



THE STOCKBURY & SOUTH GREEN OBSERVER

March 2022



Hall Diary

All events at the Memorial Hall unless otherwise stated

| | | | |
|-------|------|--|---------------|
| Tues | 1st | Bowls | 2.00-4.00pm |
| Wed | 2nd | Pilates | 9.30-10.30am |
| Thurs | 3rd | Gardeners | 8.00-10.00pm |
| Fri | 4th | Zumba | 9.30-10.30am |
| Sat | 5th | | |
| Sun | 6th | Dog Club - Field | 10.00-11.00am |
| Mon | 7th | | |
| Tues | 8th | Bowls | 2.00-4.00pm |
| Wed | 9th | Pilates | 9.30-10.30am |
| | | Parish Council | 2.00-4.00pm |
| Thurs | 10th | | |
| Fri | 11th | Zumba | 9.30-10.30am |
| Sat | 12th | | |
| Sun | 13th | Dog Club - Field | 10.00-11.00am |
| Mon | 14th | | |
| Tues | 15th | Bowls | 2.00-4.00pm |
| Wed | 16th | Pilates | 9.30-10.30am |
| | | Parish Council | 7.30-9.30pm |
| Thurs | 17th | | |
| Fri | 18th | Zumba | 9.30-10.30am |
| Sat | 19th | The Kemsing Singers & Cinque Port Wind Quintet | 3.30 -6pm |
| Sun | 20th | Dog Club - Field | 10.00-11.00am |
| Mon | 21st | | |
| Tues | 22nd | Bowls | 2.00-4.00pm |
| Wed | 23rd | Pilates | 9.30-10.30am |
| Thurs | 24th | | |
| Fri | 25th | Zumba | 9.30-10.30am |
| Sat | 26th | | |
| Sun | 27th | Dog Club - Field | 10.00-11.00am |
| Mon | 28th | | |
| Tues | 29th | Bowls | 2.00-4.00pm |
| Wed | 30th | Pilates | 9.30-10.30am |
| Thurs | 31st | | |

Stockbury Village Hall

The Hall Committee

I am writing to you to appeal for your help, since we urgently need some more committee members. The amount of work is not high, we only meet every 3 months or so and the hall is financially sound as well as being in good condition, However, most of the existing committee members have served for 25 plus years and it is time for some new blood.

Please contact me if you can help.

Mick Bingham
Chairman
01795 842480

The Harrow Pub

Satisfaction Survey

At the special meeting in November 2021, the Community Benefit Society agreed to a trial run using a manageress (Sarah) to run the pub on our behalf.

We would very much now like to get your views about how this is going and what we can improve. There is a link to a short survey on The Harrow website and The Harrow Facebook page. We will also email the link to as many people as we can.

For those who cannot access this online, there will be paper copies of the survey available at MBF and in the pub.

Please do take a few moments to complete it. Your views are important to us!

We look forward to receiving your feedback.

The CBS Committee

Diary Date

Saturday

June 4th

Jubilee Weekend on Stockbury Village Green

AUCTION

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Bring your Friends!

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STOCKBURY COMMUNITY BUS

Mondays - Sittingbourne

Tuesdays - Maidstone

Thursdays - Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre (Savacentre)

Pickups from 9:30 a.m. close to where you live. Give us a try!

07551 454702

Stockbury Book Club

A Mixture of Books

by Gervase Phinn

This month we took a different approach by all reading a different book by the same author.

Gervase Phinn wrote a series of books early in the 21st century which all detailed different experiences in his career - as a School Inspector in the Yorkshire Dales.

Most people found the books a very pleasant read and quite relaxing. 'Nicely characterised' was a phrase used to describe how people in the books came across. Several people commented the dialogue and stories made them smile and laugh out loud at times.

It was felt he went to some effort to share what goes on in a small village primary and even though it is not that long since they were written, so much in education and village life has changed. With two retired teachers in the group, a discussion of the introduction of the National Curriculum ensued amongst people and also one on how village life in very rural areas has changed. For example, how many of those schools will still be open and will more affluent retirees have replaced many of the local families? At the time the books were written, most local employment was in livestock farming and most families carried on that tradition, from generation to generation. Just like in Stockbury, much of that has changed.

As is almost inevitable in a group of eight, two people didn't take to the books at all. Facile and purple being words used to describe them. Still, you can't win them all, can you?

As a North Yorkshire woman living in Kent, I have to say I enjoyed them.

