



# THE STOCKBURY & SOUTH GREEN OBSERVER

*June 2023*



**What a Coronation Weekend We Had!**

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## Coronation Weekend Celebrations

### Thank You

We had a fabulous weekend of celebrations and entertainment to mark the coronation of King Charles III, with the village really getting behind all that had been organised. So, I just wanted to say 'thank you' to some folks, because it couldn't have happened without them.

A huge thank you to Sarah, Gemma, Mia, Tilly and Jodie at The Harrow who slogged and worked tirelessly throughout.

Thanks to all on the Coronation Planning Committee: Fiona, Penny S, Anne S, Sue P, Dave & Jo and Dave & Lou, who made it all happen including the BBQ and the Sponsor a Tree initiative. All ably supported by Ann & Keith R, Sue S, Geoff, Steve, Sara, Margaret, Louise and Jan who supported where ever required including the pre-celebration litter pick, advertising, themed planting and decoration of the pub and village green.

Thank you to all who helped with the Big Lunch and those who entered cakes in the Cake Competition, and including last minute guest judge, Paul – lunch wouldn't have been the same without your delicious creations!

To Bev and Tina for all their hard work in making it entertaining for the younger folk in the village with games and activities.

To Rod, Wendy, Tim and all those in the Tractor Club who turned out on their marvellous tractors to provide rides around the village and recreation field.

To Geoff and Dave Scott for their expert photography.

To Chris P for the devilishly difficult treasure hunt.

To Phill M and Chris J for their superb traffic management.

To Sue S, Shirley F and the Reverend Jacky for the lovely service which rounded off the weekend.

Finally thank you all very much to everyone who turned out and supported the events, it's amazing what a little village like ours can achieve when it tries!

Jackie Smith

Jackie, it is us, the Parish, who should be thanking you, for without your vision, enthusiasm and nagging ... Ooops! Sorry ... encouragement ... it would have been a very dull Coronation weekend indeed! - Ed

### Thank You!

What amazing volunteer organisers we have here in Stockbury! Why am I bringing your attention to this? Well, over the Coronation weekend gentle community activities were arranged by this Committee, with great energy and dedication of time, for the enjoyment of all of us in Stockbury. A lot of work.

Thank you (you know who you are). I fear I would leave out a name or two which is why I haven't listed any, but suffice to say I know that in the past 2 ½ months meetings have taken place, heads have been scratched, fun amusements have been equipped, a treasure hunt organised, plants planted, bunting erected, cakes baked, plaques engraved, food prepared, rousing church service arranged and all to make the public holiday a success. The results of your excellent planning were brilliant.

We are all grateful to you for making the celebrations so entertaining and memorable. Thank you all very much.

Ann Rich

## Hearty Congratulations!

Many congratulations to all our Coronation weekend winners:

### Rock, Paper Scissors Champion:

Elodie Canham

### Treasure Hunt:

Glen, Bev and Sam Martin

### Treasure Hunt Answers:

1. Parsonage Cottages, 4 were built
2. Safety footwear
3. Old School House
4. Cars parking at MBF
5. Floodlights in the church porch
6. 'Spring' sign on The Harrow
7. Footpath on Church Lane
8. Mobile Library at the Village Hall
9. Died June 8th, 1903, headstone in the graveyard
10. Planning application at Orchard Lands
11. Merrifields, Hill Green Road
12. BT box in Church Lane
13. Slate Stockists
14. Oak tree and plaque on Village Green
15. Soldier who died in WW1
16. Littlemead, Bull Lane
17. Name on salt bin outside Village Hall
18. Fountain in Nettlestead garden
19. Quealy Eastate Agent
20. "We would walk right up up heaven" - headstone in graveyard

### Cake Competition:

Best Decorated Cake - Sophie Stead

Most Flavoursome Cake - Fiona Moody

If you would like to make either of the winning cakes yourself, both recipes are included in this edition of The Stockbury Observer.

## Stockbury Community Orchard

### Adopt a Tree Coronation Weekend

The Adopt a Tree scheme in Stockbury Community Orchard over the Coronation weekend was a great success, with many orders for tree plaques being received before, during and even after the coronation weekend.

To date 80 tree plaques have been engraved, with total donations of £650 being received. The funds raised will be used to develop, improve and maintain the orchard for the enjoyment of the Stockbury community.

