

Elkstone Newsletter

28th Year: No. 8 (308)

May 2013

Editor's Bit

Spring has sprung and I hope you are enjoying the dry and (sometimes) warm weather. Soon we shall hear the gentle humming of lawnmowers, and watch the wispy plumes of smoke arising from garden waste fires.

Some people are still suffering from the winter lurgie and can be heard wheezing and coughing. Jessie is still in hospital in Cheltenham having had an operation – Get well soon Jessie – You are missed.

Reg – 22nd April

| Features | |
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| Services at Elkstone Church | What is a Soroptimist? |
| Gardens Open Day | Notes for future diary dates |
| Parish Council News | Advertisements |
| Nature Notes | Open Day poster |
| TREC coming to Elkstone | |
| Dates for your Diary | |
| GCC election – voting day – 2 nd May – Village Hall – 7.00am to 10.00pm | |
| Possible ERG Walk 11 th May, May ERG Walk on 18 th May | |
| Parish Council AGM – 22 nd May | |
| Gardens Open Day – Sunday 9 th June | |
| Regular Dates | |
| Waste & recycling | Food + garden waste - Fridays |
| Waste & recycling | All bags, bins and boxes – Fridays 10 th and 24 th May |
| 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: Monday 20th May please | |
| The Elkstone web-site has current and past copies of the Newsletter – www.elkstonevillage.com | |
| <i>Reg Eyre – High Beech – 870375 – reg.eyre@tesco.net</i> | |

Church Services in Elkstone for April

May 5th 9.30am Holy Communion

May 12th 10.00am Family Service

May 19th 11.00am Morning Prayer

May 26th 10 00am Songs of Praise – Trinity Sunday

Advance notice for June, is that there is no Church service on Open Gardens Day, and the joint Benefice service on 30 June is at Coberley at 10am and there is no service at Elkstone.

David Pierce

ERG Walks

On 20th April, a small but select band of ERGers finally enjoyed our March walk!

We might have two walks in May – Robin & Joan are hoping to find a bluebell circuit for the 11th, and Sharon is scheduled to lead us on the 18th. Details will follow by e-mail – please contact me if you would like to walk with us but are not yet on the contact list.

Lois - 870375

Gardens Open Day - 9th June

I will be doing the bookstall on the day with help from Lye and Lois so all books/magazines/DVD's and bric a brac can be brought to my garage anytime after 2nd May so please look around and see what you can donate - all in a good cause. Anything that does

not sell on the day will be taken down to the charity shop.

David & Sue Collins will be doing plants so they will be taking those.

To everyone who is opening their garden let's hope we have some good weather before and on the day. I have produced a flyer with this newsletter. Please can you put it up on your notice boards or anywhere that will get the message across to people.

Tess - 870480 - 0791 766 1457

News from the Parish Council

On Thursday 2nd May, there will be an election for County Councillors. The divisions have been re-organised, which will result in fewer Councillors.

Shaun Parsons has been our County Councillor for a number of years, but he is standing in the new division of South Cerney, which covers a large area of the Cotswolds to the south east of the Fosse Way and Cirencester.

Elkstone is one of twelve rural parishes in the new division of Cirencester Beeches, so we will have a new County Councillor after this election.

The Parish Council has received a newsletter from Western Power Distribution, which owns and operates the electricity distribution network for our area.

WPD is concerned to improve the service and reduce the number of power cuts. Tips are offered on being prepared for a power cut:

- Keep a battery-powered torch handy
- Protect sensitive equipment with a surge protector plug
- Remember only an analogue phone will work during a power cut

And if you do experience a power cut:

- Check your trip switches
- Check with your neighbours to see if they are affected
- Turn off any electrical equipment which could get hot when power is restored
- Keep your freezer shut
- Stay away from any fallen overhead cables
- Call WPD to report the outage on 0800 365 900 or 0800 328 111

If you are vulnerable – reliant on electricity for medical reasons, partially sighted, hearing-impaired, disabled, elderly or very ill – you can join WPD's priority service register – phone 0845 724 0240 for further information.

Guide Dogs for the Blind is looking for volunteers to become 'Guide Dog Mums' – fostering a breeding bitch who will produce puppies intended for GD training. Volunteers are promised lots of training, support and joy!

Please contact me for further information.

