

The Sundridge Village News

February 2021



In this issue we bring you signs of spring in our village, an impressive report from our local school about how they're facing the challenges of on-line teaching, a budding lyricist re-writes a well-known song, gardening tips to tempt you outside on warm days, an interesting report from a nature lover and a poetry corner.

Parish Services for February 2021

All church services will be via zoom at 10.30 every Sunday during February. In addition, at 10.30 every Tuesday there will be a coffee and a chat morning and on Wednesday at 10.30 'Praying for our Community and the World'. The Zoom Code for all services is as follows:- <http://us02web.zoom.us/j/83109411527> or call Rev Pam on 01959 467223

St. Mary's Church Sundridge

The church will be open for private prayer during February on Wednesdays and Sundays from 10am until 2pm. During the period of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday on February 17th, there will be thoughts and prayers up in the church each week on the theme of "Worship in the Wilderness".

Rector

Rev Pam Davies, email: rev.pamdavies@sky.com
Telephone: 01959 467223

Churchwarden, Sundridge

Althea Chapman
email: althea.chapman@outlook.com

Christingle in a Bag

Normally – well, normally – members of the church would spend a very sticky couple of hours on a Thursday preparing the bases of 100 Christingles, scoring oranges and inserting candles in preparation for the equally sticky – but delightful - time of helping the pupils of the school to make them on the following morning, in time for the Sunday Christingle service in the church. "No, no, you can't eat the sweets just now. You have to wait till Sunday." "These cocktail sticks are sharp – please don't jab them either into you or someone else."

This Christmas, however, we couldn't, for obvious reasons.

Instead, on a suggestion from the Children's Society, Jane Belle and Barbara Lockey came up with an ingenious solution. As they put it, why don't we give each pupil a Christingle "kit" so that they can make their own at home with the further opportunity of joining in a Zoom service given by the Rector where she explained the significance of the various components of the Christingle?



Each gift bag contained an orange with the red tape attached round it, a square of foil, a candle, an envelope containing the four cocktail sticks (with a label warning "These are sharp!") and a small bag of sweets. Included in the gift bag also were an explanation of the Christingle and details of the Sunday afternoon Zoom service.

In the end, Jane made 100 Christingle bags, five crateloads of which were delivered to the school – one bag per pupil. We had also identified as many families from our congregations in the three villages of the parish as we could and delivered the remaining bags either at the lychgate on the Friday afternoon or around the villages on the Saturday.

We are most grateful to both Jane and Barbara for all their hard work in organising this from scratch and especially to Jane for allowing her whole house to be taken over by an orange.....

Parish Treasurer Needed

Maria has been our Treasurer for over 10 years and her knowledge of the church accounts is amazing. Although she's tried to hand over the reins many times, unfortunately all attempts at finding someone have come to nothing. At the Church Annual General Meeting in September, Maria was thanked for her work, dedication and faithfulness. Her final act of generosity has been in staying on as Treasurer to prepare the end of year accounts. Maria will then hand over on January 1st 2021. There must be someone in the Parish, or further afield, with book-keeping or accountancy expertise who just needs a gentle push to volunteer. Maria is happy to talk to anyone who might be interested and explain what the rôle involves. Please contact Maria on 01959 562588 or email m_lewington@sky.com

Decorating the Christmas tree in Church

Just before the end of term, with a large Christmas tree installed in church – courtesy of Emma of the Sevenoaks Garden Centre – we were happily able to carry out the tradition of the youngest children from Sundridge and Brasted Primary School walking up to the church to decorate it. Up they came, the Squirrels, accompanied by their older buddies in Fox class, with their beautiful (and this year very sparkly) decorations which they duly hung all around the tree. We are very grateful both to them and to their teachers.



The Nativity Trail

I do hope that some of you managed to walk the Nativity Trail in Sundridge which took place the week before Christmas. There was a splendid map with numbered signs which took you along a route round parts of the village, leading finally to Bethlehem. At each of the signs there was a colourful picture focusing on a particular moment in the nativity, plus a QR code which, once scanned with a smartphone, took you to a link that played a carol. I'm reliably informed that a small social distancing group of adults completed the walk one evening, singing the carols as they made their way to Bethlehem.

