wedding
June 10 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Family Service
June 17 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Morning Prayer
June 23 <sup>rd</sup>	1.30pm	Wedding
June 24 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Songs of Praise

**ERG Walk** – the June walk will not take place.

There will, however, be a walk in August, date to be confirmed later.

### **Nature Notes**

At the end of April, on one of the few warm sunny days, there were clouds of swallows and other small birds at David Tellings's barn. He told me that there were lots of nests in his barn, so they had made a good choice of nest site in view of the weather we have had.

A recent radio programme was telling of two life styles; the reindeer herders living in yurts and the oil workers nearby, both on the borders of the arctic circle. They were doing very different jobs and living quite different lifestyles. The reindeer herders were very happy, and not intending to change their lifestyles, whereas the oil workers demanded a lot of comfort just to earn big wages for a short time. It was interesting to hear that snow mobiles had been found useful for herding the reindeer in the ice and snow – a fascinating glimpse of nature on the edge of the arctic circle!

*Jessie*

### **Did you see Jessie's article and photo in the May edition of Cotswold Life?**

And co-incidentally, another Elkstonian was pictured a few pages later! - *Ed*

### **Community Speedwatch**

Three Elkstonians were to be seen on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of May using the Community Speedwatch scheme's warning signs and speed gun. The first date was a training day with the Police in attendance, the others were without Police back-up.

We can report that that very few passed our position at very much over the 40mph limit.

All motorists slowed down and therefore our presence appeared to have a calming effect.

If we had some more volunteers, it might be useful to 'man' the telephone junction for all five mornings and late afternoons in a week. Would you like to join us for a session or more?

*Reg*

### **Another view**

Last Thursday three intrepid parishioners carried out the first Community Speedwatch in Gloucestershire. Under the watchful eye of our local police, Mike, Reg and Martyn positioned themselves at the Westerleigh crossroads. With the aid of bright yellow jackets, a radar speed recorder and an invaluable garden broom (to support the heavy camera) the speed of traffic was recorded as it travelled north towards the Green Dragon. The objective of the exercise was to slow the traffic and to show motorists that we care about the speed at which they travel through our parish. These objectives were met, with cars slowing markedly as they saw the jackets and the camera. The exercise was repeated on Friday evening and again on Monday morning. Around a dozen drivers were reported to the police and will receive warning letters. With six villagers accredited by the police to carry out this work we will repeat the Speedwatch several times in the next few months.

*Martyn*

### **News from the Parish Council - Road safety on 3/190**

For those of you who do not know my background, I am a Chartered Civil and Highway Engineer with 45 years professional experience of highways. For the last 15 years I have been running my own consultancy, principally as an expert witness, and for 10 of those years I was also a Senior Planning Inspector, taking public inquiries into highway schemes. My fellow Parish Councillors have asked me, therefore, to provide the latest position on this issue through the Newsletter. Ten parishioners responded to Lois's request for views prior to our meeting with Gloucestershire Highways on 4th May, and I am writing in response to each of them individually to give more details about the particular points which they raised.

The safety of the road has been a matter of concern since shortly after the opening of the A417 as a privately designed, built, funded and operated dual carriageway trunk road in about 1996, with the income paid by the Government to the builder/operator based on the actual traffic flow ("shadow tolls"). An undertaking given to the then Parish Council at the Public Inquiry into the scheme, that any problem from increased traffic along 3/190 would be dealt with, was not formalised as a commitment to be triggered by pre-defined circumstances, and so has proved worthless in practice.

However, following false starts, a scheme to reduce the carriageway to a single-track with passing bays was mooted in June 2003, but at the unaffordable cost of over £220,000. To be brief, two Engineers from the County and I met in October 2003 to produce a similar scheme but using low-cost materials (including timber railway sleepers used successfully in Kent instead of kerbs, maintaining a more rural appearance) and other more basic techniques, to match an allocation won from GCC of £40,000. This foundered because a safety audit falsely expected it to comply with trunk road layout standards. Thus we were provided in 2008 with the 40mph limit and the road markings at each end.

