

**The Rev Martin Percival 01728 668537**

**e-mail: [revmepercival@gmail.com](mailto:revmepercival@gmail.com)**

## **THE BRIDGE**

**Church and Village magazine for Sweffling**

**February/March 2021**

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



This beautiful and dramatic picture of Sweffling Church at twilight, with the Milky Way clearly in view over the tower, was taken by friends of two of Sweffling's new residents, Alex and Kat, who have recently moved into Church Cottage. Also new to the village are David and Helen, who have moved into Fairhaven, next door to Alex and Kat. A very warm welcome to Sweffling, we hope you will enjoy being part of our friendly community!

It is very disappointing that this edition of The Bridge cannot be circulated in hard copy to the village, but the decision has been taken that it is not sensible to ask those who deliver the magazine to expose themselves to unnecessary risk by posting hard copies through letterboxes. Hopefully as more people in our local community receive the vaccine it might be possible to produce and circulate copies by the end of March.

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

A Rabbi once asked God, 'How is it that people no longer hear You speaking to them?' God replied, 'Because they don't bow down low enough.'

When I heard this for the first time I was reminded of how, when speaking with young children, we often bend or even kneel down so that we are on the same level as them. Why do we do this? We do it so that we are best able to hear more

clearly what they are saying. If we apply this to our conversations with God and wonder why we don't hear Him speaking to us, it may be because we don't get into the right position and the reason for this might be that we don't really want to hear what He is telling us. It is not that God is not speaking but rather that we are not listening. We don't mind listening to God as long as He is telling us things that we want to hear. It's surprising how very passionate and committed Christians often hear God speaking to them in words that fit in with their plans and schemes.

Another reason we bend down to speak with children is to avoid distraction because children sometimes speak quietly and, usually with so much going on around, it's difficult to catch what they are saying. We need to focus on them alone. However, when it comes to speaking with God people are sometimes quite content to have as many distractions as possible because they do not find prayer easy. We would rather be doing things, getting on with the job, than just sitting or kneeling there speaking with God and so 'doing' is often a good excuse for not listening. Of course, if we are not listening then we are not going to hear what He has to say.

The last reason for kneeling down when speaking with children is to get on the same level and not to loom over the top of them. Also to kneel or to bow is to express humility. The period leading up to Easter, which we call Lent and which will begin this month, is all about humbling ourselves before God and being truly sorry for our wrongdoing and the injury we have caused to others. Holy Scripture tells us that *'A broken and contrite heart God will not despise'* and so we are invited to humble ourselves before God. This, of course, is the very last thing that most of us want to do and so we continue to stand proud and tall in our self-centredness and self-delusion.

Perhaps we should be encouraged to humble ourselves before God and bow down low so that we can hear Him speaking to us. It is worth remembering that there would have been no Easter had God not humbled Himself by becoming a child on earth and then being humiliated and crucified. So, let's try to follow in His footsteps and bow our knees, like the Magi, so that we might hear the Christ-Child speaking to us. *Martin.*

### **Sunday Worship – Holy Communion 10.00 a.m.**

Although currently, for Covid safety reasons, Martin is not conducting public worship services in any church in the Benefice, each Sunday morning he is posting a video of the Holy Communion Service with readings and a short sermon, on Youtube. If you would like to join with this service, type "The Reverend Martin Percival SSC" into the Youtube search box and you will be able to access the video. Very many thanks, Martin, for preparing the videos. It is a great joy to be able to join with you in this service, even virtually.

Services are also live streamed from the Cathedral in Bury St. Edmunds. For details and times see the cathedral website: <https://stedscathedral.org>

## Church Opening times

Sweffling Church is open for private prayer on Wednesdays and Sundays, between 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m.. Although it would be good to open the church every day, by leaving 72 hours between openings it ensures that any accidental transfer of the Covid virus will not be a threat, as the virus cannot survive on surfaces for more than 72 hours. Please feel welcome to visit the church on the open days. There is hand sanitizer in church, please use it to keep everyone safe. We do not yet know when we will be able to hold services again, but as soon as this is possible the information will be posted on the village notice boards and on the web-site.

## Obituary

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Colin Hart, of Garden House, Rendham, on 6th January 2021. Colin was a friend to many in Sweffling. He had been District Councillor of this Ward and later Councillor for the Framlingham Division and was a great supporter of village causes. Our thoughts and condolences go to Anji, and their two daughters. Due to Covid restrictions, a family-only funeral was possible. Later in the year when circumstances permit, there will be a celebration of Colin's life for all those who knew him.

