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**THE BRIDGE**  
**Church and Village magazine for Sweffling**  
**February/March 2022**  
**On line at: [www.sweffling.com](http://www.sweffling.com)**



**Do you remember the snow in Sweffling – February 2021?**

By the time this edition of The Bridge is delivered, there will have been a marked reduction in Covid restrictions, despite the number of positive cases still being very high. We have been very fortunate in Sweffling that the number of cases has been very low and it would be good to keep it that way. Common sense tells us to continue to take precautions in when we meet with others, both indoors and outside. We look forward to events in the village resuming this Spring and Summer, and you will find details of some of these in this copy of The Bridge. Make the most of these opportunities to meet with old friends and make new friends. The social life of the village depends upon everyone taking part!

**From the Reverend Martin Percival SSC**

A train company with a notoriously poor record for delays and late arrivals promised its customers that it would achieve one hundred per cent punctuality on what it called its 'Performance Day'. However, on the given day, passengers watched in amazement as the 6.20am train sailed through four stations without making its scheduled stops.

The company, which operated one of the busiest commuter lines in England, ordered staff to ensure all trains into its main terminal met punctuality targets that day. A spokesperson for the company explained that it was 'an operational decision' not to stop at four stations to help late trains make up time. The company announced that as a result all but two of its one hundred and eighty rush hour trains had met the punctuality targets.

One angry commuter left standing on the platform said, "We couldn't believe it. There is no point in running trains if you don't pick up the passengers."

Promises are easy to make but hard to keep. How are you getting on with your New Year resolutions? How about your intentions for Lent this year?

In the Old Testament part of the Bible there is a minor prophet named Hosea. He believed that God had called him to marry a prostitute called Gomer. This was to illustrate how God felt about the wanton disobedience of Israel when they failed to keep the covenant relationship of remaining faithful to him. The nation of Israel intermarried with people who worshipped false gods and broke many other laws which their forefathers had promised to keep when Moses first presented the Ten Commandments to them at Sinai. Despite rescuing her from a fallen lifestyle, Hosea's kindness was repaid with betrayal when Gomer returned to her old ways.

The positive aspect of this story is that God's promises are irrevocable – he is trustworthy. *'God is not a man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. He has said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfil it?'*

We have seen all too readily the consequences of dishonesty and the breaking of promises in our secular life. We have this wonderful season of Lent every year when we can look at ourselves and prepare for the great events of Holy Week and Easter. We can rest assured that God's promise to be with us, helping us in our daily journey, is a promise that we can rely upon, a promise that will not be broken. *Martin*

### **Report of Christmas events**

It seems a long time since the Christmas Brunch and Market in Sweffling but it was a very successful and well attended event, with visitors coming from as far as Woodbridge and Fressingfield. Thanks to everyone who helped beforehand, making beautiful hand-dyed items, Christmas wreaths, crafts and cooking, those who donated items for the stalls and raffle, and to those who helped on the day, especially the chefs in the kitchen. Also to all who supported this event. As a result of everyone's efforts almost £1100 was raised for church funds. A timely event in view of the need for unexpected repairs to the church! (see below).

The Carol Service and Christmas Eve Midnight Holy Communion were both well attended, despite the Covid restrictions.

### **Repair to Church ceiling.**

A shock awaited the congregation when they came into church on January 2nd. Between Christmas and New Year part of the ceiling plaster in the nave, close to the chancel arch, had become detached and had fallen into the aisle below.

After a quick clean up, the service went ahead as scheduled, with the pews below being blocked off. The church architect was contacted and he put John Tesh, one of the churchwardens, in touch with a builder specialising in repairs and renovations to churches and other historic buildings.

Photographs of the extent and location of the damage were sent to the builder, who said he would be in our area on

January 20<sup>th</sup> and would be able to make the necessary repairs. He was true to his word, brought his own scaffolding and the ceiling is now as good as new!



### **Thank you from Diana**

Thank you to everyone who sent me good wishes, when I spent six weeks in Aldeburgh Hospital. I am now home and recovering slowly but surely.

