Fishbourne Parish

Newsletter

Issue No 73 November 2026

Editorial

Getting Involved

November is a time of remembrance and transition. A time to remember the past and all those lost in distant and current conflicts, but also when we begin to look forward to Christmas and the start of a New Year, beyond the dark winter to lengthening days and new life again.

When you are out and about you may notice the small garden of remembrance under the Fishbourne oak tree. Crosses will be available as usual at the pub should you wish to plant one. This is the time when, as a community we can come together and remember.

Reading through the articles sent to me a strong theme was emerging, getting involved, and taking part in activities in and around the community: from the amazing volunteers at Quarr (so grateful to be allowed to help!) to the indomitable Jean Bennett, whose motto was, “do it while you still can”: from our tree warden looking after and mapping our trees, to folk organising walks and book groups, contributing and delivering our newsletter or visiting the sick and lonely. Parish councillors are truly grateful to all these individuals and everyone who gets involved. There are those in the Parish who volunteer beyond our boundaries of course, with the National Coast watch Institution, Daisy Bus, Aspire, the food bank and their church amongst others. We see the benefit, and so do they.

When considering this, it was quite amazing to see how many ways there are. Look out for a host of opportunities within these pages. Of course, none of these could exist for our community, without our community volunteers.

Whilst remembering the sacrifice of our fellow human beings, we can also acknowledge how very fortunate we are to live in such an amazing place full of amazing people, and perhaps get motivated to, “do it while we still can”.

Sarah Talbot

Copy for the next issue of the Newsletter by 15th January 2027 at the latest. Please send to sarah.talbot@fishbourneiow.org.uk



Fishbourne triumphs at the Isle of Wight Best Kept Village Award 2026

Thursday 17th September saw the presentation of the 2026 Isle of Wight Best Kept Village Awards, which took place at the Wilberforce Hall in Brighstone.

I was pleased to attend again this year as Chairman of Fishbourne Parish Council, having attended last year in what was our first foray as a Parish into the Island’s annual best kept village competition, which itself has been running for nearly 60 years.

Representatives from villages large and small attended the event, which was hosted by BKVA Chairwoman, Ann Evans, and we enjoyed Ann’s opening remarks about the history of the BKVA on the Isle of Wight.

Fishbourne is judged as a parish, which includes Fishbourne village itself along with the part of Wootton which falls within our boundaries (i.e. Kite Hill, Firestone Copse Road, Firestone Glade, Ashlake Farm Lane, Barge Lane etc) and we are judged in the “Medium Sized Village” category.

I am very pleased to announce that Fishbourne was given 1st place in this category, accompanied by a certificate and a shield. Special mention was given to our re-use of the phone box as a “little library” and also to the overall appearance of the whole parish.

Other Best Kept Village awards were announced for Atherfield Green (Hamlet), Wellow (Small Village) and Rookley (Large Village) and Bembridge (Extra Large Village) before the announcement of the overall Isle of Wight Best Kept Village Award 2026 which I am delighted to announce was won by…Fishbourne.

I’d like to offer huge congratulations to everyone who has helped to keep our parish looking great over the past year, without whose efforts we would certainly not have been awarded this fantastic prize.

Thanks go to all of the volunteers who help on our bi-annual Parish Spruce Up Days, our Parish councillors (past and present), Dave at DT Ground Care who looks after our floral planters and also to our IWC Public Realm officer, Steve, who works hard to help keep Fishbourne parish clean and tidy.

Particular recognition goes to our Parish Clerk, Katie, whose conscientiousness and hard work is hugely appreciated by me and by my fellow parish councillors, and was also recognised specifically by BKVA Chairwoman, Ann Evans, at the presentation event.

After the awards were presented, we enjoyed a talk from the High Sheriff, Nigel Hartley MBE who spoke eloquently about the importance of people valuing the place where they live and working together to improve their local environment for the benefit of everyone. His message was very positive, and he offered his hearty congratulations to everyone in attendance and across the Island who work so hard for their local areas.

We are planning our next Parish spruce up Day on Saturday 7th November from 10am until midday, after which complimentary refreshments will be served to those who have helped out at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club. Please do join us!

