

# The Offwell Mission Community

St Mary's, Offwell - St Cuthbert's, Widworthy - St Michael and All Angels, Farway



# THE LINK



## September & October 2025

As I write this, the sun is shining, the trees are waving in the breeze, and the whole of August is laid out before us like an open field. I feel about summer the same way Ebenezer Scrooge felt about Christmas — *Bah-Humbug!*

I spend most of the summer longing for September. While others are basking in the sunshine, I'm daydreaming about crisp mornings, cosy jumpers, and polishing my winter boots in readiness for that glorious moment when the first chill hits the air.

I tell myself every year that I'm not allowed to wear my boots before the second week of September — it's my little ritual, a small promise that better days are just around the corner. September has always felt like a secret doorway into something new. Spiritually, I love the thought of fresh starts, the gentle nudge that God is always doing a new thing in us and through us, even when we don't see it right away.

It's no coincidence that September is also the start of harvest time. Across our communities, farmers who have worked tirelessly through long days and unpredictable weather finally begin to gather what they've sown. Their faithful, unseen, labour all year reminds me of how God works in our lives too — often in hidden ways, growing seeds we forgot we even planted.

I have so much respect for our farmers — they understand better than most that you can't rush a harvest. You can't force wheat to grow faster or fruit to ripen on command. There's a holy patience in their waiting, a trust that the seed will do what it was created to do if they tend it well. Maybe that's why September feels so sacred to me — it's a reminder that while the world is busy jumping into new school years and work schedules, there's an ancient, steady rhythm at play. God brings the harvest. God brings the new beginnings.

So, as I pull on my beloved boots and crunch through the first fallen leaves, I want to pay attention. I want to thank God for the visible harvest — the food on our tables, the farmers behind every loaf of bread and jug of milk. But I also want to look for the invisible harvest — the new dreams, the fresh hope, the quiet places where He is planting something I can't yet see.

Maybe this year I'll learn to welcome September without the 'Bah-Humbug'. Maybe I'll even learn to see God's new beginnings in the tail end of summer too. One can hope.

May you find many blessings in your new beginnings this September.

Revd Tracey

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## A DEDICATION FOR LITTLE SETH, by Carol Hayes

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025, churches around Devon, including St. Mary's, will celebrate Devon Historic Churches Day. For centuries, churches played a central role in community life. It is within the walls of churches that you will find a rich heritage of faith, art, and community, and that is why it is so important that we preserve these 'treasure houses' of history.

Each year St. Mary's Visitors' Book reveals the names of Offwell family descendants who have travelled to our village, some from locations in the UK, others from as far away as Australia and Canada. People choose to trace their ancestry for a number of reasons; some are simply curious, and then there are those who wish to fill a gap, a mystery, in their family history narrative.

For Martin and Annie Ross it was the latter. In July 2023 I received, via the village website, an enquiry from Annie, who was researching her husband's family tree.

Martin's grandmother, Flora, was born in Offwell in 1885, the illegitimate daughter of Alice Bromfield, who never married. Flora's family lived in and around Offwell for many generations, and her mother, Alice, together with other family members, are buried in St. Mary's churchyard. Annie wanted to find out more about Flora's mother, Alice.

Brab Hallows is always my 'go to' when it comes to Offwell Church Records and on this occasion his burial records revealed a surprise. As expected, Alice and her brothers and one sister were all listed in the Bromfield graves, but there was an additional name, a baby: *'Died*

*May 1883 Seth Lyle Bromfield, aged 4 months, son of Victor Samuel and Alice Broomfield.'* Victor was in fact Alice's brother, not her husband.

