

THE Grapevine NEWSLETTER

Sutton Hall Trustee Retiring as Rector of St John's

You may already be aware that the Reverend Nigel Sands will be retiring as Rector at the end of May after 29 years of service to our church and school.

Many of you probably have memories of a christening, confirmation, wedding or funeral that Nigel officiated at over the years. These occasions are special to everyone and Nigel has always been aware of this. He will go through a wedding rehearsal with the bride, groom and families to put them at ease so that their day is a day to remember. At funeral his homework is always carried out beforehand so that on the day the service is made easier for the family and has a personal touch to it. Nigel may not know this but it is said that he always takes a good wedding and a good funeral and his sermons are short!

His last service at Stockcross church will be on Sunday 24th May at 11am followed by a reception and presentation at the Sutton Hall. If you would like to donate towards this, your donations may be handed to Mike Pike or Shirley Wernham. Everyone is invited to this occasion. Please let's make it a memorable time for Nigel and his wife Dorothy, who has supported him throughout his time with us. Thank you

*Mike Pike & Shirley Wernham
Churchwardens*



Reverend Sands with long time parishioner Mrs Pearl Dromgoole Taken inside St John's Church in 2006

FROM THE SUTTON HALL STOCKCROSS

March 2009 No: 69

Current Hall Hire Rates (£ per hour) 1st September 2008

	Small Hall	Large Hall	Both Halls
Resident	5.00	7.50	10.00
Non resident	8.00	12.00	15.00

Call Mandy on 01488 608769 to book or visit our website

www.suttonhallstockcross.org

or email

suttonhall642@btinternet.com

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Panto Pictures
- Gnome Liberation Front
- Pub's News

Next Grapevine due out 1st June.

Last date for submitting items for inclusion 15th May

End of an Era

After almost 10 years Gillem Sandys-Lumsdaine has asked to be relieved of his role as compositor of The Grapevine. His help in achieving an attractive newsletter delivered on time has been invaluable and I shall personally miss his calm and pleasant advice. If anyone else is keen to help out and can work to strict deadlines please contact me for details.

VW (Editor) vc.wilson@btinternet.com

Chairman's Report

Five months as chairman and Christmas as come and gone. Doesn't time fly when you are having fun? Our Christmas Draw get together was a great success with Peter Dawson winning the television which he supplied to us through his works. He then sold it and donated the money back to the hall so thank you very much.

Hope you all attended the pantomime. You missed an excellent evening if you didn't. Thanks to VFW and team for a really super evening.

Joan & Keith left the Rising Sun in early February; just after Joan performed in the pantomime. Joan is joining Keith in his retirement. I would like wish them and Luggage the dog all the best and happy travelling. Glen and Kelly with their four dogs Eddy, Ralph, Norman and Sid have now moved in. It's a hard act to follow but no doubt they will do their best.

Mandy Street our caretaker and her son Lewis are leaving us for pastures greener we wish them both the best of luck in their new home.

The new store room for the chairs and tables is now nearly finished; this will stop our little angels using them as an assault course!

Those of you that entered the potato competition, it's nearly time to plant it in the pot. Best of luck with this new project no cheating because Percy Goodenough will know.

Any body with ideas for a new event or project which you would like to run please come forward. You don't have to be a committee member we are always looking. We are still looking for a new treasurer; nobody seems to want this job. That's it from the Marsh Benham Boy.

Mr Chairman

Village Litter Pick 2009

Last year our enthusiastic group collected the rubbish littering our pretty village and this year we thought we'd do it again. So if you missed it last year then join us this year for coffee, bacon rolls and help improve our environment at the....

**2009 Stockcross Village Litter Pick
Sunday March 22nd 10am to 12noon
Meet outside Sutton Hall**

**Black sacks* and some equipment will be provided
(*recyclable of course).**

Everyone is welcome – including the kids, but please wrap up warm and bring suitable gloves to wear. We hope you can make it!

See you there.

Mike and

Claire

Update on Events at The Sutton Hall

The John Kirkpatrick concert organised by Viv in November was a resounding success. Over 100 devoted followers and a few locals (now converts) were treated to a splendid evening of entertainment that raised around £1800 (including £750 of matched fundraising from Barclays) for Hall funds. If you missed it you can still catch John on the television programme "The Victorian Farm".



Thanks go to Keith and Joan Holloway who managed to book John at a considerably reduced fee and achieve something of a coup for Stockcross.



The Children's Christmas party organised by Gill Cresswell and her team of local mum's was very well received by all the children, parents, and grandparents who went along. The tea was delicious and the entertainer put on a splendid show. Father Christmas even dropped in to give out the presents.