For anyone interested (and in no particular order) we read: The Little Village School, Inspecting the Village School, The School at the Top of the Dale, Secrets of the Village School, The Heart of the Dales; and A Class Act.

We gave the books an overall score of 6.5

Moira Cooke

STOCKBURY COMMUNITY BUS

With all Covid restrictions lifted and spring fast approaching, we think it is time that the Community Bus ventured a little further afield.

We are therefore planning a trip to **Faversham Market** on **Friday 25th March**. The bus will be departing Stockbury / Hartlip at around 10AM so should arrive in Faversham at around 10:30.

On the return journey we intend to stop off at **Macknade's**, perhaps for a late lunch or maybe tea and a slice of cake.

Those with a National Bus Pass will travel free, for anybody without a pass, the return fare will be £5.

Just as a gentle reminder, the bus makes weekly return trips to Maidstone (Tuesdays) and Hempstead Valley (Thursdays).

To book a seat for either the trip to Faversham Market or for one of the weekly shopping trips please call: **07551 454702**

Stockbury Gardeners

If you are still lucky enough to have your greenhouse or polytunnel left after Eunice and Franklin have gone, here is a list of things that you might be able to conduct inside it but only once you have cleared away your neighbours wheelie bins, trampolines and plant pots from the lawn.

This month sow inside:

- Beetroot. Then transplant outdoors
- Cabbage, caulis. and brussels, then transplant outside
- Peppers and chilies as soon as possible with heat 22 degrees
- Tomatoes
- Cucumbers (indoor variety)

To sow/plant outside:

- Broad beans
- Onion sets
- Early potatoes
- Peas

Tips

If you were thinking of planting rhubarb, now is a good time. Instead of buying from a garden centre why not ask a neighbour if they could split their root, this known as "dividing" and will not only be free, it benefits the donor plant. If you do have a plant already, please feed it, you will know that it's worked by the increased quantity and quality of the stems.

Autumn fruiting raspberries should be cut down by now, I have saved the dry stems in bundles as they tend to make good kindling for starting bonfires. As they are dry, they are not too good at rotting down in the compost heap.

If you are like me and find it hard work cleaning greenhouse glass, I found a product called patio cleaner worked admirably, best applied in the rain, the glass shines like new and it is environmentally friendly.

Diary

This month's meeting is on 3rd March at 8 pm, there is a presentation on the gardens of Sissinghurst. All are welcome, so bring a friend if you wish; tea and cake will be served too.

Chris Spree



The Kemsing Singers and Cinque Ports Wind Quintet

present

A lively concert with afternoon tea

Saturday 19th March 2022 at 3.30pm
in Stockbury Village Hall

Spring is coming! We all need something to cheer us up and our lovely old church needs some TLC. This concert will certainly bring cheer and will hopefully raise some funds to complete the church kitchen and deep clean.

Tickets are just £10.00, available from The Harrow pub or via Irene Milton on 01795 844642.

THE HARROW PUB

FREE HOUSE - COMMUNITY OWNED

A quiet village pub in the heart of Stockbury. Serving fresh home-cooked food.

Small functions catered for.

Open from -

Monday - Closed

Tuesday - Sunday

11am

Kitchen open from -

Tuesday - Saturday

12pm-3pm 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 on the last Friday of the month

Live Music

12th March 8pm

Mike, Steve Duo

Back to the 50's & 60's

Takeaway available

Tues-Sun

Collection only



01795 843222



theharrowpubstockbury



The Harrow PubStockbury



contact@theharrowstockbury.co.uk



M2 junction 5 Stockbury interchange improvement scheme

The weekend closure we had planned for the 18 February to 21 February had to be cancelled due to the weather. **We apologise for any inconvenience or confusion this may have caused.**

The safety of our customers and staff is our number one priority and we will replan these works for a time when they can be carried out safely without the heightened risk of bad weather.

The closure will be arranged for later in the year. We'll provide more information on our project webpage once new dates are confirmed.



We're carrying out improvements to help reduce congestion at and on the **M2 junction 5 Stockbury interchange**, and enhance the flow of traffic, bringing real benefits to the drivers who use this junction daily.

To find out more, please visit our website: 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



The Harrow

What a busy February we had!