People you may need to contact on the Parish Council

Ed Hopper – Chairman
Telephone: 07973 899882
Email:
ed.hopper@fishbourneiow.org.uk

Cheryl Fontana
Email:
cheryl.fontana@fishbourneiow.org.uk

Carolyn Dugdale
Email:
carolyn.dugdale@fishbourneiow.org.uk

Sarah Talbot – Vice Chair
Telephone: 07772 165000
Email:
sarah.talbot@fishbourneiow.org.uk

Dr Ramesh Babu
Email:
ramesh.babu@fishbourneiow.org.uk

Vince Carter (Tree Warden)
Telephone: 07985 147900

Katie Riley (Clerk)
Telephone: 07772 950343
Email: clerk@fishbourneiow.org.uk

Ian Dore IOW Councillor
Email: ian.Dore@iow.gov.uk

THE FISHBOURNE INN
THE INN FOR ALL

There is plenty to come down to your local pub for this winter.

A warm and welcoming place to meet with friends and catch up, as the evenings draw in.

For something different, there's a 'Smart Phone' quiz on 9th November.

Mid-week Christmas parties can be booked Monday – Thursday from 1st December.

The Famous Christmas Raffle will be drawn on 20th December (after Carols on the Green, under the Fishbourne Oak.) Join in the festivities with mulled wine.

On 31st December, The New Years Eve Party theme is 'All that Glitters is Gold'. Open to all. Fancy dress (around the theme) welcome. Free entry.

For more information and 'specials' see The Fishbourne Inn facebook page.

Living on your own at Abbeyfield Ryde doesn't mean being alone

Living on your own at Abbeyfield Ryde doesn't mean being alone.

Abbeyfield Ryde offers independent living, delicious home cooked meals along with friendly company in a caring and supportive setting.

For many people, staying independent matters just as much as feeling safe, supported and connected. Abbeyfield Ryde offers a simple reassuring alternative for older people who want to live independently but not alone.

We are not a care home, but a small, friendly home where residents can come and go as they please, maintain their independence, and benefit from living in a supportive community. Families also value the peace of mind knowing their loved one has support and daily contact close to hand.

Many residents say they wish they had moved in sooner, not because they needed care, but because they enjoy the companionship, routine and reassurance that Abbeyfield Ryde provides.

How is Abbeyfield Ryde different?

You will have your own private ensuite room in a well maintained, welcoming home with home cooked meals prepared daily.

We offer friendly company and a real sense of community in a home without long corridors or an institutional feel to it.

We have an affordable monthly fee that includes most bills and 24-hour Wightcare alarm service for reassurance.

Abbeyfield Ryde is a not-for-profit charity, supported by volunteers.

We currently have some rooms available and enquiries are welcome. To find out more or to arrange an informal visit we would love to hear from you so please call 01983 563540 or email info@abbeyfieldryde.com



IWASP
Isle of Wight Against Scams Partnership

The National Trading Standards Scam Team have produced some new and useful tools to help you protect yourself from Scams.

They have a new page on their website that includes :

1. Guidance on recognising common scam tactics and warning signs
2. Advice on safeguarding personal information and reducing digital vulnerabilities
3. Clear instructions on how to report scams and access support
4. Links to wider Friends Against Scams materials, including training and awareness resources

https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/

You can continue to check potential scams using the Ask Silver AI scams checker and complete the Friends Against Scams training directly from their phone.

The app is available for free on all Android and iOS devices and can be downloaded from the respective app stores, or scan the QR code:

Red Flags:

- Urgency: you must act right now.
- Secrecy: don't tell anyone, don't check with anyone.
- A request: for money, personal details, codes or images.
- Pressure: they don't want you to check. That is itself the biggest warning.

However real it looks or sounds, judge the request.

Please use these resources to protect yourselves and any friends or relatives that may benefit from this information and support.

You can continue to find additional support on our website www.iwasp.org.uk

- For advice on scams call - Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline: 0808 223 1133 (this is a free phone number)
- To report a scam call – Report Fraud: 0300 123 2040

Clerks Corner

Spruce Up Day – Saturday 7th November

We hope to see as many volunteers as possible at our next Spruce Up Day, starting at 10am on Saturday 7th November, following our success in being named Best Kept Village on the Isle of Wight!

