

THE LINK

FEBRUARY & MARCH 2021



THE BENEFICE OF
OFFWELL, FARWAY & WIDWORTHY

FAITH ON-LINE IN 2021

www.churchtimes.co.uk/coronavirus-resources

This website lists resources for churches and individuals during the coronavirus pandemic including prayer, music, mental health, worship, live streamed, pre-recorded and interactive on-line services, funerals and bereavement, social action, theology and reflections.

www.churchofengland.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance

This website page contains prayers and intercessions for personal or group use, special prayers for use when it isn't possible to meet in church, and a simple form of prayer for the morning and evening, which can be downloaded, printed, and shared with those remaining at home or who are unable to access the internet.

www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/church-on-line

Weekly on-line services, streamed each Sunday at 9.00am

There is also a link to light a virtual candle to remember someone who has died.

www.facebook.com/thechurchofengland

BBC Radio 4, Long Wave – Daily Service at 9.45am weekdays.

Available on BBC Sounds for 27 days.

www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/religion-and-ethics

Also on BBC Sounds – all religious and ethics radio shows.

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes

Search here for Sunday Worship recordings on BBC Television

www.holyford.org

The Holyford Mission Community video their Sunday services from St. Andrew's at Colyton

www.youtube.com/user/CofEDevon/videos

'Pause and Pray' every day



A prayer for the pandemic

Dear Father God,

You promise to hear us when we come to you in prayer, thank you! We so need Your listening ear at this time – and your help, Lord. Winter always brings challenges, but this winter is exceptional as the effects of the pandemic continue. When we are afraid, or lonely, or grieving, or in despair, help us to trust You and to know that You are with us in the middle of it all, sustaining us. You are not social-distancing, You are very, very close, full of love and compassion.

We pray for our National Health Service and ask for Your special strength and protection for all staff. Thank you for the skills You have given to scientists all over the world. Thank you for the hope which the vaccines bring. Most of all thank You for the hope which Jesus brings. This earthly life is a whisper in the light of eternity and Jesus is the key to that eternal life. Thank You, Father, for meeting all our needs in Jesus.

Amen

By Daphne Kitching



OPENING THOUGHTS

I received a video clip recently from my young brother, entitled 'The Four Candles'. As some of you know, life has been especially hard for me recently so I thought my brother had sent me the much acclaimed Two Ronnie's sketch to cheer me up. When I opened it, I got a wonderful surprise; amusing though the sketch is, what my brother sent was so heart-warming and moving. The four candles in the clip represented Peace, Faith, Love and Hope. One by one they go out because they feel they are no longer being heeded. But Hope remains alight and with that one flame all the others could be relit. Of course, we know from the Scriptures that Love is the greatest of them. Paul tells us this in his first letter to the Corinthians chapter 13, verse 13. In the gospel of John 3:16 we are told that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son'. We will be remembering the significance of God's love for us as Lent approaches. In John 13:34 he also tells us that Jesus gave us a new commandment, 'Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another'.

Candles play a significant part in the church. The Old Testament speaks of the faithful preparing an altar in the temple with candles. The New Testament highlights the sanctity of this light. Jesus is often referred to as the Light; in John, chapter 8, he refers to Jesus as 'the light of the world'. It was traditional at Candlemas, which is celebrated on 2nd February, for people to take their candles to church to be blessed and these were then used for the rest of the year.

We have all come through a difficult year and hope is surely uppermost in our minds. Hope that we can get the better of the pandemic, hope that we will be able to see our loved ones again, perhaps even hug them, hope that life will eventually get back to normal. The words of the prophet Jeremiah 29:11 should give us that reassurance; 'For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope'. In Paul's letter to the Romans, 15:13 he says 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the holy Spirit'.

The flame of hope should never go out. May it and the word of God shine in our life.

Pam Staunton, Offwell



BENEFACTURE CHURCHWARDENS

FARWAY

Tara Huffman 01404 871372
Robin Banks 01404 871355

OFFWELL

Jonathan Paveley 01404 831450
Marion Hutchinson 01404 830055

WIDWORTHY

Mim Prins 01404 831688
Mary Wakeley 01404 831345

Websites:

Farway: www.farwaydevon.org.uk

Widworthy: www.widworthyparishcouncil.co.uk

Offwell: www.offwell.org

www.explorechurches.org

www.achurchnearyou.com

It's well worth visiting the NEW Offwell website which is regularly updated with information and helpful links.

