

THE LINK

JULY & AUGUST 2020



THE BENEFICE OF
FARWAY, OFFWELL & WIDWORTHY

OPENING THOUGHTS

Historians are often asked ‘what is the use or relevance of studying history? Why on earth does it matter what happened long ago? The recent Black Lives Matter protests have brought these questions into sharp focus and highlights the historian’s often quoted response: *‘History helps us understand the present. If we listen to what history has to say we can come to a sound understanding of the past that will tell us much about the problems we now face’.*

John Newton, who wrote the hymn ‘Amazing Grace’ was an Anglican clergyman and abolitionist who, aged 11, was impressed into naval service and served as a sailor in the Royal Navy. He spent many years serving on slave ships and was once abandoned by his crew in West Africa where he was forced to be a servant to a slave trader’s wife, a Sierra Leone Princess. At the age of 23, in 1745, he was rescued and during a severe storm, on his return voyage to England, experienced a spiritual conversion. This experience marked the beginning of his conversion to Christianity but Newton continued to work in the slave trade for many years and it wasn’t until his mid-fifties that he became a committed abolitionist. His first curacy was Olney in Bedfordshire, and to this day Olney continues to provide philanthropy for the African town in Sierra Leone named after him.



John Newton once wrote: *“I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.”* Was Newton courageous or cowardly? Honourable or dishonourable? Hero or villain? Or was he all of those things? Perhaps the single most important reason to study history is that history teaches us to think.

History & Heritage is our theme for this month.

BENEFICE CHURCHWARDENS

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Village Websites:

Farway: www.farwaydevon.org.uk

Offwell: www.offwell.org

Widworthy: www.widworthyparishcouncil.co.uk

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

Views expressed here are not necessarily the opinion of the Editor or the Community. Submissions, BY THE 15th OF THE MONTH, should be sent, preferably by email in text, Word, JPG, PDF or PNG format, to the editor at parisheslink@gmail.com The editor reserves the right to delay or refuse publication of articles for reasons of decorum, space or practicality.

CHURCH SERVICES

Our church buildings are open for personal prayer and limited services. Please refer to St. Mary's page on the Offwell website for updates regarding services resuming



If you would like to share in worship at home, you can do so via the internet or telephone. See below for information about some local church services:

Church Of England:

Honiton Deanery see website for information of services www.honitondeanery.org.uk

The Reverend Canon Cate Edmonds invites you to join a telephone service each Friday at 10:30am Dial 03306 060 403 then when asked 484444 #

Holyford Mission - www.holyford.org Sunday and weekday services, weekly thought for the week podcasts. A weekly newsletter to download with news, prayers, readings and links.

St. Pauls, Honiton - www.honitoncofe.org Sunday services in 'zoom' by internet or phone with a telephone number to call for details of how to join. An order of service to download and other resources.

Baptist - Honiton Family Church - www.honitonfamilychurch.co.uk Sunday services live on FaceBook. Recent sermons to listen to in audio

The Baptist Church Kilmington - www.beaconbaptist.co.uk Livestream services via youtube with other recent services available. Children's activities to download

The Community Church Honiton & Sidmouth - www.thecommunitychurch.co.uk Sunday services live via FaceBook and telephone. Weekday Bible study and more.

Free national phonline bringing worship and prayer

Government figures show that 2.5 million people aged 75 and above have never used the internet. And so, to help them, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, recently launched a free national phonline to bring worship and prayer into the homes of those without access to the internet.

Daily Hope, which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England.

Please send your contributions for the **SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER** Link magazine as soon as you have them, by **15th AUGUST at the latest**. Email: parisheslink@gmail.com Please note - Late submissions may not be included. A decision about whether the next issue is produced as a digital or printed version will be made in August, depending on the current situation with Covid19 and how many activities are able to take place.

BIBLE READINGS



These readings from the bible are used in our Sunday services. When we're not able to meet for services, maybe we could read them at home on a Sunday morning to help us feel connected to God and one another.

