



THE STOCKBURY & SOUTH GREEN OBSERVER

April 2021

Parish Council Elections

It has now been confirmed that elections to the Parish Council will go ahead in May alongside the Borough and County Council elections.

Stockbury has 7 Parish Councillors, of whom 3 are standing down this election for personal reasons. As things stand, we may end up with only 4 candidates.

Have you thought of standing?

There are no qualifications required other than an interest in the Parish of Stockbury and the people who live in it. Whether you are the Chief Executive of a multi-national company or unemployed it makes no difference; it is the person that counts.

It does not even take up much of your time if you don't want it to. One meeting a month (currently via Zoom) is the only "requirement" but you may find that you want to do more than that and get involved in more depth with the issues that affect us all. It is your choice.

Unlike many Parish Councils, Stockbury has a bit of a reputation which was summed up by our former Kent County Councillor, Jenny Whittle, as follows:

"Stockbury is my favourite Parish Council. Whilst others complain, Stockbury gets on with it and solves the problem."

If you want to find out more, please get in touch with me or one of the other current Councillors who can tell you what it is really like and (I hope) how satisfying it can be.

If you want to stand for election, your nomination papers need to be with Maidstone Council by 8th April.

The papers and associated guidance are available through our Parish Clerk, Sherrie Babington (stockburypc@sherriebabington.co.uk).

Phil Woods
SPC

Chalky Road Flooding Update

Despite repeated requests by the Parish Council to have this resolved, MBC have done little other than advise that it is caused by a collapsed pipe.

Consequently a keen local conservationist is therefore considering approaching The Kent Wildlife Trust with a proposal to extend the Stockbury Hill Wood nature reserve to include the flooded area of Chalky Road, as studies have shown that this would make an ideal enclosure for rearing pygmy rhinos.

A local gardener is very keen on the idea of having a nutrient rich supply of manure on his doorstep as it is ideal for growing giant vegetables. Mike and Edo have also expressed an interest as the manure is also an excellent fertiliser for the alberi di spaghetti which they are planning to plant in the pub garden.

The idea will be presented and discussed at the next Parish Council Meeting scheduled for the 21st April. Anybody who would like information as to how to participate in the meeting should contact the Parish Clerk for details of the Zoom meeting (see back page for contact details).

AFJ
Stockbury

Much Appreciated

After our impassioned plea for more participation from the village residents in last month's Observer, I just want to say a massive thank you to all of you that have taken the time and trouble to send me your stories and articles for inclusion.

Although I have too many to publish in this edition, they will all be included in future months. That said, please keep them coming!

Ed

Keep Stockbury Tidy

While I run around the village on a regular bases, it disheartens me to see so much discarded rubbish from members of the public who drop or throw litter into the grass verges and on the roads. When did we become a nation when throwing rubbish onto the wayside instead of taking it home to throw away, become acceptable?

Well, I could continue to rant but instead I've come up with an idea. Many of us in the village take a daily walk with or without a dog, so why not take a bag with you and if you see any litter pick it up.

Why not do our bit and pick up a bit

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St Mary Magdalene

A big thank you to everyone who has signed up to the Church Lottery this coming year especially as the church itself has not been able to do any fund raising. The PCC is very grateful for your support.

It costs about £11,000 per year to run the church, excluding large repairs for which we have been able to obtain grants from English Heritage.

The £11,000 covers the insurance, the Parish Share to the Diocese, lighting, heating, organ upkeep and any minor repairs. The accounts are kept quarterly and are audited annually. Anyone is free to examine them at any time.

The church wall running down Church Farm's field has about 50 flint stones missing. Is there anyone in the village - or who knows anyone - who could put flints back in for a fee? The PCC has a bag of the correct lime mortar.

EASTER DAY - 4th April

The Revd Amanda Lane will hold a dawn service of Holy Communion at Stockbury Church on Easter morning. Anyone is welcome. If you would like to attend please contact Amanda. Tel 01795 842 478 or email revamandalane@gmail.com

Penny Stevens
PCC Secretary

The Church, with the kind permission of the Parish Council, will be placing a cross on the Village Green over the Easter period.

The thinking behind this decision is that this has been a very unusual year for all of us but even harder for some.

There are many amongst us that have suffered the loss of friends and family members and have been unable to attend their funerals. I myself lost four friends so know what that feels like.