Lois - 870375

Neighbourhood Watch News

Please watch out for 2 scams currently operating:

Cotswold District Council is aware that at least two men have been making phone calls to local residents, advising them that their Council Tax bands may be too high. For a fee, they offer to work on behalf of the residents to obtain a reduction. The pattern of calls suggests they could be working their way through the local telephone directory. Despite what these callers may suggest, there are very few circumstances in which appeals against Council Tax banding would be successful. However, anyone wishing to appeal against their banding can do this themselves very easily by contacting the District Valuation Office on 03000 505 150. It is not a complicated procedure and there is no requirement whatsoever for a third party to intervene. We are aware that some private companies have been claiming that the Valuation Office makes a charge for a reassessment, but this is untrue. Some companies have also been saying that you need an agent to act on your behalf and this is also untrue. We would advise residents against doing business with these people.

The second scam is an email purporting to be from HM Customs & Excise advising you of a

tax overpayment and that in order to process the refund, you need to click on the email link, as it says you can now claim your refund on line. Whilst this email does look like an official email, the tax office would NEVER advise you via email of a refund and you **cannot** claim on line.

Finally, please also be aware of a rug seller in the area selling door to door as he has no license to do so and therefore we do not know if he is part of another scam. Please do not buy from him or anyone who cannot produce the required Pedlar's License to sell door to door and report as soon as possible to the Police on 101, so that they can follow up if necessary.

Julia Davey

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator

Nature Notes

An April evening listening for owls in sub-zero temperatures may not seem an occasion with immediate attraction. However, Jane Blunden was hospitality itself, providing books, DVD, tape and hot drinks before we ventured into the woods, walking through several inches of snow in a biting wind. Once we had disciplined ourselves to forget frozen fingers, we were able to appreciate the magic of the forest at night under the snow. We walked through the grounds of a delightful toll house where a tiny owl had been nursed back to health and became the subject of a children's book; we saw red banners eerily blowing in the trees, caught by the light of torches, a vivid splash of colour against the white under foot and the dark of bark; and had a wonderful bonfire in the middle of a snowy glade, orange-red flames piercing the shadows, with the heat touching our faces and warming our hands as we listened for the owls.

A Norwegian night in the Cotswolds – pure enchantment!

Barbara

Community Speed Watch

Friday afternoon saw a happy band monitoring traffic flow and speeds as traffic uses the Queen's highway (country lane) as a rat-run. Three of us were stationed by the 'phone box' (sic) and used Police issued radar to monitor traffic speeds. We report any vehicle travelling at over 43 mph to the Police. We witnessed 2 overtaking manoeuvres by Ivy Farm but did not have a repeat of the cars traveling at 57 mph on Monday.

Thank you to all villagers for the cheery waves. We really must keep this up – walking from Manor Cross to the 'phone box was an experience to remember (if you survive): one car actually gesticulated because I would not jump off the edge of the road into the hedge. Next time, it might be your child or grandchild.

Full marks to the volunteers who work on Speed Watch. It is quite clear that the Speed Watch (even a hi-vis jacket) has a very significant effect.

Please come forward to help Reg and our village – it's quite good fun. *Nic Williamson*



Elkstone Community Speedwatch needs you!

We already have a small band of volunteers but with some extra trained people we could mount a full week's campaign. Essentially, if more motorists blatantly exceeded the speed limit of 40mph, by say 18mph, the two crossroads out of the village would be even more dangerous. Please let me know if you would like to volunteer for training.

Reg Eyre – 870375 – reg.eyre@tesco.net

TREC is coming to Elkstone!

Techniques de Randonnee Equestre de Competition (= pony-trekking/trail-riding techniques competition) is a sport developed in France post-war, based on the qualifying tests a trail-ride leader had to pass before being allowed to lead rides.

TREC arrived in this country in the early 1990s, and is still a niche sport, though we have National Championships, and there are European and World Championships too.

Lakin and I discovered TREC rather late in our competitive career, but having completed and been placed in a number of TRECs, I have moved on to organising on behalf of the British Horse Society's Gloucestershire county committee.

Most riders who try TREC get hooked – you don't have to go fast, or jump huge jumps, so it suits a wide variety of riders, including juniors, from the grass-roots recreational rider to the ambitious competitor, and a wide variety of horses and ponies too.

TREC has three phases, the long map reading ride (POR), the Control of Paces (CoP), and the obstacle course (PTV); and five levels of difficulty, from 1 up to Championship.

