

*Kettle & Fish News - February 2012*

Are your 'spirits' affected by the weather? Maybe relaxed, content and happy in the summer months, more inward-looking and less adventurous in the colder times of the year? February has the reputation of being the month when many people feel depressed and woebegone. Possibly as a result of being the third month of winter, with spring still some time away; of nights continuing to be dark; of days continuing to be very cold, and not much respite from having to remain shut up indoors for lots of the time. At least that's my experience. Give me the beauty of spring flowers beginning to show in the garden, the warmth of longer days, the heat of summer, the pleasure of spending long hours outside - and my spirits lift. Perhaps it boils down to the contrast between light and dark. Gloomy thoughts cluster around ideas of illness, being 'under the weather', of death. Brightness attracts sensations of pleasure, well-being, of life even. It makes me think of probably the best-loved Psalm of all, Psalm 23. The Psalmist talks of walking 'through the valley of the shadow of death'. Just as the months and seasons change but always come back again, there is no way we can escape the inevitability of death, whether it involves a family member, a friend or the approach of our own. The Psalmist also speaks of lying down in green pastures and walking beside quiet waters - although it is incredibly unlikely that he was familiar with Sudbury's water meadows, he could have been describing them on a summer's day! The point of the Psalm is that whatever our spirits, high or low, the Lord God cares for us, He 'restores' us, guides us and is always with us - to and beyond the end.

*Malcolm*