

Summer - the bountiful colour of a wild flower meadow, the hum of bees and holiday postcards home - the Elevate artists find words and images to delight and inspire you.



elevate **your mood**

bringing colour and inspiration to you

Issue No.11

Enjoying summer wildness

Hannah Lefevre writes from her off-grid small holding



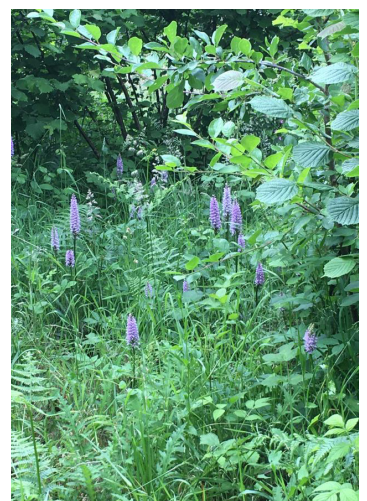
It is officially British summer, and although the weather conditions on many days throughout June felt otherwise, we can celebrate the long days that bestow this time of year. Much of the annual produce has caught up and the vegetable patches are once again in full bloom. Fresh strawberries are producing plenty of fruit and the ornamental flowers, though late, are arriving. I have begun to dry flowers and herbs for winter stores. Lavender, marigold, rose, yarrow, bay and feverfew adorn the ceilings. Meanwhile, whilst many of the soft fruits are slow after the cold spring and several fruit trees have suffered, the wilder areas of the site are thriving.

Our wild flower meadow is into its third month of yielding bountiful colour and spectacle. Foxgloves have lined the full lengths of the field and a second wave of orchids are densely packed amongst young saplings. Yellow rattle, a key grass-suppressing component of wild flower meadows, has taken and is spreading.

The meadow project, previously an abandoned slope, full of bracken, bramble and nettle, began with

copious amounts of scything and the installation of a rope swing, at the top of the slope, over two years ago. Somehow, the swing changed our relationship with the field, as it became a place of leisure, not only work. The top of the slope now has several swings, a rope ladder, a willow-fenced den and steps up to a viewing point across the valley. Curvaceous paths have been scythed to lead to these key features and the bramble and bracken are waning.

The off-grid lifestyle can create a work-sink, a never-ending list of jobs and projects, but we have learnt that leisure is vital in sustaining this existence and in this instance, I enjoy a few minutes of perspective, followed by a 'woosh' as the body becomes light, lifts away from the ground and into the air.



Send me a postcard



Summer brings thoughts of holidays past and present, and although the holiday ritual of sending postcards may be dwindling, I still love to receive one. Postcards I have kept, particularly those sent by my grandmother in the 1970's, say so much about the people, places and feelings that were important to her and so, over time, have become important to me.

Postcards are wonderful conversation starters and I often use my collection of old cards (found at seaside bric-à-brac shops) with creative group work. I notice the stamp and postmark first and then the postcard image itself – a photograph that usually shows how we hope a picturesque view or relaxing resort should look. I imagine where the postcard might have been bought, the postcard stand, the shop, the shopkeeper. Even the smell and how

dog-eared it is all add to the memories and stories and make these physical and tangible again.

But it is the familiar layout of a postcard, the space to give news with few words squeezed into short lines, the equal space opposite for address and stamp, and the greetings and sign-offs that capture the human story. And, that someone has taken the trouble to catch the post, that the postcard has travelled between places, handled by different people, possibly by train or airplane as it is delivered, received and read.



Summertime holiday postcards remind us of important people, places and feelings in a way that is almost like poetry says David Davies



Often, a postcard received will be passed around and read several times within a household before being propped on a mantelpiece or pinned on a noticeboard, and perhaps kept as a memento.

Frequently, the words on postcards seem like small poems in the way they capture moments and feelings. I really like this postcard sent in July 1964 concerned about life back at home, alongside the era of milk deliveries:

I have a feeling I may have confused you about the milk? I have asked the milkman (Peter) to deliver two pints on Saturday. ...keep it in your fridge until we return. If you go out before we arrive please put it back outside.

And this one postmarked 5.45AM, Aug 6th 1908, signalling a forthcoming letter, shows how frequently postcards were used, sometimes for very brief messages:

Dear Margaret I am going to write first thing in the morning - Love from all.

Sent from the Scottish borders this postcard marked June 1970 suggests, perhaps, an idea for health and wellbeing:

How lovely it was to get your letter on arrival. Dad says you must bring Michael to the mountains soon.

Often postcards show those at home – family, friends, even pets – that they are not forgotten. I really like this holiday postcard to work colleagues – how everyone back at the office is included:

*Messrs. Freeman, Ross & Paynter, June 1938
Friday ~ Hello Everybody
Hope Nora had a good holiday and that Kathleen has got all the statements out. Trust Beatrice is not snowed under and that Mary had a handkerchief day when saying goodbye. Hope Gordon & Miss Hurst are now settled down to hard work.
Yours sincerely J.V.*

And from Newton Abbot, 21st July 1999, news about the bookshop cat:

Dear Mary, A very importunate cat has been walking back and forth on this bookshop counter grumbling loudly. I can only write this now thanks to the shop lady who has removed him/her.

On the 23rd June 1965, there's news of a holiday gift:

It rained all the time we were in the car, but when we had a picnic, the sun was shining. Then onto Burns cottage where Gordon bought me the Poems & Songs of Robert Burns.

I liked this final postcard message because of all the numbers in it (which I've arranged at the beginning of each line). It also refers to a change in the weather – another British holiday tradition!

*2:15PM September
24th Scarborough
1906 - Thank you for your postcard. I caught 30 fish the day you wrote 1 of which weighed 2 pounds. I have now caught about 100 in 4 catches. You have taken the fine sea weather with you.*

The hum of bees

Stephanie Jalland



'The hum of bees Is the voice of the garden'

Sitting in my garden I can hear their gentle background hum and amidst the flowers see a constant dance of bees.

'In meadows every afternoon, About the time for tea, The flowers listen to the tune, Sung by the bumblebee.'

Christopher Ryan

Bees have been buzzing out there for around 100 million years. There are nearly 20,000 species worldwide and they are all descended from one ancestral species of vegetarian wasp which lived when dinosaurs were still stomping the earth and flowering plants were just beginning to appear.

Bees have four wings, they hook them together to form one big pair when flying and then unhook them when not flying!

Not all bees produce honey: solitary bees - as their name suggests - like to live on their own, and don't have a queen, or live in hives.

Bees live in marshes, shingle, sand dunes, soft cliffs, heathlands, wetlands, chalk grasslands, quarries, gravel pits, sea walls and even post-industrial land. Leafcutter bees construct their homes from thick-stemmed plants, rotted wood and leaves, and masonry bees, can be found inside naturally-occurring holes in bricks and mortar joints!

Bumblebees use their 'smelly footprints' to distinguish between their own scent, the scent of a relative and the scent of a stranger. This means they can improve their success in finding food and avoid flowers that already have been visited.

'How doth the little busy bee Improve each shining hour And gather honey all the day From every opening flower!'

Isaac Watts 1674-1748

If you have online access you could listen to bees
www.youtube.com/watch?v=iiiDT_XoZls

Enjoy Rimsky-Korsakov 'Flight of the Bumblebee'
www.youtube.com/watch?v=X14kC-sEH0I

Take part in a count of pollinators
www.wiltshirewildlife.org/pollinator-count

Learn more about bees
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/05/types-of-bee-in-the-uk/

Contribute your own reflections, a poem or image for our next edition on the theme of summer.

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