The whole idea of adopting a tree and placing a plaque or plaques on the tree guard was enthusiastically embraced by everyone, with families meeting in the orchard on the Monday of Coronation weekend to stroll around and select a tree to put their plaque on, thereby creating many "family trees"!

As the scheme is ongoing, it is never too late to adopt a tree! Look out for information in The Observer in the future including the order form and information on activities to help maintain your tree.

The Community Orchard is a lovely place in Stockbury village and is there for the whole community to enjoy - why not pay a visit and have a stroll around it.

Joanne Tingey

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**Monday - Closed**

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**Wednesday - Sunday**

**11am**

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**Wednesday - Saturday**

**12pm-2.30pm and 5pm-8:30pm**

**Sunday**

**12pm-4pm**

## EVENTS

*Fish'n'chip shop night on the 1st Friday of every month*

*Games night on the 2nd Tuesday of every month.*

*Quiz night on the 3rd Tuesday of every month.*

*Coffee and cake morning every Friday*

**Live Music**

**17th June**

**Richie Phillips**

**From 8pm**



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The Harrow PubStockbury



contact@theharrowstockbury.co.uk



## M2 junction 5 Stockbury interchange improvement scheme

During our recent weekend closure of the A249, we successfully moved northbound traffic onto the old southbound carriageway. This is a big step in our project, and allows us to get going on the construction of the new flyover.

The new Maidstone Road link is making great progress. The final surfacing is due to be completed in early June, with the road opened to traffic soon after.

We also used the Maidstone Road closure to litter pick between Key Street roundabout and our compound. Along with the expected coffee cups and food wrappers, kettles, car wheels and lots of e-cigarettes were among the findings.

### Upcoming closure

**8pm Friday 9 June to 5am Monday 12 June** – the A249 southbound between the Bobbing and Stockbury roundabouts will be closed while we work on the dedicated slip to the Stockbury roundabout.

Traffic will be diverted down Maidstone Road from the Key Street roundabout. The link to the Stockbury roundabout from Maidstone Road will be temporarily reopened for southbound traffic during this closure, then will close permanently.



We're carrying out improvements to help reduce congestion at the junction, and enhance the flow of traffic. This will provide a safer and more integrated network for everyone and bring real benefits to the drivers who use this junction daily.

To find out more, please visit our website: [nationalhighways.co.uk/m2-j5](https://nationalhighways.co.uk/m2-j5) or scan the QR code. You can also call us on **0300 123 5000** or email [m2j5@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:m2j5@nationalhighways.co.uk)



## The Wombles of Stockbury!

Those of us of a certain age will remember The Wombles of Wimbledon Common, but did you know that Stockbury Parish has their very own Great Uncle Bulgaria, Tomsk, Tobermory, Madame Cholet, Orinoco, Wellington and Bungo?

Ten days before the Coronation, the Stockbury Wombles undertook a massive clean up of the parish from Bimbury Lane to Yelsted, Hill Green Road, The Street, Church Lane and Hill and over to Pett Lane and South Green too.

Aby co-ordinated by Tobermory, the Wombles collected over 50 bags of litter and sufficient car parts to enter a Red Bull Soapbox Race!

Despite Tobermory's best efforts to have MBC collect and dispose of the collected rubbish before the start of the Coronation weekend, they were unwilling to oblige due to their Health & Safety rules. However, following a very brief discussion with Harry Knapp of Graham - the A249 contractor - the rubbish mountain was soon cleared and disposed of without further ado!



On behalf of the residents who value living in a litter free environment, a massive thank you to all of the Stockbury Wombles, along with Harry and his colleagues, for all your efforts.

Can you correctly name the Stockbury residents by their Womble alias? Answers in an email to the Editor The winner will receive an empty green rubbish bag to fill, so you can be a Stockbury Womble too!

Alderney Womble

## Stockbury Church Coronation Celebration

A very big thank you to all of you who made your way to our Coronation Songs of Praise Service on Bank Holiday Monday.

Sarah kindly closed the pub for a couple of hours and persuaded everybody to take the long walk to the Church. This worked superbly as around fifty souls made it safely and in very good spirits. This was reflected in the singing which was performed with gusto and our thanks to Sara Kemsley on the organ who kept us all in time.

