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## **THE BRIDGE**

**Church and Village magazine for Sweffling**

**December-January 2020/2021**

**On line at: <https://sweffling.life>**



### **Happy Christmas and New Year to all from Martin and the PCC**

Christmas in the village is likely to be very different this year. - no Christmas Markets and no Brass Band concert. Even Christmas services will be different from previous years (for details see page 7 of The Bridge). Nevertheless, the Christmas message of the Angels to the Shepherds is still the same "Peace on earth, Goodwill toward men" and the Christmas spirit will still prevail in Sweffling.

To this end, remember the **Sweffling Coronavirus Support Group** During the current lockdown our village group continues to provide help and support to anyone who needs it - shopping, collecting medicines, dog-walking and chatting on the phone. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to provide this special service to keep our community safe and supported. We are all extremely grateful to Marie at Sweffling White Horse for making the Support Group a success. She is always happy to arrange help to whoever needs it and will continue to do so if restrictions continue. Thank you Marie! **Phone: 07849 119259 or 664178.**

#### **From the Reverend Martin Percival:**

St Augustine described the Christian life as being like a journey. When we are joined to our Lord in faith and love we journey with his body, the Church, on an adventure that carries us inwards, until we finally see God

face to face. It is a journey that can be characterised by times of sadness and of struggle. Nevertheless we are to be a people marked by joyful hope. He uses the image of song to exemplify the encouragement we can bring to each other when we are experiencing trials and setbacks. *'Sing as travellers sing on a journey in order to help to keep on walking. Lighten your toil by singing and never be idle. Sing and keep on walking. And what do I mean by walking. I mean press on from good to better in this life...Sing up...and keep on walking.'*

In the rhythm of the Christian Year we find ourselves with the story of the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus and of the outpouring of the Spirit. It is in this framework that carries us forward, year by year, that we are carried onwards to glory with him. As we move from Advent to Christmas to Epiphany and onwards we begin to sing again that joyful story through which we are saved for ever in Christ, and we journey forwards conscious of the grief and challenges of the moment but propelled beyond them.

It goes without saying that this Advent and Christmastide we find ourselves passing through some particularly difficult terrain. The present restrictions will mean that our celebrations are more muted than usual; family gatherings may be smaller; some of us will be conscious of the loss of those dear to us, and of the strains and stresses we are bearing at work and at home. We must, therefore, make an extra effort to sing up and keep up walking with fellow Christians across our parishes in the Upper Alde Benefice. We might not be able to 'sing up' with our mouths this year, but we can make our souls sing; and we can let them sing not as some sort of exercise of 'whistling in the dark', but because we are filled with a real hope because of what these days are proclaiming to us. God is with us and we are walking into the future with him.

As a help to celebrate this coming season of Advent I am going to produce a daily reflection and will distribute it by way of the present Pastoral Letter recipients list. If, for whatever reason, you are not on this list and would like to be, please get in touch with me [revmepercival@gmail.com](mailto:revmepercival@gmail.com).

### **Leslie Holden**

Veronica and families would like to thank you for your calls, cards, letters and flowers received after Leslie's passing.

Thank you also for your presence at his funeral - a very moving tribute Your kindness has been so comforting and much appreciated.

### **Macmillan Nurses Donation Appeal:**

Although the Coffee Morning was unable to take place this year, Linda Newson would like to thank everyone who gave so generously to make the appeal such a success. The total amount raised was £960.00 and together with Gift Aid this amounted to £1120.00. This is a record amount!

### **Remembrance Sunday**

Remembrance Sunday had to be celebrated differently this year, as the country was in lockdown and churches had to be closed. This meant that the joint service of Remembrance for the Fallen of Sweffling and Rendham could not be held in either church, as the war memorials for both villages are inside the churches. Instead, a Benefice service was held in Badingham, where the war memorial is in the churchyard. Representatives from each of the six churches making up the Benefice, took part in a short service, led by the Rev. Percival. All members of the congregation were suitably spaced and wore face coverings. During the service, the names of the Fallen from each parish were read out and wreaths of poppies were laid. The Last Post and the Reveille were played, the Kohima epitaph was read and it was permitted to sing the National Anthem. After the service, wreaths from parishes other than Badingham were collected and taken back to be placed on the war memorials in the relevant churches.