If you were one of the lucky ones, upon arrival at Bethlehem you took one of the packs of home-made gingerbread biscuits that had been lovingly prepared by one of Santa's elves.

Thank you to everyone who made a special effort to decorate their windows and to keep an eye on the signs so that they faced the correct way in the morning! Thank you, Ginny, for organising the event and to the little elf for her culinary skills.



News from Sundridge and Brasted CE Primary School

*Greetings from Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School!
Another year, another challenge.*

Firstly, we hope that you all were able to enjoy Christmas in some form or another and that you and your families were able to stay safe and well.

As you will be aware, 2021 started for us with the news that we would be closed for most children for the first two weeks of term and as such, when the message subsequently changed to a 6-week national lockdown, our plans for a remote learning programme were already in place.

This time round we are working with our newly installed Microsoft 365 package which is hugely exciting. The 'Teams' feature allows the staff to offer live teaching sessions, as well as uploading assignments and resources for the children. It also allows for children to work on Teams directly and upload completed work. Staff can mark work, send feedback, work in 'break out' rooms or as a whole class. It's an excellent educational package.

As always, the staff have been brilliant, planning and setting work which is effective for remote learning and differentiated for the whole class to access. Every school day starts with a 9.00am welcome and ends with a 3.00pm celebration for the whole school and in between times each class has a live teaching session both morning and afternoon via Teams, allowing the children to join in from home. This is working really well, allowing the teachers and children to engage with each other which is hugely beneficial for their learning as well as their mental wellbeing.

Once again, our parents have been superb, rising to the challenge of supporting their children at home with their various school assignments and lesson schedules as well

as their juggling with their own work and care commitments and, in some cases, seriously dodgy internet connection!

We are so aware that home learning is much more difficult than it sounds and we recognise the effort and time it takes to support the children in their learning at home. We encourage all of our parents to celebrate their successes and not to dwell on the parts of the day that do not go so well.

We have lent out numerous laptops and made full use of the Government's tech support schemes. We send home reading books and paper packs of work and resources and we call parents weekly to offer support and help, to have a chat and ensure all is well. Once again Teams is proving to be incredibly useful, allowing staff to read with individual children throughout the week which is a wonderful way of keeping in contact.

As before, we are open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children throughout the term. Joe Wicks is also a regular in school, with his PE half-hour warming everyone up and getting them ready for the day, and the staff in school are doing a fantastic job of working with the children and their various class lessons and assignments. They make each day a fun day for the children and even played in the snow. Sadly, there wasn't quite enough for a snowman!

Whether or not we will be back in school after half-term is not yet known. We do hope so but we all know that the health of the country is the priority at the moment and we will be back in school, in full, when it is safe to do so.

As always, we send our very best wishes to the community and hope that you all stay safe and well.

Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School

A 2021 Flanders & Swann (song)

We are all in the same boat.

January has always been a grim month so it's just about grinning and bearing and being massively positive.

We will get through this pandemic but sadly the next few months will continue to play havoc with our freedom and our mental well-being. As Helen Keller said, "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadows". Chin up, one and all. Things will be better eventually. I fully believe that this time next year we will be into the realms of normality.

In the meantime I have rewritten lyrics to Flanders and Swann – '*A song for the weather*'. If you are unfamiliar with this then you are young enough to access it on Spotify or click on the photograph below.



January brings the snow, Oh but there's no place to go.

February brings the rain, really - Lockdown again?

March with win'try wind around, surely the NHS must be sound.

April brings the sweet Spring showers. Been booking hols for hours and hours

Farmers fear unkindly May, didn't they know it's Brexit – hey!

June it rains and never stops, Facemasks on, still got the pox.

In July the sun is hot, tiers are out, we've done the lot

August can be dank and wet, but at least we are all out and met.