July 5 th	Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67	Psalms 45:10-17	Romans 7:15-25a	Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30
July 12 th	Genesis 25:19-34	Psalms 19:105-112	Romans 8:1-11	Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23
July 19 th	Genesis 28: 10-19a	Psalms 139: 1-12, 23-24	Romans 8:12-25	Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43
July 26 th	Genesis 29:15-28	Psalms 105: 1-11, 45b	Romans 8:26-39	Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52
August 2 nd	Genesis 32:22-31	Psalms 17:1-7, 15	Romans 9:1-5	Matthew 14:13-21
August 9 th	Genesis 37: 1-4, 12-28	Psalms 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b	Romans 10:5-15	Matthew 14:22-33
August 16 th	Genesis 45:1-15	Psalms 133	Romans 11: 1-2a, 29-32	Matthew 15: (10-20) 21-28
August 23 rd	Exodus 1:8 - 2:10	Psalms 124	Romans 12:1-8	Matthew 16:13-20
August 30 th	Exodus 3:1-15	Psalms 105: 1-6, 23-26, 45c	Romans 12:9-21	Matthew 16:21-28
September 6 th	Exodus 12:1-14	Psalms 149	Romans 13:8-14	Matthew 18:15-20

Give thanks to the Lord and proclaim his greatness.

Let the whole world know what he has done

Sing to him; yes sing his praises.

Tell everyone about his miracles.

Exalt in his holy name;

O worshippers of the Lord rejoice!

Search for the Lord and for his strength,

and keep on searching.

Psalm 105 verses 1 - 4

A PARABLE OF JESUS

The Doctor and the Patient



JESUS HAD MANY FRIENDS



BUT SOME WERE EXTRA SPECIAL. THESE WERE HIS 'DISCIPLES'.

JESUS ONCE ASKED A TAX-COLLECTOR CALLED 'MATTHEW' TO BE ONE OF HIS TEAM

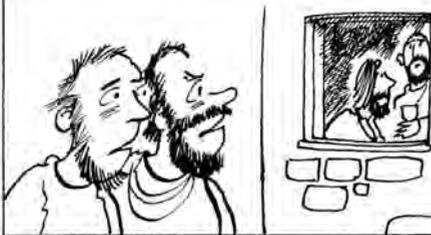


MATTHEW AGREED TO FOLLOW JESUS

JESUS WENT TO HAVE A MEAL AT MATTHEW'S HOUSE



BUT MANY PEOPLE COMPLAINED ABOUT THIS. THEY THOUGHT MATTHEW WAS A BAD MAN - AND JESUS SHOULD IGNORE HIM.



JESUS' REPLY WAS VERY STRAIGHT FORWARD.

HE EXPLAINED THAT MATTHEW NEEDED HELP, NOT CRITICISM.



"IT'S NOT THE WELL THAT NEED A DOCTOR - BUT THE SICK!"
see Luke 5:27-32

Churches re-open for Private Prayer

As churches across the country closed, due to the coronavirus pandemic, many worshippers switched to viewing prayers and services on-line. With live streaming on YouTube some churches managed to engage more people than ever before and in some cases numbers have doubled. As we begin to emerge from these strange times it will be interesting to see whether these on-line relationships transform into human ones and boost church attendance, but some people anticipate that this may not be the case.

The National Churches Trust recently ran an on-line survey to find out whether the success of digital worship means that church buildings will no longer be so important, or whether having a church building, where people can meet for worship and to build community, will in fact be more important than ever after the coronavirus lockdown ends.

The results, published at the end of May, revealed that three-quarters of churches (75%) agree that the closing of their building during Covid-19 lockdown has had a negative effect on the community and almost two-thirds (64%) think their building will become more important in the future as a result of Covid-19.

In the survey the four most important uses for churches and chapels after the coronavirus lockdown ends were:

~ *Providing a place where those who died as a result of the coronavirus can be remembered (46%)*

~ *Providing a place for quiet reflection or private prayer (44%)*

~ *Weddings, funerals and baptisms (42%)*

~ *Community support services (39%)*

Before the pandemic many churches were already functioning as community hubs and churches have always been at the forefront of combatting loneliness, especially in rural communities. During lockdown churches have continued to support people through phone calls, social media and sending letters to those who are not online. The survey concluded that people were most looking forward to the togetherness and companionship that church offers, closely followed by religious service and being able to gather together in the building once more.