FEBRUARY SERVICES

	OFFWELL	FARWAY	WIDWORTHY
7th February	9:30am HC		9:30am Family Service
14th February			9:30am Family Service
21st February 1st Sunday in Lent	11am Family Service		9:30am HC
28th February 2nd Sunday in Lent		11:15am HC	9:30am Family Service

BIBLE READINGS

7th February	Isaiah 40:21-31	Psalm 147: 1-11, 20c	1 Corinthians 9:16-23	Mark 1:29-39
14th February	2 Kings 5:1-14	Psalm 30	1 Corinthians 9:24-27	Mark 1:40-45
17th February Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17	Psalm 51:1-17	2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10	Mathew 6:1-6, 16-21
21st February 1st Sunday in Lent	Genesis 9:8-7	Psalm 25:1-10	1 Peter 3:18-22	Mark 1:9-15
28th February 2nd Sunday in Lent	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16	Psalm 22:23-31	Romans 4:13-25	Mark 8:31-38

FARWAY METHODIST CHURCH



February

7th 11am Mrs. Ann Skinner
 14th 3pm Revd Dr Stephen Mosedale
 21st 11am Deacon Geoff Tamblin
 28th 3pm Revd. Ben Haslam. H.C.

March preachers to be arranged and informed when available.

Sundays - 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th

As we were not able to have the Covenant Service on the 24th January as arranged, Revd. Ben will conduct it on another date, to be confirmed. We will keep as many of you informed as we are able regarding the new arrangements.

The LINK is the magazine of the three Parishes of OFFWELL, FARWAY and WIDWORTHY.

Views expressed here are not necessarily the opinion of the Editor or the community.

The next edition will be **APRIL/MAY 2021**. Submissions to be received by **15th MARCH at the latest please**. Email: Melanie at parisheslink@gmail.com

Submissions, should be sent, preferably by email in text, Word, JPG, PDF or PNG format. The editor reserves the right to delay or refuse publication of articles for reasons of decorum, space or practicality. Please note - Late submissions may not be included.

MARCH SERVICES

	OFFWELL	FARWAY	WIDWORTHY
7th March 3rd Sunday in Lent	9:30am HC		9:30am Family Service
14th March 4th Sunday in Lent Mothering Sunday	11am Family Service		9:30am Family Service
21st March Passion Sunday			9:30am HC
28th March Palm Sunday			9:30am Family Service
2nd April Good Friday	12 noon Service of Reflection		
4th April EASTER DAY	9:30am HC	11:15am HC	9:30am HC

BIBLE READINGS

7th March 3rd in Lent	Exodus 20:1-17	Psalm 19	1 Corinthians 1:18-25	John 2:13-22
14th March 4th in Lent	Numbers 21:4-9	Psalm 107: 1-3, 17-22	Ephesians 2:1-10	John 3:14-21
21st March Passion Sunday	Jeremiah 31:31-34	Psalm 51:1-12	Hebrews 5:5-10	John 12:20-33
28th March Palm Sunday	Mark 11:1-11	Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29		
1st April Mauddy Thursday	Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14	Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19	1 Corinthians 11:23-26	John 13:1-17, 31b-35
2nd April Good Friday	Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12	Psalm 22	Hebrews 10:16-25	John 18:1- 19:42
4th April EASTER DAY	Isaiah 25:6-9	Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	John 20:1-18



From Ash Wednesday (17th February) to Easter Sunday (4th April), there will be six reflections for each week, written by Stephen Hance, the Church of England's National Lead for Evangelism and Witness. Each reflection will include a short passage from the Bible, a brief exploration of the reading, and a prayer. Additionally, each week will

have a unifying theme and an action to be taken during the week.

The daily reflections will be made available through a booklet (**available, free of charge, from St. Mary's church from Sunday 7th February**) as well as a free app, emails, audio and through the Church of England's social media accounts.