Martin and Annie knew nothing of a second illegitimate child, born to Alice, and now two new memorial stones have been added to the Bromfield grave: one for Tom Bromfield, Alice's brother, and one *'In Loving Memory of Seth Lyle Bromfield, infant son of Alice, born 4<sup>th</sup> December 1882, Died 1<sup>st</sup> May 1883.'*

Annie's first communication with Offwell was in the hope of finding a photograph of Alice. Sadly, we were unable to help with that request, but I hope that the discovery of little Seth will have made this a satisfying conclusion to Martin and Annie's long ancestry journey. As the Chinese proverb goes: *'To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root'.*



PICTURE OF MARTIN ALONGSIDE THE GRAVE

A longer version of this article can be found on [www.offwell.org](http://www.offwell.org). – St. Mary's page – News & Articles.

## Why pray, why create a Prayer Space in church?

Why pray, how to pray and firstly, perhaps, what is prayer are questions I hope to explore in the Prayer Space being created in St Mary's from September.

A UK survey in 2018, undertaken by the market research company ComRes and commissioned by the charity TEARFund, looked at the prayer habits of adults and found some surprising results. In, what many may see as ever-increasing secular society, the survey revealed that 1 in 5 of those who described themselves as non-religious, prayed, and over half (51%) in the population generally prayed.

Perhaps an insight into the survey's results is found in the word 'prayer' itself. The word 'prayer' is derived from the Latin word 'precarious'. We pray because life is precarious.

Rabbi Abraham Herschel described prayer as:

***"Our humble answer to the inconceivable surprise of living".***

***"More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day."***

Alfred Lord Tennyson. Idylls of the King

Pete Greig\* in his book "How to Pray, a simple guide for normal people", (I have, unashamedly, taken much from this book for this article and the displays going up in the Prayer Space) that he learnt two things from the process of writing it. Firstly, that prayer is the most important thing in life and, secondly, that, in his words "I was horribly bad at it". He takes the Lord's Prayer' as his template. In Luke Chapter 11 the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray, and the response from Jesus was what we have come to call the Lord's Prayer:

He said to them, ***"When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come.***

***Give us each day our daily bread.***

***Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.***

***And lead us not into temptation."***

The creation of the prayer space at St Mary's was in response to the feedback to the Quiet Day, earlier in this year, and encouragement from friends to create a more permanent prayer space. Each month, for 6 months from September, I shall put up a display on the notice board on different aspects of prayer from Pete Greig's book. I invite you to explore, for yourself, what prayer is about. I hope the displays will be helpful. Bring a coffee, sit in a comfy chair (watch the space by the font) and enjoy time spent in quiet.

\*Pete Greig is the founder of the 24/7 prayer movement, now in more than half of the countries in the world. He has written 9 books on prayer and is host of the daily devotional Lectio365 used by 370,000 people.

This year St Mary's has been delighted to host two large and joyous weddings. On both days the weather has been magnificent and the church looking beautiful.

In July, 146 people squeezed into St Marys for the marriage of Tom Hine and Fiona Laramy, daughter of Dean and Karen Laramy – Fiona has sent us some of the photographs of the occasion and this reflection:

*We were very lucky to get married in St Mary's Church, it was a special moment to get married in the village where I grew up. We would like to thank everyone on the committee and Bishop Oliver for the help in creating a lovely church service and the bell ringers, no wedding is a proper wedding without church bells! The sun was shining, everyone was smiling, and we had the most perfect day.*



Considering getting married? Please get in touch with one of the churchwardens to see how St Marys can help make your special day perfect?

### **Historic Churches Open Day, Saturday 13th September, in St. Mary's Church.**

Come and join us for an enjoyable morning in St. Mary's Church on 13th September! Help us celebrate Historic Churches Open Day. There will be bacon and sausage baps, cakes, and refreshments. There will be trips up the Tower, and a chance to try bellringing.

From 10:30 to 12:30.

### **A CELEBRATORY FLOWER DISPLAY**

**Weekend of Saturday 13th September.**

In St Mary's Church over the weekend of the Offwell Flower and Produce Show and coinciding with Historic Churches Open Day.

The theme is **ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL**

We would love to see anybody who would like to help, either experienced, or just wanting to give it a go as a complete beginner.