The Christmas get together was once again well received. Thanks to Julie Smith for volunteering to organise the mince pies and mulled wine. Peter Dawson won first prize in the raffle. Thanks to all those who donated prizes. We raised over £400.

The Stockcross Recipe Book sold out within minutes and another run had to be done to meet demand. In the end 226 books were sold. Congratulations to Linda Mason, whose idea this was and who put hours of work and worry into its production. The total amount raised (including £350 matched fundraising via Vodaphone) was £1146

Charlie ran out of pots at the launch of the Potato Growing Competition. He sold 53 potatoes, so get planting looks like the competition will be fierce!

The Panto is reported elsewhere, but all the effort by the cast and crew resulted in over £1700 profit being taken over the three performances. Thanks to Greenham Common Trust, who gave us £500 to cover the cost of production.

Such active fundraising means we can continue to invest in the future of our hall and help us obtain grant aid.

Nature Notes February 2009

There is a saying that goes something like – if you stick your head above the parapet you are going to get shot at. Well I think I have done just that. At the recent potato event in the village hall, I asked Viv if there had ever been a Nature note in the Grapevine, The answer was no and I heard myself say ‘well, if not shall I have a go?’ So... in the middle of one of the coldest spells of weather we have had in recent years here goes.

If you, like me, feed birds in your garden the cold certainly brings all sorts of fairly unusual varieties within close range. I am lucky enough to have a garden bordering the lovely Church Wood, so get all the woodland birds – except the ones that go to Geoff and Angela Painting’s garden! From what I hear they have a large number of Siskins – I, just across the road, do not have one! I keep a bird list and would love to hear from anybody who thinks they have seen anything unusual.

I think we will all heartily be glad when spring is on the way and that often starts with the first signs of frog activity. In last year’s diary I had seen frogs active in my pond on the 5th February. Not much hope for this year I feel as the pond has been icebound for weeks. I also see that we had a BBQ in the garden on the 10th! One of the other first signs of spring is the sight of the Brimstone butterfly. I would love to know from others when this large yellow butterfly is first sighted.

So we all wait for the start of another year of activity and observation. I would love to hear from anybody with nature news, especially from children, I can be contacted at Pump Cottage, Church Road, 01488 608324 or by e mail ivor@ivorscull.wanadoo.co.uk

By Janet Scull

Doggie Drawings by Louise Burgess

I live in the village and am a part-time artist, doing pet portraits. I have recently done portraits of both of the village’s lovely pub dogs Luggage and Charlie. Although Luggage has recently moved on with Keith and Joan from the Rising Sun, Charlie’s portrait can be seen in the Lord Lyon and I have some other pictures on display in the Rising Sun. I would like to offer village residents 20% discount on Pet Portraits - just refer to the Grapevine. Pictures are done from a photo. More details, including prices and examples can be found on my website - www.loubpetpics.co.uk

My contact number is 01488 608390

Join our knitting club at the Rising Sun Stockcross Saturday 14 March, 11am to 1pm

Do you knit or crochet? Would you like to learn? Knitting is enjoying a real renaissance with hundreds of knitting clubs popping up all over the country. First made popular again by celebrities like Sarah Jessica Parker, Madonna and Russell Crowe (yes, knitting is for men too!) – Knitting is reported to now be one of Britain’s biggest past times.

For myself, I got into knitting as an excuse to get together once a month or so with some of my friends and their mums. We’d sit around someone’s table and have a good chat. Every so often we even make something! Since then, I’ve really been bitten by the knitting bug. Knitting is a great way of *being green* with lots of new eco yarns available and increasing numbers of British farmers producing undyed and organic local wools. You can recycle pretty much anything into knitting yarn – including plastic bags! But it’s also just really thrilling to wear or give a gift of something you’ve knitted. I made lots of Christmas presents this year – and whilst they may not be perfect – the people who got them seemed really happy to get something unique.

‘New knitting’ even has a language of it’s own! Can anyone guess what the following abbreviations stand for?

WIP KIP KAT and UFO

For the answers you’ll have to pop along to our first meeting...

So, the idea is that the Stockcross knitting club will meet on the second Saturday of each month for a knit and a good chat.

Everyone is welcome, from complete beginners to those who have been knitting for years. And whilst there won’t be any formal classes, there will be lots of help to get you started on knitting (or to help solve those little knitting problems)!

Bring your own projects – and for those who want to learn out I’m sure there will be some spare needles and wool that you can borrow

For more information contact Claire on 01488 608597 – or just drop in at the first meeting. Hope to see you there!