### **Harvest Festival Thanksgiving**

Despite coronavirus, at the beginning of October churches were open for public worship and so we were able to have our Harvest Thanksgiving service, albeit differently, as we were unable to sing the traditional Harvest hymns. Nevertheless, the organist played Harvest music and a sizeable congregation (self distanced) gave thanks for God's gifts throughout the year and for the Harvest in particular. We were also unable to have our usual Harvest Lunch and Auction of Harvest Produce, so instead we asked the village to donate tinned and dry goods, toiletries etc. which were sent to the Waveney food bank to be distributed to those less fortunate than we are. The response was fantastic and the food bank representative could hardly fit the boxes and bags into his car. He was amazed that such a small village could have been so generous. Very many thanks to everyone who contributed!! Normally the proceeds from the lunch and the auction would have been sent to TearFund to be used to assist their work of famine relief in the most needy parts of the world. This year instead £250 was sent from church funds and from donations. We have had a Letter of Thanks from TearFund, as, like most charities, their income has been greatly reduced due to cancellation of so many fund-raising events.



### **Jubilee Field - Thank you !!**

On November 6<sup>th</sup> Andy Franklin and Steve Smith cut the grass on the Jubilee Field for the last time, having maintained the field for the past 11 years. On behalf of the village we would like to say a very big **THANKYOU!** to both of them for their dedicated hard work. The field is a great asset to the village, but only as long as it is looked after in the way that Andy and Steve have done.

Andy has written a short poem to go with this photograph of their last working day on the field:

#### **Farewell yon pasture**

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Time hasn't waited for Andy and Steve  
 We're both getting older  
 And decided we'll leave  
 We've strimmed and we've tidied  
 A decade now, mowing  
 But back ache is coming  
 So it's time that we're going  
 It had to end one day  
 We just had to yield  
 It's time now that others  
 Cared for Jubilee Field...



### **Nature Notes: December - January**



The Berries on the Holly in our garden are by now a magnificent sight. Unfortunately this means that they are now ripe, and already a target for the various thrushes which feed on them. So far this has mainly been Blackbirds, although there have also been a few Song thrushes, pleasing to see as there have been so few around this year.

In some recent years it has been Redwings which have been the main agents for stripping the Holly berries, so completely that by Christmas they were all gone. We have had to resort to picking holly early and trying to store it for Christmas. So far this Autumn I have seen just a few Redwings, in small groups in the hedges, and as yet none of their companion thrushes, the Fieldfares.

The Green Sandpiper is a small wading bird, associated with shallow wetlands, often near the coast. It is not a bird I would associate with a village like Sweffling. Nevertheless, one did turn up on the pond belonging to friends at Silverlace Green. This was earlier in the Autumn, the time when these birds tend to migrate



through Britain on their way to Africa. They nest in northern Europe from Norway eastwards through Russia. Nowadays a very few do also spend the winter here, and I have occasionally seen one in the wet fields alongside the River Alde. The Green Sandpiper is about the size of a Starling, white underneath and dark above (I find it needs the eye of faith to see any green!). The bird sees you first and so it is normally seen in flight, showing very dark wings and a white rump, almost calling to mind a House Martin.

Elsewhere in the village I have been told about Goldcrests in the garden.

Goldcrests usually favour conifers over deciduous trees, but will be seen in mixed woods and also from time to time in gardens.

(The photo' is of one taken through our sitting room window.) In winter they will often move around with the roving flocks of Blue Tits and others. Size is perhaps the thing that brings them to notice – they are the smallest bird that



you will see. The crest may sometimes show, yellow on the female and more orange on the male, but the best guide is probably the mark on the wing, two small whitish wing bars which show up remarkably well on such a small bird.



Jays have been flying over the garden for many weeks now. Their target has been the large crop of acorns in the Oak trees at the top of our neighbour's drive. In this part of England the native trees are all the Pedunculate Oak, (*Quercus robur*), which carries its flowers and then acorns on long stalks called peduncles. The other native Oak, the Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) is found in western England and in Wales, and, curiously, in an area of South-east Essex around Southend – perhaps a

relic of the way Oaks colonised Britain after the Ice Age. When all these acorns were gone, the birds switched to the smaller acorns of the Evergreen Oak, or Holm Oak, which is commonly planted in woods and copses in this area as cover for pheasants. The Jays then flew off several hundred yards in the direction they came from, several fields away. Here, out of sight, they will have buried their spoils. Jays will carry one acorn in the beak, and 2 or 3 more hidden in the gullet; in fact they can carry as many as 9 like this. *Geoffrey Abbott*

**Alde Community Council:  
Spring Flower Show 2021**

The ACC is planning to hold a Spring Flower Show in April next year. This will restore the annual flower show after last year's hiatus. We have traditionally had a splendid display of spring blooms and arrangements in Sweffling Hut and hope to repeat this corona-virus permitting. However, we have plans for an outdoor show as an alternative, should this not be possible. The venue and date will be updated as the situation develops.