Also a big thank you to James my gardener and Audrey Lummis for helping me by picking my sweet peas and dahlias. I have given Jill Abbott £228.73 for the Gambia, which is money from the flowers over two years. I hope you are all keeping well and a very Happy New Year. *Diana Smith*

### **Sweffling Parish Council**

You will have received notice of recent vacancies on the Parish Council. The Parish Council works best when we have the full compliment of seven Councillors. We generally meet on the second Tuesday of each month throughout the year except in August and December. Meetings are in the Village Hut and are usually between one and two hours long. We would like to hear from any interested parties who would be willing to serve our local community as a Parish Councillor until at least May 2023, which is the date set for the next Local Council Elections.

At our most recent meeting we set our budget for 2022/23. We will have to ask the District Council for a slight increase to the precept. The precept is the money we receive from the District Council that comes from your Council Tax payments. The last time we asked for an increase to the precept was in 2015, since then we have kept it fixed. The cost of maintaining village assets, in particular equipment on Jubilee Field, has increased recently and has led us to this decision. You may well find a slight increase to your Council Tax this year.

### **Sweffling White Horse Bowls Club**

The Bowls Club in Sweffling is a small friendly club. We have players of all abilities with some experienced players, some novices and some new to the game. We would always like to welcome new members. Lawn Bowls is a game for all, young or old, male or female and any level of physical fitness. Suffolk, as a County, is a very strong base for bowling so there is the opportunity to play against some strong competition locally.

Suffolk County Bowls Association are encouraging as many clubs as possible to open our greens across the weekend of 30th April/ 1st May. So you would be more than welcome to "Come and try bowling" or "Return to bowling" at any time over that weekend. If you would be interested in joining us please contact our Secretary, John Stanley, on 01728 664073 or by email at [arthurjohnstanley@gmail.com](mailto:arthurjohnstanley@gmail.com)

This season we will once again have teams in the Saxmundham and the Woodbridge Leagues as well as a team in the Fynn Trophy. These competitions generally play on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Our competition season usually runs from late April to early September. Fixtures have not all been set for the 2022 season yet.

**The Queen's Platinum Jubilee** is being celebrated on the first weekend in June this year. Please be thinking about how the village might mark this occasion. Details of to whom to send your suggestions will be in the next edition of The Bridge. It would be good if the whole village could take part. As a reminder, for the Diamond Jubilee we had a Bring and Share tea party on the Townland meadow, with a competition for the best decorated hat!

### **Bridge Nature Notes February – March 2022**

I have always been surprised how seldom I see Lapwings in the valley, considering how close we are to the Alde estuary where they are common, and how they are equally likely to use inland fields. Early in January however, there was a fair sized flock (some 200) on the airfield at Parham. They were loosely spread out, feeding. Mixed in with them were a number of gulls, Common Gulls in fact, which do visit our fields in the winter. What is happening here is something which I have seen before, and which is well documented. The gulls in these groups are each watching the Lapwings around them, waiting for one to catch a worm (Lapwings are better at finding worms than gulls). When a worm is found, the nearest gull flies up and tries to steal it. Success will vary – a small worm will be more quickly swallowed by the Lapwing. This behaviour is called 'kleptoparasitism', not a word easily slipped into conversation. But we do like to have names for things.



Fieldfares and Redwings, which I always talk about in the winter, were fairly scarce here up until the New Year. Since the cold weather in early January, I have been seeing them more. In the fields near Dernford the sheep have been feasting on fodder turnips. On parts of these fields which the sheep have cleared, there have been good numbers of Fieldfares (at least 100) feeding on the ground, with a few Redwings and even a couple of Songthrushes.



If they hang around, they can be well seen from some of the dog-walking

paths. Missing from this assembly of thrushes were Mistle Thrushes, although I have been seeing them around. Listen for the loud rattling call they make as they fly. They are large thrushes, with white underwings like Fieldfares, but with plainer, grey-brown upperparts. One was singing from a tree near our house during storm 'Barra', a common habit which has given it the name Stormcock, at least in the books. It is quite a simple song, like a short Blackbird, but very loud, clear and far-carrying - one of my very favourite bird songs.



Several people have been telling me about seeing more of the deer which we find in the area. Commonest of the larger deer which we have here are the



fallow deer. In summer, the coat is reddish brown, with prominent white spots. In winter, the coat is duller brown, but tends to be variable so that people have told me about grey, very pale, or almost black individuals. The famous 'White Hart' is a Fallow Deer. The males (or Bucks), carry antlers from August to April, large, with several points and recognisably flattened (palmate) at the tip. I have to say that I have not often seen these locally, most of mine being females (does) or younger bucks. Recent wet weather has made the fields muddy, so that deer tracks are easy to find. Deer tracks ('slots') are cloven, with two long parallel toes. Those of Fallow Deer are narrower than those of the



Red, with more tapered, pointed tips.