If you would like to, please place flowers, plants or a candle by the cross. These will remain there from Good Friday until the following Tuesday when the flowers etc will be taken to the Church.

Many people, whether they have a faith or not, see Easter as a time of new beginnings as the weather changes, flowers are growing and trees come in to bud.

This year more than ever we hope for new beginnings with, we trust, life returning to some semblance of normality as from April 12th. We will then be able to meet friends and have coffee in the pub garden. There is much to look forward to.

The Church wishes you every blessing.

Irene Milton

Recommendation

If anybody is looking for a cleaner, I can recommend our lady, Sherrie. She has been doing a fabulous job for us over the years and has even been available all through the pandemic (when it was legal...). If you would like to contact her, her number is **07593 901347**

Ann Rich

March Church Draw Winners

CONGRATULATIONS!

1st - Mrs P.J. Stewart

£30 (103)

2nd - Frank Mace

£20 (33)

3rd - Fiona & Geoff Moody

£10 (134)

Noise Nuisance – Loud Music

During the Summer of 2019, numerous complaints were made of noise nuisance caused by loud music from events venues, in or on the borders of the parish. There was disagreement as to which venues were at fault but the noise could be heard clearly into the early hours of the morning most weekends and right across the parish. Stockbury PC reported the matter to MBC, as did many residents individually; those complaints remain on file.

Last summer because of the pandemic, there were few events but those that did occur did generate some complaints but generally because of lockdown, as one parishioner put it, on weekend evenings it was 'blissfully quiet'.

This year, with the end of lockdown, the beginning of summer and the start of the party/wedding/festival season, we anticipate there will be further complaints; we hope not as the music does not need to be that loud! No one wants to harm or put a local company out of business, in fact we want to encourage and support local businesses and we all want to get out and celebrate the end of an awful year too!

BUT there has to be a balance struck between the interests of businesses and the mental wellbeing of residents and the quiet enjoyment of their own homes.

In order that MBC could correctly identify and take any action required against the venues concerned, residents were asked to make a note of times, dates and level of noise. We attach a link to the MBC form to record from the outset any problems this year (we hope there won't be).

https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/other-services/community-protection/tier-2-primary-areas/noise#noise_165677

So, for anyone affected during the coming months, please keep a record and complete the form. MBC takes such complaints seriously, an officer will investigate complaints and if necessary take the matter up with the Licensing Dept.

SPC

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HELP WITH UNCLAIMED BENEFITS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Did you know that at least £2.5 billion of benefits aimed at the older members of our society on low incomes goes unclaimed every single year?

The benefit system for older people can seem very complicated and this may put people off applying. They also may not be aware that there are benefits such as Pension Credit which are aimed to help them to stay independent and healthy and not have to struggle to manage their bills or cut down on essential items.

The average amount of Pension Credit unclaimed is £39 a week (more than £2,000 a year) but even a smaller amount such as £10 a week could be a great help towards bills. Plus it can also 'passport' people to other types of help such as support with some housing and health costs.

I live in South Green but work for a wonderful charity called CROP – Citizens Rights for Older People. We are a small charity based in Lenham but we help older people all over Kent with claiming benefits that they are entitled to, also Attendance Allowance and the Blue Badge scheme for when things become a bit harder for them, health wise. We can help with any form that may seem a bit daunting or we can do online forms for you as well.

Despite the lockdown, we are still open for business and helping with claims, either by talking it through with you step by step over the phone or by coming out to your home and the Pensions Service are still dealing with any claims sent to them.

Please call CROP for a friendly conversation with one of our team.

Our number is 01622 851200. Our offices are open Monday to Friday 10am – 3pm. If the line is busy please leave a message and we promise to call you back asap.

Ann Mansfield
CROP Co-ordinator
South Green Resident

STOCKBURY COMMUNITY BUS

As we edge towards the end of lockdown, to freedom and the open road, SPC wants to get our Community Bus back into action! We want to resume regular shopping trips, theatre and cinema trips, outings to flower shows, to the seaside, out for lunch to particularly fabulous restaurants (without having to drive home!) Or to any other special events you want. BUT to do this we need your help, we need more drivers and someone to take on, or share the running of the service. So, if you can help in any way we would LOVE to hear from you!