Please contact either Barbara Oakes, on [oakes@querci.co.uk](mailto:oakes@querci.co.uk), or Jan Burditt on [janburditt@gmail.com](mailto:janburditt@gmail.com).

# BENEFICE CHURCH SERVICES

DATES	ST MARY'S OFFWELL	ST CUTHBERT'S WIDWORTHY
Sun. 7th September 12th Sunday after Trinity	9:30 am Holy Communion	9:30 am Family Service
Sun. 14th September 13th Sunday after Trinity	5:00 pm BCP Evensong	9:30 am Holy Communion
Sun. 21st September 14th Sunday after Trinity	10.30am Family Service	9:30 am Morning Prayer
Sun. 28th September 15th Sunday after Trinity	10:30 am New Beginnings Service	9:30 am Family Service
Sun. 5th October 16th Sunday after Trinity	9:30 am <b>Harvest Thanksgiving</b> with Holy Communion	4:00 pm (please, note time) Harvest Festival, followed by Cream Tea
Sun. 12th October 17th Sunday after Trinity	5:00 pm BCP Evensong	9:30 am Holy Communion
Sun 19th October 18th Sunday after Trinity	10.30am Family Service	9:30 am Morning Prayer
Sun 26th October Last Sunday after Trinity	10:30 am New Beginnings Service	9:30 am Family Service



Refreshments will be served after all our services in St. Mary's.

## Do you fancy bellringing?

There is a friendly, welcoming, and active, group of bellringers at St. Mary's Church in Offwell.

It is under the guidance of John Tristram, and he is looking for new recruits. If you would like to try your hand, please contact him on **01404 831404**. or by email on **bjtristram@gmail.com**.

They practice often on Tuesday evenings, and entertain the village. They play all the right notes, and in the right order. With practice.



## COFFEE MORNING

Thursday 18th September, and Thursday 16th October  
10:30—12:00

3rd Thursday of every month, in Offwell Sports and Social Club, for all three of our Benefice Parishes.

This event is for everyone, whether you go to the church or not. You will be made very welcome.



# BIBLE READINGS



DATES	FIRST READING	NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLE	THE GOSPEL
Sun. 7th September 12th Sunday after Trinity	Jeremiah 18.1-11	Philemon 1-21	Luke 14.25-33
Sun. 14th September 13th Sunday after Trinity	Jeremiah 4.11-12, 22-28	1 Timothy 1.12-17	Luke 15.1-10
Sun. 21st September 14th Sunday after Trinity	Jeremiah 8.18-9.1	1 Timothy 2.1-7	Luke 16.1-13
Sun. 28th September 15th Sunday after Trinity	Jeremiah 32.1-3a, 6-15	1 Timothy 6.6-19	Luke 16.19-31
Sun. 5th October 16th Sunday after Trinity	Lamentations 1.1-6	2 Timothy 1.1-14	Luke 17.5-10
Sun. 12th October 17th Sunday after Trinity	Jeremiah 29.1, 4-7	2 Timothy 2.8-15	Luke 17.11-19
Sun. 19th October 18th Sunday after Trinity	Jeremiah 31.27-34	2 Timothy 3.14-4.5	Luke 18.1-8
Sun. 26th October Last Sunday after Trinity	Joel 2.23-32	2 Timothy 4.6-8, 16-18	Luke 18.9-14

## Some children's prayers, by Jan Burditt

*"Dear God, please take care of my daddy, mommy, sister, brother, my doggy and me. Oh, please take care of yourself, God. If anything happens to you, we're going to be in a big mess."*

*"Dear God, I say your prayer every night, 'lead us not into temptation and deliver us some e-mail' but I never get an e-mail from you. Do you have my right address?"*

## Offwell and Widworthy—did you know?

Nathaniel Partridge served as Recor of both Offwell and Widworthy from 1954 to 1968. A census records that the population of Offwell rose from 300 to 666 persons in that period.

Offwell and Colwell (now part of the Offwell Parish) are both recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. At the time, Colwell was the bigger tax-generating unit. "Land for 8 ploughs" vs "Land for 2 ploughs".