It began with a celebration of the Chinese New Year - The Year of the Tiger. In recognition of the occasion, a limited selective Chinese menu was created for the evening which included sweet and sour chicken, chilli beef, Chinese noodles, special fried rice and more! A lucky 26 villagers tucked into the feast with a further 2 opting for takeaway; there were plenty of disappointed faces too that night! And the aromas escaping from the kitchen

The following Tuesday was Games Night which drew in a good crowd with familiar village faces and unfamiliar too from the local neighbourhood, joining the fun, which was lovely to see, all enjoying the traditional board and card games on offer, from Yahtzee to Shove H'penny.

We were entertained by some live music in the shape of Richie Phillips who played to a fabulously enthusiastic crowd, who all sang along with him whether they knew the words or not! Richie will be back sometime in the future!

The old and young romantics of Stockbury were treated to a bit of fine dining on St Valentine's Day. With the lights dimmed just a touch, the tables laid with clothes and a red rose and candle on each one, the ambience was indeed a romantic one and the food ... oh, the food! Fine dining at its best.

Once again, Quiz Night was a resounding success. The pub was full to the rafters with all the quiz tables booked and participants eager to show off their knowledge of useless information! The winners of the evening - Clueless - were awarded a trophy, whilst the Golden Girls received the Wooden Spoons of the evening.

Our thanks to Ann Rich, our Quiz Mistress. Can we have easier questions next time please Ann??!!

Coming up in March for you:

- **4th March - Fish'n'Chip Night** - come and enjoy the full chip shop experience from cod and saveloys to mushy peas and pickled eggs. Eat in or takeaway - please pre-book takeaways.
- **8th March - Games Night** Come and try your hand at some traditional card and board games - or bring your own if you want! Kick off is 8pm
- **9th March - Tractor Club Lunch** 12.30pm
- **12th March - Live Music** - remember the 50s and 60s? Lets go back there or if, like me you are too young, to remember, be initiated to the sounds of both decades with Mike, Steve Duo. The music begins at 8pm but get there early.
- **15th March - Quiz Night** - Who will lift the trophy and get the wooden spoons this month? This is a very popular evening, so get your quiz table booked fast to avoid disappointment! Pens at the ready at 8pm
- **25th March - Coffee & Cake Morning** from 10.30am - Who can resist the pairing of coffee, cake and a relaxed catch up with friends? Not me! See you there!
- **27th March - Mother's Day** - Those very important ladies deserve to be treated to a fabulous lunch with each mum receiving a gift at the table.

With the pub's continuing success, Sarah is looking for both bar staff and kitchen help who have transport or are in walking distance of The Harrow. Please contact her if you would be interested in joining the team.

Who Gives a Cr@p? - I Do!

I've been banging on about plastic waste for a long time and remain continually offended when all my kitchen bin contains is plastic wrapping. I don't put my loose onions, bananas or anything else with a skin on in a plastic bag to go through the checkout and I try to buy single tins not those bound together by more unnecessary plastic but sometimes it just seems unavoidable.

After watching a couple of the recent programmes about reducing single use plastics in the home, I decided I would make some definite changes to the way I purchase.

Firstly, toilet paper and kitchen roll. After doing some research on the internet and talking to friends, I plumped for – yes, you've guessed it – “Who Gives a Crap” toilet paper and kitchen roll. I opted for a subscription which means I can manage delivery dates. It is delivered in bulk to reduce the carbon footprint, so you need somewhere to store a full box at a time but it comes in a recyclable cardboard box, wrapped in recyclable paper and quite frankly does the job!! They don't use inks, dyes, or scents and donate 50% of their profit to help provide sanitation for those in need.

Secondly shampoo, conditioner and washing up liquid. “Milk & More” deliver my milk in lovely glass bottles which they kindly take away and recycle for me, so I have opted for their shampoo, conditioner and washing up liquid. As they are delivering my milk anyway, this doesn't increase my carbon footprint any further. The shampoo doesn't feel quite the same but I am getting used to it and the conditioner is fine. Currently I am decanting the contents into the old plastic bottles which is working well but here are options to buy dispensers if my plastic bottles ever give up!

Thirdly deodorant. I used a particular brand for a long time because the bottle was glass even if the rollerball wasn't but I haven't been able to get it recently. A friend recommended a product called “Wild” which comes in different natural plant-based scents, some for sensitivity which is useful. You purchase the holder which is not plastic and infinitely re-suable and just refill with a block deodorant which comes wrapped in recyclable card through the post, so no delivery vans. They also donate a percentage of profit to support reforestation projects. If you sign up and refer a friend you can get them a free holder and 20% off your next order! What's not to like, and no-one has complained that I smell – yet!

