

# Wensum Diary

The monthly magazine for  
Great Witchingham (Lenwade), Little Witchingham,  
Morton-on-the-Hill, Ringland, Weston Green and Weston Longville

Volume 49, Issue 1, February 2021

Price 50p



## Wensum Diary Finances

Welcome to a new year of the Wensum Diary. The Wensum Diary is a not-for-profit organisation and goes out to households in Gt and Little Witchingham, Morton on the Hill, Weston Longville and a few into Ringland.

2020 was not a good year for anyone, not least the Wensum Diary and expenses exceeded income by £525 last year. In the year, income came from subscriptions + postal copies £825 and adverts £2048, whilst expenses were printing £3190, expenses £214 (ink and stamps for 2 years) so tot in = £2873 and out = £3404

Year on year our income is constantly declining – both from adverts and from subs. Since we stopped ‘doorstepping’ people and demanding the money, the income from subs has declined from about £1100 down to nearer £800. We print 500 copies every month, 10 of which are postal copies. We do 11 editions. We have a cover price of 50p. If everyone paid their £5 then there would be an income of £2450—currently it’s only 1/3rd of that but only around 20% of people actually pay something.

2017 112 separate individuals paid – 40 from WL, 50 from Gt Witchingham and 12 from Morton, 20 from Ringland and ‘unidentified’. 24 of the 112 people paid more than the £5 asking price.

2018 102 separate individuals paid – 33 from WL, 32 from Gt Witchingham and 37 from Morton, Ringland and ‘unidentified’. 24 of the 102 people paid more than the £5 asking price.

2019 110 separate individuals – 32 from WL, 60 from GW, 8 from Morton and 10 from Ringland / unknown. 37 of the 110 paid more than £5

2020 91 individuals - 24 from WL, 44 from GW, 13 from Morton and 10 ‘others’. 23 from 91 paid more than £5.

So roughly 400 out of 500 copies go unpaid for, and around a quarter of those who do pay are more than generous and subsidise considerably.

Advert income has gone down from a peak of £2500-3000, down to currently £2048 – in the last 5 years it’s been between £2000 and £2200. Compared to other local magazines, it is quite cheap to advertise in the Diary, in an effort to try and attract more advertisers, and we do hope you will use the services advertised where you can.

Printing costs are relatively good news in that they are cheaper now for colour at around £3200 per year than they used to be for black and white at £3500

Previous to 2020 the WD has roughly broken even each year +/- £50. This is fine but more than a couple of years like 2020 will see all the reserves gone.

The recent Parish Plan involving Morton and Weston Longville showed that nearly 90% of people got local information about services and events from the Wensum Diary or The Pilgrim so it seems that many people value the magazine and hopefully in the coming year they will feel able to pay for it.

One might say ‘Twas ever thus’ ! Looking back in the archives, in the second edition of 1976 (volume 4) there was a plea from the editorial team for funds to cover expenses, despite sponsorship from Anglian Windows Ltd whose staff typed and printed the magazine. Then a request for 50p per household for the year was made. This then seems to have been repeated more or less every year ever since !!!!

You will find your subs envelope in this month’s edition. This can be dropped off or returned by post, given to your distributor or left in either Stylistics or Lenade News for collection. Any point in the year will be fine.

### December 2020: Hall for All 100 Club Prize-winners:

1st Prize:	£50.00:	No. 02:	Thomas Goodall
2nd Prize:	£30.00:	No. 23:	Marian Barnes
3rd Prize:	£20.00:	No. 29:	John Parsons

### The Editorial Team

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Closing date for copy — 10th of the Month

Views and assertions expressed are not necessarily those of the editors.

## Parson Woodforde's Diary

Extracts chosen by Katharine Solomon



*February 1787* Nancy Woodforde, the Parson's niece, who had been ill on and off for months, was seriously ill during February. She vomited frequently and had griping pains in her bowels. Dr Thorne had prescribed a mercury bolus (a pill) daily, but on 3rd February, Woodforde felt that there was too much mercury left in her system.