Courtesy of Debrett's "History of Offwell Church and Parish"

## OFFWELL COFE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Being away from school gives you the time and space to unwind, think, plan, rest, worry and READ! Reading transforms lives and gives your child the gift of a successful future, in many more ways than we might have imagined. From research conducted by the Book Trust, reading not only helps them to succeed at school and in work, but can also help children to:

- Be healthier and happier children with better mental wellbeing and self-esteem
- Overcome economic or social disadvantages
- Develop creativity and empathy

The **National Literacy Trust** recently conducted a survey of over 115k children aged 5 to 18 on their reading habits. It makes for interesting, and possibly worrying, reading but also offers some ideas for ways to reverse a downward trend. According to the survey children and young people's reading for enjoyment continues to be at an all-time low.

The report looks at what motivates children to read and how we might re-engage those with the lowest levels of reading enjoyment. It suggests we align reading more with personal interests and media habits, such as:

- Books tied to films or TV series
- Books with visually appealing covers
- The freedom to choose what they want to read
- Hearing recommendations from friends, family or teachers
- Encouraging reading through a variety of formats, including journals
- Consider using digital formats

Reading for pleasure is important as it supports wider literacy skills, wellbeing, empathy, confidence and aptitude for learning. The 2024 research showed that twice as many children who enjoyed reading in their free time had above average reading skills. Nurturing a love of reading from an early age is a tangible way to equip children with the reading skills needed to thrive in school and beyond.

At Offwell we continually work on inspiring reading for enjoyment in a variety of ways:

- Every Friday morning there is an opportunity for family to come to school to read with their child
- We have libraries in each class which are regularly checked by the School Library Service and from which a child can choose whatever book they find interesting
- We read to the children every day
- We use interesting books to stimulate writing
- People from the wider community come into school to read with the children
- We continue to develop links with the local library in Honiton

In September we are launching '**Book at Bedtime**'. Children can take home book(s), a soft toy, a sachet of hot chocolate and they will be encouraged to spend some time with family reading and enjoying new books.

All is not lost but work needs to continue.

## Offwell Fete and Family Fun Day – A Day to Remember, A Future to Secure



If there's one thing Offwell does brilliantly, it's throwing a fantastic community celebration – and this year's Fete and Family Fun Day on 29th June 2025 was no exception. Sunshine, music, and fun filled the day from start to finish.

The fete kicked off with a wonderful maypole dance from Offwell School, followed by an afternoon of music, performances, stalls, Birds of Prey, delicious food, and tug of war. Unusual plant displays and a lively family rounders match helped kick off fete week, with even a spontaneous hopscotch popping up on the day!

The fete is unique in that it raises vital funds for all the four organisations in our village - Offwell Recreation Ground and Village Hall Charity, St Mary's Church, Offwell PTFA and ORSA. This year's total of £3,339 was raised thanks to the incredible generosity of our community and shared between the organisations.

There are so many people to thank, from those who baked cakes, made signs, or donated equipment, parking space, and prizes, to those who ran stalls or worked tirelessly throughout the day. We are truly grateful for every bit of support that makes the fete possible.

The event is organised by a small but dedicated team of volunteers. As it grows, so does the workload, and to keep it thriving we need more people to get involved. Even a few hours of help, either in the run-up or on the day can make a huge difference.

Without additional support, we may have to reconsider the future of the fete – and we would really love to know how people feel about that. Does the fete matter to you? Is it something you want to see continue? Are you able to help us in some way? Your time, enthusiasm, and skills, no matter how small, could help secure its future for years to come.

We've provisionally secured 27th June 2026 for our next fete, but we need your support to make it happen. If you'd like to help, or simply share your ideas, please get in touch at [offwellfete@gmail.com](mailto:offwellfete@gmail.com).

Sophie Joy



## OFFWELL RURAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION - ORSA

ORSA was formed in 2003, when the village Post Office was threatened with closure. ORSA's aim was to reopen the village post office and shop. Money was raised through numerous fund raising events, the sale of bonds and membership fees.

