

FROM THE SUTTON HALL  
STOCKCROSS  
May 2021 No: 117  
E-edition & Limited hard copies

# THE Grapevine NEWSLETTER



At Austin Macauley we are proud to present one of our newest Authors to our family, and we were fortunate to secure a contract with Scobie Dee for her work of 'Please will you come to my party'. The manuscript was brought to our attention during lockdown and we felt that having read all the reports and taken into account the editor's opinion we could confidently state that Scobie's work was found to be an imaginative and evocative story for Children. We also felt that the illustrations were superb and wonderfully stylized that the Board expressed a belief that with the right marketing strategy,

this work could stand out in an extremely competitive genre.

**Please will you come to my party** was published on 31<sup>st</sup> March as is available through Austin Macauley website [www.austinmacauley.com](http://www.austinmacauley.com) along with other major online book companies. This book was the first successful joint venture between Mother and Daughter who live in Stockcross, Newbury and we hope this is the start of many more.

Scobie Dee's Mother, Rhoda Hopkins, wrote many children's poems which all her family and friends loved to read. After her passing in November 2014 this creativity baton then passed onto her Daughter, who after retiring from a hectic role as Senior European packaging consultant for DS Smith, began to write. The story was brought to life due to Elizabeth's illustrations and with this in hand, Scobie Dee had the courage to submit. The end result can be seen and enjoyed by everyone. True proof that creativity really does run in the family!



## The Editor

**Hi Grapevine readers, we have another exciting magazine for you.**



Our next edition of the Grapevine will be out in August, so any contributions will be needed by the 23rd of July (Friday) and no later than 3.30 pm. Thank you and have a very

good summer.

If you would like to receive your future Grapevine edition through your Email In-box, then please contact me through my email address (address below). In the E-edition/PDF file, it will, on occasions, have extended pages (for the items we couldn't get into the 8-page hard copy,). The E-edition is also in full colour.

[stockcrossgrapevine@gmail.com](mailto:stockcrossgrapevine@gmail.com)

**Glenn (Editor)**



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



Well – Spring has sprung. Daylight is plentiful; the grass needs cutting; and social restrictions are easing. Sutton Hall is now open for those events allowable in phase 2. The hall committee is hopeful that the

Covid rules for gatherings continue being eased. We have been so bold as to put provisional dates in the second half of the 2021 calendar for traditional village events such as the Panto, Harvest Supper, Children's Christmas Party and Christmas drinks. We are also starting to plan events for the summer in hope that we can all meet up and share a toast together.

Many villagers have enjoyed a new phenomenon – online drinking!! These have been in the form of a red wine and a port tasting, both splendidly organised by Tony Hersh. These fun and informative sessions have been well supported, raising money for the hall and raising the spirits of all who attended.

Many residents will have noted that the village hall flew the flag at half-mast in April to honour Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh at his passing and also in respect for Sir Richard Sutton who's untimely, tragic death was felt by many in the surrounding area. Sutton Estates farms, fields and woodland surrounds us. Our Village Hall is owned by the estate and we are forever grateful for the support Sir Richard and his family have given to Stockcross over the years.

So, to everyone I wish good health and the hope that we get the right amount of sunshine and rain to maximise outdoor activities whilst keeping the trees, flowers and veg patches growing nicely!

Take care all.

Liz Newell-Hart

# S&SHA

Stockcross and Surroundings  
History Association



## Stockcross & Surroundings History Association

**Our AGM will be held on  
Monday 28th June 2021  
at 7.30pm. in Sutton  
Hall, Stockcross.**

If you would like to know  
more about our club please  
visit our website:

[www.stockcrosshistory.org.uk](http://www.stockcrosshistory.org.uk)

or our Facebook Page.

*Angela Tyler, Co-Chair.*



I am pleased to say the hall re opened after the April 12th relaxation of the rules albeit only for a small amount of allowable activity. Activities will pick up from May 17th and then hopefully to full operation from June 21st . We will need to see what the rules are around social distancing which will determine what we can do in the future , but if you have a need to hire the hall for an event please do get in touch .