"The Mercury she took last night was much too strong for her weak frame at this present ... therefore there must be a great deal of mercury left behind. ... her pain within her was so bad that she could not get from the close Stool for near 2 hours together. I went up to see her in the evening, and she was very low and cried a good deal. ... I was very uneasy indeed the whole day on my dear Nieces Account. Pray God give her more ease."

On 17th February "Poor Nancy had a dreadful night of it, in violent Pain all the night ..." followed by an equally dreadful day, including repeated vomiting. Dr Thorne prescribed some powders, then a "Potion", which may or may not have been responsible for a gradual improvement.

*19th February, 1787* "I sold 2 acres & ½ of Turnips today to be fed off, to Gould of Attlebridge for 2 Guineas and half. Turnips now are very cheap indeed in Weston, as there are many to sell & Weather so very fine. ... Nancy continued brave [better] all day and sat up till after 10 at night – then took a Rhubarb Bolus and went to bed quite cheery."

*27th February, 1787* "Nancy now daily improves, thank God for it. ... Mr and Mrs Custance with their Son George drank Coffee and Tea with us this afternoon and stayed with us till near 9 o'clock this evening. After Tea, we had no Cards but I shewed them all my Pictures and Prints, with which they were well pleased, especially Mr Custance."

*Nancy, aged 29 in February 1787, was to live to 73, a good age in those days. After her uncle's death, she returned to Somerset and lived there for the rest of her life, surrounded by the younger generation of Woodfordes.*

For more information, visit [www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk](http://www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk)

A massive thank you to the distributors of the Wensum Diary. The 'master distributors' - Chris for Gt Witchingham, Judie for Weston Longville and Morton, and Dian for Ringland do a brilliant job each month making sure copies go to the 30-odd people who are then so very kind as to go out in all weathers to put the Diary into every house. Without the foot-slogging of these people, month after month, there would be no Wensum Diary and we cannot thank them enough for their efforts. If anyone else would like to help, then please contact Chris, Judie or Dian—details on page 2.

### Dogs fouling on Pavements

A particular issue of dog fouling has started to occur in Lenwade.

Dog fouling is a messy eyesore. Perhaps more importantly, dog mess is also a potential health hazard.

All dog owners have a legal duty to clean up dog faeces immediately after their animal fouls a public place. Dog mess laws do not allow the excuse of 'not noticing' that the canine has fouled.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 is law in England and Wales. It revoked the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 and introduced a raft of strict dog control orders.

The act grants local councils and communities greater regulation towards owners of canines and clearing up their dog's mess.

Besides, the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 now permits local authorities to make a 'public spaces protection order'.

As a rule, council fines for dog mess vary from £50 to £80. You can avoid an on-the-spot fine by knowing what is the law on picking up after your dog.

What happens if you don't clean up after your dog has fouled and you get fined? Refusing to pay the on-the-spot fine could land you in court where you can get another penalty up to £1,000.

There are some exemptions for dog owners

The dog mess law, and consequential fine, does not apply to registered blind dog owners. The blind do not need to clean up 'guide dog poop'.

An exemption exists for dog owners on certain areas of public land in England and Wales. As a rule, these will include Highways which have speed limits of 50mph or more, Land used for woodlands or agriculture, and Parts of rural common land, or that which is mostly marshland, heath land, or moors.

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## Some festive cheer

Conforming to the Covid restrictions of the time, 4 hardy souls convened in the mouth of Louise and Paul's garage and pooled green stuff and baubles to make our Christmas wreaths. Thanks to all for the pooling of coffee, biccys and mulled wine, all of which improved our creativity no end. Thanks for hosting us, Louise.