FARWAY



If restrictions allow, the following services will take place :

February 28th Holy Communion at 11:15am with Bishop Oliver. March - no services

April 4th Easter Day HC 11:15am with Bishop Oliver



Our carol service was held in the church yard on 20th December. This year, instead of a Christmas tree in the church, we decorated our yew tree with baubles and lights; it looked magical at night and could be seen across the valley. We sang carols with readings and prayers. We raised £95 for the children's hospice south west.

For support during these difficult times Pat Beard is co-ordinating help within the village. Contact Pat on: Email: patricia Beard@tiscali.co.uk Tel: 01404 871445
Farway Village Hall remains closed until further notice.

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FARWAY

Revd. Peter Walker has fond memories of visiting Farway School in a Christmas letter to Douglas Bruce-Marie

When I had parishes in Devon, I attended two schools as the Vicar, they being Church of England Primary schools. Each Thursday I would visit them for an RE lesson and assembly. The smallest school had no more than ten children and was on the point of closing. (happily, they managed to boost their numbers and the school remains viable). The village was very small and was scattered-many were farms. Just before Christmas as the school was about to finish for the year, the children asked the teacher if they could sing me a Christmas song which had made the top ten, by the unusual named band called 'Wham!' So they launched into '*Last Christmas I gave you my heart, and the very next day you gave it away!*' What was so funny was that they did all the hand actions too! To see the children so taken up by this was, in a way, a highlight of that particular Christmas. We can all remember Christmases of long past and treasure special memories. For many, this Christmas will be particularly difficult because of the loss of loved ones either through age and illness or because of the Covid-19. We remember and pray for them. That little school was such a joy to visit, as was the larger school I visited. In the words of that song, perhaps we can rededicate our lives to the service of the Babe in Bethlehem, our Lord and Saviour, and say 'This Christmas I give you my heart'.

May God bless you and your loved ones this Christmas and into a healthier New Year.

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OFFWELL



The two Christmas services we were able to hold were well attended. There were 24 at the Christingle/Carol service and although we could not sing it was lovely to hear the carols played by our organist, Charles. Thanks to the flower arrangers, the lights and the crib the church was as ever, bright and welcoming. Outside the star and our beautiful nativity scene really set the mood; at the end of the Christmas morning service, we all congregated (socially distanced of course) around it and sang O Come, all ye Faithful. Bishop Oliver paid tribute to the donation of the figures and the construction of the stable.

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, 17th February. The new booklets, 'God's Story, Our Story' will be available free of charge in church from **Sunday 7th February**. The church will be open on that Sunday for **Holy communion at 9.30am** and stay open until 2pm and on Wednesday between 2pm and 4pm.

In March our family service will move to the second Sunday, **14th March, which is Mothering Sunday**, at the usual time of **11am**. Everyone is welcome to this service which will be taken by Bishop Oliver and there will be posies for the ladies as usual.

On **Good Friday, 2nd April, there is a service of reflection at 12 noon**.

Bishop Oliver will take Holy Communion on **Easter Sunday, 4th April at 9:30am**

NB: All these services are of course Covid permitting.

The **Offwell Support Group** remains in place, although we realise that many have made their own arrangements. We can also help with **transport to vaccination sites**. Feel free to call us on **01404 831924** and we will endeavour to help.

A reminder for those with internet access; the **Facebook Group 'Offwell Together'** is a lovely way for villagers to keep in touch and, of course, the **Offwell website** keeps us right up to date with the latest information on news and events. Many of our local shops are still offering delivery services. Keep well everyone, and stay safe.

We currently have vacancies on the **Offwell Parish Council**.

The Council meets on a monthly basis, currently virtually, in order to serve the best interests of our local community. Anyone wanting any further information can contact the Parish Clerk at offwellparishclerk@aol.co.uk or call for an informal chat to the current Chairman on:

01404 831924

OFFWELL CHURCH BELLS

Parishioners will have heard St Mary's bells since the start of Covid, although not as regularly or extensively as usual. The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers have been issuing guidance notes, regularly updated. It would not be appropriate for our ringers to deviate from these, which were developed in close consultation with the Church of England, whose churches house over 90 percent of the bells in this country, hung for full circle ringing. Nevertheless, on the first Sunday service after the initial lockdown, before universal publication of the full guidance, the Offwell band rang 5 of our 6 bells for 15 minutes before service.