**Young persons Opportunity Awards**

The ACC has for some time had a Young Persons Opportunity Awards Scheme. This, like the flower show, is coming back to life. Two awards have recently been made to assist the claimants with unforeseen changes that may have thwarted their opportunities in higher education. This is a small discretionary grant and a fuller description of the scheme will be given in a future edition of The Bridge

**Vacancy - Sweffling Parish Council clerk from January 2021**

We are a small Parish Council with just seven councillors and we meet 10 times each year. We generally meet on the second Tuesday of each month, except August and December.

As well as good secretarial and finance skills the Clerk advises the Parish Council on all matters. The position is paid at point 7 of the new pay scales for clerks and other government employees as agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

We are affiliated to the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) who can provide support and training.

If you have some of the skills and would be interested to find out more please contact John Stanley on 01728664370 or 07484793594 or email him at [arthurjohnstanley@gmail.com](mailto:arthurjohnstanley@gmail.com)

## **CHURCH SERVICES IN DECEMBER-JANUARY**

At the time of going to press churches are only open for private prayer. Sweffling Church is open on Wednesdays and Sundays between 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. Assuming that the lockdown is lifted on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Churches can again hold public worship:

**Services of Holy Communion will be held in Sweffling on Sunday December 6<sup>th</sup> at 9.30 a.m. Rendham on December 16<sup>th</sup> at 11.00 a.m.**

### **CHRISTMAS SERVICES:**

Services of Holy Communion will be held on:

**CHRISTMAS EVE:** December 24th

4.00pm Bruisyard 6.00pm Badingham **8.00pm Sweffling**

There will not be a Midnight service in Sweffling this year, please note earlier time.

**CHRISTMAS DAY:** December 25th

8.00am Rendham 9.30am Cransford 11.00am Dennington

**DECEMBER 27<sup>th</sup>:** 10am Benefice service Cransford

**CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE:** Planning for a Carol Service is very difficult this year. Unless regulations change significantly we are not permitted to sing in Church, and the numbers permitted to gather together are limited. If it is possible to arrange a Carol service the information will be circulated round the village and on the village website (<https://sweffling.life>).

**SERVICES IN JANUARY** (assuming no further lockdown) :

Sweffling, January 3<sup>rd</sup> 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

Rendham January 17<sup>th</sup> 11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

Dennington January 31<sup>st</sup> 10.00 a.m. Benefice Holy Communion

If circumstances change we may be able to have an **EPIPHANY**

**CAROL SERVICE** in mid-January.



**Christmas at Juniper Barn.** We have lots of lovely things on display which will make great presents. Our beautiful Hannah Dunnett calendars, Advent calendars and Christmas cards are now in stock and selling fast. Christmas crackers, mincemeat, brandy butter and unusual treats such as scallop pate will add to your seasonal store cupboard or present box. Mincepies, Christmas puddings and Stollen are in stock and we have vegan and



gluten free options too. We will have truffles and Al Christmas boxes in mid-December.

Paintings and  
woodwork by local  
artists are on sale too.  
Why not fill a basket of



your own with lots of yummy goodies from our shelves and make a DIY hamper? Or ask us to do it for you with a price in mind.

### **Sweffling Christmas Cards**



This year all fund-raising events for the church have had to be cancelled. So, instead, we have had a Christmas card printed, with all profits going to St. Mary's. The greeting inside reads: "With best wishes for Christmas and The New Year". On the back is printed "Christmas at St Mary's Sweffling". The cards with envelopes cost £5.00 for 10 cards and are available now. If you would like to buy any contact Sheila Tesh on 663518 and tell anyone you know who might be interested.

### **Christmas wreaths and table decorations**

With Christmas fairs cancelled, I have no outlet for selling my usual homemade Christmas decorations this year. I am happy to make things to order and all profits will be in aid of St Mary's Sweffling. Here are a few examples which would be available from early December for £15 - £25 depending on size. Please contact me on 663402 - *Jill Abbott*



Please e-mail any news items or events for the February/March edition to [john.tesh@talk21.com](mailto:john.tesh@talk21.com) before January 15th. We also welcome your literary input. The Bridge is sponsored by St. Mary's Church and circulated free to all houses in the Village.