## Three Parishes Parish Plan Draw

Cast your minds back to late 2019 when each household in Weston Longville, Morton and Attlebridge was delivered a copy of the Three Parishes parish plan questionnaire. In with the questionnaire was your prize draw raffle ticket. Well, finally, the plan has been completed and given out to every household, and the prize draw has taken place. The winning tickets are :

**Ticket Number 413 a parishioner of Weston Longville who wins the first prize of £100.**

**Ticket Number 441 a parishioner of Attlebridge who wins the second prize of £50.**

All you have to do now is find your raffle ticket and contact either Ruth on 880 000 or Clare on 880 645, to claim your prize.

## Spiced Pear Cider Crumble

Get ahead : The crumble topping can be prepared a few hours ahead and kept chilled until continuing with step 3.

### Ingredients

6 pears, ripe but firm  
1 tbsp caster sugar  
zest of 1 lemon  
½ tsp ground cinnamon  
150ml pear cider  
custard or ice cream, to serve

### For the topping

150g whole rolled oats  
100g plain flour  
1½ tsp ground cinnamon  
1 tsp ground ginger  
pinch ground cloves  
100g butter, diced  
100g demerara sugar



1. Preheat the oven to 190°C, fan 170°C, gas 5.
2. For the topping, mix the oats, flour and spices in a large bowl with a good pinch of salt. Rub in the butter to form small clumps, then stir in the sugar and rub in again until you have a chunky crumble. Set aside.
3. Peel, quarter and core the pears, and cut into 2cm chunks. Tip into a shallow ovenproof dish (about 2 litres capacity) and toss with the caster sugar, lemon zest and cinnamon.
4. Pour the pear cider into the dish.
5. Scatter the crumble topping over the pears and bake for 35-40 minutes until golden brown and the fruity filling starts to bubble up.
6. Leave to cool for 10-15 minutes before serving with custard or ice cream.

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## Weston Longville Parish Council

Weston Longville Parish Council have a casual vacancy opportunity. Have you some ideas as to what you'd like to see the parish do? Would you like to put your name forward to be a parish councillor? WLPC meets 5 times per year, usually in the Hall for All but more recently via Zoom. We run a 'portfolio' council where individual councillors have an area of interest that they look after on behalf of the council and carry forward the aims and decisions between meetings. This may involve talking to local people, contacting local authorities or other groups, responding to questionnaires and attending other meetings or groups if required. Full training is available. If you are interested then please contact —Helen Pearson, Clerk to Weston Longville PC

Email: [weston.longville@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:weston.longville@yahoo.co.uk)  
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## A century past

In 2019, there were 13,330 centenarians (people aged 100 years and over) with the number of people aged 100 years increased by 11% compared with 2018. What a huge amount of change those people will have seen in their lifetimes.

In 1920, the UK population was 40 million people. In 1923 there were 383,525 cars—one for every 104 people. In 2020 the UK population is 67 million and there are 31.9 million cars—about one for every other person. By the end of the 1930s there were very few horse drawn vehicles in service. The last horse-drawn tram to be withdrawn from public service in the UK made its last journey on 30 September 1957 when the Omagh to Enniskillen line closed.



In 1918 less than a quarter of Britain's homes were owner-occupied. Mortgages were rare, most people rented their homes privately and new property was mainly built for sale to private landlords. It was only in the 1970s that home owners came to outnumber those who rented. It's currently at around 62%. In the 1930s, around 3 million UK houses were built, compared to around 1.5 million between 2010 and 2019.

Working class houses with bathrooms were first built around 1900, and in the 1920's it was mostly council houses which were built with bathrooms. At this time, bathrooms were still considered to be a luxury, and as late as the 1960's, many homes in Britain did not have a bathroom, which meant using an outdoor toilet and washing in a bath that was placed in front of the fireplace.

In January 1948 Britain's first self-service supermarket is opened by the London Co-operative Society.