Continued

OFFWELL CHURCH BELLS cont...

Subsequently Paul Hutchinson has ensured that 3 bells announce services for 15 minutes on the first Sunday of each month. This allows appropriate social distancing between ringers and necessary measures are taken to ensure adequate ventilation in accord with the guidance.

Meanwhile, as I am now 80, I felt I should be shielding, but I was able to do some work in the tower which I have had in mind for some time. 200 years ago this year the Rev. Henry Ellacombe of Bitton in Somerset, fed up with the drunken behaviour of his ringers, paid the village blacksmith to create a system which would allow one person to sound all the bells. The Ellacombe chimes mechanism was installed in hundreds of churches round the country, mostly in the late 19th century, but few are now in usable condition. There is however a scheme to celebrate the Bicentenary by sounding Ellacombe chimes in as many towers as possible this summer.

John Seymour, the previous Bell Captain, told me that when he first came to Offwell the Rector would sometimes play tunes on the chimes, but when I became Tower Captain I found that several of the pulleys which brought ropes down to the chime frame in the ringing chamber were jammed. The ropes themselves were unserviceable. Some were actually parted, others knotted together, all worn and frayed. After the first lockdown Clive Whithear very kindly helped me bring the mechanism into working condition and on Christmas morning I was able to chime the bells to welcome parishioners to morning service. I found that tension of the control ropes is very critical. The ropes operate a hammer inside the bell as it hangs down; too vigorous a strike swings the bell so much that it's not in position for the next strike. I need to do some fine tuning before the summer.



Installing the new (blue) ropes

As normal ringing practice has not been possible for many months the Devon Guild of Bellringers has been conducting virtual meetings via Zoom every Monday. Sometimes talks are given on relevant subjects; sometimes the meetings are purely social but it is also possible to conduct electronic bellringing using a special app, so members have actually been able to master new ringing methods or keep their hand in with existing skills. All the East Devon ringers, aged from 12 to 87, are looking forward to once more being able to hear 'Look to, treble's going, she's gone' and start ringing the full peals of bells in our towers.



John Tristram, Tower Captain

NB: The 200 year anniversary of the Ellacombe invention takes place on 26th June 2021. This Bicentenary will be celebrated around the globe and there will be an exhibition in St. Mary's, about the Ellacombe Chimes, during the month of June.

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OFFWELL WOODLAND

Flowers and Frogs

Although the days are still short and grey, there are already signs of new life in the woods. Catkins, the flowers of the Hazel, are now past their best, but the first of the primroses have started to appear. The many Willows in the wet areas of the woods will be the next to flower. Like the Hazel they are pollinated by the wind, but from later in February they will be a magnet for early flies and Bumblebees for whom they are a vital source of nectar. Watch out for the large Queen Bumblebees who have hibernated over winter and will soon be quartering the ground looking for old mouse holes and



other suitable locations to build a nest.

Towards the end of January and into February look out for emerging frogs and the first frogspawn. Warmer weather will bring them out of hibernation and their first task will be to mate and deposit their spawn. At Offwell Woods we find that there is always a particular area in the ponds where all the spawn is laid. However, frogs are not fussy and you will often find spawn in puddles and roadside ditches.

Vernon Whitlock



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Offwell School has started the Spring Term albeit in a slightly different way. We are schooling on two fronts at the moment. Firstly, in school we have a number of children who are the offspring of critical workers – they come in for either a whole or proportion of a week depending on the family needs and spaces in school which still allow us to maintain social distancing. Secondly, using Google Classroom the teachers have adapted their lessons for use in school and at home. We now have set times twice a day for each class, also on Google Classroom, when we are able to engage directly with the children.