Julian Hudson also provided us with some excellent trumpet playing which added a special dimension to the music.

Thanks must also go to Jacky Davis who, with short notice, gave her time to conduct the service in her typical kind and calm manner.

So, after all the hymns, a couple of poems and the National Anthem, all were invited to join in with a toast to the King.

The fizz was kindly donated with thanks to Anne Southern. All this made for a very fitting finale to a very enjoyable Coronation weekend in our village.

Sue Sellens

## The Harrow

Stefan, The Harrow chef, who had been on sick leave for the last couple of weeks, has confirmed he will not be returning to work, so the pub has advertised for a new chef / cook. Please spread the word amongst family and friends that a vacancy exists for this full time position or for anyone with those skills who could work full or part time or on a temporary basis until a new chef / cook is found.

In the meantime, the pub is exploring other options for providing food, including agency chefs, private chefs/ outside caterers for one off dining evenings. While we are without a chef we hope to organise a rota of volunteers who will help with prep for cold lunches, Ploughman's, sharing platters etc so that we can continue to provide some level of food service. If you are able to spend a couple of hours now and then, please contact the Committee or Sarah in the pub as all assistance will be invaluable.

The current situation does, however, also mean that in the short term we will be unable to cater for our regular tractor and ladies lunch time menus and well as our popular theme / fish'n'chip evenings.

The good news is that our games and quiz evenings will still go ahead, as well as our live music evenings.

Despite this news, we had a fabulous Bank Holiday weekend of celebrations for the coronation of King Charles III, with so many of you getting into the swing of the village celebrations from the Boughton Monchelsea Morris on the Thursday, through to the church service and toast to our new monarch on the Monday. Thank you to all that made it happen and all the cake bakers too! We hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we did.



Sadly our calendar of events is short and sweet this month!

- **13th - Games Night** - from 8pm
- **17th - Live Music with Richie Philips** - from 8pm
- **20th - Quiz Night** - 8pm start - please pre book your quiz team table

Don't forget every Friday from 10.30am to midday is Coffee & Cake Friday too!

Our guest ales for June are:

- **Canterbury Ales West Coast Light 3.6%**
- **Canterbury Ales Kentish Best 3.7%**
- **Sharps Doombar 4%**

See you in the pub!

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Surrounded by fields my Salon will offer you a peaceful and private treatment allowing you to relax, enjoy and be beautiful...

To see a full price list, learn more about the Salon and its offers or to book an appointment See the following;

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- Gel Polish nails - £20
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  - Gel Polish toes - £15
  - Gel Extensions with Gel Polish - £30
  - Gel Extension Infills with Gel Polish - £25
  - Waxing - prices from £7 for Eyebrows to £25 for Full Leg
  - Range of Facials (Inc. Microdermabrasion, Dermaplaning etc) prices from £20 - £75
  - Full Body Massage - £40
  - Back and Shoulder Massage - £20
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*Stockbury, Kent*

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# MICHAEL BINGHAM

15<sup>th</sup> December, 1936 - 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2023

For a chap who wasn't expected to live beyond a few days after his birth (he had pneumonia), Mick lived long and had a full and interesting life. Probably the most visible record of the impact his life had on others was seen at the service celebrating his achievements on May 2<sup>nd</sup> this year. The chapel was crowded to overflowing; his life had touched so many. Groups representing his naval years, the Police, the Dog Club, the community in which he lived, all gathered to pay their respects; 3 service banners held proudly throughout the proceedings honoured his many years of selfless service.

I can only give you a glimpse into Mick's 86 years but I will try to give you a flavour of his experiences. To begin with it is clear that medical knowledge in the 30s and 40s could not provide relief for severe hay fever and this played a key role in the direction that Mick's work-life took. Because he suffered so much his studies were curtailed. He had attended Hosey Boy's School, Westerham, won a scholarship to Sir Andrew Judd Grammar School in 1947, where he stayed only 4 years since he frequently spent long periods confined to bed. Then in 1952 he began training as a carpenter but in July of that year he joined the Navy.