## Information regarding Covid Vaccinations

Hopefully by the time you read this, the majority of people in Sweffling in the high-risk categories will have received their first Covid injection. However, the following information may be useful:

**Covid-19 Vaccination – (Fram Practice patients)** - Suffolk GP Fed website : A senior doctor from the Suffolk GP Federation, which is running the COVID-19 vaccination programme for 28 of the county's 62 GP practices, today said all patients over 80 will have been contacted by the end of this week. Patients who have a mobile phone will receive a text and those who do not are being posted first-class letters. The texts and letters will enable patients to book an appointment to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

["https://suffolkfed.org.uk/assurance-given-to-elderly-patients-over-covid-19-vaccinations/](https://suffolkfed.org.uk/assurance-given-to-elderly-patients-over-covid-19-vaccinations/)

## A message from Framlingham Surgery. Please do not call the surgery

We are currently receiving a very high number of calls regarding the vaccination programme. Framlingham surgery was not chosen as a vaccination site and, as explained on our telephone message and website, therefore, we have no control over the COVID vaccination programme. This is being co-ordinated by NHS England and delivered via the chosen vaccination organisations/sites.

We do appreciate that our patients are anxious to receive the vaccine and are finding the current communication channels difficult, however, we have no

additional information other than that provided on our website. Please be assured that we will update our website with any information provided on a regular basis, however, we are unable to respond to individual enquiries as this severely impairs our ability to deliver day to day care

Thank you

The Partners, Framlingham Medical Practice

There are vaccination centres at the Surgery in Saxmundham, if you are a patient there, Woodbridge Community Centre, Debenham Sports and leisure Centre, and at various centres in Ipswich and Stowmarket, depending upon the supply of vaccine to these centres. Others are opening – see local press or TV

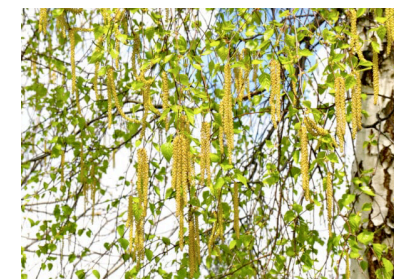
## Nature Notes – February – March 2021



For the last few winters our bird feeders have attracted the small finches called Redpolls. They use the feeders which are designed to hold the tiny black Nyger seeds and to dispense these to birds with small, pointed beaks. We installed them a few years ago in the hope of attracting Goldfinches, which they did within a few hours, but in subsequent winters also numbers of Repolls and the other small winter-visiting finch, the Siskin. Both these finches are mostly seen in

the winter, but in East Anglia they are also found as breeding birds, particularly in areas of Birch or Pine. But so far this year, up to the time of writing, both finches have been completely absent from the garden. The stock answers to this are usually that for some reason the birds have not migrated here from the continent, or that there is so much natural food in the district that they have no need yet of visiting gardens. In fact, I have seen flocks of Redpolls already feeding in the tops of local Birch trees.

Have a look at the twigs of the Birch, and you will see what is their attraction. The new catkins, which are the male flowers, will soon ripen and shed their pollen. The bigger catkins are the females, whose seeds ripened in the autumn, and are still available into the winter. These seeds are tiny, each equipped with wings, and are produced in large numbers along the length of the catkin. Thus there is a lot of food for birds available here, but only for those which have small, delicate beaks and are very light and acrobatic – in practice the tits and smaller finches. This year's female catkins develop later. By the river, look for the same thing on the Alder trees. The





large male catkins will be producing their pollen soon. The familiar woody fruits, which look like miniature Pinecones, are the female 'catkins' and are ripening about now. Next year's female catkins can be seen as tiny buds at the tip of some of the twigs. Again, their seeds are suitable food for tits and small finches, which can get their beaks into the 'cones'. Traditionally, these seeds are over by mid-February, which is when the Siskins in particular tend to visit garden bird feeders.



In this rather wet winter, the River Alde has risen onto the low floodplain meadows for much of the time. This has attracted a few ducks, mainly Mallard, and a few gulls. The gulls, mainly Black-headed Gulls (look for them starting to



get their black heads anytime from February), but also a few Common Gulls and Herring Gulls. They seem to be feeding mostly around the edges of the floodwater, where I presume they are taking creatures such as earthworms, displaced by the water. Often there has also been a Heron, usually an immature bird, greyer and with less of the

striking black and white of the adult on its head and neck. When we first came to Sweffling there were Herons nesting high in a tree by the river, but the tree has since died and fallen, and I have not seen signs of nesting since.

Along the river this winter I have on a couple of



occasions seen a Kingfisher, on the stretch above the Benhall bridge. My impression is that there are only low numbers of small fish here, and I would not expect Kingfishers to be common, but some people disagree with me, so keep your eyes open. The Kingfisher makes a loud, shrill piping call when it flies, giving you a



good warning that one is about. Another favourite thing of mine is the Kingcup, or Marsh Marigold, which grows in early spring along the river Alde and some its ditches. Look out for its large, bright yellow, buttercup flowers from March onwards.