For the POR, competitors can ride as individuals or in pairs. They are given a set amount of time (10 minutes at Level 1) to copy the route from the master map, then set off at 5 minute intervals, trying to average given set speeds between checkpoints – but they don't know where any checkpoint will be until they arrive at it. At Level 1, the route is about 6 to 8 miles long, and usually follows quiet lanes and public rights of ways, so it requires only basic map reading skills. For each Level, the length of the ride increases by about 10 kms, and from Level 3 upwards, riders have to navigate using grid references and bearings as well as a map. Riders are timed between checkpoints, and lose a point (from a starting total of 240) for each minute that they arrive early or late – so it's not entirely unknown for riders to get horribly lost and end this phase with a minus score.

Control of Paces is timed, and requires each rider to canter very slowly along a marked corridor (up to 150 metres long, and 3 metres wide) and walk back very quickly.

The third phase is the timed obstacle course or PTV (Parcours en Terrain Varie) – it's like Handy Pony meets mini Hunter Trial, with a course of 16 obstacles, chosen from a list of 40, such as might have to be negotiated on a long ride – a gate, a ford, a fallen tree, low branches, a narrow gap... Up to three of the obstacles can be small jumps, some of the obstacles have to be negotiated in walk, and some with the horse in-hand. Riders score up to 10 points for Effectiveness and Style at each obstacle they attempt, and they can opt to leave out any obstacle they don't like the look of.

Weather permitting, our TREC this year will be based in Elkstone, with hopefully up to 60 riders, from all over England and Wales, out on the POR on the morning of Saturday 13th July, using local lanes, byways and bridleways, and we also have permission to use some footpaths and private tracks.

Please contact me if you are e.g. a dog-walker concerned to avoid our riders.

Later on Saturday, riders will be enjoying a social evening and supper in our Village Hall – with catering very kindly provided by a number of local volunteers co-ordinated by Jennie; and on Sunday morning, our Level 2 riders will be tackling the CoP and PTV.

Could you help us, please?

- I need to borrow two tents, or a small garden tent and a gazebo with sides
- Also, TRECs need a small army of helpers – please let me know if you are the driver of a 4WD willing to help on a Checkpoint on Saturday morning, or if you could help with stewarding or judging for a few hours on Saturday or Sunday morning – nothing complicated, full instructions, a picnic lunch and (hopefully) good fun provided!

Lois – 870375

Stop Press

It is with great regret that we have to report the death of Jessie Hindson on 24th April.

What Is a Soroptimist?

I am a Soroptimist and when on occasion I have mentioned this to villagers I get the response 'A what?' As this is such a wide ranging organisation, but one that is not widely known, I hope that Mr Editor might spare me a few lines to bring the organisation to your notice. This will also save me having to answer the question repeatedly!

Soroptimist International is a global organisation for women who care about issues that affect women and children and who want to make a difference. Every member of Soroptimist International belongs to a Club, somewhere in the world, through which they can take part in organised Programme Activities, including service and practical help for local causes, lobbying government at all levels for change and increasing their awareness of International issues. We have connection with the United Nations through membership of the ECOSOC committee, as a non-governmental organisation (NGO).

I belong to the Cirencester club, which is very sociable with approximately 30 members from a range of backgrounds. We are a very active group with members who have a range of different skills, which, as we work together, enables us to focus on issues that affect women and girls locally and in other parts of the world.

Locally members have helped with a range of projects and fundraising events. These include providing essential items at a local women's refuge, supporting the running of a Nature Quiz in Primary Schools, setting up a Club for Deaf Children, running and developing a School Literacy Competition, developing links with the local Guiding movement. In addition, club members have organised a swimathon, which raised funds for a local children's charity, table top sales and other fund raising events to raise money for local and international charities, together with great social occasions which are always enjoyed by all.

If you want to know more about the organisation or indeed would be interested in joining us I would be happy to talk to you or you can visit our local website at <http://sigbi.org/cirencester/> Thank you for reading this and I hope that may feel able to support us in our future local efforts.

Anne Davies - 870516

Advertisements

Shirley Chester is about to move to Leckhampton. This has meant reviewing furniture, which is no longer needed. I have a Hostess Trolley and a large Stag wardrobe, which packs flat which I would be delighted to find a new home if anyone is interested. I also have a pressure cooker and computer desk to add to the other items.