Now things start to get interesting. His sea sickness was dire, (it subsided after a year) but undaunted he served on a variety of ships, minesweepers, small frigates, destroyers and during that time became part of or witnessed a number of significant historic events. He was sent out to the Med. with short notice, to be in the vicinity of the Suez Canal crisis (1956) when power struggles went on there, then because of the Greek / Cypriot unrest he visited that part of the world again in 1958. He was also sent on fishery protection. Never one to stop still he went on a radar course to learn about early warning systems. As a result of his years of service he saw the Arctic, hunted subs, was on escort duty accompanying the Royal Yacht Britannia when the Queen and Prince Philip visited Oslo in 1955.

Meanwhile his private life had blossomed. Mick's sister had a friend, named Brenda and he had seen her in that capacity for a while but they never socialised. Early on in his naval career, whilst on HMS Virago on duty in the Med., he decided to write to Brenda and it wasn't long before wedding bells were heard (1956). First Roy was born, then Debbie and later Phil completed the family. Mick has always said that Brenda was his mainstay and in the next 8 years, whilst Mick was on board ship, Brenda was in charge of life at home.



However Naval life was drawing to a close because in 1963 he applied to join the Kent Police and on December 22<sup>nd</sup> at 27 years old he was sworn in as a beat officer. He continued to flourish and keeping his interest fresh he then went on to be with the motorcycle patrol and eventually became a Detective Constable in the CID. However he had a young family and this branch of the Police Force did not really suit him, the hours being so unpredictable and all for no extra pay; he applied to become a countryside police constable. After being accepted he then went on to join the dog section (1970). It was at this time he learned to train dogs for drug searches and later for explosives detection. Both of these areas put him in various theatres of danger and he must have experienced many anxious periods on his assignments but his faith in the dogs he trained was complete. He searched and secured planes and yachts, schools and warehouses, ships' cargo and even the machine area prior to the break-through of the Channel Tunnel. Important residences had to be secure and he was part of a security section at the Foreign Secretary's residence at Chevening House,

Sevenoaks all at a time when the IRA was a significant threat to life and limb. Mountbatten had been assassinated and Airey Neave blown up ... When the QEII Bridge was completed he, with his faithful Misty searched and secured all the towers, before the grand opening by the Queen. What a responsibility! AND ... he actually met Churchill when on security duty at Chequers, pushing the wartime Prime Minister, in his wheelchair, up a steep incline to assist the nurses ... now there's a link to history! Royal visits and VIP occasions required his presence at this time. At Scotney Castle he even had to secure the private flat belonging to Prime Minister Thatcher. Then there's the time he needed to make a house and garden in Sandwich safe for a visit by the Queen Mother. He didn't meet her but watched from a distance whilst she chatted to friends.

In 1972 he moved to Stockbury Valley Police House where he was tasked with establishing Police Dog Kennels and was appointed Stockbury Kennel Keeper. Whilst there he, with Brenda's invaluable help started a breeding programme. They bred several litters of German Shepherd pups which were tended by Brenda much of the time because he was away with his dog attending drug search assignments and later when violence erupted in Northern Ireland explosives detection. Finally in December 1992 Mick retired as a police officer but remained in charge of the kennels and his beloved dogs until December 2001.



Free from duties at last, he and Brenda made their final house move to Stockbury Village in 2005. After retirement, not one to put his feet up, Mick involved himself in various activities in Stockbury. The dog training club which he founded you probably read about in March. He joined the Short Mat Bowls and Pétanque Clubs and you will also learn about his time on the Parish Council (May 2015 – May 2021) and the Village Hall Committee in another article. Then he took up pastel painting becoming very competent, his subjects usually being dogs, of course! Many of his friends and family have his pictures of their pets on display.

There are very many people who will miss Mick. We send our best wishes to his family and hope they may take comfort from the good memories that remain with them.

Ann Rich

# 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](mailto: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](http://www.stockbury.org) within 5 days of the meeting at which they are approved.