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Friday Night Takeaway Service

Our weekly themes for Friday Take-Away may vary!

Orders taken from 9am on Thursday, phone only. First come, first served!

Thank you to everyone for their support during this time. It has been a pleasure to help our local community and we shall continue to do so until we are able to re-open as usual. We hope you all stay safe and well!

- The Grazing Cow Team

OFFWELL



St. Mary's church will be open for private prayer and reflection on Sunday mornings from 10:00am to 12:00noon and on Wednesday afternoons from 2:00pm to 4:00pm.

Please use hand sanitiser when entering and leaving the church and remember to social distance.

OFFWELL FLOWER SHOW



The answer we all want to know
Is will there be the Flower Show?
We're waiting on the PM's say
Can we hold it, yay or nay?

It gives you guys a chance to bake
And practice on your chocolate cake
The weather has been great so far
Your produce must be way above par

Your toms and lettuce, carrots too
There's always so much work to do
Craft and photos and flower displays
So many things to fill your days

It has been such a very strange year
We need something to bring us cheer
So we end as usual, please remember
We hoping for the twelfth of September



Please visit the continually updated Offwell website for information and helpful links

www.offwell.org

Survey:

Coronavirus, church – and YOU

This survey by York St. John University is assessing responses to the Covid-19 crisis among churchgoers in the UK.

The questionnaire asks about your own experience and reaction to the outbreak, as well as your opinions about how the church locally and nationally has responded.

You can take part in the survey via the Church Times website:

www.churchtimes.co.uk

Fish and Chips will be back in the village hall car park on **Saturday July 4th July**, frying from 6:00pm to 7:30pm.

There will be a pop-up bar outside selling tins and bottles, but we regret no kegs yet. If you wish to eat at the club please bring your own garden chair. Social distancing will be observed. You will be very welcome and we look forward to seeing you all again. Any profit goes towards the new children's play park.

Possible dates to go in your diary:

Sept. Sat. 12 th	OPEN CHURCHES DAY
Sept. Sat. 12 th	FLOWER & PRODUCE SHOW
Oct. Fri. 2 nd	HARVEST SUPPER
Nov. TBA	QUIZ NIGHT

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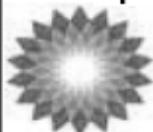
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Tel: 01404 831417

As I am sure many residents of Offwell Village will have known the school has been open 3 days a week for a number of weeks when we have been caring for the children of key worker families. We are now open for 4 days a week caring for some of the children in the year groups designated by the government.



All of our classes are now once more in use and it has been lovely to hear the children's voices echoing around the school. Silent schools are not happy places. Children and their families have been able to keep in touch using some of the features of the online Google Classroom. Teachers will now meet their class virtually every Wednesday which will give them a chance to have a chat and assure children they are in our thoughts.

As a Church of England school we are supported by both County and the Diocese. In particular we benefit from the help of the Rev. Sue Roberts, Vicar of St Paul's in Honiton. The whole school had the opportunity to share in an online Celebration Worship which was enjoyable.

The school continues to move forward in a purposeful manner responding positively to guidance issued by the government.

In a few weeks we will begin to look forward to September but before that we have to say goodbye to 12 of our children who will be moving on to secondary school. Some of our Year 6 have been back in school since June but we have not been able to undertake our usual farewell celebrations and acknowledgement. We have missed this as some of the staff have taught them for 7 years. However, they are all resilient and ready to move on so we wish Alana, Aubrey, Carmen, Ella Henry, Jack, Jessica, Layla, Lilly-Grace, Mirabelle, Niamh and Rosie all the very best for the future.



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The school was challenged by Mr Thomas to create some artwork based on some poppies he had seen at school. He asked the school to recreate the photos of the poppies using whatever art resources they had at home. Here are some of the results. We have also included some photos of what some of our children have been doing during lockdown.