Please email Sara at:

communitybus-stockbury@hotmail.co.uk

SPC

Stockbury Book Club

The End Of Everything by Megan Abbott

This novel by well known author Megan Abbott is set in small town America in the 1960's where two 13 year old girls, Lizzie and Evie, are very close friends and neighbours.

Lizzie, who narrates the story, is fascinated by Evie's family, the Ververs; in particular Mr Verver and Evie's older sister Dusty. When Evie unexplainably disappears one day, Lizzie takes on the role of amateur sleuth to uncover clues as to how and why this happened to her best friend. In doing so she becomes very closely involved with Mr Verver and Dusty and we learn about how these and other characters respond to the disappearance. The police are involved of course but the role of their detectives takes second place to Lizzie's investigations.

The novel has been described as a really good thriller but the reason for the disappearance of Evie is never really fully explained. This is one of the reasons why the majority of the group criticised the book; we were expecting a traditional detective novel, a page turner with gripping events and a twist at the end. I think we would agree that this novel could be best described as "a psychological study of adolescence" with disturbing undercurrents of family relationships.

However, we did think that the writing was rich in detail and that it would be interesting to compare the book with others written by Megan Abbott.

We gave a low score of 4 for this novel.

Next month we are going to Greece.....(we wish!!) as we read Victoria Hislop's latest book "One August Night", a sequel to "The Island" which we read and enjoyed a couple of years ago.

Jan Butterfill

Stockbury & Hartlip Cricket Club

After a most unusual 2020 when we started 10 games had 2 curtailed by rain, played 8 and won 1, we look forward to a more fruitful season this year.

We have 22 fixtures arranged, fourteen of which are at home. We have new shirts with green and yellow piping and club badge and on the back we have the Burden Brothers logo, who donated the money to purchase same.

We have put a lot of work in to try and improve the square and in recent years this has been subsidised by Forayes Farms which has resulted in our strip receiving many complimentary comments. The nets have been improved and new balls and battery have been purchased for the bowling machine, so we are all set to improve our techniques.

The four old benches have been replaced by five new ones so there is plenty of seating for our spectators.

We are still looking for new players so if you would like to join us give me a ring on 01795 844642.

Roger Milton



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We are a Police registered Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Neighbourhood Watch is a way for communities to help themselves stay safe. We are volunteers who work in partnership with the police to:

- -Distribute safety advice
- -Help make sure that elderly and vulnerable residents are not targets to criminals
- -Gather information to help police tackle local problems
- -Alert residents when there is a particular crime problem in the area

Our aim is to help people protect themselves and their properties and to reduce the anxieties of becoming a victim of crime.

Please be vigilant and report suspicious characters or incidents to the police and also to your co-ordinator (details below).

Co-ordinators will cascade any information from the police or neighbours to members.

CONTACT NUMBERS:

Emergency : 999

(crime in progress/life threatening)

Non-Emergency : 101

Rosemary (Ann) Ballard (*Co-ordinator*)
(01622) 736331

Alternatively you may e-mail the Co-ordinator at:

stockbury-neighbourhood@outlook.com

Any ideas and views would be greatly welcomed at the above mentioned e-mail address.

If you know of any other residents who would like to receive information from Stockbury Neighbourhood Watch, then please ask them to either contact the Co-ordinator on the above telephone number or e-mail their details to the above mentioned e-mail address.

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Patrik Says ...

Dear Residents,

Doesn't time fly? April is almost here already.

Starting with an update from last month's newsletter, the Conservatives did indeed vote against the MBC budget but were outvoted. You should have received your latest council tax bill by now and claimants who qualify for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme will be advised of recent changes. For those claimants in receipt of sickness/disability benefits, there will be a 5% increase in the amount of Council Tax Support they receive in Band 2-5.

I reported last month about weather related problems, affecting waste collections. 40,000 collections were indeed reported as having been missed. After a troubled start to the year things should be smooth running by now. A slight worry remains the recycling rate, which continues to be around 49%. We all could do a little better. The biggest problem is contamination, when whole lorry loads are being spoilt because people put the wrong stuff in the recycling bin. Please **do not** place carrier bags or sacks, textiles, food waste or nappies into your green recycling bin.