Eventually, permission was granted to build on part of the Charity land, and a portacabin was erected. The shop and post office opened and ran successfully for at least 10 years, providing not only the convenience of a shop but also a meeting point and support network for villagers and other locals.

There was a proposal to build a new shop with a community cafe attached and to relocate to a different part of the Charity grounds, but permission for a new premises was not granted and sadly the shop closed.

The aims of ORSA have evolved over the years. It became an organisation which would provide assistance for Offwell projects that could not otherwise get funding. New Christmas lights, and donations towards events such as the Jubilee and Coronation celebrations are just a some examples of how ORSA has helped out over time.

These funds remain available and ORSA is always happy to be approached to assist with future worthwhile projects.

For any further information please contact the ORSA secretary, Marian, at The Barn



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# DIARY DATES

Wed. 10th September	Offwell	<b>OFFWELL LADIES LUNCH CLUB</b> Contact Marian for details on 01404 831066 or tuckers@offwell.com
Sat. 13th Sept	St. Mary's Church	<b>HISTORIC CHURCHES OPEN DAY.</b> Baps, cakes, Tower trips, bellringing. Flower show in the Church for the whole weekend (Fri to Sun)
Sat. 13th Sept.	Offwell Village Hall	<b>OFFWELL FLOWER AND PRODUCE SHOW.</b> Entries 08:30—11:00. Public Viewing 2:00 pm. Prize Presentations 3:00 pm.
Thur. 18th September	Honiton Golf Club	<b>MEN'S BREAKFAST</b> 9:30am for 10am Contact 01404 831924 for more details
Thur. 18th Sept.	Offwell SSC	<b>BENEFICE COFFEE MORNING</b> 10:30am - 12 noon
Sat. 20th Sept.	Offwell Village Hall	<b>OFFWELL VILLAGE MARKET.</b> 10 a.m. to 12 Noon
Sat. 4th October	Offwell Village Hall	<b>HARVEST SUPPER.</b> Doors and bar open at 6 pm. Food served at 7. Tickets £10, ideally in advance from Viki on 831050 or Lynn on 831924. Also on the day. Entertainments by Richard Lee.
Wed. 8th October	Offwell	<b>OFFWELL LADIES LUNCH CLUB</b> Contact Marian for details, as above.
Thur. 16th October	Offwell SSC	<b>BENEFICE COFFEE MORNING</b> 10:30am - 12 noon
Thur. 16th October	Honiton Golf Club	<b>MEN'S BREAKFAST</b> 9:30am for 10am Contact 01404 831924 for more details
Sat. 18th October	Offwell Village Hall	<b>OFFWELL VILLAGE MARKET</b> 10 a.m. to 12 Noon
Wed. 29th October	Offwell Recreation Ground	<b>OFFWELL BONFIRE NIGHT</b>
Fri. 31st October	St. Mary's Church	<b>LIGHT PARTY</b>

If you would like to have your Group's dates added in to this Diary Dates section in the November / December edition, please send details to the editor at [linkparishes@gmail.com](mailto:linkparishes@gmail.com), before 19th October.

**Just a month now until the Flower Show!** I hope all your lovely plants, flowers, fruit and veg have survived the blistering heat we have had. Please don't think your entry is not good enough—it may just win its class! Looking forward to seeing all the entries.

Buy your raffle tickets early! **Two front row seats at the Northcote Theatre Exeter for ... THE EXE MEN.** This play is an interesting and entertaining history of The Exeter Chiefs. An unmissable production, you'll be laughing, crying and singing in the aisles. Tickets £1 each available from Marian at The Barn or Lynn at Kyrenia. They will also be on sale at the Flower Show on 13th September, where the winning ticket will be drawn.

We are also looking for donations of cakes to sell with the teas. Please message us (Lynn, Marian, or the Editor) if you are able to donate one. Thank you.