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## Calling the "Ladies" of Stockbury:

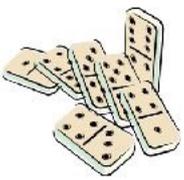
Come and join like-minded ladies for a lovely lunch and a catch up  
At  
The Harrow Pub on the last Thursday of the month  
at about 12.30pm

Please book your place directly with The Harrow on  
01795 873222

## We would love you to join us



## CALLING ALL GAMERS!



**Following its previous success, we are re-establishing a traditional games evening at The Harrow Pub on the second Tuesday of every month.**

**This is a great opportunity to play old favourites and to learn some new games.**

**Come along for an evening of traditional fun in the gloomy depths of winter and beyond.**

**We aim to start about 8 pm and would love to see anyone interested and you are welcome to bring any games with you.**



## Mick Bingham

The members of Stockbury Parish Council were very sad to learn of the recent passing of former Parish Councillor and stalwart of the village, Mick Bingham. At the April Parish Council meeting tribute was paid to his service to the community and a minute's silence was held in his memory, a time to reflect on his great contribution to the village and how much he would be missed.

As well as being a long term and supportive member of other village organisations, Mick became a Parish Councillor in 2015 and spent 6 years on the council, stepping down in 2021. During his time on the Council his particular interest, unsurprisingly as a former police officer, was law and order and in particular the Stockbury Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. He was vocal in trying to get local beat officers to attend PC meetings, as he thought it beneficial to have a local village bobby known to the public. He was also an important liaison between the Parish Council and the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee, an organisation of which he was Chairman for 20 years; he had only recently stepped down from that role.

Although no longer on the Parish Council, after he stepped down Mick's wealth of local knowledge and wide life experience meant that he regularly continued to engage with the Parish Council on a number of local issues and proved an invaluable help, to both the PC and members of the parish.

Our thoughts are with Brenda and his family at this sad time.

SPC

Stockbury Hall Committee were very sorry to hear the news about Mick and would like to pass our condolences to Brenda and the rest of Mick's family.

Mick was a tireless worker on behalf of the Hall; he was on the committee for more than 30 years and was Chairman for the last 20 years. He was always on hand to help with DIY jobs around the Hall and provided invaluable guidance and help with the running of the Hall.

Mick will be missed by all of us.

Stockbury Hall & Playing Fields Committee

## Stockbury Book Club

EDUCATED

by Tara Westover

As the title suggests, this was Tara's account of her journey in to education. But the reading of the title is probably the point at which any assumptions or preconceptions, should be put to one side. What that journey was like and how it progressed once she started to be educated formally, makes up the body of the novel.

Tara's family were Mormon's and she was the youngest of seven children. They lived in a remote mountain side location in Iowa and led by a domineering father, appeared to practise an expression of the Mormon religion that was very extreme. Births were not registered, schools never attended and modern-day healthcare never accessed. Incidentally, home schooling never happened either. The father's fear of the coming of Armageddon seemed to

for this was paramount and above all else. Violence and danger seemed to be part of their daily lives, its total inappropriateness never acknowledged or improved upon. Although never acknowledged with any clarity in the book, some of us in the group did wonder whether mental illness played a part in her fathers extreme behaviour. Whether that was the case or not, he had complete control over his family.

Most people found the book a very interesting read and were intrigued by how Tara managed to develop such a strong sense of self, such that she became a successful academic. Inevitably this was not without difficulty on Tara's part and the nature and content of her journey is both very interesting and admirable. As one of the group put it "she educated herself in order to escape". Others commented on her levels of ignorance around world events, never having been to school, she didn't know for instance, what the Holocaust was and had no knowledge of the events of 9/11.

Others found the book too violent, particularly when referring to her childhood and what life at home was like. It was certainly difficult to comprehend how such everyday violence, danger and lack of access to medical attention or education could continue in full sight and for so long. One member of the group listened to the book rather than reading it and came away with quite a different sense of what it was all about. For those of us that listen to Audio books, it was a timely reminder of the difference the medium we use to 'read' can make.

Tara's desire to access an education led to her being offered a place at college when she was 17, but clearly her route to this was unusual to say the least. Her determination and strong sense of self shine out, as she takes the reader through that journey right through to when she wrote the book in 2018, by which time she had gained a P.Hd from Cambridge University.

We gave the book an overall score of 7 - reflecting as ever a range of opinions.

Our book for May is *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng.

Moira Cooke

## Stockbury Gardeners

- Upchurch Horticultural Society.
- Stockbury Gardeners.
- National Vegetable Society, Kent Branch.
- NVS, Stockbury, vegetable free giveaway.