The school is committed to providing families and children with the support they need and helping each child to learn is a shared aim over the next five weeks. The DfE gives guidelines for the minimum number of hours learning a school should provide, ranging from 2 hours in EYFS to four hours at KS2. Teaching staff have been able to upload work, including daily lessons on Maths and English and a variety of afternoon activities, including some history and geography. We are also making music available at home using our online music platform

On a different note, we hope you all liked the Christmas display on one of our fences and the magnificent tree that went up in our bottom playground? We were slightly



hampered by the weather which was not kind to the laminated baubles created by each child! The Christmas bunting will be coming down soon and will be replaced by a non-specific bunting (thank you to the member of the village community who gave us material). The wellies have been replanted with a layer of bulbs below a pansy – sadly some of our pansies have vanished! Again, thank you to Carol Hayes and Melanie Jolly who have helped us with weeding, ideas and encouragement to

keep the front of school looking welcoming.

We are looking to the future all the time and planning ahead for when all our children will be back at school. The days are getting longer and we will be delighted when we can go back to playing on the field or in our meadow.

Finally, all the staff were very touched this week when one of our families sent in a beautiful vase of flowers as a thank you for all our efforts. It was a wonderful gesture and we are grateful for all the support we receive from the whole school community.



WIDWORTHY - ST. CUTHBERT'S



Sunday, February 7th the service at **9:30am** will be taken by Marc Kastner. The Revd. Nigel Freathy will take our Parish Service on **Sunday, February 14th at 9:30am** and Bishop Oliver will be with us to celebrate Holy Communion on **Sunday, February 21st, the first Sunday in Lent, at 9:30am**. The fourth Sunday Parish Service on **February 28th at 9:30am** will be taken by The Revd Nigel Freathy and we hope you will be able to join us, in spite of COVID restrictions preventing the serving of coffee and biscuits.

February 17th is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent when during the 40 days leading up to Easter when we enter a period of prayer, fasting and repentance, culminating in the death of Jesus on Good Friday and the celebration of His resurrection on Easter Sunday. From Ash Wednesday until Easter, the church is stripped of flowers and the altar hangings are purple, the liturgical colour of penitence and preparation.

One bright spot in Lent is **Mothering Sunday** which is **March 14th, at 9:30am** during which we remember and give thanks for all that our mothers do and have done for us. During the service, the children present will be able to collect posies of spring flowers on their way into the church to give to their mothers.

On **March 7th at 9:30am** there will be a Family Service. On Sunday, **March 14th at 9:30am** the Mothering Sunday service and it will be taken by The Revd Nigel Freathy. Bishop Oliver will take our **Passion Sunday** service of **Holy Communion on March 21st at 9:30am** and The Revd Nigel Freathy will take the **Palm Sunday service on March 28th at 9:30am** during which palm crosses will be blessed and given to the congregation.

Because of the ever changing COVID regulations, this service information is correct at the time of going to press and we pray that it will remain so. The church has been COVID risk assessed each time the regulations change and is as COVID secure as we can make it. It is a privilege to have the freedom to worship in this country and especially in the time of a global pandemic. Please join us if you feel you can and if not, pray for us at 9:30 on Sunday mornings as we will be praying for you all.



ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and is always 46 days before Easter Sunday (a moveable feast based on the cycles of the moon). Lent is a **40 day** season, (not counting Sundays) marked by repentance, fasting, reflection, and ultimately celebration. The 40 day period represents

Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, where he fasted and where Satan tempted him. Lent asks believers to set aside a time each year for similar fasting, marking an intentional season of focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice and resurrection.

Ashes were used in ancient times to express grief and Christians continued the practice of using ashes as an external sign of repentance. Ash Wednesday derives its name from the placing of repentance ashes on the foreheads of participants to either the words:

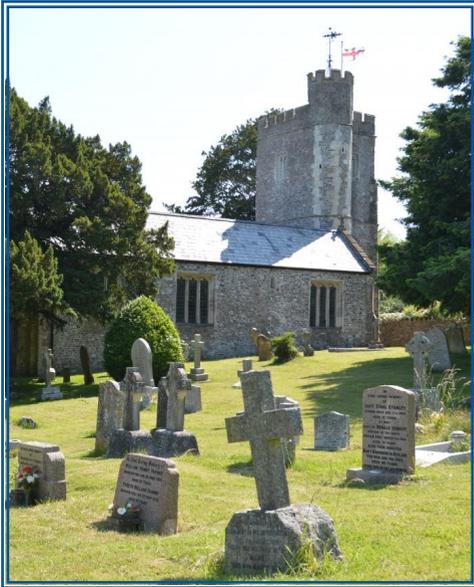
"Repent, and believe in the Gospel" or the dictum: *"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."* The ashes are prepared by burning palm leaves from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration.