Biffa have recently invested in some newer vehicles and this has reduced the environmental impact of the service as the newer models meet the Euro 6 standard and generate less polluting emissions. They should also improve service reliability by reducing the number of breakdowns.

New busking guidelines were approved for the town centre. Although the guidelines are pretty relaxed and not too onerous on the musicians, it will give enforcement officers powers to deal with nuisances.

Any business that was required to close due to Covid is being urged by Maidstone Borough Council to apply before the end of March, when many of the mandatory government Covid grant schemes will come to an end.

Infection rates really dropped in Maidstone in recent weeks. Thanks to everybody. Please continue to be careful. The worst seems over but we are not through the crisis yet. Remember YOUR mask is to protect OTHERS! And why not go for a regular symptom free test at Detling? It only takes a few minutes and gives you and the people around you reassurance.

And finally (for political balance), I read with interest of the Green Party's proposal to introduce a ULZ emission charging zone in Maidstone.

<https://wordpress.greenparty.org.uk/maidstone/wp-content/uploads/sites/98/2020/06/MGPTransportPlan2020.pdf>

They also propose to build a tramway in Maidstone. **Given an unlimited pot of money**, I'd improve on the latter and build an underground line.

April is almost here, longer days and the colours of spring should give us a well deserved cheer up. Stay safe!

PATRIK GARTEN
MBC Cllr for North Downs Ward (Conservative)
Phone: 01622-807907

Stockbury Gardeners

I am sure that you will remember when we were able to visit a restaurant!! I often then wondered who thought up the graphic descriptions of the dishes? Phrases such as "drizzled", "jus", really means gravy to me!! How many of you have been offered heritage tomato salad? I did once ask the waiter, "if you can tell me the variety names of the tomato, I will have that as a starter course". To which the chief came to the table, spoke at length to me and named some of them.

This week I transplanted some varieties of heritage tomatoes, the names of which are "Green Sausage", "Green Zebra", "Indian Moon", "White Zebra", "Green Agate" and "Giant White". I have had a very high success rate with the germination, so I will therefore have some spares to give to the garden members, social distance observed though, after all it is food stuff!!

Also, this month I couldn't miss the opportunity to show a picture of my wife's cacti and succulents; these were kept in a warm greenhouse with no water given to them since October, perhaps they might receive a drink around May time, somewhat similar to us I believe!



As we are in a similar situation to last year, I will again be sourcing plants (veg that is) from growers in Thanet and distributing to members if they can call and place orders soon.

Chris Spree

From History ... How NOT To Do It!

NEDELJKO CABRINOVIC at 19 years old, conspired with others of a secret society, to assassinate Franz Ferdinand (somebody else did it triggering WW1) when he visited Sarajevo in June of 1914.

However, when the cavalcade passed by, Cabrinovic blew up the wrong car.

Depressed at his failure and not wishing to be arrested he decided to commit suicide and swallowed a cyanide capsule. It was out of date and therefore did not do the required deadly job, it only made him vomit.

He then decided to perish in the river and jumped from the local bridge, only to find that because the summer had been exceptionally hot he landed in just 6 inches of water!

There is a lesson there somewhere!

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		1		2				
			5		7			
		4				1		
	9							
5							7	3
		2		1				
				4				9

Word Search



Spring



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 F T U L Y I J B E P Q N O P A S D X
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MY MEMORIES OF STOCKBURY

All change over 60 years!

How things have altered! No, just for once this isn't about how Covid19 has made such a difference to our lives and will do into the future – but about the village and the parish. Having lived here for all of my adult life I have witnessed quite a turnaround in Stockbury over the decades and there are others who will bear me out and remember ten or twenty years before my own recollections. Perhaps next time they will mention their memories and possibly correct mine!

Way back, we're talking of the 1960s here, if you'd caught the bus from Maidstone, like as not you would choose to alight at the bottom of Middle Hill as the locals called it (postal designation, Amel's Hill). where there was a bus stop As you faced Stockbury, Church Hill is to the left and Honeycrook to the right and we would climb the steep, narrow hill road fully aware that vehicles might be coming down. It was the shortest route and you would arrive, probably quite breathless, at the top at the junction of Honeycrook and Church Lane. Gradually the way became overgrown; traffic was disallowed, the A249 became busier, traffic faster; the bus stop defunct and change happened.