Mobile Library visits Stockcross

MAR	APR	MAY
11	1 22	13

Village Hall 1.15pm to 1.55pm

Bayford House Nursing Home 2pm – 2.40pm

Stockcross Panto Players in Jack and the Beanstalk

Only a village pantomime engages all the generations with such passion and enthusiasm; so many of the community were involved in *Jack and the Beanstalk* it was a wonder there was anyone remaining for audience. What a wealth of talent we can muster: designers, painters, costumers, dance and music directors, actors, bovine impersonators, a hen delivering golden eggs on three successive nights, sound and lighting engineers, agricultural advisors, a giant midget and his missus, hospitality caterers (including a rehearsals "field canteen"), front- back- side- and under-(?) stage support, young people confident beyond their years and much, much more, all in the name of fun and laughter. Well done everyone and special thanks to the "roadies", our audience.

Snow, ice, real influenza and skirmishes with other performance-threatening germs made for a hazardous journey to the opening night. Furrowed brows notwithstanding and cries of "*it'll be alright on the night*" there were times when the actual performances seemed like a distant dream. As the dress rehearsal thundered towards us it all somehow came together and those "*ibaotr*" optimists proved correct against the odds. The Archers' Jack and the Beanstalk never had to cope with ice and snow. The greatest reward was to see so many smiling faces leaving the Sutton Hall for the bitter cold of early February nights; never mind what they were smiling at.... perhaps the thought of doing it all again next year.

Cast and support:	51 of all ages
Tickets sold:	198
Raffle Tickets sold:	246
Bar – drink consumed – too many to count!	
Auntie Angela's Orange Squash consumed:	27,000 litres
Goodenough Beanstalk Compost:	15 tonnes
Rhubarb:	56 crates
Feel good factor:	immeasurable.

Keith Phillips



Little Carry: Sophie Reed, Carry: Joan Holloway: Fetch: Viv Wilson and Little Fetch: Danielle Reed



Villain 'Squire' Harry Coe played by Colin Butter



Granny Bean: Gerry Thurgut with Jasper: Emma Smith



Daisy the cow: Nick and Ann Drewe with Jack: Georgie Hunt

More Pictures: Stockcross Pantomime



Mrs Mungus: Chelsea Ford
Giant, Hugh Mungus; Louis Spencer



The King: Stephen Blackmore with Harry Coe, Jasper, and
Heralds: Amber Richards and Georgia Brown



Jack and Princess Lima: Emilie Butter



The Hen that lays the golden eggs: Natasha Squire



Villagers Amber Richards and Georgia Brown

THE CREW

Producer	Viv Wilson
Directors:	Acting Keith Phillips
	Dance Penny Brookman
	Music Anna Gillings
Set Design	Chrissie and Nigel Rickards
Costume Design`	Sylvia Pascoe
Make-up	Penny Brookman
Props	Denise Lewington
Prompters	Tina Stapleton and Sheelagh Brown
Stage Manager	Simon Reed
Stage Hands	Stephen Blackmore, Anna Gillings, Karen Reed
Lighting	Michael Brenkley and Steve Kirby
Sound	Sarah Ching and Sam Hunt
Set construction	Nigel Rickards, Roger Thomas and Jane Batt
Set painting	Bob John, Jean Wallis, Roger Thomas, Nigel and Chrissie Rickards
Seamstresses	Sylvia Pascoe, Jenny Thurgut, Jan Gill, Shirley Turner
Rehearsal catering	Angela Painting
Programme & Posters	Georgie Hunt & Jane Batt
Front of House	Jane & David Seaton, Jenny Thurget, Linda Mason
Bar	Steve Kirby, Mike Pike, Ollie Highton



AROUND THE VILLAGE

Gnome Liberation Front in Stockcross

You may not have heard of the GLF, no one had until last June, when Shirley Turner at "Cornerways" put her aging concrete Gnome in the gap in her hedge. She received the following letter from the GLF. (We feel a full reprint is justified considering the obvious seriousness of the issue.

Dear Madam

Re: Gnome in Captivity

It has been brought to our attention by one of our roving operatives that you have recently installed one of our Brothers in a comedy "grotto" in the hedge by the road on the border of your property.



Whilst we applaud your efforts to promote Gnome Awareness we are concerned that you may be forcing our Brother to endure a traumatic lifestyle in order solely to enhance your bucolic ideas.

