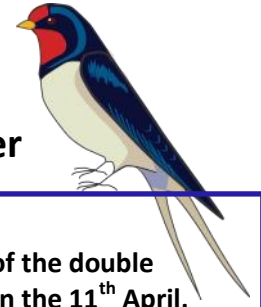




May 2026 Elkstonians' Village Newsletter



Margaret's Meanderings...

Many thanks to Jane for this photo of the double rainbow, taken up near Cave Farm on the 11th April, after a seasonal April shower. We have certainly enjoyed better weather this Spring than we did 10 years ago. While digging into my Picture Archive for April 2016, I unearthed this one taken on the 29th of that month from my bedroom window when I opened the curtains...



Steak Night—Ten Elkstonians enjoyed the Reform Inn's great Steak Night food on the 16th April, and can heartily recommend the venue.

June Walk

Our next Elkstonians' get together will be on Friday 5th June, when we are planning a walk (or gentle stroll !) starting at 6.30pm from a not too distant pub, and maybe finishing up there or at another one for a drink & something to eat. Look out in next month's Newsletter for where the start point will be & where it will finish.

We hope to see you there 😊



Ten years ago we did a similar thing but much more strenuous, when Peter the Dane (formerly of Grove House) led us on a walk from Hartington to Pilsbury, where we enjoyed the hospitality of Pilsbury Grange and were joined by a host of non-walkers! Don't worry, this year's walk will be much shorter... and if you are not feeling very mobile just join us for the pubby bit... Cheers!

St. John's Church:

Sunday 17th May: Holy Communion celebrated by Rev. Patrick Griffin
Cleaning and flowers for May: Elizabeth Buxton

Flower Festival Coming Up! – Friday June 19th to Sunday June 21st



Eight people got together on the 23rd April to discuss the forthcoming Flower Festival, which is St. John's Church's major fund-raiser for the year, to help to pay for the costs involved in keeping the church open, heated & in repair. We eventually came up with the theme of The Knightage, so the flower arrangements will be based around any part of the life or career of anyone who has been knighted, ie entitled to call themselves Sir or Dame. There is lots of scope to choose someone from the past or someone still living, so if you will be prepared to do an arrangement, please ring 01538 304225 and let Myrtle know as soon as possible who your subject will be, so that you can be included in the programme. Those present at the meeting came up with lots of Sirs but not a lot of Dames, so it would be good to even things up a bit if you can. I just thought of Dame Edna Everage, but then realized that this would still be a bloke, and not even British, and her honours were self-acclaimed rather than bestowed by the Monarch, so that one's excluded! I think she'd liven things up in the House of Lords though... In addition, if you can provide some cakes for the refreshments, and/or volunteer to serve in twos on the Refreshment Rota, please let Myrtle know as soon as possible so that we can work out a Schedule. The slots currently vacant are Friday 10.30 – 1.30, 1.30 – 5pm / a 2nd person for Saturday 1.30 – 5 p.m./ Sunday 10.30 – 1.30. We will also need offers of Raffle Prizes and Tombola Prizes and people to take a turn at looking after the Tombola. Hazel Bailey is collecting things for the Tombola and is currently very short of items, so please let her know if you can supply some suitable items (01538 304303). Thank you in anticipation.



Feeding the Birds (or not) ...

While it's always a good thing to feed your garden birds to help them survive the winter, a lot of people, like me, keep on feeding all through the summer too, simply because they enjoy watching their comings & goings, and like to see which birds are sharing our neighbourhood. The RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) is now asking for people to stop feeding garden birds between the 1st May & the 31st October each year, because the disease *Trichomonosis* is killing many of the finches, especially greenfinches, but also goldfinches, bull finches & chaffinches which gather at garden bird tables. It is an unpleasant parasite which lodges in the bird's throat. It flourishes in warm weather & breeds around dirty feeders, and places where infected bird food is dropped on the ground. The affected birds are unable to swallow, so appear to be choking on the seeds. If you see a bird which seems to be frothing seed from its beak & has its feathers all fluffed up, this is a sick bird infected with this disease. It is horrible to watch the bird suffer in this way—it will eventually starve to death. The RSPB is not asking you to give up feeding entirely, but only to stop putting out seeds & peanuts until winter. These are finches' favourite foods, so these birds will soon become discouraged from gathering at summer bird tables. It is OK to put out meal worms, suet pellets & fatballs, as finches don't eat these types of food, and you will still get all the other garden birds coming. Having said that, unless you can keep your feeders clean (they should be thoroughly cleaned weekly), and unless you use hanging feeders instead of flat bird tables, and keep moving the feeders to different areas of your garden, it is better not to feed at all during the summer.



More information & advice can be found at
www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/news/how-to-help-garden-birds

And now
over to Zac 😊

Think Bike

Now the weather is getting better, more cyclists and motorbikes take to our roads, particularly the rural roads in and around our village. The “Think Bike” campaign raises awareness and helps bikers and drivers to be more aware of each other. Many crashes happen because riders just weren’t seen, so take extra care to look out for vulnerable road users, including cyclists, motorcyclists, horse riders and pedestrians. See resources and advice at

www.think.gov.uk and www.safedrivingforlife.info/blog/



Encouraging Pollinators to Our Gardens

No Mow May is a national campaign trying to encourage people to not cut their lawns to help tackle the decline in pollinating insects. It allows wildflowers such as daisies, clover, and buttercups to bloom which provide nectar and pollen for bees & butterflies that are emerging after winter.

If you’d like to support pollinators beyond May, here are a few easy ideas:

- 🌸 Plant nectar-rich flowers like lavender and foxgloves.
- 🌸 Leave a “wild corner” in your garden for insects.
- 🌸 Provide shallow water dishes with pebbles for bees to drink safely.

Recipe Corner – A Little Inspiration for Your Picnic Basket

Recipes are handed down through generations and this recipe was a favourite of my Grandma’s. In our family, we call them Auntie Nancy Biscuits, but they are oat biscuits that are very simple to make. If you have a favourite recipe you’d love to share in a future issue, then please send them in!

Auntie Nancy Biscuits

4ozs Butter, 3ozs Sugar, 1 Tbsp Syrup & 1 Tsp Bicarb. Melt in a pan, then add 4ozs Rolled Oats and 4ozs Plain Flour.

Mix together, roll into balls and space on a greased baking tray. Bake in a slow oven (160degrees C) until golden, between 8 to 10 minutes.