Gas street lights started in the 1790s but were still being used in Glasgow in 1971. Throughout the Victorian era electricity remained extremely expensive leaving gas as the popular choice for most middle-class households. Between 1901 and 1910 the availability of electricity became more widespread and there was a change to new 'electroliers' replacing gas fittings (gasoliers). It is not until after the First World War that electricity found its way into homes on a large scale. The metal filament lamps had been perfected in 1911 and the Electricity (Supply) Act passed in 1926, led to the establishment of the national grid. An electric cooking stove was still considered a novelty in the 1920s. By the 1930s, decreased cost of electric power and modernized styling of electric stoves had

greatly increased their acceptance. The countertop microwave oven was introduced in 1967 and became affordable for residential use in the late 1970s.

Electric vacuum cleaners started to be produced between 1906 and 1926.

The domestic refrigerator was only invented in 1913, and didn't become common place until the 1950s.

The first patent for a washing machine was in 1691 however the first domestic automatic washing machine was patented in 1937 by the Bendix Corporation. In appearance and mechanical detail, this first machine was not unlike the front loading automatic washers produced today but lacked any drum suspension and therefore had to be anchored to the floor to prevent "walking". Because of the components required, the machine was also very expensive.

Television appeared in 1937—The first commercially available sets had screens that measured only 12 or 14 inches and cost between £50 and £125 - this at a time when the average wage was £3 a week. And even if you could afford it, only people within a 20-mile radius of Alexandra Palace could pick up the flickering image without a 'booster'.



On 7 March 1926 the first transatlantic telephone call, from London to New York, was made.

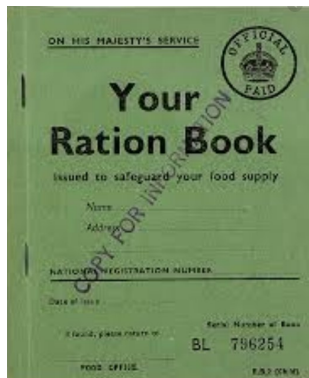
From the early 1920s only a very few well-off families had phones - or were 'on the phone' as it was called. There were public telephones, and shops or businesses which were 'on the phone' might be encouraged in an emergency to let valued customers use their phones. The early candlestick phones did not even have a dial, just a disk stating the number of the phone and other information on making the call. The main expansion in home phones came in the 1960s, when push-button telephones replaced the old fashioned rotary or dial phones, and introduced the answer machine. In the 1980s came the cordless handset, allowing callers to move around the house while talking on the phone, and paving the way for later mobile phone technology. The first UK mobile phone call was made by Earnie Wise in 1985 to Vodafone's HQ. The first text was sent in 1992 and the first touch screen phone came in 1996. In 1999 it was possible to connect to the web. The first iPhone came along in 2007.

In 1918, 82 million Telegrams were sent, the all time highest number. The service stopped on the 30th September 1982.



The development of the World Wide Web was begun in 1989 by Tim Berners-Lee and his colleagues at CERN, an international scientific organization based in Geneva, Switzerland. They created a protocol, HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP), which standardized communication between servers and clients. Their text-based Web browser was made available for general release in January 1992.

The first personal computers, introduced in 1975, came as kits. 1981 was a very significant year for the personal computing industry as the IBM PC was introduced. The first laptop was known as the Dynabook. It was invented in 1968 by Alan Kay. It was also called a tablet PC or slate computer because of its very flat shape.



The centenarians have lived under 4 monarchs—George V (1910–36), Edward VIII (1936), George VI (1936–52) and Elizabeth II (1952–). They have seen the aftermath of the First World War when 895 thousand people were killed in the UK—2% of the population; the Second World War and conscription, which saw another 383 thousand military but also 67 thousand civilian deaths; rationing which saw many things like paper, fuel, cloth and food-stuffs on limited supply, the last limitation - meat and cheese—was not stopped until 1954; National Service which was a standardised form of peacetime conscription. All able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 30 were called up. They initially served for 18 months. But in 1950, during the Korean War (1950-53), this was increased to two years. Thus between 1949 - when the National Service Act came into force - and 1963 - when the last National Serviceman was demobbed - more than 2 million men were conscripted to the British Army, Royal Navy or Royal Air Force.