By mid-January some of the hedgerow Hazels had mature catkins (the male, pollen-bearing flowers), a classic and delightful sign of Spring. By February there will be many more.

On sunny winter days, look out for surprising swarms of an insect, the Winter Gnat, not a gnat at all but a small, delicate relative of the Daddy-Long-Legs. These are mating swarms, but why they choose mid-winter I have yet to learn.

*Geoffrey Abbott*



### **Townland Trust Reminder**

The Townland Trust is a long-established village charity that exists to offer financial support to Sweffling Church and village residents in times of hardship. The charity cannot support individuals long-term but can offer one-off non-repayable grants. All requests for help are treated in the utmost confidence and requests for assistance are only known to the Charity trustees. If you, or anyone you know might need support, **DO NOT HESITATE** please contact one of the trustees, who are: The Rev. Martin Percival (01728 598455), Sandy Rowe (663753), Andy Franklin (663600), Jill Sedge (663564), Sheila Tesh (663518)

### **Church Cleaning Rota and Festive flowers**

Our team of cleaners has recently been rather depleted owing to illness, so a call to anyone who has an occasional hour to spare, to get in touch please.

The task is not onerous (a few hours a month), involving making sure the church is clean (hoovering, dusting and polishing), for services, twice a month. Each team covers one whole month - twice a year. We work out the teams around New Year so this would be a good time to join in. One of the team puts flowers on the altar and keeps them fresh over the month but this needn't be you, if flower arranging is not your thing.

Thank you to everyone who helped in this way during last year. Also to the Festival Flower arrangers who make the church look so colourful and welcoming at special times. The church looked beautiful over the Christmas period, with a large illuminated and decorated Christmas tree, and candles, greenery and decorations on all of the window sills.

For help with any of these things please ring *Jill Abbott 663402*.

## **FUTURE EVENTS**

### **First Thursday Suppers**

**The next community supper for Sweffling Residents is at 7.30pm on Thursday 3rd February at Sweffling White Horse.**

The theme for the food is 'Traditional English' and for about 24 folk we need 3 main dishes (one vegetarian dish has already been offered) plus vegetables. If you haven't cooked recently please consider preparing something hot for 8/10 people. Let me know what you would like to cook and then bring it hot on the night to be kept warm in the stove. Also it would be nice to have a couple of people bringing some English cheeses with some biscuits (each enough for 12).

Those not cooking will be asked to pay £6 a head and money left over will go to The Gambia for medicines and anti-mosquito bednets. I look forward to hearing from you. Numbers are limited so email soon to be sure to be on the list.

Please check that your new neighbours know about this event.

*Jill Abbott 663402*

### **Chat and Craft at The Hut**

**The next "Chat and Craft" morning will be on February 7th in Sweffling Hut from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon.**

Judy will lead a workshop in bead threading using old necklaces.

Please bring:

- *Any old beads (strung or loose)*
- *Small scissors*
- *A tray (baking tray or tea tray) covered with a small towel, tea towel, piece of velvet or felt, to lay out bead arrangement and stop the beads rolling away.*
- *Little pots (old yoghurt or similar) to sort beads.*
- *Judy will bring plenty of stretch thread and more beads.*
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If you would rather just come for a chat and coffee, you are equally as welcome, but there will be a very good supply of beads that you can freely take.

There will be a small donation to cover the cost of the Hall and Coffee. Hope to see you there.

#### **Future dates are:**

Monday March 7th Bring your own craft or just come for a chat.

Monday April 4th Workshop in felt beads led by Liz.

*Jill Abbott 663402*

### **Bruisyard Village Hall Events**

**Saturday 12 March, 7 for 7.30 p.m. "Dead Funny"**

An entertaining and informative talk by Ron Bossingham, drawn from his years in the funeral business.

Tickets £10 on the door, including a glass of wine or soft drink.

## **Saturday 2nd April, 7 for 7.30pm. “The Poison Garden”**

A talk by Matt Tanton Brown

Tickets £10 on the door, including a glass of wine or soft drink.