Fourthly, I have started using a search engine called “Ecosia”, which searches just like another well known one I won't name but plants a tree for every search you make. In the space of a week that could be a lot of trees and it is so easy to set up. Why not give it a go.

This is only the beginning of my quest to reduce my plastic usage and I, and I am sure others, would welcome any suggestions, product recommendations or green changes anyone has made that we could all try.

Jackie Smith

Polly's Beautique


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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
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The Herb Garden

 @pollys_beautique

 07725 403697

Price List:

- Gel Polish nails - £20
- Gel Polish toes - £15
- Full set acrylics with gel - £25
- Acrylic infill with gel - £20
- Waxing – prices from £7 for Eyebrows to £25 for full leg
- Range of facials
(Inc. Microdermabrasion, Dermaplaning etc)
prices from £25 - £75
- Full Body Massage - £40
- Back and Shoulder Massage - £25
- Wash and Blow dry from £15
- Eyelash and Eyebrow Tinting from £5
- Lash Lift and Tint - £30
- MICROBLADING – eyebrow tattooing, enquire for prices

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Hybrid Lash Extensions

Russian Volume Lash Extension

Polly Kingsford-Field

email: pollykf@btinternet.com

Stockbury Kent



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.



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 843222

We would love you to join us

The Liberty Ship Threat

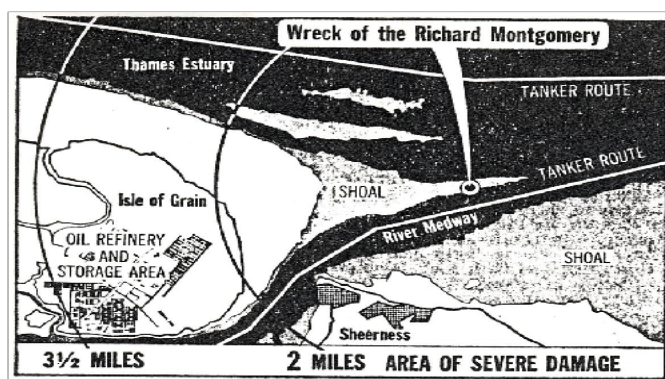
Ten years ago I wrote the article below about the American shipwreck in the Thames Estuary just off Sheerness. Then it was prompted, in part, by Mr Johnson's suggestion that a new airport could be built close to the mouth of the Thames; it was immediately dubbed by the press as "Boris Island". I opined that the "Bomb Ship" could be a very large obstacle to that project and did some research to show why.

Now I reintroduce the updated piece as background information following the report that, in June of this year the masts on the S.S. Montgomery are due to be removed amid fears that should they collapse, an enormous explosion could be precipitated causing huge volumes of water to flood Sheppey, the Isle of Grain and Hoo and the surge would continue up towards Chatham and Rochester, doing untold harm. The KM's Sittingbourne News reports (Jan.5th, 2022) "Earlier this year the Ministry of Defence offered to pay £5 million 'danger money' to any company prepared to hack off the rusting masts." As it happens Navy specialists will complete this task. It would also appear this is the first time that the M.O.D. have admitted there could be damage from an explosion at the wreck.

Let's start from the beginning. In the USA, Liberty Ships were built very quickly and were not meant to last. Such was the need for warships in a WWII crisis at the time. Their hulls were welded together (not riveted) and were susceptible to cracking. The S.S. Richard Montgomery was just such a ship. Built in Jacksonville, Florida and named after an American General killed in the American War of Independence, this Liberty Ship set sail in 1944 from the Delaware River to the Thames Estuary laden with bombs, detonators, pyrotechnic signals and other ammunition bound for use by allies in the post D-Day forces advancement. At its helm Captain Wilkie.



The S.S. Richard Montgomery under sail on its way to Sheerness.
Photo as seen in KM Sittingbourne News 5/1/22