**Geoffrey Abbott**



## Sweffling Parish Council

Following the retirement of the previous Parish Clerk, Michael Smithson has been appointed to the vacancy. The council generally meets once each month, normally in Sweffling Hut but, in the current pandemic, meetings are being held by Zoom. If you wish to raise any matter with the Parish Council please e-mail the Chairman, John Stanley, [arthurjohnstanley@gmail.com](mailto:arthurjohnstanley@gmail.com) or the Clerk [sweffling.clerk@outlook.com](mailto:sweffling.clerk@outlook.com) Minutes of the January 2021 meeting will be posted on the Parish Council Notice Board at the end of Holden's Lane. The date of the next meeting is scheduled for February 9<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 p.m. by Zoom. Please contact the Parish Clerk if you would like to attend.

If you are interested in learning about current local environmental issues, you might like to click on the following link:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Green-Issues/Newsletters/2020/096-Greenprint-newsletter-winter-2020-21.pdf>

## Alde Community Council Spring Flower Show

The ACC announced last month its intention to hold its Spring Flower Show in early April. The intention is undiminished and it is still envisaged that it will go ahead, either in Sweffling village hut, or on Sweffling town field. The precise date and venue for the show depends on the COVID regulations which will be in force in April. That is 2 months away. We can hope that is long enough for the covid threat to diminish and the rules to be relaxed, remembering the saying back in September, "it will surely be over by Christmas" ( ref, WW1).

There is much to be said positively about the show. First and foremost, participation is not limited to ACC members. Secondly, it is intended to be enjoyable for the growers, spectators and all participants. There is a broad format to the show to give it some order. All entries have to be at the site by 10.00am. No entry after that time. Judging will begin at 10.00 am, no-one except the judge will be present. The show will open at 2.00pm Prize giving at 3.00pm followed by raffle. There are a wide variety of classes for entries covering seasonal flowers, displays and arrangements, with special sections for young exhibitors, up to 10, and up to 15. (Fruit and vegetable animals made by Eleanore Fitzgerald, aged 15 at the time.)



**Further updates will be given as the information becomes available.**

## 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.**

## Fly tipping

Two large settee cushions have been dumped under the hedge next to the recycling bins on the Townland Meadow. Would the person or persons responsible for this please **REMOVE THEM!!!**. This is not a general tipping site and the Council rubbish collectors will not take them away. **THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE IS NOT A RUBBISH DUMP.** Fly tipping is a criminal offence and if further instances occur it may become necessary to notify the police and/or remove the recycling facility.



## JUNIPER BARN NEWS

February and March, signs of spring and signs of hope. Thanks as always to all those who keep supporting us and welcome to all those newcomers to the village – we look forward to getting to know you. After a difficult January, we're still here, serving takeaway drinks and snacks with a shop full of lovely things to tempt you including a varied selection of fresh fruit and veg, goodies and treats for all, and we're supporting lots of local businesses too. Come and find special treats for Mothering Sunday, Valentine's Day and Easter. The café will open again as soon as we are able too – please keep an eye on our website. Keeping our staff and customers safe is our priority, following Government COVID-19 guidance.

*Geoffrey and Katie Boulton* **01728 663773**

Open Tues – Sat 9.00 – 3.00 **[www.juniperbarnsuffolk.co.uk](http://www.juniperbarnsuffolk.co.uk)**

## Are you a Marmalade Lover? – A message from Julia Kinsey

Dear Lovely Villagers

Well here we are in lockdown 3! I have been keeping myself busy these last few weeks making marmalade. So, as before, if anyone would like a jar or two, please let me know. [juliakinsey@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:juliakinsey@hotmail.co.uk) 01728664085  
£2 per jar, cash only, correct amount please.

I can either put a bag out for you on our doorstep (Laigh Logan), & you can put money in an envelope through our letter box. Or I can deliver to you & hand over (socially distanced of course) & you can give me money in an envelope then.

I have the following available currently & will be making more while stocks of Seville oranges last.

- \* Classic Seville orange
- \* Orange with Sherry
- \* Old fashioned Oxford marmalade ( slightly darker as uses part Demerara sugar & peel chopped in chunks)
- \* Dark & stormy with rum
- \* Dark & stormy ( this style is very dark, uses some dark muscovado sugar & contains ginger & some lime juice from fresh limes)
- \* Lemon                      \* Lemon with gin                      \* Honeyed pink grapefruit

Also Apple & cranberry chutney (left over from Christmas that never happened!). This is nice with cheese & biscuits or great as an alternative to apple sauce with pork.

I will be making some fresh lemon curd over the coming weeks. As this has a shelf life of only 1 month I will make this according to any orders.

With kind regards to you all, stay safe & hoping we all remain well. **Julia**

## Finally, cheering pictures to remind us Spring is not far away.

Snowdrops, aconites and crocuses can be seen around the village – just look!!



Please e-mail any news items or events for the April/May edition to [john.tesh@talk21.com](mailto:john.tesh@talk21.com) before March 15th. As very few events are taking place, why not send any poems, thoughts you might have had about the lockdown or other short literary items and we will be happy to publish them (as long as they are not libelous!!)

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