A small donation to my charity box would be most acceptable but not essential.

Shirley Chester - sachester@btinternet.com

Shop online and give to a local charity

Many of us buy on line these days, whether from Amazon, John Lewis, Currys, PCWorld, Harrods, Marks and Spencer or other retailers. But did you know that a donation to a charity of your choice would be made if you buy from selected retailers? Even if you buy from Amazon which doesn't seem to like to pay too much tax in the UK (as an accountant, I can obviously not comment on their tax strategies!) How?

First you register with The Giving Machine, www.thegivingmachine.co.uk and nominate a charity you want to support. From then on all you have to do when you want to buy something online from one of the registered retailers, is to go to The Giving Machine website and then connect to the retailer from The Giving Machine website, and order from the retailer in the normal way.

What happens is the retailer pays The Giving Machine an introductory commission for directing people to them. The Giving Machine is a non-profit making social enterprise and converts the commission into donations to charities. It has over 400 registered retailers and most of the major retailers are listed. Go to the website and have a look.

Our church is a registered charity on The Giving Machine, so if you select St John the

Evangelist, Elkstone as your charity, it receives donations as a result of purchases made through the site. Last year we received about £150 from The Giving Machine as a result of online purchases by supporters.

Coberley Primary School is also registered. You can choose just one charity to support, or up to four charities, and if more than one, decide on the proportions to be allocated to each.

Why not support a charity when you buy online.

David Pierce

Date(s) for your diary

Coberley C of E School Summer Fayre will take place on Saturday 29th June from 12.00 – 3.00pm. Free entry and everyone welcome.

Coberley School is Collecting Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers

Coberley School is trying to collect as many Sainsbury's Active Kids vouchers as possible, as they can be used to buy new sports equipment for the school. If you have any vouchers that you would like the school to have, please pop them through the letterbox at the Old School House, next to the Village Hall, and I'll ensure they get to the school. I'm not sure if Tesco have also restarted their voucher scheme, but as soon as they do, the school will also be collecting those. Thank you so much to those people who are already dropping off vouchers through our letterbox at the Old School House. These are really welcomed by Coberley C of E School and buy much needed sports equipment. Please keep them coming!

Many thanks for your help and support for this local school.

Julia Davey

Advance Notice - July 13th 2013

The Green Dragon Quartet will again be giving a concert in Elkstone Church on Saturday July 13th at 7.30pm. More details will be in the next newsletter.

David Pierce

Summer Holiday Project

Calling all **Actors and Actresses** aged **8 years -18years**

'Actiontrack' are pleased to be coming to Duntisbourne Leer, Gloucestershire, to lead one of our ever-popular 5 day creative SHOWBUILD projects – in which we create an original show from start to finish over the course of one week. Using as a starting point the participants' ideas and talents we work together to devise a script, create original music, then make and rehearse a unique performance.

Dates August 5th - 9th

Performance Friday 9th August 7.30pm

Cost: £90.00 for the week

Venue. *Duntisbourne Leer Farm Barn*

Please note that support is available for families in receipt of Council Tax benefit.

Applicants who would like to apply for help with the cost please contact Councillor Nicholas Parsons by email at Cotswold District Council. nicholas.parsons@cotswold.gov.uk


To find out more please don't hesitate to contact **Actiontrack on 07785 564 092** - and to book your

place, please send an email to cind.actiontrack@btconnect.com

Booking is open until **31st May 2013** and places will be allocated on a **first come first served basis**.

Further information from:

Jane Edwards Duntisbourne Leer - jre2@btinternet.com

A decorative border with a repeating pattern of stylized green leaves and colorful flowers (red, yellow, purple) surrounds the text.

ELKSTONE VILLAGE GARDENS OPEN DAY

Our 21st year!

Sunday 9th JUNE 2013
2.00pm - 6.00pm

Ten Open Gardens
Norman Church & Bell Tower Visits
Tractor Rides
Cream & Traditional Teas
Local Art Exhibition & Items for Sale
Stalls: Plants, White Elephant,
Books.

ADULTS: £4.00 CHILDREN: FREE
FREE CAR PARKING

Elkstone lies midway between Cheltenham and
Cirencester just off the A435 or A417

All proceeds in aid of the Church and Village Hall

No dogs please

www.elkstonevillage.com