Financially the hall is in good shape, we have reduced our costs in the current year by over £7000 and have been in receipt of the government grants for closed businesses during this and previous lockdowns . The committee wish to continue to invest in your hall so we have a couple of projects at the early stages of planning - more to follow as these develop .

Finally, Jay will be on maternity leave from mid-July so we are looking for someone to undertake maternity cover - please see the advert elsewhere in this issue and if you are interested, please let me know .

Mark



# STOCC

Stockercross Two O'Clock Crowd



## STOCKCROSS TWO O'CLOCK CROWD



The last year forced us to have a very reduced social life and we've all missed the company of friends for a long time. If the road map to normality goes to plan we can get back to meeting in larger groups - yippee! I have booked our usual slots (last Wednesday of each month) and we are currently sourcing speakers.

Our first date will be a social tea on June 30th from 2-4pm when old friends and newcomers will be able to meet again safely at the hall. To break the ice and as a focus for discussion could you bring along something to display which represents your lockdown? Perhaps you were walking or taking more exercise, reading or creating wonderful crafts, baking or researching gin! Also, if you could Bring a Book And Buy a Book it will help towards costs – we must all have so many books now! You are all welcome - no membership required as we are not a club. Thanks to the generosity of the Sutton Hall the cost will remain at £2 per person. We look forward to seeing you again!  
Jane Batt

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2-4pm STOCC  
Social tea  
Cost £2 includes refreshments



# Stockercross News



## CARETAKER VACANCY – MATERNITY COVER

The hall caretaker will be taking maternity leave from July to January  
The committee therefore wish to recruit a person to provide maternity cover for certain key duties including:

- Opening up ahead of bookings
- Greeting hirers
- Tidying and cleaning as required between bookings
- Locking up after bookings (may occasionally be up to midnight)

Hours are variable depending on bookings but we anticipate 5-10 hours per week

A contractor has been engaged to undertake the weekly deep clean  
Pay - £10 per hour worked  
Would suit someone either in Stockcross or the immediate vicinity



To apply or discuss further, please contact Mark Nevitt

[suttonhalltreasurer@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:suttonhalltreasurer@hotmail.co.uk)  
07484 845414

## STOCKCROSS VILLAGE STORES & POST OFFICE

Just a brief article as it's that busy time of year with end of year accounts!

We are all enjoying the sunshine and spring flowers and have some lovely scented soaps capturing the essence of flowers, together with our popular Kew range of hand creams, wonderful after all that handwashing!

Our ice creams are stocked up ready too for enjoying in the sun and our Café food is available for takeaway or can now be eaten in our garden outside!

We continue to stock all the necessary provisions for every day, plus those indulgent extras for a special occasion or little treat!

Our Showroom in the room behind the front shop continues to stock many gifts from local suppliers of beautiful, handcrafted items and cards, together with Designer lighting and mirrors.

We look forward to seeing you!

With best wishes,  
Deborah & Sally.



## Support Sutton Hall

Shop at [smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk) and we'll donate to your favourite charitable organisation, at no cost to you.

Start shopping

[Pick a different charity](#)

Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases.



Hi everyone, the hall has been invited to participate in the Amazon smile programme. This means that the hall will receive a donation from Amazon every time someone makes a purchase through [smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk) ( this has the same product range and prices as the main amazon website ) When making a purchase just select Sutton Hall from the list of charities and make your purchase as usual . Please see the link below

<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1071688-0>

So, if you are shopping on Amazon please do it through [Smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk) - you will be helping the hall .

## THE PUB IN STOCKCROSS

There isn't one. Not one real, living, welcoming place as we once enjoyed. The last to close, *The Rising Sun*, is a sad, decaying reminder of "*The Good Old Days*".