From an article in the Sheerness Times Guardian 1971

Instructions were given by the Harbour Master at Southend Pier, HMS Leigh, to heave to at the Great Nore, Sheerness middle sands and await orders before proceeding. However, a squall arose and despite other ships in the area sounding warning sirens the Montgomery dragged anchor and ran aground onto a sandbank 1½ miles from Sheerness in 24 feet of water. This happened on August 20th, 1944. It was hoped that the ship could be re-floated. To this end, Rochester based stevedores arrived on August 23rd and began removing cargo. On August 24th the ship's hull cracked open and the bow holds were flooded but salvage operations continued whilst, according to Hugh Smith in c1960, the Sheerness dockers of which he was one, manned the pumps. For the next few weeks attempts were made to re-float her by emptying holds 3, 4 and 5 onto barges where soldiers checked the bombs. The weather appeared to be set fair and the unloading continued until the evening of September 25th when the team left the tarpaulins off the holds overnight. Needless to say, once more the weather worsened; the holds flooded and the ship sank breaking its back in two. Recovering the rest of the explosives from holds 1 and 2 was now not an option. As can be imagined there was great consternation amongst the powers that be because there remained a few thousand tons of bombs on board (it is said to be over 14,000 tonnes).

From this moment on matters become complicated, muddled even. I have researched several reports written for local newspapers from decades ago; many have conflicting accounts and certainly experts over the years have differing opinions as to the safety / dangerousness of the remaining load.

Responsibility has been shifted from one department of government to another. At the end of the war America fully intended to raise the ship and dispose of the cargo dispatching an American salvage company, Phillippa's Craft & Co, which completed a survey. However the British Government maintained it would deal with the wreck instead, at which point the S.S. Richard Montgomery was removed from all American lists (c1948) and became the sole responsibility of the British. Surveys were done and it was thought that the bombs would sink gradually into the sand and not be a problem. However the wreck is one mile south of the main Thames shipping lane and residents ashore on both sides of the estuary were and still are concerned about the safety of the wreck and its contents. But experts could not agree on the matter of dangerousness of the munitions on board. On the one hand it was stated that the heavy casing, covered in silt would corrode slowly, releasing the TNT into the sea gradually and safely. Then again others would opine that the heavy casing was sprayed with many thicknesses of anti-corrosion paint which would protect the contents, which in turn would become progressively volatile. Who to believe? And there lay the problem. Nothing was done.

Over the years various departments and authorities have 'passed the buck'. At one point the Navy declared it was nothing to do with them and when matters were referred to the Home Office they apparently did not know who was responsible either. The finger was pointed at the Department of Transport and they side-stepped responsibility. **Con'd ..**

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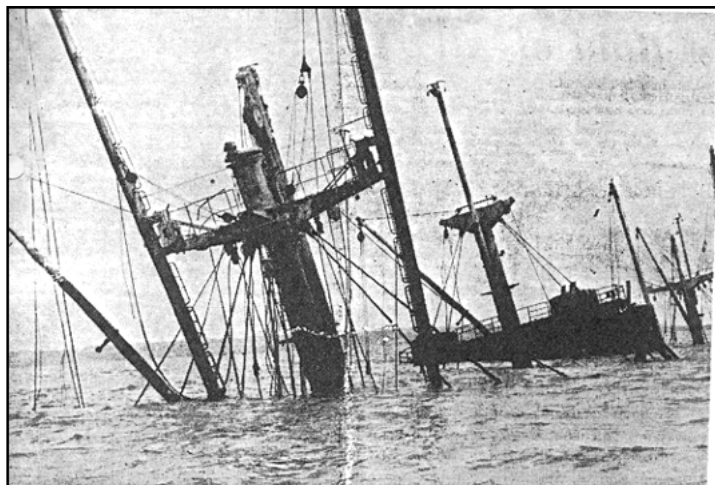
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The Liberty Ship Treat cont'd ...

As for the ship's manifest, there is a bit of a fog there. Challenged comparatively recently (2008 and ongoing) by one Ron Angel under the Freedom of Information Act, for facts concerning the actual contents of the ship's holds the M.O.D. did not answer a specific question about the possibility of there being chemical or biological weapons on board.

The wreck has been surveyed many times as experts try to assess deterioration of the structure and I have gleaned various facts from The North East Kent Times, 1964, May 27th, 1965, the Sheerness Times Guardian December 15th 1967 and other articles from 1971, 1972, 1974 and 1980. I present just a sprinkling of information gleaned from those years.