OFFWELL



St. MARY'S JOINS THE 'EXPLORE CHURCHES' WEBSITE

St. Mary's can now be found on the 'Explore Churches' website:



www.explorechurches.org

The 'Explore Churches' website is part of the National Churches Trust. It provides an entry point for anyone wanting to visit an historic church, chapel or meeting house. There are estimated to be in the region of 42,000 in the UK and they are all 'treasure houses' of architectural heritage, history and community. 'Explore Churches' provides all the relevant information for people interested in history and heritage who may not have thought of visiting a church, as well as for those who already know they love these incredible buildings. Visiting churches, both old and new, is one of the most popular past-times in the country and these sites also attract many foreign visitors. With more and more people likely to choose a stay-cation holiday in Devon and Cornwall in the

future St. Mary's offers visitors a fascinating opportunity to learn more about Offwell's history, the Copleston dynasty and the people who now rest in St. Mary's graveyard.

Our church entry on the Explore Churches website links to St. Mary's page on the Offwell website, where visitors can view downloads on 'St. Mary's Through the Ages', the 'Coplestons' and 'Offwell Graveyard', as well as the various publications about Offwell Village up to and including the present day.

A Church Near You website

St. Mary's is also listed on the Church of England's newly updated 'A Church Near You' website: www.achurchnearyou.com Whether you are looking for a church near you with a Food Bank, a local Alpha course or a wedding venue with beautiful stained glass windows then A Church Near You is your 'go to' site. Most importantly it provides quick and easy access to all churches near you that are open for Holy Communion, Morning Worship and Evening Prayers as well as for private prayer and reflection. You just need to type in your location and a list of local churches will appear. This site will be updated regularly and it also links to St. Mary's page on the Offwell website, where you will find current and past editions of The Link.

During **March in St. Mary's** there will be a display of '**Reflections for Easter**' – a collection of bible readings, hymns, poems and prose plus 'Reflection for Easter Day' given by the Very Reverend Dr. David Hoyle, Dean of Westminster, in April 2020"

HONITON FOOD BANK

Here at the Food Bank we would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year despite the current situation. There is hope that the vaccines will help us to recover from the pandemic. During December our volunteers worked additional hours which enabled us to make 178 deliveries to families and individuals, together with over 60 Bags with 'extras', and vouchers for turkeys and meat kindly donated by local businesses. We (and the people who received the food) are very grateful for all the support you have given – particularly during the past year. Thank you!

The poster to the right is updated regularly and can be found on the Facebook page: **The Community Church, Honiton and Sidmouth**

1 of 1

The King's Centre Food Bank

Please could you help by donating the following four items:

- Fruit Juice
- Rice Pudding/Puddings
- Small bags of sugar
- Toilet Rolls

Thank you but we already have plenty of Baked Beans, Pasta and Soup at the moment.

Huge thanks to the Honiton Round Table and other community groups for their support.

foodbank@thecommunitychurch.co.uk
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(as at 12th January 2021)
www.thecommunitychurch.co.uk

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LOCAL HOSPISCARE

Since moving to Devon over 20 years ago Brab and I have been actively involved with **Honiton Hospicare Support Group**. The Charity is in constant need of funds but during the Covid pandemic many fund-raising events have had to be cancelled.

During the first lockdown, having spent many weeks planting seeds, propagating cuttings, and recruiting a team to nurture the plants to be at their prime for sale in May, the Annual Honiton Plant Sale was cancelled. To ensure that none of the plants would be wasted we set up a garden stall at the bottom of our drive. Well, what a success! It exceeded all expectations for the Charity, raising over £424.82p, during a 6 week period; our thanks to everyone for supporting us and giving so generously. We then decided to place jams, marmalades and chutneys in a safe freezer box, raising another £200. We are still receiving orders for the latter which I am pleased to supply on request.