They have seen atomic bombs being dropped, lived through Cold War fears, seen the NHS come into existence and seen flight go from the Wright brothers in 1903 to a man on the moon in 1969.

The decades have been marked by 7 different recessions and depressions which have seen interest rates reach 15%, inflation be as high as 18% per year, and unemployment reach 10.7% of the population. Many well known and established businesses have folded—C&A, Thomas Cooke, Woolworths, Rumbelows, Wimpey, BHS, Greenwoods, Safeway, Gateway and Nettos, Radio rentals, Borders Books and Comet to name but a few.

And now we have the ongoing Covid crisis... So as we do without things like coffee shops, meeting friends and family, holidays and haircuts, what would you most not want to be without? If all of the inventions and expectations of today were taken away and you could be left with one thing from the last 100 years, what would it be?

For me, I would be hard pushed to choose between the washing machine and the fridge—but I'd be more lost without the former. One old lady said the thing that amazed her most, and what she was still most grateful for, was hot water when you turned on a tap. Such a simple thing but so much effort to achieve without today's technology. Please let the Wensum Diary know what it would be for you or what life-changing events may be missing from the list.

## **Weston Longville Parish Council Financial Covid Assistance**

With a continuation of the Covid 19 pandemic and on-going restrictions on people and business, Weston Longville Parish Council, with the assistance of All Saints Church Charitable Trust, can offer a grant of £100 to offer a small measure of immediate financial help to residents whose household incomes have been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 crisis. If you have been a resident of Weston Longville Parish for at least one year and a day and your household is in **need, hardship or distress**, caused by restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 outbreak then please apply to the PC in writing. You can either apply by letter or use the form below including any circumstances which you feel that the PC should take into account.

The PC must act in accordance with the best interest of the parish and in particular, that means being able to evidence, within reason, that the people we assist are genuinely in need.

Each case will be considered in confidence and on the individual merit of the application and preference will be given to those who have not previously applied.

If you require any assistance in completing the application, any of the PC will be pleased to help.

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**2021**

**February 2021**

Thurs 4 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Newark Antiques Fair	7am	£37
Thurs 4 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Andover Abbey Snowdrops	tbc	tbc
Fri 12 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Chispenham Park Snowdrops & Newmarket	9.30am	£35
Sun 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb	London Motorcycle Show	8am	£42
Thurs 18 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Br & Walker Wild Swans	8.30am	£32

**March 2021**

Thurs 4 <sup>th</sup> March	Kew Gardens Orchid Festival	8am	£55
Wed 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Preston Woman Musical	8am	£75
Wed 17 <sup>th</sup> March	Wickstead Park – Rat Pick Show & Dinner	8am	£56
Wed 17 <sup>th</sup> March	Chispenham Park & Newmarket	9.30am	£35
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> March	Creative Crafts – NEC	7.30am	£40
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> March	Miniature Exhibition – NEC	7.30am	£47
Sun 21 <sup>st</sup> Mar	London Model Railway- Ally Pally	8am	£40
Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Blackpool 1950's week	7am	from £460
To Fri 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	Royal Courts Of Justice Tour & 2-Course Café Rouse Lunch	8am	£60
Wed 24 <sup>th</sup> March	Classic Car Restoration Show	7.30am	£50

**April 2021**

Thurs 1 <sup>st</sup> April	Ideal Home Show	7.30am	£40
Thurs 8 <sup>th</sup> April	Newark Antiques Fair	7am	£37
Fri 9 <sup>th</sup> April	Blaichier Park	8am	£45
Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> April	Kaukenhof Gardens, Amsterdam	7am	from £510 oo
To Wed 14 <sup>th</sup> April	& Bruzes DBB		
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Trustees:- Rev. Helen Rengert, Peter Dilloway, Freda Bunton, Bridget Wright, Ron Cornell, Sally Acloque.