All the above vegetable sales sold out or made record sales over the last few weeks. More and more people are now realising the potential health benefits of growing (exercise) and eating (nutrients) your own food. Quite probably the cost of imported supermarket produce also means financial savings can be achieved by growing your own.

The Chairman of Stockbury Gardeners Society would love to hear if any villagers might consider lobbying our Parish Council for an allotment. Come on, don't be shy!

This month there is a lot to do in the garden:

- Hoe regularly to keep weeds down.
- Check roses for mildew, blackspot, and aphid, treat as necessary.
- Stake/ support tall annuals and perennials in the flower bed.

## Hall Diary

All events at the Memorial Hall unless otherwise stated

Thur	1st	Private Booking	11.00-3.00pm
Fri	2nd	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
Sat	3rd		
Sun	4th	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
Mon	5th		
Tues	6th	Bowls	2.00-4.00pm
Wed	7th	Pilates	9.30-10.30am
Thur	8th		
Fri	9th	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
Sat	10th	Summer Ball	3.00-11.00pm
Sun	11th	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
Mon	12th		
Tues	13th	Bowls	2.00-4.00pm
Wed	14th	Pilates	9.30-10.30am
		SPC	2.00-4.00pm
Thur	15th		
Fri	16th	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
Sat	17th		
Sun	18th	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
Mon	19th		
Tues	20th	Bowls	2.00-4.00pm
Wed	21st	Pilates	9.30-10.30am
		SPC	7.30-9.30pm
Thur	22nd	The Harrow AGM	7.00-10.00pm
Fri	23rd	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
Sat	24th		
Sun	25th	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
Mon	26th		
Tues	27th	Bowls	2.00-4.00pm
Wed	28th	Pilates	9.30-10.30am
Thur	29th		
Fri	30th	Zumba	9.30-10.30am

### May Church Draw Winners

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

1st Pam & Lew Gransden (248)

2nd Leslie Stevens (150)

3rd Mike Wegg (54)

## Laughing gas and littering

Laughing gas (**nitrous oxide**) is no laughing matter. Selling it could cost you a prison sentence. Using it could cost you your life.

### Know the law

- It's **illegal** to give away or sell laughing gas if you **know** or **suspect** that the substance is **likely to be consumed** by the person to whom it is supplied, or by some other person, for its **psychoactive effects**. If you do, you could face up to **7 years in prison**, an **unlimited fine** or both.
- It's illegal to drive under the influence of drugs. You could get a fine, a driving ban or even a prison sentence.
- It's an offence to drop litter. You could get an £80 fine. There are real dangers linked to the use of Nitrous Oxide.



For more information on this or other drugs, visit [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com) or call **Young We Are With You** on **01795 500 881** to speak to an expert confidentially



Report a non-urgent crime online [www.kent.police.uk/report](http://www.kent.police.uk/report)  
Talk to us on LiveChat - available 24/7 [www.kent.police.uk/contact](http://www.kent.police.uk/contact)  
In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**  
If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use our textphone service **18000**.  
Or text us on 999 if you've pre-registered with the emergency SMS service.  
[www.kent.police.uk](http://www.kent.police.uk)   

## OBSERVER DEADLINE

**MONDAY 26th June**

Please email your contributions to  
[stockburyobserver@gmail.com](mailto:stockburyobserver@gmail.com)

### Mobile Library Dates

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> June, '23  
9.10am - 9.40am



- Water in young transplants. Apply mulch once weeded and watered.
- Join the Stockbury Gardeners (sneaked that one in!)
- If your early vegetables all arrive at the same time, start planning whom to give them away to!
- Trim box hedges.
- Final dates in June for sowing mainstream vegetables.
- Make a note of forthcoming shows.

### Diary

There is NO meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, as this date has been changed to 8<sup>th</sup> June, when a joint BBQ with Upchurch, and Cobham Gardeners is being held at the Chairman's house, 4pm until 8pm where there will be a mystery gardening celeb present.

The Sweet Pea and Rose Show is on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, volunteers are required to help set up on the Friday evening. Members and non-members can compete in the show, so if you think that your flowers are better than your neighbours bring them along.

The Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies (KFHS), has its summer show at Ditton on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. This represents all the societies in Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

The next guest speaker at Stockbury is Jean Griffin, from BBC Radio Kent, on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July.