At this stage, I must make what is always a difficult and unpopular point: priority for public spending on the highway work will always be largely driven by the actual collision record. As far as we are aware, the only injury collision in recent years has arisen from a loss of control alleged to be due to excess speed, and involved a single vehicle. With always-limited funds, how can our problem be prioritised above sites with a real and ongoing record of people being hurt or killed?

The Parish Council met Gloucestershire Highways (GH) staff on 4th May to review the possibilities for further improvements. We measured the visibility distance to the left for drivers emerging from the village street to be: 53 metres at the Westerleigh Crossroads, and so just 3m below the current required standard for a speed limit of 40 mph on the through road; and 62 metres at the Manor Crossroads, and thus in excess of the standard.

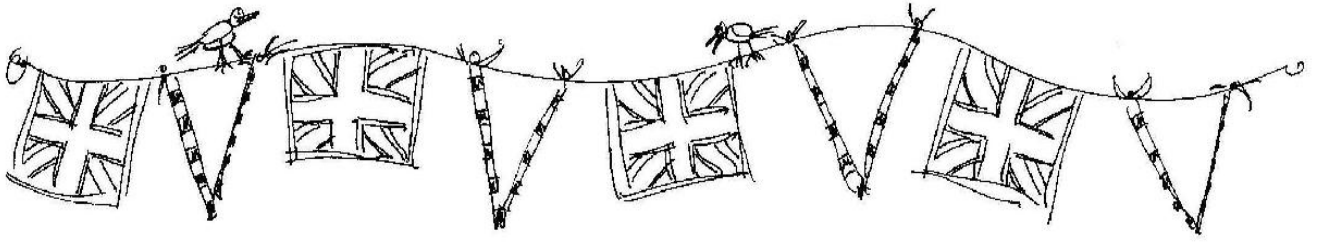
GH joined us in welcoming the Speedwatch initiative and hoping that it will encourage compliance with the speed limit.

GH no longer installs mirrors in the highway. If one were to be placed at the Westerleigh Crossroads, it would have to be on private land and against the clearly-stated and reasoned advice of the highway authority. I can certainly envisage scenarios, such as at night and following vandalism or when covered with ice, where a driver could wrongly rely on the lack of reflected headlights as an indication that it is safe to proceed. Having very recently had my expert opinion tested under rigorous cross-examination, and upheld by the High Court judge in making a multi-million pound award against an authority, which implemented a decision made against technical advice, I would strongly resist any action by the Parish Council to do likewise.

However, GH agreed to enhance the signage on the approach to the Westerleigh Crossroads from the A417 direction (yellow backing, change to show staggered junction, add distance plate, possibly duplicate on opposite verge, add SLOW marking to carriageway). Visibility for those exiting from Ivy Cottage Farm appears to be restricted by a hedge overhanging the highway verge, whose private owner will be contacted by GH.

The road does not meet the criteria for a speed limit of less than 40mph. Speed humps have to be lit and cannot legally be installed in a carriageway with a limit of 40mph without special permission from the Secretary of State, who would certainly expect justification in terms of a significant collision record.

*Robert Luck (for Elkstone Parish Council)*



## **“Diamond Jubilee Big Tea”**

Elkstone Village Green and Village Hall  
3pm to 6pm - Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012

Time is nearly on us for all the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations and the long Bank Holiday Weekend.

It's not too late to phone if you'd like to come to the Tea Party on the Monday afternoon. The tables will all look very patriotic and hopefully some suitably decorated cakes. Weather permitting we'll be able to have the tea on the Village Green under the trees and Bunting. I've got my red, white and blue to wear – so feel free to dress for the occasion. There'll be special little prizes for any children who come dressed in a Jubilee theme.

You may like to wear (or bring) suitable footwear as there will be rounders on Lindy and Trevor's lawn and other old-fashioned games on the Village Green.

We have a Celebration Cake and Bubbly to toast the Queen in the Hall. The new Projection Screen is up and running and will feature a short film of the Queen's Coronation.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Carole - 870493 - [carolebury@hotmail.com](mailto:carolebury@hotmail.com) - 2 Hill View

This invitation is open to everyone who lives in the Parish of Elkstone and their guests