For example, have you considered the effect of exhaust fumes on the Gnome lung, dog urine on the skin, or the trauma traffic noise can cause to small Gnome ears, or even the psychological horrors that our Brother will be suffering seeing large vehicles bearing down on him day in day out, wondering if it will be the next vehicle that veers off course and crushes the life out of him? Being a Human Bean I expect, like so many before you, you have not – not through the desire to be unkind but through sheer ignorance. Have you even asked his name?

Therefore, before we take further action we at the GLF are writing to you to insist that you put into place certain measures designed to alleviate the distress our Brother will inevitably be feeling in his comedic "grotto". These are as follows:

- 1. Our Brother should be supplied with a high visibility jacket in order that vehicles approaching down the B4000 can see him and take avoiding actions*
- 2. A selection of cones and barriers – red and white- should be installed in the footpath around the "grotto" to warn Human Beans to move aside and not encroach on our Brothers habitation.*
- 3. An electric fence should be wired around the "grotto" at the height most appropriate to ward off dogs and their repulsive urinary habits. Our Brother should also be supplied with daily hot water with Johnson's Baby Soft Wash (lavender).*
- 4. Ear defenders in blue will need to be supplied, as will an iPod Nano to alleviate boredom.*

A tank of oxygen should also be installed as our Brother has reported that he is finding it increasingly difficult to breathe given the high levels of pollution in the "grotto".

If our Brother is to continue to remain in the "grotto" then in the winter months he will of course require heat and blankets and some source of entertainment. Sky+ is very popular with our Brethren, watched of course on a 42" Plasma.

We will be watching your property with interest and expect that all of these measures be in place by July 10th. Failure to do so will result in our Brethren being relocated to a more caring residence

Yours Fraternally

Odds Bodkins (Gnome-in Chief, South West Sector, Albion

Christmas is for Children.....crackers from around the village

Little boy says to his father "He can't be the real Father Christmas he had to ask you to read the names on the present."

Nigel Richards has had to start to grow a beard because he was woken up Christmas Morning by Father Christmas alias his daughter Abigail in a Father Christmas outfit supporting Nigel's shaving foam as a beard!

Father Christmas "What do you want for Christmas little girl?"

Little Girl "A pony"

Father Christmas "What a My Little Pony?"

Little Girl "No a real one "

Now performing at the Lord Lyon @ Stockcross,

TAKE AWAY FISH "N" CHIPS,

7 days per week 12.00-2.00pm

5.45- 9.00pm(7.00- 9.00 Sun)

All fish in our own light beer batter: Starring

Cod Fillet 8/10oz **£6.95**

Haddock fillet 8/10oz **£6.50**

Home breaded Plaice Fillet **£ 6.25**

Whole tail Scampi **£7.95**

All served with chips & mushy peas

Please call 01488 608366 to place your order now!!!

10% discount on all catches over £ 30.00 + order a drink while on the phone to be on the bar when you arrive Please be patient while waiting, all fish will be cooked to order for your maximum enjoyment, hope to see you soon Fast approaching Mothers Day & Easter weekend don't forget to book your tables.

Lord Lyon - Guest Ales

Donnington S.B.A ABV 4.4% Malt dominates over bitterness in the subtle flavour of this premium bitter, which has a hint of fruit & dry, malty finish.

Whilst holidaying in St Lucia, Amy Winehouse snatched up a real stunner; Sam from the Lord Lyon. He was strolling along the beach when Amy stopped him and asked if he would go and get her a drink (how cheeky?).

Of course, Sam went to the bar and bought her a drink; they spent the next few hours together, along with one of Amy's friends chatting on the beach, whilst Gary carried on buying the drinks! Sam left them behind feeling really chuffed with himself, and couldn't wait to try and see Amy's FRIEND again.

A thief was recently caught in the Lord Lyon pub! Monty Mason stole a rose just before Christmas, and when he was confronted by Gill, his excuse was 'he gave it to an old lady'. Would that excuse stand up in court? Then on Valentine's Day, he tried his luck again. Stealing another rose to give to his village sweetheart, Julie. Linda was quick off the mark, and snatched the rose from Julie and replaced it back on the table. Was she jealous or just honest????

The Rising Sun

We said goodbye to Keith, Joan and Luggage at the end of January. They supported the village hall very well and most will have seen Joan on stage a week later in the pantomime. However on the 1st of February Richard came in for two weeks and promptly warmed the place up with a chimney fire! Good lad.

And on the 16th February the new tenants arrived.



Glen and Kelly are looking forward to meeting everyone in the local area. After running pubs in Bath, Oxford and Waltham St Lawrence we are very excited to have The Rising Sun as our new home.