Don't forget if we do get some sun eventually, use sun oil and cover up if you have not been hardened off yet!!

Chris Spree

## Countryside Matters

### Bats (part two)

British bats eat insects, an awful lot of insects, in fact a pipistrelle can eat over 300 tiny insects in an hour! Flying takes a lot of energy. In order to catch their prey the creatures use echolocation, which means that they emit sounds, too high for the human ear, which bounce off the target and guides them to the insect. The bats are not blind but their ears are more important to their way of life.

They choose various places for their homes. They do not nest they roost, that is they hang in hollow trees, caves, under tiles or in hollow roof spaces. For several weeks in the summer the female bats congregate to keep warm whilst nurturing their babies, staying until their young are able to feed themselves.

British bats hibernate in the winter there being no flying insects at that time of year. They find a quiet place and tuck themselves away often in a crack or crevice and remain hanging, with a slowing heartbeat their temperature dropping, conserving energy. They might occasionally wake to look for water or even move location, but mostly they sleep.

Unfortunately there are fewer bats today in the British Isles today, as like other species, they have fallen prey to industrialisation, losing their habitats and their food supply as insects are destroyed by insecticides.

Now all British bats and their roosts are protected by law. It is illegal to harm or disturb them or deliberately alter their roost sites without first seeking advice. Bats need everyone's help and protection.

If your garden attracts many insects, that is if you have a pond, shrubbery, grow night-scented flowers, have a wild

area or sweet-smelling herbs then you may attract bats. In which case why not make a bat box with a small entrance slit underneath and maybe hang it from one of your trees. Try not to use chemicals in your garden. otherwise you might cancel out the good work you are doing!

Ann Rich

## Patrik Says ...

As you are aware, we held local elections earlier this month. For the last time Maidstone voted for a third of its councillors and from next year onwards we will have all out elections once every four years. North Downs was not affected by this year's elections.

The Conservatives will remain at the helm of MBC; with only 25 members we lost our thin majority, making Maidstone once again a council of no overall control.

Over the past weeks it has become obvious that a six-member Green & Independent Alliance formed who appear close to the six Labour Party members. In my last newsletter I referred to this constellation as "Lefties" which earned me some criticism from a few readers. No derogatory comment was intended, I was merely hinting that they are certainly on the political Left of the Chamber.

The 12 Liberal Party members and six non-aligned Independent councillors, form the centre field in the political spectrum. Their support or lack of it may prove decisive in formulating policy in the months to come.

We will continue to benefit from a strong Executive and a system of Policy Advisory Committees to give guidance to the Executive. Last year this system proved very successful; Maidstone's Councillors did work together for the good of Maidstone across the party political spectrum and I hope that we will continue to do so in a very collegial manner, even in view of the 2024 all out BIG elections, and hopefully without too much grand-standing and political obstruction for the mere sake of it.

Interesting times ahead!

One thing I would really like to keep a secret from you is that your own member has joined Cabinet - with the portfolio for Environmental Services. Yes, I know the bin situation leaves a bit to be desired! I previously told you that we will get a new contractor next year, which should see some great improvements, but please don't expect any imminent miracles or even preferential treatment for the North Downs. I will still read my inbox and follow up on your complaints and I shall endeavour my best to make the transition to the new contractor as smooth as possible.

I previously reported that MBC has committed to delivering a Design and Sustainability Development Plan Document (DPD) to sit alongside its Local Plan and forthcoming Local Plan Review. The DPD is now ready for public consultation and the document puts forward a range of draft policies, which new developments will be assessed against, such as a quality design and outlay of streets and buildings, incorporation of open space and nature as well as sustainability and design quality:

<https://localplan.maidstone.gov.uk/home/design-and-sustainability-development-plan-document>

Please take part at the consultation, which finishes on 12th June 2023.