The Pub, the Boozer, the Local, hostelry, inn, gin palace, call it what you will, serves a multitude of functions: a place to meet friends and neighbours or business contacts, catch up on the local news, gossip, chat up the barmaid or generally flirt, set the world to rights, hope for a chance encounter, "get wasted", sometimes have a meal, take a break during a journey or simply to go and enjoy a drink somewhere warm and welcoming, just for the sheer delight of it.

Back in the '70s Stockcross offered all of this. Maybe even in Roman times *The Ermin Street Guard* would take a break here as they trudged between Silchester and Cirencester. I can find no record of that but certainly the Stockcross & Surroundings History Association's (SASHA) census transcripts record that in 1841 we had *The Nag's Head*, *The King's Head* and *The New Inn*. Meanwhile down in Marsh Benham, though no pub was listed, Henry Wernham and Harriott Palmer were recorded as publicans, but living at separate, unspecified addresses.

In 1851 the census makes no mention of any pub in either Stockcross or Marsh Benham apart from recording Thomas Snook (previously at *The New Inn*) as a publican living in Nalderhill, and Lucy Wernham, now Henry's widow, on parish relief, with eight children! What happened around Stockcross in 1851 to cause our pubs to temporarily disappear?

Thankfully ten years later *The Nag's Head* had reappeared and also a "Beer House" in Marsh Benham. *Sportsman's Hall* is also listed, for the first time. In his *Stockcross Story* Rev Nigel Sands states that in 1869 the vicar of the day lamented that there were no fewer than eight public houses in his parish, including a *Craven Arms* in Marsh Benham. However, *Sportsman's Hall* is not mentioned in the 1871 census or in 1891 but reappears in 1881. It disappears again in the 1911 census and certainly has not been a pub in the last 50 years but, still standing on the right as we enter Stockcross from Newbury, we can see evidence of its previous incarnation in the marks on the wall of one of the "Widows' Corner" cottages where the pub sign was once displayed. If invited, one can also see the stream running through its cool cellar which must have kept the beer in magnificent condition.

Rev Sands also mentions a *Nag's Head* on the A4 in 1887 adjacent to the old Sutton Estate offices (now Benham Chase). He states that that pub ceased trading by 1890.

In 1875, in order to reduce the incidence of drunkenness amongst residents frequenting village pubs the then Sir Richard Sutton provided *The Workman's Club* to enable members to "drink moderate amounts" in what is now the Billiards Club room at The Sutton Hall

In 1911 [\*The Nag's Head\*](#) was still listed. In 1957 it was renamed *The Lord Lyon*, to commemorate Sir Richard Sutton's horse of that name winning the 1866 Derby. By 1911 we also now had *The Cricketers* and *The Rising Sun* (publican Stuart Dennison). There is also mention of a publican, one Harriott Elms, but no pub name.

Since the Second World War Stockcross has been blessed, and, some might say, cursed, with many landlords in "*The Lordy*", "*The Riser*" and *The Cricketers* variously displaying a spectacular variety of talents, each in their own way. We have our memories. The highly successful sometimes moved on to greener pastures, or simply retired, while others, thankfully, just left.

But times changed and one by one the pubs closed. First *The Cricketers*, sold to Vockins to build five houses in 1987. Then there were two. In 2015 *The Lord Lyon* closed and was converted into nine flats but happily retaining the external character of the building, apart from the loss of the left ear of "The Nag's Head" over the door! Sad as we were to see the closure of *The Lord Lyon*

many believed that with no competition the only pub left standing could not fail. How wrong we were!

In 2017 *The Rising Sun* closed its doors. In 2018 we managed to have it listed as an Asset of Community Value preventing a change of use at least until 2023 though the tenancy, which I believe West Berks Brewery still holds, does not expire until a few years later. Meanwhile it stands and rots, remaining an eyesore and sad reminder.

The reasons for the demise of pubs are legion: from changes in social habits and driving laws, pressure on housing and hence property value, to the general ineptitude of some landlords and their inability to adapt; it has not simply been a case of “*use it or lose it*”.