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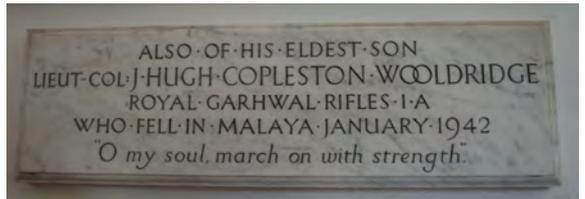
ST MARY'S, OFFWELL



HISTORY AND GRAVESTONES

For me, researching Offwell's past, the events that took place and the people who lived here, is both fascinating and rewarding. My most recent research was for the *VE Day 75 Offwell Memories*. I was lucky enough to have four people still living in the village with strong childhood memories of World War Two. I also included in the *Offwell Memories* the names of three young men from the village who died in the war and this invited an email from John Tristram, our Bell Captain. *"You don't mention the memorial in the church to Lt.Col. James Wooldridge, R Garwhal Rifles, who died in Burma in 1942"* he wrote.

Who was James Wooldridge and why were there memorial plaques in St. Mary's for both him and his father, Brig.Gen. William H. Wooldridge?



I then started searching through the military websites and included Brab Hallows in our email stream. Brab has a particular interest in military and social history, and is extremely knowledgeable about St. Mary's and the Copleston graves. There followed some fascinating historical information from both John and Brab about the War in the Far East. I even learnt that Brab's uncle was the last officer to escape uncaptured from Singapore, and it was Brab who came up with the Wooldridge answer, not from military websites, but from St. Mary's gravestones:

"Grave 136 – 'In loving memory of Alice Waters Woolridge, who died 16th April 1954, wife of Brig.Gen. W.H. Woolridge C.M.G.' Alice was the second daughter of Rev. J.H. Copleston of Offwell. Here we have the marriage between the two families."



Another Copleston riddle solved and yet another reminder that gravestones do not only provide an important record of the social history of the area, each graveyard is also the biography of its community and a tangible link to our past. We should all work to preserve that past or we will lose an irreplaceable resource.

Carol Hayes

HISTORY & HERITAGE

The Painter's Bill

When the authorities of an old church in Wales decided to make some repairs to its interior furnishings, an artist was employed to touch up a large painting. The artist presented his bill in due course, but payment was refused, as full details of the work performed was not specified.

The next day the account was presented, itemised as follows:

Embellishing Pontius Pilate and putting new ribbons on his hat	8 shillings
Putting tail on rooster of St. Peter and mending his comb	6 shillings
Re-pluming and re-gilding left wing of Guardian Angel	6 shillings
Washing High Priest's Servants	5 shillings
Cleaning out St. David's ears	2 shillings
Renewing Heaven, adjusting the stars and cleaning up the moon	7 shillings
Brightening up the flames of Hell, putting new tail on the Devil, mending his hoof, and doing several odd jobs for the damned	12 shillings
Touching up Purgatory and restoring lost souls	7 shillings
Mending shirt of the Prodigal Son	3 shillings
Touching up Pharaoh's Daughter	2 shillings

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'Churches can no longer 'lift every voice'



Thankfully, churches are now open for quiet reflection, private prayer and limited services, but it will be some time before churches will again 'reverberate with song' as bringing people together to sing has proven to be dangerous in the coronavirus pandemic.

In March a group of 61 singers met to rehearse at a church in Washington, USA. One of the members' unknowingly infected 52 people with Covid-19 and two people died.

Although such restrictions are understandable, they rob congregations of an important aspect of their Christian worship. Singing is critical to identity and faith and in some traditions is as important as the sermon. Choral singing has tremendous power, both spiritually and physically; various studies have linked singing with improved mental alertness, memory and concentration 'making people nicer, more forgiving and trustful'.

Choral singing creates the kind of community togetherness that is necessary in churches. It brings us all into a cohesive oneness, just as corporate worship brings individuals into oneness with Christ. A great deal of creativity is presently being employed around the country to keep the music going during on-line services, using pre-recorded music, solo performers and virtual choirs.

It may be some time before church services return to anything approaching normal so congregations are being advised to consider alternatives to singing. Worship may still be joyful, but it is likely to be quieter.