Patrik Garten

## Useful Contact Information

Church Matters St. Mary Magdalene		01795 227329
Community Bus	Booking Line	07551 454702
Cricket Club	Enrique Damian	07522 691831 07967 890010
Crimestoppers	(Confidential)	0800 55511
Dog Club	Gary Morris info@mail4sdc.uk	07825 792031
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
Parish Council Clerk	Sherrie Babington	01634 867173
Pétanque Club	Tina Jacobs	07743 910185
Police	Emergency Only Non-Emergency	999 101
Police Community Support Officer for Stockbury		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	Janet Bracey - dd.fastmail.co.uk	
South East Water	Emergency Only Non-Emergency	0333 000 0365 0333 000 3330
Stockbury Observer - Editor	stockburyobserver@gmail.com	
The Harrow Public House	contact@theharrowstockbury.co.uk	01795 843222

# Sophie's Winning Coronation Cake

## Red Velvet Recipe

The recipe I used is originally a cupcake recipe which I increased for the competition - for the bottom tier I tripled the quantities and used a deep 20cm/8" push pan tin - to use the 20cm/8" the recipe originally called for the recipe to be doubled.

**N.B** Cooking time for the cake tins is longer.

### Ingredients

120g soft unsalted butter  
300g caster sugar  
2 large eggs  
20g cocoa powder  
1 tbsp red food colour  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
250ml buttermilk  
300g plain flour  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda  
3tsp white wine vinegar

### Frosting

350g mascarpone  
600g icing sugar

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C, fan 160°C, gas 4 and divide 16 paper cases between 2 x 12-hole cupcake trays.
2. Put the butter and the sugar in a free-standing electric mixer with a paddle attachment (or use a handheld electric whisk) and beat on medium speed until light and fluffy
3. Turn the mixer up to high speed, slowly add the eggs and beat until well incorporated.
4. In a separate bowl, mix together the cocoa powder, food-colouring paste, 3 tablespoons of water and vanilla extract to make a thick, dark paste. Add to the butter mixture and mix until evenly combined and coloured (scrape any unmixed ingredients from the side of the bowl with a rubber spatula).
5. Turn the mixer down to slow speed and slowly pour in half the buttermilk. Beat until well mixed, then add half the flour, and beat until well incorporated. Repeat this process until all the buttermilk and flour have been added. Scrape down the side of the bowl again. Turn the mixer up to high speed and beat until you have a smooth, even mixture. Turn the mixer down to low speed and add the salt, bicarbonate of soda and vinegar. Beat until well mixed, then turn up the speed again and beat for a couple more minutes.
6. Divide evenly between the paper cases and bake in the preheated oven for 20–25 minutes, or until the sponge bounces back when touched. A skewer inserted in the centre should come out clean. Leave the cupcakes to cool for about 15 minutes in the trays before turning out onto a wire cooling rack to cool completely.
7. While the cupcakes are cooling, make the frosting. Beat the soft cheese first to make fluffy and then add icing sugar together in a free- standing mixer with a paddle attachment (or use a handheld electric whisk) on a medium-slow speed until the mixture comes together and is well mixed – cover with a tea towel to stop the icing sugar going everywhere.

# Fiona's Most Flavoursome Winning

## Ginger Bundt Cake

In all honesty, I tinkered with the original recipe and, hand on heart, cannot exactly recall what I did! I have, though, recalled my tinkering to the best of my knowledge!

### Ingredients

220g unsalted butter, softened  
365g self raising flour  
200g muscovado sugar  
50g black treacle  
150g golden syrup  
2 large eggs, lightly beaten  
150ml milk  
150ml ginger liquor  
4 balls stem ginger in syrup, finely chopped  
1 tsp fine sea salt  
4 tsp ground ginger (heaped)  
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

### Icing

160g icing sugar  
50ml ginger syrup  
30ml ginger liquor

### Method

1. Heat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas 4.
2. Melt 1 tbsp butter in a small pan, then stir in ½ tbsp flour to create a wet paste. Brush it over the inside of a 9-inch bundt tin. Put the remaining butter, sugar, treacle and golden syrup in a pan set over a medium heat and stir until everything has melted together. Leave to cool a little.
3. Pour the mixture into a large bowl and whisk in the eggs ginger liquor and milk. Fold in the stem ginger, remaining flour, salt, ground ginger, and bicarb. Tip into the prepared tin and bake for 45-50 mins, or until firm to the touch. Leave to cool for 10 mins in the tin, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.
4. To make the icing, whisk the liquor, ginger syrup and icing sugar together. Pour the icing over the cake, and decorate. The original recipe decorates the cake with chopped crystallised ginger, I used edible flower petals.