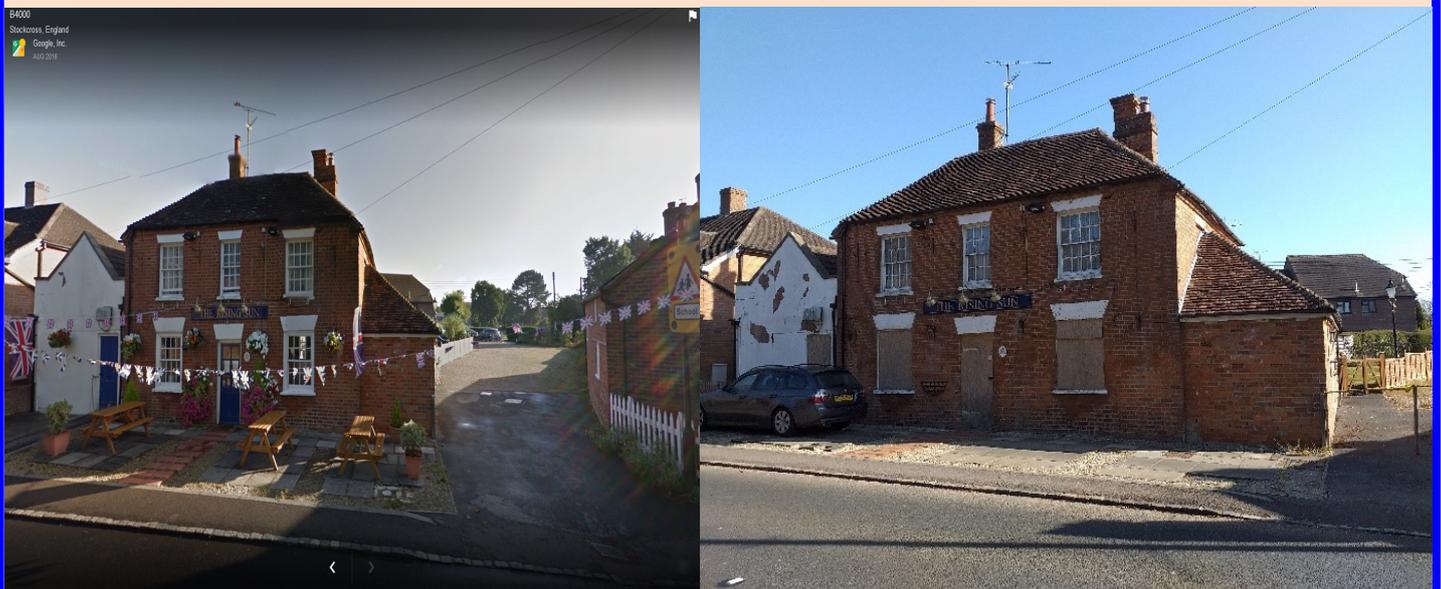
So now there is no pub within easy, safe walking distance of the centre of Stockcross. In spite of the nationwide demise of pubs there must be an opportunity for an enterprising publican in Stockcross, not just being dependent on “the locals”. We have considerable passing trade. The village shop and post office appears to be thriving, offering groceries, gifts and fresh coffee and home-prepared snacks. Many travel quite a distance for the easy parking at the post office door. Stockcross Recreation Ground attracts visitors from well outside the village to park and walk, often with dogs, to use the children’s play area, to picnic in the summer and of course at weekends to use the football pitches, it being a “Home Ground” for the members of AFC Newbury. But most importantly, we still have a vibrant and varied village community centered largely on the Sutton Hall. The Hall Committee has put considerable effort into trying to restore a semblance of a social hub. Following closure of *The Rising Sun* and building on the success of *The Inn on The Glebe* during Stockfests the committee took the initiative to provide an occasional *-Pop-Inn Bar* in The Sutton Hall. Originally it was conceived as a regular, hopefully monthly, Friday night affair to enable villagers to come together for a drink, chat and maybe a bite to eat at the end of the week. But the effort involved for the committee with even an extended group of helpers, “*The FROTHERS*”, has proved to be unsustainable on a regular basis. However, when they are held, they prove very popular and proof, if any is needed, that we really do need a pub!