Bleak September mist and mud, - Education in a flood.

Then October adds a gale, we don't mind we've some ale (at the local pub)

Dark November brings the fog, 12 peeps now can walk the dog.

Freezing wet December, then...

Bl'dy January again.

Fi Parkin

Nature and Sundridge Village

One in five of the world's 11,000 bird species migrates, some flying hundreds of thousands of kilometres in a lifetime to feed, nest, raise their young and survive. In winter, migrant birds from the Arctic and colder European countries are attracted to the UK for its milder winter temperatures and where food is easier to find. Other species, such as Swifts, House Martins and Cuckoos, migrate from more southerly countries, such as Africa, to summer and breed here. The most extreme migration is undertaken by the Arctic Tern which literally flies from pole to pole in its search for food and breeding sites. Climate and geography on the mild maritime north-western corner of Europe make the UK one giant "service station" on the bird motorway stretching from the Arctic to South Africa and beyond.



Brian and I have lived on the fringe of Sundridge now for 30 years, our garden drops down to Sundridge lake and we can see as far as the North Downs. During that time, we have recorded 94 species of birds in, over or from our garden. Some are residents, many are migrants.

On day one of the first COVID-19 lockdown we went for a walk around the local woodlands and fields. The human world had gone silent and absent outdoors, with no traffic on the A25 or M25, but the pastureland was alive with the sound of Skylarks high above us, six in one field alone. As spring advanced, more species were in full song establishing breeding territories. Swifts and House Martins arrived from Africa, Yellowhammers and Warblers could be seen and heard in some of the old hedgerows. Robins, Song Thrushes and Blackbirds sang all day and late into the evening in gardens to maintain their territories. Lots of people were saying that they became aware of birdsong with less competing noise and that it raised their spirits, even if they were living alone. As the days rolled on, more people and families with children started to walk in the countryside and were interested in the birds and wildflowers which we were able to point out to them.

The UK resident populations of many species such as Robins, Blackbirds and Starlings are joined in the winter by migrants from Eastern Europe and Russia, so "your" garden Robin could in fact be of Viking heritage.

Birdwatching in your garden can be enhanced by planting berried shrubs for the Thrushes, and rowan and crab apple trees. You can also put out food and water for

birds and make spaces for insects to hibernate. Insects are a vital part of the web of life. Buy some bird feeders and stock them with sunflower seeds and unsalted peanuts. A shallow water dish kept topped up with clean water will attract birds to drink and bathe to keep their feathers in good condition. Keep the feeders clean so there is less risk of a disease build-up. Install a pond for wildlife and frogs, toads and newts will benefit. Encourage children to look for wildlife in gardens, make bird boxes and insect houses and learn about nature.



Brian and I volunteer for the RSPB, which has over 1 million members in the UK. Birds and nature worldwide are facing all sorts of threats from climate change, hunting, and habitat destruction. Mankind has a responsibility for nature worldwide. The RSPB is playing a leading role in driving flyway-scale conservation, working with and supporting our BirdLife partners all along the flyway from Iceland to South Africa. Sundridge as a village can help by maintaining its gardens and countryside in good health. Leave wild areas for nature. If nature is healthy, coming generations of children will stand a better chance of living healthy and happy lives.

Photographs by Jean Nobbs

Gardening jobs

If you haven't started to sow your sweet pea seeds, now is the time to begin. Sow under cover now and they will produce deeper, stronger roots and will reward you with prolific flowers for a longer period of time. A lot of people soak them overnight before sowing, but be prepared for some to rot if you do that. Best results are obtained by using root trainers. This enables the roots to grow directly straight to the bottom of the pot.

It's also time, weather permitting, to cut back your hellebores. At this time of year, some hellebores tend to get black spot and, unless you cut the leaves down to the ground, the fungus will transfer to the flowers. So cut them right back and dispose, but don't compost.

Check that your dahlias are next on the list or, if you're like me, first try to remember where you stored them. When found, remove any signs of disease or rot to prevent them from spreading.