### Covid 19 Pandemic

If any resident of Great Witchingham Parish, who has lived in the parish for at least one year and a day has suffered financial **need, hardship or distress** arising directly from the present pandemic, or as a result of the Government imposed restrictions relating to the pandemic, please write to the Trustees giving full details including any circumstances which you feel that the Trustees should take into account.

The Trustees must act in accordance with our charitable objects and, in particular, that means being able to evidence, within reason, that the people we assist are genuinely in need, hardship or distress.

- Each case will be considered in confidence and on the individual merit of the information provided.
- If you require any assistance in making your submission, any of the Trustees will be pleased to help.
- Applications may be handed to any trustee or preferably sent to:

Bridget Wright, 12 Common Lane, Great Witchingham NR9 5QH

Freda Bunton, Milcot, 9 Ladies Row, Lenwade NR9 5SF

Sally Acloque, The White House, Mill Lane, Lenwade NR9 5SQ

Ron Cornell, The Old Bakery, 46 The Street, Lenwade NR9 5SD

### PRIVACY STATEMENT

Great Witchingham Fuel Allotment Charity takes the privacy of our applicant's data seriously and will only ever use your personal information for administration purposes or for communicating with you about benefits you have requested. We will never share or sell your data with/to anyone else. Only GWFAC Trustees will be able to access your details. For more information about how we look after your data, to request a copy of our privacy policy or if you wish to contact us regarding your privacy please do so by contacting any Trustee.

### Use of Mercury in Medicine

In the Parson Woodforde extract on page 3, the Parson writes about the illness of his niece Nancy and her subsequent treatment with mercury. The element mercury, and its common chloride compound, are known to be toxic to the central and peripheral nervous systems, and the inhalation of mercury vapour can produce harmful effects on the nervous, digestive and immune systems, lungs and kidneys, and may be fatal. So it seems extraordinary that such a harmful substance would be used to treat the already sick. The toxic effects were known back in the 15th century so why did doctors prescribe it, and for what? There is actually evidence that mercury and other metals such as silver can kill bacteria outside the body, which may form the basis of some thoughts. It was used as a medicine to treat various diseases, such as Melancholy, constipation, syphilis, influenza, parasites, typhoid fever and skin disorders.



In the era before antibiotics, sexually-transmitted diseases were deadly. Some scholars believe that syphilis was the most critical medical problem of the first half of the 16th century. A great number of printed works dealing with syphilis first appeared at the end of the 15th century when it was known by such names as "morbus gallicus," "the French disease," "the pox," and "lues venera." There was a desperate search for a cure, and various forms of mercury were tried and the treatment appeared to benefit some patients.

It is very unlikely that Nancy was being treated for an STD but more likely for the flu or a fever.

Up until the 1980s it was still extensively used in the amalgam for tooth fillings where it made up 40-50% of the filling but was also found in skin whitening products and is still used in some parts of the world as an antiseptic for wounds. Over the years it has also been used in batteries, fluorescent lights, felt production, thermometers and barometers. As a naturally occurring element, it can be found in things like seafood, coal, old paints and old jewellery. It will linger in the body for around 6 months after exposure stops but will eventually be completely eliminated.

### Possible changes to the traffic calming measures in Weston Longville.

Thank you to all those who submitted their thoughts on the raised pavement idea in Weston Longville. On the whole, the feedback was 60:40 against the ideas and this will be discussed at the next Weston Longville Parish Council which is the 8th February.





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## Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society

### 2020 Roundup -

For obvious reasons it has been a long time since I wrote an update on the doings of Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society, so I thought I would round up our year's activities. In common with most organisations there was a complete halt to indoor and outdoor meetings during the first period of lockdown, but then we got in to Zoom. Our first attempt was a bit of a muddle, and took two tries in order to succeed but subsequently things have gone more smoothly. Upwards of 50 people have been attending each Zoom meeting, and a recording is made available for other members to catch up if they wish. Of course we miss the atmosphere and the company, but the talks lend themselves very well to this sort of presentation.