In 1964, Terry Boston MP pressed for information from The Secretary of Defence for the Royal Navy, Mr Mayhew, as to the safety of the ship. Divers investigated in 1965 because of consultations by a working party consisting of the M.O.D., the Home Office, the Port of London Authority and the Medway Conservancy Board. The conclusion made by the government was that the ship would be safer exactly where it was and that the risk of explosion was 'slowly getting less'. In 1971, Major Bill Hartley GM a bomb disposal expert of 19 years, in a report by Brian Moynahan and Bruce Bodford was quoted as saying among other things, that the adulterated TNT (manufactured towards the end of the war) would lend itself to producing a larger explosion than pure TNT. Essentially nothing changed, not even when a Mr. Cotgrove, a former government Explosives Trials Officer published an exhaustive report in 1972, condemning the government view and declaring it a 'whitewash job', giving his reasons. In the 1970s Southend Chamber of Trade was concerned enough to challenge the Government on numbers of bombs remaining, the fact that the ship was broken in three places and not two, and listed problems over safety (as they perceived them) which included heavy seas, tidal currents, sandbank movement, weighty flotsam, drifting ships, irresponsible navigation, sightseers and salvaging. All this because it has been assumed that should an explosion occur, it would put Sheerness, Southend, the Isle of Grain, Leigh and Canvey Island at risk. It has also been suggested that a resulting tidal wave would threaten Chatham and Rochester too. Every 4 years since the 1950s surveys have been carried out and maintenance work done when needed as in 1974, when the rotting torpedo nets were cut down and removed.

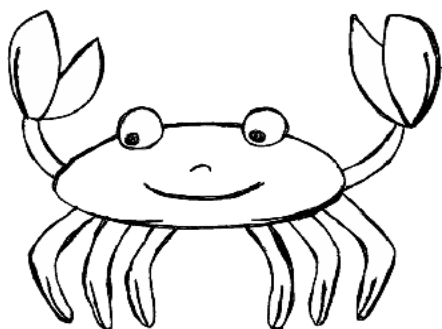


S.S. Richard Montgomery c1948
From the Sheerness Times Guardian 1971

With more time and energy, I could go on and on as successive governments have become involved in this saga ... too many incidents to mention here but if you want to know more you can wade through a whole host of websites and government survey reports which are available. (*I have not read them*) Just Google S.S. Richard Montgomery and put aside a week or two to plough through it all!

As matters stand, Naval Authorities will begin dismantling the masts in June of this year 2022.

Ann Rich



However there have been a few hairy moments as when Councillor David Atkinson boarded the Montgomery and unchallenged, he stayed taking photographs for 2 ½ hours to 'verify the boat's condition'. No one knew who or what he was doing at the time and he cited poor surveillance as yet another danger. And then there was the time in 1980 when a Dutch coaster, the Marie Altun, was seen set on a direct course for the wreck and was hastily intercepted by a Medway Ports Authority launch.

At this present time, we should take comfort from the fact that there is regular radar monitoring taken of the ship and it is surrounded by illuminated yellow pallet buoys. However even in the July of 2019 there was a debate in the House of Lords where, amongst other discussion points, it was noted that phosphorus continues to be released from the holds self-igniting when reaching the surface and in one year there were 40 sightings.

AWARD WINNING M B Farms

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Wednesday: 9:00am - 4:00pm

Saturday: 9:00am - 12 noon

National Lottery Available

Court Barn

ESCAPES



Luxury Shepherd's Hut in Yelsted with wood fired hot tub, stunning views and set exclusively and privately alone in an acre meadow field.

We would like to offer a discount to the local residents and the families and friends of Stockbury, Yelsted and Hartlip. Ideal for Christmas, New Year and family celebrations.

For further details please email info@courtbarescapes.com



Patrik Says ...

The year has barely started and I am overwhelmed!
Sorry, so much news - exciting and bad too ...

Let's start with the less important items here and leave the vital corks to the end:

Garden Waste

North Downs having been the worst affected ward last autumn for missed garden bin collections, I was looking forward to 2nd February when this item was referred by full council to CHE Committee. Officers presented a report for noting. Granted, great amendments were made since November but when I asked members not only to note the report but to seek refunds of fees or an extension of service period, plus a personal apology to customers, who clearly paid for a service which they did not receive, I shouldn't have held my breath. If the council offers a non-statutory service and cannot deliver, then this does reflect on the reputation of the local authority. The only remedy is now to pursue the issue in the small claims court. If members of the public want to explore this way I'd be happy to assist as their McKenzie friend.

The Good News of the Month:

Maidstone Borough Council's Climate Action Plan is ranked joint 25th place, nationally, out of 325 UK councils who have declared a climate emergency and has received the top score among Kent councils according to a Climate Emergency UK campaign.