Start thinking about all the vegetables that you'd like to grow this year. Start making the must-have list of the things that you know taste better home grown and that you will look forward to eating.

Poetry corner

The Editor is delighted to have received 2 verses from Pat Murch that she thought readers would like to read in these uncertain times. The first one was printed on a tea-towel and is an Irish blessing;-

*May you always be blessed with walls for the wind,
A roof for the rain,
A warm cup of tea by the fire,
Laughter to cheer you,
Those you love near you,
and all that your heart may desire.*

The second one was written by Iris Hesselden, printed in 'People's Friend' on 3rd October last year.

Little Hopes And Dreams

*When all the world looks dull and grey
The sunshine hard to find,
We need some little hopes and dreams
To lift the heart and mind.
And if your hopes aren't realised
Don't let them slip away,
But hold them fast and keep them safe,
There'll be a better day.*

*Just now then, shut out the world
And dream a little dream,
And let your thoughts go wandering
As gently as a stream.
Keep cheerful as you journey on
Whatever comes your way.
With all those little hopes and dreams
You'll find a better day.*

The Editor has researched a little into the life of Iris Hesselden and found out that she has been contributing to 'People's Friend' magazine since the 1980s. She finds her inspiration from nature – the sky, the sea and flowers - things people say and life in general. Her advice for aspiring poets is "Don't get downhearted. Keep trying. We all get a lot of disappointments. Be patient. Everything comes to those who wait." Very sound advice with many of us needing to heed those qualities as we wait patiently for our turn in the vaccine queue!

Brasted, Ide Hill and Sundridge Gardening Society

I hope you are keeping safe and well during this third period of lockdown.

Signs of spring are appearing in the form of snowdrops, hellebores and other early flowering plants, which make us gardeners feel hopeful for the months ahead. How lucky we are to have our gardens to keep us sane (even if we are only able to plan and pore over the seed catalogues at the moment!).

Spring is in the air

Walking through the churchyard a few days ago, I was delighted to come across so many snowdrops. Is it because there is hardly anything in flower at this time that makes these simple white flowers such a joy to see? These flowers love it when the sun is shining and the air is cool.



Deck the Doors for Christmas

Thanks to all who shared their pictures, here's just a few:



Christmas stamps

Did you notice the Christmas stamps this year? They were simply marvellous, eight elegant stamps featuring Nativity scenes depicted in the stained-glass windows of Anglican churches across the country. If we weren't in lockdown, I might have taken a drive round to see them. If I were Dominic Cummings, I guess I would have gone anyway!

The images showcase the detail and craftsmanship of this highly specialised decorative art. The 1st class stamp is from St Andrew's Church, Coln Rogers, Gloucestershire and the 2nd class one is from St Andrew's Church, East Lexham, Norfolk.

St Andrew's Church in Coln Rogers, I have since found out, is a 'Thankful Village', that is, one of those few villages in Britain which did not lose a single soldier in World War One. Only 52 villages in Britain can share that thankful statistic.



Fundridge events

Fundridge, the group aiming to bring the community together, has not been idle during lockdown, in fact they've been optimistically planning for many events in 2021. With the hope that at some point during the first quarter of 2021 our area will be released from lockdown, they plan to kick off with a Duck Race and an Easter egg hunt along with the 'Great British Clean-up' over the Easter weekend. Look out for more details next month. *Fundridge had scheduled lots of events for 2020 including:*

Easter Egg Hunt, Duck Race, Village Clean up
St Georges Cheese and Wine, Murder mystery,
Seniors' afternoon teas, FunStock, Auction of Promises
and many more!

Not abandoned, simply delayed.

The March edition

If you have any information for the "Dates for your Diary" section or an article that you'd like included in the next edition, please email by Monday 22nd February to:-
sundridgevillagenews@gmail.com

And finally . . .

I have been sent 2 cartoons to make you chuckle.



Can it get worse...Yup!

2020

2022