In between lockdowns Hospicare were able to hold sales in Lace Walk, and with the Committee's help, Honiton managed 4 successful events before Christmas. During Christmas week the Annual Tesco Collection also raised much needed additional funds.

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who supported these events; locals, walkers and cyclists etc. Hospicare supports many local people and their families and we are so grateful for the generosity of everyone during these difficult times.



We are keeping fingers crossed that we can hold our Annual Event in **Honiton** this coming May and planning, sourcing seeds, planting and raising seeds is already underway. Look out for the signs and plants at the bottom of our drive in **Offwell**. We welcome additional plants, shrubs and cuttings (your leftovers, clearly labelled please.)

As a Charity we are always eager to welcome new volunteers and helpers during these difficult times. If you feel you can help please contact:

Mary Bolshaw (Chairperson) 01404 43196 or Bridget 01404 831829

Thank you again for your generous support during 2020.

Bridget and Brab Hallowes

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Sam in Exeter

16th February – Shrove Tuesday: Who's for pancakes?

Why do we have pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Day, as we call it today? And what is Shrove Tuesday? And why do thousands of people feel it rewarding to race along a street somewhere tossing pancakes from their frying pans as they go?

Well, the answer to the first question is that it is the day before Lent begins and for well over a thousand years that has meant it was the last chance to enjoy meat, fat and other tasty dishes until Easter Day. The 'Lent Fast' was widely and strictly observed. The food in the larder wouldn't keep for six weeks so it had to be eaten. With all these rich foods no wonder the French call it 'Fatty Tuesday' – Mardi Gras.



So, what have pancake races got to do with all this solemnity? 'Shrove' is an old word for 'forgiven' and in those days to prepare for the rigours of Lent people would want to confess and seek forgiveness – not quite what you want at a party. The answer is quite simply enjoying yourself while you can! So, on Shrove Tuesday this year let's enjoy them and make it last as long as possible.

The most convincing (and amusing) of the explanations of pancake races is of outwitting the Sexton who rang the curfew bell that marked the start of Lent. He was reluctant to do it while the race was unfinished. So, the revelry caused by dropped pancakes, postponed the inevitable.

Since the Reformation it has not been so rigorously observed in Britain, but still people will resolve to 'give up something for Lent'. Six weeks is about right as a duration and Sunday has always been exempt but make the most of those pancakes. They may well not reappear until April 4th!

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LOVE YOUR GARDEN

Gardening tasks for February

Right now, in these current times, we need fresh air and some gentle exercise to keep mind, body and spirit alive. This month we will talk about a few tasks that can get you back in the garden, weather permitting, and pottering!

Wisteria pruning

Regularly pruning your Wisteria will help to keep it tidy and prevent growth getting into guttering and around windows but also encourage greater flower production. It is recommended to prune in the summer, July/August and again in the winter, January/ February. This regular pruning also allows air to circulate in and around the wood improving bud formation and 'ripening' of the wood. For this seasonal prune the wood is bare and dormant and perhaps easier to see, cut back the growths to just two or three buds.



If your Wisteria needs renovation a much harder cut back may be necessary, remember to espalier the branches and use wire to help train your branches into better positions. Wisteria can be caught by a late frost just as the long-awaited buds are opening so let's hope for a warm spring with no cold snaps.

Transplanting and dividing

Now is the time to move any deciduous shrubs that are perhaps not quite in the right position, they are dormant and won't harm from being moved. Likewise, when snowdrops have finished flowering, they can be divided and replanted for next year's display



Roses

Give your roses a top up of mulch to keep get them through these winter months, alternatively you could use a slow-release fertilizer just sprinkled at their base.

Heathers

Give your Heather's a light trim, just removing their tips. Be careful not to cut back into the old wood; Heather's do not regenerate well from old wood so once they have become old and leggy it might be best to replace them.



Virginia Creeper

Trim back before bird nesting season begins.

Even in midwinter it is surprising to see what is happening in the garden, listen out too for the sounds of the birds, I have started to hear the woodpeckers drumming busily.

Shelley, Goodlife Gardeners & Landscapers



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