That closure is hidden but a more obvious transformation occurred not far along Church Lane on the way to the village. On the left at present is a large field where for the last 40 or 50 years the farmer rotates crops, but in the late 1950's and during the 1960's an orchard covered the area and from time to time sheep collected there, nibbling not just the grass but everyone's hedges at the properties backing on to it.

Thinking about open spaces, it occurs to me that the village green was larger 60 years ago. It didn't spread out like the old photos show us but was probably bigger by 18 inches to 2 feet all round and extended slightly down in front of the village hall. There was no little fence surrounding it and people parked cars and even left small lorries on it. In fact it was in rather a mess, very unsightly; during the winter it turned to mud and the surface was churned up. As traffic and the size of vehicles increased on journeys through the village, the edges began to erode. Eventually the Parish Council had it levelled and a fence was erected to help preserve the green communal area.

A gradual shaping of our village amenities took place mainly through the hard work and persistence of a few individuals who wanted to improve and enhance Stockbury life. In the late 1950's our village hall had been erected; just the hall and kitchen existed but the building provided space for all the village clubs to meet and along with The Harrow, was the focal point. In the background negotiations were afoot to purchase the old orchard to the rear of the village hall. When difficulties were overcome and the 6 acre site purchased an enormous change took place during the 1970's as the land had to be cleared of the trees and as many flints as possible removed. The transformation took time and effort but was well worth it as pleasure was gained from the multi-use of the open field. Gradually through fundraising, sponsorship and donation, the village added extras to this recreation area, with seating, sheds, and a protected play area for the young. When funds allowed the hall changed too. A committee room and stage were added. (entertainment no longer took place on

strapped together wooden trestle tables for a stage) and years later another extension was built at the opposite end of the hall. We've come a long way in 60 years.

Looking around the buildings in the centre of the village, I remember the gaps there were between the houses when I first came to Stockbury. The White House was there, built in a very different Scandinavian style and then came Rose Cottage with a garage to the side and after that Cobb Cottage; there were no buildings in between. If we go in the other direction towards Bull Lane, the school was still functioning but there were no houses beyond Portico House until Walnut Tree Cottage was reached on the corner. Moving back up towards MB Farm, Tyndale Cottage had a very different frontage, Harrow Cottage didn't exist, nor did Cedar Gardens (built 1970) and Harrow Court wasn't there either (developed 1983) nor of course Buxton Meadow. If you turned your attention to Hill Green Road, the tiny village shop (which had a long garden extending to the pub car park,) sat between the pub and the Old Vicarage. The Vicarage itself had a very big garden at that time and its Glebe lands just beyond were still owned by the church. Yew Trees, the Dower House and Glebe House didn't exist. Opposite the now Glebe House, was an old, rundown cottage which later in the 1970s was demolished and two new dwellings Walsingham House and Springbank, were erected in its place.

This is all beginning to sound a lot like a history lesson but the transformation has all happened in my lifetime. The metamorphosis has been gradual and of course many residents who have joined the community over the years probably have not even registered much difference. I find that in writing, my reminiscing has chased many other memories to the fore. I will do a part two next time.

AND please, anyone out there who has something interesting to add along the lines of changes in Stockbury please email me at ann.stockbury@btinternet.com

Ann Rich

Ditty Corner

Farewell Winter

Farewell winter, spring is in the air
Nature is stirring from her winter slumber
Soon vibrant colours will be all about
The birds will joyfully sing their morning greeting
But do they need to be outside my window
And so early and loud?!

What The Robin Told

The wind told the grasses
And the grasses told the trees
The trees told the bushes
And the bushes told the bees
The bees told the robin
And the robin sang out clear
Wake up everyone! Spring is finally here!

Domestic Abuse

If you or someone else is suffering from domestic abuse please visit a Domestic Abuse webpage for advice and more information:

www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/primaryservices/housing/tier-2-additional-areas/domestic-abuse

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

www.womensaid.org.uk

www.mensadviceline.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

There are also helplines available if you would rather speak to someone:

- Choices Domestic Abuse Services
0800 917 9948
- National Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 2000 247
- Refuge freephone National Domestic Abuse
0808 2000 247
- The Men's Advice Line for male domestic abuse survivors
0808 808 4994
- National LGBT+ Abuse Helpline
0800 999 54428
- Childline
0800 1111

Housing helplines

There are helplines available if you need help with housing:

- Shelter -**0808 800 4444**
- Choices -**0800 917 9948**
- Victim Support -**0808 168 9111**

Observer Deadline!