This year we have had 5 such talks, beginning with the ever obliging Allan Hale, who is a member of the club and has traditionally given a talk about his travels for our AGM. This year he varied from the norm by talking about birds in the Wensum Valley, giving us helpful points about where to look for birds during travel restrictions and an update on some of our favourites such as the local Peregrine Falcons. He is a ringer, and was able to show lovely images of Goshawk and Marsh Harrier chicks at the nest. For our second Zoom we welcomed Paul Noakes who is also a local enthusiast, and a GP, to talk about how we can help to stop the decline in the Swift population. He described the life of the Swift in some detail, especially their need for nesting sites. We have been busy destroying suitable sites by our lifestyle for years, and we need to provide many more. It seems that Swifts are very fussy about their nest sites and also entirely site faithful, so a lost nest is never replaced. Paul had asked members who already had swift boxes on their property, or who were interested in installing them, to send photographs of the site of the boxes in advance of the meeting. So for the final part of his talk he was able to give helpful tips that were tailored to the individual's requirements.



Swift



Redwing

Next month we met Simon Gillings of the British Trust for Ornithology, who told us about the use of sound recordings to study nocturnal migration. It seems that almost any species might be recorded flying over your property at night! The most commonly heard are the obvious ones that migrate in large flocks, like Redwings, but there are also lots of species that make smaller migrations or fly at night more locally. It is possible to send your results to a database so that the information you gather can be of use in research as well as satisfying your own curiosity. Like the presentation on Swifts, this talk gave lots of practical advice, and I am sure there are more members taking up this form of 'birdwatching'.

In October Lizzie Bruce, who is the warden at RSPB Titchwell, took us through a year on the reserve. Not quite the usual year, as it was 2020! She described the species we could expect to see at different times of year, but also gave us an understanding of the extra challenges presented by the COVID situation. The big departure this month was that the talk was followed by an outdoor visit to the reserve itself. 5 members met up on 25<sup>th</sup> October to walk the reserve. It was very windy, which made it hard to control telescopes etc, but they all enjoyed being out birdwatching in company of others. Sadly we have again gone into lockdown since then, so we don't know for sure when it might be possible to repeat that activity. Just in case, we are planning a visit to Buckenham Marshes at the end of January. Obviously only small numbers can take part, and they must book in advance.

Our most recent Zoom presentation was given by the well-known writer on wildlife James Lowen. He is a friend of the club and has spoken to us before. He described the birds of Argentina, giving us a bit of a geography lesson on the way. A fascinating talk illustrated with beautiful photographs of the birds.

So WVBS is continuing to be active. There is much communication between members on the WhatsApp group, and we are all managing to continue to birdwatch. One of the good things about this activity is that we can birdwatch in our own gardens, local parks even streets. There are always things to observe, and it does keep the spirits up!



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## From the hedgerow ...

Following the Winter Solstice on the 21st December, the days start to get longer at a rate of around 2 minutes per day. So by the beginning of February, the official sunset is more than an hour later than in mid-December. It is really noticeable following a bright, clear day when there is still light past the sunset time. Candlemas Day is the 2nd February. There are a number of weather predictors associated with Candlemas—tradition says, "If Candlemas Day be fair and bright, Winter will have another fight. If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain, Winter will not come again." This has similar sentiments to other sayings such as 'if it rains on Candlemas (Chandeleur) there will be forty more days of rainy day' and its converse 'If the badger is in the sun at Candlemas, he will have to go back into his hole for another four weeks' or 'If it is fair weather on Candlemas, the bear returns to its cave for six weeks'. In the USA, 2nd Feb is 'Groundhog Day'.

*'When halo rings the Moon or Sun, rain's approaching on the run.'* The halo is caused by the refraction of that body's light by ice crystals at high altitude. Such high-level moisture is a precursor to moisture moving in at increasingly lower levels, and is a good indicator that an active weather system is on its way.