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HYMN

by John Betjeman

The Church's Restoration
In eighteen-eighty-three
Has left for contemplation
Not what there used to be.
How well the ancient woodwork
Looks round the Rect'ry hall,
Memorial of the good work
Of him who plann'd it all.

He who took down the pew-ends
And sold them anywhere
But kindly spared a few ends
Work'd up into a chair.
O worthy persecution
Of dust! O hue divine!
O cheerful substitution,
Thou varnishèd pitch-pine!

Church furnishing! Church furnishing!
Sing art and crafty praise!
He gave the brass for burnishing
He gave the thick red baize,
He gave the new addition,
Pull'd down the dull old aisle,
- To pave the sweet transition
He gave th' encaustic tile.



Of marble brown and veined
He did the pulpit make;
He order'd windows stained
Light red and crimson lake.
Sing on, with hymns uproarious,
Ye humble and aloof,
Look up! and oh how glorious
He has restored the roof!

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WIDWORTHY



Our church buildings are allowed to open for personal prayer and for limited services. Please refer to **St. Mary's page on the Offwell website** for updates regarding opening times and services resuming .

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Offwell, Widworthy and Farway Parish Churches all benefit from memorials and monuments which commemorate the lives of the Copleston family (St. Mary's), the Marwood Eltons (St. Cuthbert's) and the Prideauxs (St. Michael's).

The rich history of Widworthy includes many notable Devonshire families, including the Marwood-Eltons. Thomas Marwood, physician to Queen Elizabeth, enjoyed great fame as a doctor, having cured the Earl of Essex in 1592 when the best London doctors had failed to do so. In the 19th century Sir Edward Marwood-Elton, the High Sherriff of Devon, commissioned the architect, G.S. Repton, to design Widworthy Court.

St. Cuthbert's contains many handsome monuments and memorials including one to James Marwood (who died in 1767), by the famous English sculptor John Bacon. Works by Bacon adorn both St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. Another memorial, in memory of James Marwood (1811), is by English sculptor, Peter Rouw the Younger, modeller of cameos and gems to the Prince Regent.



In the churchyard are the Dare family graves including three brothers who died in World War 1. The Dare family have a genealogical connection with Virginia Dare, born 20th August 1587 at Roanoke in Virginia (now North Carolina, USA), the first English child born in North America. A great heritage for a tiny church and one that deserves to be preserved for future generations.



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Our church buildings are allowed to open for personal prayer and for limited services. Please refer to **St. Mary's page on the Offwell website** for updates regarding opening times and services resuming.

The One Day Diary Activity for May 12th was a great success with 56 local entries contributing to the total of 900 received by the archive.
For more information go to the St. Mary's page of the Offwell website.

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

The Prideaux family was one of the most widespread and successful of all the gentry families of Devon. Sir Edmund Prideaux, 1st Baronet, who died in 1628, purchased Netherton Hall, was married three times and is buried at St. Michael's in Farway. The monument to Sir Edmund is particularly arresting: a life size effigy lies supine in prayer dressed in barrister's robes on a chest tomb under an ornamented round arch surmounted by the family arms. At the foot of the monument a knight in armour lies on his side.

Few records of Sir Edmund's life have survived but his principal biographer, the Rev. John Prince, vicar of Totnes, wrote the following in his book of biographies 'Worthies of Devon':

"...For one to mount from the condition of a younger brother in a private family to the degree of a baronet, and leave so fair an estate and so high a title to his name and posterity, is an argument of pregnant parts and an extraordinary blessing of Providence."

The Copleston, Marwood-Elton and Prideaux families were not always the happiest of neighbours. In the 1850's John Gay Copleston caused disharmony with both Sir Edward Marwood-Elton and Sir Edmund Prideaux, 9th and last Baronet, over trusteeship of the 'Poor Field' in Offwell Parish. The Charity Commission recommended the resignation of older trustees and the election of 'young persons' likely to remain in the Parish'. All three older men reluctantly resigned and a newly elected trustee included Sir Edmund's only surviving son, John Rolle Prideaux, who was not yet 20. Sadly he was to die just a few weeks later on his way from India to the Crimea; his father outliving him by 23 years.