If you would like to advertise or have item included in next months Observer, we must receive it no later than

MONDAY 26th April

Please email your contributions to
stockburyobserver@gmail.com

Calling All Advertisers

Our annual rates for advertising in 12 editions are:

A whole page £400

A half page £200

A quarter page £120

Our advertising year starts in April and new adverts for less than 12 months duration will be charged on a pro-rata basis. Rates for ads smaller than a quarter page will be given on application.

If you would like to place an advert in The Observer, please email stockburyobserver@gmail.com The editor will confirm receipt and an invoice will be sent along with details of how to pay.

If you are a new customer, please also attach your artwork, preferable in MS Word or as a PDF file.

This is a great opportunity to promote your business as The Observer is delivered to **every** household within the Parish of Stockbury as well as having an online presence.

**It's never too late to advertise in
The Stockbury Observer!**

Stockbury Parish Council Minutes

The minutes for our Parish Council meetings will be approved at the following meeting and will then be published on www.stockbury.org within 5 days of the meeting at which they are approved.

A Soldier – Fond Memories

By November 1965 I was approaching the end of my Royal Engineer young officer training which had been preceded by 2 years at Sandhurst and a 3 year degree course. It was time to do some soldiering. I had turned down a place at medical school to join the Army and see the world. Most of us completing our training would be posted to units in either the UK or Germany, neither of which appealed. There were just 3 postings to the Far East and I was keen to get one of them.

I applied for the Gurkha Engineers. An interview with the Colonel of the Regiment, a severe, monocled, silver haired, retired General, followed. He asked me why I was attracted to Malaya and service with the Gurkha's. I replied that Somerset Maugham's short stories set in Malaya and Singapore and "Bugles and a Tiger", the autobiography of a former distinguished Gurkha officer turned author, had fired my imagination. How impressed or otherwise he was history does not relate. Suffice to say I was selected.

I flew out to Singapore early in January 1966, in those days a 24 hour flight with several stops en route. I'd left a cold England with snow on the Downs and arrived in Singapore where it was hot and humid, quite a contrast. I was met by a brother officer who drove me up country to Kluang in North Johore. My arrival in the Regiment coincided with the King of Nepal's birthday celebrations, a festive couple of days involving lots of sport and evening parties in the Gurkha officers and sergeants messes. Although most of the Gurkhas only spoke a little English I much enjoyed my first broken conversations with them.

On my first working day I sat down to breakfast, turned to Cpl Dawa Tamang, the Mess Corporal and ordered fresh fruit, scrambled egg, toast and coffee, as I had done on the previous three mornings. He looked straight through me. A bachelor Major sitting next to me said, "Until you can order in Gurkhali you will starve". What I did not know was that the Gurkha Major, the senior Gurkha officer, had given strict instructions that the only Gurkha who could speak to me in English from that day on was my orderly whose main task was to help me learn the language.

By lunch time I could order a beer and a sandwich!

Tony Kerr

A Winter's Bike Ride

Not able to go swimming for the last year, I chose bike riding as the substitute exercise, from Hill Green Road to a steep hill above Magpie Lane. Bad weather, the only thing to stop me. Even in rain, hail or sleet, I got out and did it; I drew the line at the recent snow, ice, high winds and freezing weather though!

Starting out on Monday 15th February with rain falling I hoped a thaw had set in. Even though it was still just above freezing I had to get out and do it, didn't I? Checked my brakes and tyre pressures, all in order. Noted the time as I set off to measure my fitness; last trip, I took 1 hour and 20 minutes. So off I went along Hill Green Road, leaving behind a fire side armchair, winter novel, steaming cup of coffee and chocolate gateaux, only

justified if I completed the circuit.