There is one other possibility I can think of; but then I always was a dreamer; without dreams how would we ever achieve anything? Whatever the solution, there is no doubt it would require considerable effort and investment.

Do we care enough?

Keith Phillips, April 2021

This is but a brief overview of work in progress. I am collating more detailed information on the pubs of Stockcross and am aware there is a considerable amount in the SASHA records but if anyone would like to share their memories or other information with me, or correct any of the above, I will be delighted to hear from you: [keithstockcross@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:keithstockcross@hotmail.co.uk); 01488 608 249.



# COMING EVENTS



## Tennis Club News

Following the AGM on May 19th two people have volunteered to take on the roles of Chair and Secretary. Last year's committee of 3 people have all retired after several years running the club. Our new committee needs a few more people willing to be involved and to help develop the club for the future.

There will be an on-court, socially-distanced meeting to which all are invited, whether a member or not. This will be on Sunday May 9th at 3.30pm at the tennis courts. Do bring along a racquet if you wish to have a game.



## Stockcross Tennis Club Membership 2021-22

Welcome to the 2021 Season. We're looking forward to glorious summer days and evenings – and some great tennis! Membership continues to represent excellent value for money.

Below is the membership application/renewal form along with a request for membership fees due April 1<sup>st</sup> onwards. Please pass this form to any interested friend or family member.

If you have any queries please contact Felicity Merchant [felicitymerchant@gmail.com](mailto:felicitymerchant@gmail.com) or Tel 01488 608672 or Gillian Coles on [gillianfcoles@gmail.com](mailto:gillianfcoles@gmail.com)

### Membership Application / Renewal

Membership Type	£ cost	Quantity	£ Total cost
Adult (over 18's)	£50		
Junior (under 18's)	£20		
Student (under 25yrs)	£20		
Family (2 adults & 2 children under 18yrs)	£75		
Visitor (Guest of member)	£2 per visit		

Payments can be made by sending a cheque payable to: Stockcross Tennis Club at the following address: Felicity Merchant, 34 Stockcross, Newbury, RG20 8JX. Please enclose completed application form.

Or by Faster Payment via online banking to:  
Sort code 30 96 26 Account 37947460  
Additionally email attached application form to: [gillianfcoles@gmail.com](mailto:gillianfcoles@gmail.com)

Felicity Merchant (Club Secretary) will advise you of the gate code. Her contact details are Tel 01488 608672 / [felicitymerchant@gmail.com](mailto:felicitymerchant@gmail.com)

To aid communication with members I would be grateful if you could provide the following information for each person included in your application.

Name and age of any non adults	Email address of adults	Telephone number of adults	Address

A booking sheet, which will be at the courts for people to sign up for a time slot to play. This will not be policed but if the system does not work then we will have to close the courts again.

**SUTTON HALL COMMITTEE MEETS  
2<sup>ND</sup> TUESDAY EVERY MONTH AT  
8.00PM SMALL HALL - PLEASE  
COME**



E MAIL - [CHRISTINE.RICKARDS@YAHOO.COM](mailto:CHRISTINE.RICKARDS@YAHOO.COM)  
OR RING ON 07787825459

SUTTON HALL, STOCKCROSS

## Become A Friend Of The Sutton Hall

We're looking for volunteers who can help with running events. This might be setting up the Pop Inn, doing a shift behind the bar or distributing leaflets.

If you can spare a hour or two to help the Committee so we can run more frequent events, please get in touch.

[suttonhall642@btinternet.com](mailto:suttonhall642@btinternet.com)