Electoral Reform

I reported previously that the Boundary Commission is looking at redrawing the map for council wards post-2024. I am still shell-shocked about the latest proposals: There is a good chance that North Downs Ward will be split into three slices west to east: Stockbury forming a new ward with Detling and Boxley; Hollingbourne, Hucking and Bicknor joining Leeds and Wychling, Frinsted, Otterden being annexed by Lenham. It's early days and things are clearly at consultation stage. Please add your comments here: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/have-your-say/32722> I certainly would be upset at losing two thirds of my ward, which currently represents many small communities within the AONB.

And Now the Major Corker

(Please read and digest slowly)

For any of you who may not already know, Binbury Park is a proposed new Garden Village on the site of the former Detling Aerodrome off the A249 Sittingbourne Road. This site lies entirely in the AONB and if permitted, would form the largest development within an AONB anywhere in the country. Further information can be obtained by visiting: https://maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/132576/ED-022-Binbury-Park-Garden-Village,-Detling-September-2016.pdf

For some years a developer has been eyeing up this site and put in a planning application for 1100 homes. By law the council has to consider this application. **So far so good.**

I hear on the grapevine that a special meeting of the Planning Committee will be held on 16th of March, dealing solely with this application.

The planning application and all its 439 associated documents can be viewed on the MBC website; the Planning Reference is 18/504836. It was validated on 18 September 2018 – over 3 years ago! Although the site is known as Detling Aerodrome, most of the land involved is within Thurnham Parish and a small area is within Stockbury Parish.

If Maidstone were to allow or refuse this application, there will undoubtedly be an appeal.

I thought that it would be helpful if I explained how major applications like this one, which is in conflict with National Planning Policy, are handled by the Government. If a development of this scale were to be permitted by the District Council in an AONB, I am certain that it could only be by way of a Ministerial decision.

Planning appeals are mostly determined by Planning Inspectors in the name of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (SoS). Some major or hugely controversial appeals concerning issues of National Planning Policy may, however, be 'recovered' from the Inspectorate and referred directly to the SoS for decision. In these cases, instead of the Inspector issuing a decision himself, he sends his report and recommendation on the appeal to the Secretary of State.

The Binbury Park planning application gives rise to serious conflicts of the National Planning Policy concerning the protection of AONBs, encouraging more house building and planning for climate change. I would not, therefore, be surprised if any appeal for this development is recovered for a decision by the SoS and that a decision on it will then be made by the SoS and not by an Inspector.

Once the inquiry has been concluded, the Inspector will submit his conclusions and recommendations to the SoS and a decision will be issued in the same way as a decision on a recovered planning appeal.

So, what is likely to be the outcome? On the basis of what I know at present, I think that if Maidstone refuses the application, it is very likely that an appeal will be dead in the water and the Inspector (or SoS) follows the Council's decision. If MBC resolves to permit the application, it will almost certainly be called in by the SoS and MAY be refused. But, who knows?

No doubt, you are aware that Maidstone is currently going through the hoops of its Local Plan Review. A Local Plan should give local communities certainty about forthcoming developments and protection against unwanted ones. Over the past months I reported that the Local Plan Review went through several stages of consultation; all 55 members of the council had the chance to input their two cents. We saw many public protests regarding Garden Villages in Lidsing and Lenham Heath. It is a difficult and ongoing journey.

The Binbury proposal may have fantastic features, may be sustainable and even improve certain traffic problems on the A249 but for the very reason that the Binbury Development is entirely within an AONB it was not included in the Local Plan. You may even argue that this particular area of the AONB doesn't deserve its status, fact is, however, that it is part of the AONB and by law it deserves special protection, until or unless Parliament revokes this designation.

cont'd ...

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EVENTS THIS MARCH...

- SAT 19TH: SIX NATIONS SHOWING

TUE 1ST: PANCAKE DAY

SAT 5TH: COCKNEY NIGHT & 3-COURSE MEAL

THURS 17TH: ST PATRICKS

SAT 26TH: BAND NIGHT DJ KAM

SUN 27TH: MOTHERING SUNDAY & 3-COURSE MEAL

MONDAYS - BINGO/QUIZ

THURSDAYS - OPEN MIC NIGHT

FRIDAYS - FISH FRIDAYS & TAKEAWAY FISH & CHIPS.

SATURDAYS - 3RD SAT MUSIC QUIZ. LAST SAT BAND NIGHT

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Patrik cont'd ...