Further information for both events at [www.Bruisyard.com](http://www.Bruisyard.com)

## **LENT EVENTS IN SWEFFLING**

### **Ash Wednesday, March 2nd 7.00 p.m. Sweffling Church Service of Holy Communion with imposition of ashes**

**Lent Study Course:** Each Wednesday evening in Lent, after Ash Wednesday until Holy Week, i.e. March 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th and April 6th, there will be a service of **Compline** with an address in Sweffling Church at 7.00 p.m..

### **Church services Sweffling and Rendham February/March/Easter**

Date	Venue	Time	Service
February 6th	Sweffling	9.30 a.m.	Candlemas: Holy Communion
February 13th	Rendham	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
February 20th	Sweffling	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
February 27th	Rendham	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
<b>Ash Wednesday March 2nd</b>	<b>Sweffling</b>	<b>7.00 p.m.</b>	<b>Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes</b>
March 6th	Sweffling	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
March 13th	Rendham	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
March 20th	Sweffling	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
<b>Mothering Sunday March 27th</b>	<b>Rendham</b>	<b>9.30 a.m.</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>
April 3rd	Sweffling	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
April 10th	Rendham	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
<b>Easter Sunday Lily Festival</b>	<b>Sweffling</b>	<b>9.30 a.m.</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>

**Full details of the services during Holy week and on Easter Day will be published in the next edition of The Bridge.**

### **Home Holy communion, Blessing and Prayers for the sick**

If you, or any one you know, would like to have Holy Communion at home, or if any one who is ill would like a visit from Martin, please contact him directly or speak to one of the Churchwardens (Geoffrey Abbott (663402) or John Tesh (663518) and it can be arranged. Also, please let one of them know of anyone who is sick and prayers can be said in church.

### **Annual Lent Soup Lunch in Sweffling Village Hall**

**Saturday March 26th 12.00 noon to 2.00 p.m.**

**in aid of the Medical Centre in The Gambia,**

Lots of homemade soups to choose from, including vegetarian and gluten free.

Sample as many as you like, with bread.

Adults £6.00, children £3.00.

(Covid permitting)



### **EASTER Memorial Lily Festival, Sweffling**



At Easter we will again be having lilies given in memory of family and friends. Their names will be written on a memorial scroll, which will be read out at the service on Easter Day. If you would like to order a lily or lilies, please contact Diana Smith (663578) or Sheila Tesh (663518) by March 27th at the latest, as the lilies have to be ordered in good time for Easter.

Each lily will cost £3.50. Please give the names of those to be remembered together with the money for the lilies. The church

will be open on Easter Sunday and Easter Monday (10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.) to enjoy the lilies and remember our loved ones.

### **ACC Spring Flower Show**

We are planning to hold a COVID safe Flower Show in Sweffling Hut on 2nd April 2022. Exhibits to the Hut from 9.00 to 10.00am. Judging at 10.00am.

Entry forms in Village Halls and on Village Websites

Show opens at 2.00pm, Entry £1.00 (includes

tea/coffee). Under 12's free

Presentation of cups at 3.00pm followed by Raffle.

Enquiries ring Lynda on 663325



### **BOOK THE DATE:**

**Saturday April 9<sup>th</sup> 10.00 a.m – 12.00 noon. Sweffling Hut**

**Pancakes and Coffee in aid of the British Heart Foundation.**

**Saturday April 23<sup>rd</sup> 7.30 p.m. Snape Maltings**

**Phoenix Singers Concert with Beccles Choral Society and Lambeth**

**Orchestra performing Elgar's "The Music Makers". Also Cockaine**

**Overture and Sea Pictures. Conductor Geoff Lavery.**

Tickets £18, £24, £28 available through <[phoenixsingers.onesuffolk.net](http://phoenixsingers.onesuffolk.net)>

Please e-mail any news items, events or short literary items for consideration for inclusion in the February/March edition to [john.tesh@talk21.com](mailto:john.tesh@talk21.com) before March 15th. The editors welcome contributions for The Bridge but reserve the right to edit. Accuracy of the content is the responsibility of the submitter. We are limited to 8 pages and so may not be able to publish everything we receive. Dated items of village interest will be given priority. Please include your name and contact details in case we need to get in touch.

The Bridge is sponsored by St. Mary's Church and is delivered free to all houses in the Village.