Jug arrangement above

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REMEMBRANCE & FEAST DAYS

St. Swithun's Day - 15th July

St Swithun is apparently the saint you can blame for rainy summers. It is said that if it rains on his special day, 15th July, it will then rain for 40 days after that. It all began when Swithun was made Bishop of Winchester in 852 by King Ethelwulf of Wessex. It was an important posting: Winchester was the capital of Wessex, and during the 10 years Swithun was there, Wessex became the most important kingdom of England.

During his life, instead of washing out people's summer holidays, and damping down their spirits, Swithun seems to have done a lot of good. He was famous for his charitable gifts and for his energy in getting churches built. When he was dying in 862, he asked that he be buried in the cemetery of the Old Minster, just outside the west door.

If he had been left there in peace, who knows how many rainy summers the English may have been spared over the last 1000 years. But, no, it was decided to move Swithun. By now, the 960s, Winchester had become the first monastic cathedral chapter in England, and the newly installed monks wanted Swithun in the cathedral with them. So finally, on 15 July 971, his bones were dug up and Swithun was translated into the cathedral.

That same day many people claimed to have had miraculous cures. Certainly everyone got wet, for the heavens opened. The unusually heavy rain that day, and on the days following, was attributed to the power of St Swithun. Swithun was moved again in 1093, into the new Winchester cathedral. His shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the middle ages. The shrine was destroyed during the Reformation and restored in 1962. There are 58 ancient dedications to Swithun in England.

VJ Day 75

Saturday 15th August 2020 is the **75th anniversary of VJ Day**, marking both the surrender of Japan and the end of WW2.

Fighting in the Asia-Pacific took place from Hawaii to North East India. Britain and the Commonwealth's principle fighting force, the Fourteenth Army, was one of the most diverse in history -

over 40 languages were spoken and all the world's major religions represented. The descendants of the Commonwealth veterans of that army are today part of multicultural communities up and down the country, a lasting legacy to the success and comradeship of those who fought in the Asia-Pacific.

More information about VJ Day 75, and how the war in Asia-Pacific impacted on the people of Offwell, will be posted on the Offwell website during August.

VJ Day 75 coincides with the ***Feast of the Assumption***. This holy day commemorates when the Virgin Mary ascends to heaven at the end of her life. The Assumption is widely celebrated in many parts of the world.

BOOK REVIEWS



God on Mute: Engaging the Silence of Unanswered Prayer

By Pete Greig

ONE in 20 adults have started to pray during the lockdown, despite not praying before, a new survey published by the charity Tearfund suggests.

But how do we pray and how do we react if we don't get the answers we want. When our prayers seem to fall on deaf ears, when God doesn't seem to even exist, or if he does, he isn't answering. When we suffer, how do we reconcile it to the promises we read in the Bible?

Pete Greig was one of the founding leaders in the 24-7 Prayer Movement. In this book he seeks to address these issues theologically and very personally. His wife was diagnosed with a brain tumour in her 30's and, although free from the tumour, suffers terrible epilepsy.

This book was an encouragement to persevere in prayer, being honest about our struggles as well as successes.

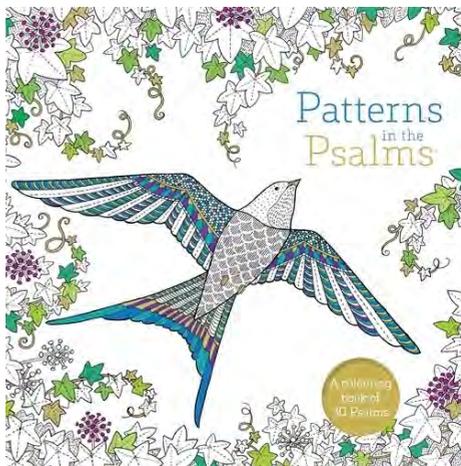
For me, the most encouraging thing was to think that no prayer is wasted. As we read in the book of Revelation 5:6; our prayers are being stored up in heaven in golden bowls like incense. God loves us and hears our prayers.

Patterns in the Psalms – a colouring book

SPCK, £9.99

This summer, if you have time on your hands, why not colour your way through the beautiful imagery of the Psalms?

