

St Osmund's Church (Please scroll down for the 2023 Annual Reports)

St Osmund's is part of the Melbury Team benefice, details of which can be found on the Team [website](#)

Services

Our usual monthly pattern of services is as follows:

1st Sunday 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer (Book of Common Prayer)

2nd Sunday 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion (Common Worship)

3rd Sunday No service. For services at other church in the Team see the [Team website](#)

4th Sunday 9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer or Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

This pattern often changes around Easter and Christmas. A list of services throughout the Team, including St Osmund's, can be found on the notice board at the South gate.

History of St Osmund's

Melbury Osmond church was dedicated to St. Osmund who was probably a nephew of William the Conqueror. Osmund was Bishop of Salisbury from 1078 - 1099 and had much to do with building the first Cathedral at old Sarum. His tomb is in the present Salisbury Cathedral.

This church is probably the third on this site and dates from 1745. The memorial to Mrs Susanna Strangeways Horner on the south wall of the chancel states that in that year "the parish church being ruinous, was wholly taken down and rebuilt on the same foundation". In 1888 a major restoration took place. The old two storey pulpit was cut down to its present size and the choir stalls were added. During the restoration the font thought to be Norman was rediscovered and built into the pillar of the tower arch. Also discovered at this time were the carved stone depicting Abraham's ram caught in the thicket (probably Saxon) and the cherub's head now built into the north wall of the Sanctuary.

The church has associations with Thomas Hardy's mother and grandmother. The latter, Elizabeth (Betty) Swetman of Melbury Osmond was married to George Hand Affpuddle, "a young man of whom her father strongly disapproved", in Melbury Osmond church. They had seven children of whom the fifth, Jemima was to become the mother of Thomas Hardy. Jemima, after spending some time in London, went in 1835 or thereabouts to live in the neighbourhood of Stinsford and there met her future husband. The wedding took place in Melbury Osmond Church on 22nd December 1839 and Thomas was born the following year. A copy of the marriage certificate is displayed on the west wall of the nave.

In 1954 the church bells were rehung and retuned and two of them recast and in 1955 a new ringing chamber was constructed. In 1967 the number of bells was increased from five to six with the presentation of a treble bell.

In 1955 a churchyard extension was prepared by parishioners with the help from the West Dorset District Council Target Area Scheme on land given by the Ilchester Estates. It was consecrated by the Bishop of Sherborne in December 1999.

Friend of St Osmund's

A very generous gift under the will of the late Peggy Macquire is enabling the PCC to put the fabric of the church in good order and to plan for future developments.