Come and join us for music and quiz nights, exceptional ale and locally sourced food. Look out for four character dogs as well – Ralph, Norman, Eddy and Sid.

Glen is a big cricket fan so could he be a candidate to join Stockcross Gentlemen's eleven?

FUND RAISING IDEAS NEEDED - Get Connor and Yasmin to the Olympics!

Three Stockcross children, Connor, Yasmin and Erin Hamilton-Giles, have great international potential for tumbling and gymnastics, but need your help with ideas for fundraising!

Kirsty Hamilton-Giles of Church Lane, Stockcross currently funds their training, a minimum of 13 hours each week at Basingstoke Gymnastic Club, but with the up and coming national and international fixtures it is becoming too expensive. Connor (age 11) is due to compete at the British National championships in Stoke on Trent in March in the field of tumbling and then onto the World Championship in St. Petersburg in Russia in October, and will represent Great Britain. His overall ambition is to compete for his country in the Olympic Games.

Sister Yasmin, 7, will also be competing in the British National championships and has been identified as having exceptional ability for her age by the gymnastic club for 'women's artistic' gymnastics. Meanwhile Erin, age 5, is also training in gymnastics, but her potential is unknown at the moment.

So Stockcross mums are scratching their heads trying to think of fund raising ideas to raise the £6000 needed. Ideas please to Kirsty on 07917 696646 or Gaye on 01635 569992.

COMING EVENTS

Held in the Sutton Hall unless otherwise stated

Mar

- 14 **Knitting Club** 11am – 1pm
meet at Rising Sun
- 22 **Village Litter Pick**
meet at hall 10am
- 25 **STOCC** Social afternoon

Apr

- 22 **STOCC** Coach trip to Bristol
- 29 **STOCC** Social afternoon

May

- 27 **STOCC** To be arranged

Open Studios

May 2nd – May 31st 2009

Local artist Jean Wallis will be opening her studio again this year and exhibiting at the Arlington Arts Centre as well as at Insight 2009 which is being held at New Greenham Arts.

Dates and opening times will be available nearer the time at Jean's website; www.jeanwallis-artist.me.uk



Wednesday 25 March

Social afternoon
£2 including tea

Wednesday 22 April

Coach trip to Bristol

Coach leaves Stockcross (Sutton Hall) at 9.00 a.m.

Optional 1 hour guided walk around historic old town. Coach arrives back at about 5.30 p.m.

Cost (coach and driver's tip) - £14.50 including walk, £12 without walk.

Booking forms from Leigh

Wednesday 29 April

Social afternoon £2 including tea

Wednesday 27 May

To be arranged

ALL WELCOME

Call Leigh: 01488 608443
for further information

Newbury Symphony Orchestra Spring Concert 2009

Stravinsky: Firebird Suite
Richard Strauss: Four Last Songs
Soprano: Janet Coxwell
Saturday 21 March 2009
St. Nicolas' Church Newbury
7.45pm
Tickets from the Corn Exchange
01635 522733

St John's Church Stockcross

CHURCH SERVICES

Mar

- 8 11.00am Holy Communion
- 15 10.00am United Benefice of Holy Communion (See below *)
- 22 11.00am Family Communion (Mothers Day)
- 29 11.00am Holy Communion

Apr

- 12 11.00am Holy Communion (Easter Day)
- 26 11.00am Morning Prayer

May

- 10 11.00am Holy Communion
- 21 7.30pm Holy Communion
- 24 11.00am Holy Communion

* *Bishop of Reading*

The Rt Rev Stephen Cottrell will be preaching and celebrating Holy Communion at the United Benefice Service at Stockcross on Sunday 15th March at 10am. The service will be followed by coffee and all parishioners are welcome.



Stockcross CE Primary School News

The children made the most of the recent snow fall. The field became home to a number of giant snowmen while the adventure playground mound made an impromptu toboggan run! Staff made a superb effort to keep the school open with strong support from parents.

We enjoyed welcoming the January intake of pupils who join those who have started in Miss Phillip's class in September. All have settled in well and brought an added richness to the school. A recent PTFA 'Tea and Cake' event after our weekly Achievers' Collective Worship allowed parents and staff the chance to get to know one another better.

There is a rich mix of extra-curricular activities at school. Netballers and footballers have enjoyed success in recent fixtures. Choir continue to sing strongly, the band is playing well and children are cooking up some tasty treats in cookery club. The junior rugby teams performed very well in the Hungerford Rugby Tournament reaching the finals and semi-finals and winning the trophy for the most sporting team.

Nathan Hunt
Head Teacher