This book contains 30 illustrations with a corresponding verse, all designed to appeal to an adult market. The designs include animals, flowers, leaves, waves, stars and other patterns. Readers can enjoy the creativity and freedom of adding colour to these intricate designs, whilst scripture provides inspiration and reflection for each page.





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Online 'Talking Jesus' course FREE during the Covid-19 lockdown

HOPE Together has made the hugely popular Talking Jesus course available, rent free, to watch online during the Covid-19 crisis. Roy Crowne, executive director of HOPE Together, said: 'We have had lots of requests during the Covid-19 lockdown to make the

Talking Jesus course available online. There seems to be an increased interest from non-Christians in spiritual issues. People are searching for hope. We want to help equip Christians to tell their story and to talk about the hope we have because of Jesus.' The Talking Jesus course includes six video-based teaching sessions with inspirational testimonies.

To access the course free until end of August visit: www.hopetogether.org.uk/talkingjesus

Use your old clothes to help others in poverty

Lockdown drove many of us to do a Spring clear-out of our wardrobes. But what do you do now do with the old clothes you no longer want?

Charity shops have been closed and may be inundated once they're open again, but there's still a way to donate your old items and support your favourite charities. Just go online and visit [Thrift+](#). It is an online store where you can buy and donate great quality second-hand clothes. And you get to choose which cause to support when you make a donation. While lockdown measures are in place, they've introduced a door-step collection service, so you don't need to leave your home to support life-transforming charities.

Gardening Against the Odds?

The Conservation Foundation has relaunched *Gardening Against the Odds* as a virtual network and is getting some excellent interest.

As a result, it may be making a radio series soon, featuring some of the projects it has discovered over the years which show how people combat 'odds' – mental, physical and environmental - by gardening, even when they have no garden.

These people plant seeds which they watch grow, eventually producing growth leading to flowers and fruit. Sometimes they work alone, sometimes there is an opportunity to share, producing a sense of community. All this is nothing new, but many people are discovering the benefits of gardening as a result of lockdown – discovering how gardening can help combat loneliness and depression with a sense of caring and well-being sometimes with life changing results.

This is a very topical issue and so if you have discovered the benefits of gardening recently – or know someone who has – the Conservation Foundation would love to hear from you as soon as possible.

Please contact : davidshreeve@conservationfoundation.co.uk.

Facebook @gardeningagainsttheodds website <https://conservationfoundation.co.uk/projects/gardening-against-the-odds/> 27

OFFWELL WOODLAND

We are hoping to get our fantastic volunteer team back into the woodlands again in July. Although there is a lot of cutting back and tidying up to be done the woodlands have been looking great without our input! With people having more time for walking in the last few months it's been great to see family groups exploring the woods and picnicking beside the lake.

With the temperature rising now is the time to see the increasing number of butterflies in the heathland and woodland rides. We have seen record numbers of Meadow Brown's and if you look closely in the grassy areas you may well see the beautiful small Common Blue in the photo.



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LOVE YOUR GARDEN

Mulching!

Mulching is a great way to maintain moisture in your borders. It will also suppress weeds and if using the correct mulch, will feed your plants, all at the same time reducing the need for soluble feed.

The best time to mulch is in the Spring, but it is never too late in the season in my opinion. Applying mulch in the Autumn will also help to protect the roots of plants through the winter.



The timing of mulching is best when you have cleared your borders of weed and the soil is very moist. The mulch will then trap the moisture in and less evaporation from the sun will occur.

I recommend a well-rotted homemade compost ideally or a mushroom compost. Well-rotted farmyard manure is also a great alternative and is readily available from most garden centres. Spread evenly, at a minimum of 50mm (2") depth and leave as a thick blanket, don't be tempted to turn the mulch in. Wood chippings are not a favourite of mine, there is limited nutritional value and birds will often flick and scatter it about.

If you trial one of your borders with a mulching manure you will see the difference in plant health and growth. It will also reduce the amount of weeding required in the future. New plants will also benefit from this.

Happy Mulching!

*Shelley Cruz
of Goodlife Gardeners & Landscapers*





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