Things start to get moving in February. Catkins come out on the hazel trees, snowdrops flower in early February with primroses following towards the end of the month. If the forecast is for a week of warmish weather then early frogs will emerge and start to mate. The resulting frogspawn and baby tadpoles are a great source of food for dragonfly larvae, fish and even adventurous blackbirds. The territorial behaviour of robins is evident. In summer a robin's territory is defended by a mated pair, while each bird holds individual winter territories.



## From the Rector

I think I am writing this article on the coldest day of the year. The temperature hasn't risen above freezing and we saw the sun for the briefest of times. 2021 is here and boy do we need a New Year collectively. Yes, the whole world needs a reboot, a fresh start, new ways of living that bear in mind everyone. For some, this year is going to be more tough because of job losses, recession, Brexit and so much more. So where do we gain our hope from this New Year.

I have great hope because I saw something awesome in 2020 which was the care and attention and kindness that flowed out from most people. I also saw some people who really tried to get as much for themselves from the system which wasn't so good and kind. Yet that kindness and good was much more than not. It was in most people. We celebrated the small things more, we noticed the great beauty in our nature and world.

Kindness and good come from the source of whom we have been created by. To be people who look out for each other and care. Jesus said "Do to others as you would have them do to you" or as some people say 'Do as you would be done by'. Many people live this way. Most people say I am not religious and yet live great lives of kindness. It's in our DNA. We are doing it because we are a community.

Many people have remarked that the prolonged lock-down is damaging to people's mental health. It is good sometimes ask to questions of ourselves. Do I feel lonely? Does life seem to have no purpose? Do I feel excluded from the happy bustle that most people seem to enjoy?

People with all kinds of mental illness or anguish are usually advised to seek a counsellor. The natural world and gardening are now seen as good medicines for mind as well as body, but it is seldom realised that the Church, too, has much to offer in this field. The Church can provide the friendship and relationship for which so many seek, not only within the fellowship of the local church, but in the friendship that Christ himself offers us

Please let us know if 2021 is a real struggle. We have access to community funds that may go a little way to helping.

Helen

For the **Great Witchingham Village Hall**, see the website [www.gwvh.org.uk](http://www.gwvh.org.uk)

Address: Hubbards Loke, Great Witchingham, Norwich NR9 5AZ, tel 01603 879 918

For the **Hall For All, Weston Longville**, see the website [www.hallforall.co.uk](http://www.hallforall.co.uk)

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As we can't meet in person for a shared meal, you will receive a hospitality treat each week so please let us know any dietary requirements.

We look forward to discovering together Revds Helen and Keith



### Team Rector: Rev'd Keith Rengert

The Rectory, Station Road, Reepham, 01603 879275, revdkeith@gmail.com (Rest day: Friday)

### Team Vicar: Rev'd Helen Rengert

The Bircham Centre, Reepham, (Please ring first as I may be out visiting) 01603 871263, revdhelenrwv@gmail.com

(Rest day: Friday)

Annabel Dack: Benefice Administrator, 01603 871263, parishofficerwv@gmail.com

### For local churchwardens :

Weston Longville: Mrs Dot Le Grice 01603 880962 Gt Witchingham: Mrs Janet Houlston 01603 872251

As we enter into Lockdown 3.0, and with much discussion with our Worship team, Church Wardens and parishioners, we have taken the difficult decision to close our church buildings to public worship on Sundays for the duration of January 2021. Moving our services online and via telephone for the duration of January will help to reduce the risk of our communities catching and spreading this more virulent strain and protect the most vulnerable in our parishes. This is likely to be extended into February.

As before, we will have online Zoom Sunday Worship services as well as pre-recorded services which will be available on the website and Facebook. We will have daily prayers via Zoom offering Morning Prayer, Midday Prayer and Evening Prayer, so whether you are a lark or a night owl you can join us in prayer.

As we have learnt the situation is everchanging. However we will also be putting together a weekly "Isolation Times" newsletter which will help you to keep up to date with services and news across the benefice. The Isolation Times can be sent out via post to those who are not on email, please contact parishofficerwv@gmail.com if you know someone who may benefit from this.

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