Riding towards the thatched barn, keeping away from the verge where heaps of slush lay, I skidded and slipped in the frozen snow that remained. I continued on madly, up and over the hill and down the huge slope, testing my brakes to their limits. Death trap if they failed. Up the other side I went left and immediately right at Penny's cottage, thinking of the warm swimming pool I'd be in, if Covid-19 hadn't happened. I trudged on in bottom gear to climb up and down the hill and left turned up Scragged Oak, up an easier hill with a slight gradient, going to the next right and down a short sharp hill, to Magpie Farm at the bottom.; unsuccessfully negotiating a small lake and soaked by the freezing splashing deep muddy icy water, which filled my boots then turning left up the hill. Oh what a hill! Always a challenge but never so hard as this day,. Through more slippery snow and icy water, I slowly rode up to reach my resting point to breathe, ready to come back and die or descend.

Noting my front break inoperable being out of its casing, and checking it against the correctly fitting rear brake cable, I spent tantalising bare handed freezing seconds trying to fit it back in and finally, rehoused the cable. I tested the brakes and felt the wheels were slipping too much due to the amount of slime gathered from the mucky icy water. Impossible to safely ride down the hill I accepted that walking down hills and riding up them was the only way to get home. So on I went again, cycling gingerly on the level ground, getting colder and colder. Bearing the thought that hypothermia might set in. Walking back down the hill to the small icy lake, my feet like rocky slabs, edging towards frost bite, I managed to remount and with difficulty ride back up the short sharp slope to level ground again. I took the left turn and immediately right down Hill Green Road, off and on the bike as I faced slope and hill, to the death-trap hill I'd gone down at the beginning of my ride.

The pitch of the slope proving too much for me to ride all the way up, so I got off again and walked to reach the alpacas grazing in the field at high altitude, I suppose similar to the Andes of Chile, Peru and Bolivia, native to South America. From the top, I was just about able to stay on the bike to end my journey, failing miserably on my target time of 1 hour 20 minutes, to reach home in, just over 2 hours.

Such a great solace, enjoying the warmth of my shower, followed by coffee and chocolate gateaux, sitting in front of a roaring log fire, reading my winter novel, so truly deserved.

Brendan Ferrill

WANTED!

The Stockbury Observer requires a delivery person for the **Plum Tree Road** area.

The round would take approximately less than an hour once a month and a batch of newsletters would be delivered to you for onward distribution.

If you are interested, please contact the Editor at stockburyobserver@gmail.com

Useful Contact Information

Church Matters St. Mary Magdalene		01795 - 227329.
Community Bus	Booking Line	07551 454702
Cricket Club	Roger Milton - rogerandirene@btinternet.com	01795 844642
Crimestoppers	(Confidential)	0800 55511
Dancing Club	Brian Crisp	01634 231886
Dog Club	Mick Bingham	01795 842480
Electricity Problems		0800 7838866
Environment Agency	Incident Hotline	0800 807060
Fly Tipping & Waste Collection	Including bulky items	01622 602162
Gardeners	stockburygardeners@live.com	
Golf Society	Philip Painter	07850 190204
Hall Bookings	Sue Porter	01795 843715
Kent County Councillor	Shellina Prendergast shellina.prendergast@kent.gov.uk	
Maidstone BC Councillor	Patrik Garten - patrikgarten@maidstone.gov.uk	01622 807907
MB Farms Stores & Post Office		01795 842401
Member of Parliament Faversham & Mid Kent Ward	Helen Whately - helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk	
Neighbourhood Watch	Ann Ballard	01622 736331
Not So Young Club	Rosemary Leonard	01634 232672
Parish Council Clerk	Sherrie Babington	01634 867173
Petanque Club	Tina Jacobs	07743 910185
Photographic Club	Tim Arnold - timarnold@btinternet.com	01795 843049
Police	Emergency Only Non-Emergency	999 101
Police Community Support Officers for Stockbury	Daniel Genn daniel.genn@kent.pnn.police.uk	101
Public Footpaths & Bridleway	Reporting issues with. - westprow@kent.gov.uk	03000 417171
Roads, Potholes, etc	(manned 24hrs) - www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem	03000 418181
RSPCA		0300 1234999
Short Mat Bowls	Ann Rich - ann.stockbury@btinternet.com	07718 070807
South East Water	Emergency Only Non-Emergency	0333 000 0365 0333 000 3330
Stockbury Observer - Editor	stockburyobserver@gmail.com	
The Harrow Public House	stockburypub@gmail.com	01795 843222
WI	Pat Fothergill	01622 734093