So one would expect that the decision on the 16th will be a foregone conclusion. It is not in the Local Plan Review, it is in an AONB and the current Local Plan Review meets its criteria for fulfilling the future housing delivery targets in the Borough. Except – certain members may see the wonderful benefits of this proposal; those Councillors may have always wanted this development but were too scared to put it in the Local Plan. Outside an AONB it would surely tick all the right boxes for a great development and it would take the pressure off the two other proposed garden developments in Lidsing and Lenham Heath.

To me, however, the permission of Binbury on the 16th will drive horse and cart through the Local Plan. A development of this size must be considered by the Local Plan making process, must stand up to scrutiny by all 55 elected members as well as public consultation. Allowing this development through the back-door by a specially convened planning committee of only 13 members, without the due process of Local Plan making and public consultation is outright *immoral and undemocratic!*

What is the point of us slugging for months over the Local Plan Review process, if a special meeting of 13 Committee Members can circumnavigate everything we worked for? How often do I hear councillor colleagues crying that their hands are tied by the Planning Inspector?

And never mind how wonderful the merits of the development are but allowing it in order to delegate the moral decision making to a Planning Inspector or even the SoS would represent **cowardice** by your locally elected councillors.

My bit's said ... next newsletter expected after the 16th of March – update to follow ...

PATRIK GARTEN

MBC Councillor for North Downs Ward (Conservative)
Phone: 01622-807907

Cooking with Zeina

Daal Malai Makhni

(Lentil Soup with Butter and Cream)

The woman who gave me this recipe did not like me and believe me, the feeling was mutual. We could not stand each other and would go to great lengths to avoid one another; despite this, I have to concede that she was a damn good cook. I have no idea why she chose to share this recipe with me and I'm sure she hates the fact that I have made changes to her original recipe but I'm eternally grateful. We might not have gotten along but we both believe in ancient recipes not being lost to the ages. Or perhaps she was giving me an awful formula in the hopes that I would choke on it and I just happened to, instead, like it!

This dish calls for red lentils - they're my favourite - but you can deviate and use another type of lentil if you like. I'd avoid white lentils as I don't think the flavours would work but anything else should be fine - just keep an eye on cooking times as other lentils can take significantly longer to cook. Note: you can take out the butter and

and cream to make it vegan - I'd add a large fistful of coriander leaves if you do - and maybe use a stock cube instead of salt ... should balance everything out nicely.

Ingredients

- Red lentils, rinsed, 2 cups
- Vegetable oil, 2 tbsp
- Butter, 1 tbsp
- Cumin seeds, 1 tsp
- Coriander seeds, 1 1/2 tsp
- Garlic cloves, 8 chopped/smashed
- Ground turmeric, 1/2 tsp
- Chilli powder, 1/2 tsp
- Salt, to taste
- Tomatoes, 3
- Cream, 3 tbsp
- Chopped Coriander leaves for garnish

Method to the Madness

- Always rinse lentils three times (same with rice - if you don't wash rice three times, my grandmother will rise from the grave and smack your hand lightly with her wooden mixing spoon). Use a large pan and place the lentils on the hob (high heat) with 6 cups of warm water. Add the turmeric, salt and chilli powder.
- In a separate frying pan, add the three tomatoes, chopped and cook with a little bit of water until you have a paste. Add the oil and the garlic and fry. Careful not to burn anything.
- When the garlic softens, add the coriander seeds, butter and cumin seeds. Fry for 10 seconds and then take off the heat. Set aside.
- Check the daal. If it has started to soften and is drying down, begin to stir. This is key, by stirring for a few solid minutes, you take a daal from a confusing soup to a substantial daal. It might seem silly and like you're not doing anything but it makes a huge difference later on. I usually count stirs - fifty clockwise and fifty counter clockwise. It feels like a little bit of witchy fun.
- Heat the tomato-garlic paste before you add it in to the daal. You want it to sizzle when it hits the daal but you don't want to caramelise the mix at all. Stir together until incorporated.
- Stir in the cream and sprinkle the coriander leaves on top. Done!

Serve with rice or naan or do what I do and just have a bowl on its own while you think about how strange human connection can be.

Love Zeina

OBSERVER DEADLINE

MONDAY 21st March

Please email your contributions to
stockburyobserver@gmail.com

Mobile Library Dates

Thursday 10th & 24th March, '22

9.10am - 9.40am
At the Village Hall

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 |
| 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 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 | Ann Rich - email: 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 | contact@theharrowstockbury.co.uk | 01795 843222 |
| WI | Ann Ballard - email: rosemary.ballard@outlook.com | 01622 736331 |