Are there areas near you that could benefit from a litter pick, some weeding, a wipe-down or a general spruce-up? Every little bit helps to keep our village looking its best.

All volunteers are invited to enjoy a drink and a snack at the club afterwards. If you would like more information or to register your interest, please contact one of the Parish Councillors or the Clerk.

Goodbye

At October's meeting we said goodbye to Cllr Chris Woollin after nearly 4 years of service. We wish her well and would like to thank her for everything she has contributed. This means we now have a vacancy on the Parish Council! Please do get in touch to find out more or to express an interest.

Remembrance Sunday – 8th November

A gathering will be held beside the Garden of Remembrance on Oak Tree Green at 11am on Sunday 8th November for those wishing to observe the two-minute silence on Remembrance Sunday.

Please meet at 10.50am. Everyone is welcome.

Our Village Greens – Protected for the Future

Our Village Greens, Oak Tree Green and Lower Green, are valued parts of our community. They provide important open spaces for residents to enjoy and help preserve the character and identity of our village.

Understandably, residents may have questions about what would happen if the land were ever sold to a new owner. The reassuring news is that both Greens have Village Green status, which provides important legal protection that remains in place if ownership changes.

What does Village Green status mean?

Village Green status is a legal designation in England and Wales that protects land recognised for its use by the local community for lawful sports and pastimes.

In simple terms, it recognises the importance of these spaces as places where local people can enjoy outdoor recreation and community life.

Once land is registered as a village green, it benefits from significant legal protection against activities that would unlawfully interfere with its protected use. Importantly, this protection is attached to the land itself, not to the person or organisation that owns it.

This means that a change of ownership does not, in itself, remove the Greens' registered status or the legal protections that come with it. A new owner cannot simply disregard these protections because they have purchased the land.

Village Green status provides an important safeguard to help preserve these valued spaces for our community, both now and for future generations.

Actions taken

Please get in touch with one of the Parish Councillors or the Clerk if there is anything you would like to raise. We are always grateful when residents bring issues to our attention. If something falls within our remit, we will always do what we can to help or direct it to the appropriate organisation.

Here are some of the issues residents have recently reported and the actions taken:

- Wightlink information sign at Kite Hill: The variable information sign was obscured by an overhanging tree branch. It was established that the tree was on private land, and Island Roads has written to the landowner requesting that the branch be cut back.
- Pavement between Fishbourne Lane crossing and Elenors Grove bus stop: The pavement had become almost impassable and was cleared by Island Roads. We have since received a further request to address weeds and grass covering the pavement.
- Bus stop bin at the top of Kite Hill: The bin was reported as overflowing, with a broken door. We have asked Island Roads to arrange the necessary repairs.
- Bus stop lighting: Residents have raised concerns about the lack of lighting at the bus stop at the top of Kite Hill and at the Fishbourne Lane bus stop in the direction of Newport.
- Vehicles belonging to Fishbourne Garage: Concerns have been raised about vehicles regularly parked on Fishbourne Lane without MOTs or vehicle tax. PC Andrew Emery has offered to speak to the garage about the matter.
- Vehicles waiting for the ferry on Ranalagh Drive: Two reports were received about vehicles parked while waiting for the ferry. We have written to the companies concerned, requesting that they do not park there again.
- Parking restrictions on the Lower Green: We continue to work with Parking Services to address recurring illegal parking. We have been advised that, as the restriction is enforceable only between 8am and 9am, this coincides with Civil Enforcement Officers carrying out scheduled school enforcement duties. An officer can attend only if their designated patrol route permits it. We will continue to monitor the situation and report any ongoing issues.

Thank you to everyone who takes the time to report concerns and help us keep our village a pleasant and welcoming place to live. Your feedback is important, and we will continue to do what we can to address the issues that matter to our community.

Fishbourne Book Group

The book group will be meeting on Wednesday 25th November at 10.30am in the Fishbourne Inn to discuss our chosen book "Land" by Maggie O'Farrell. If you enjoy reading and would like to join us, please contact Cheryl on 07910849302 or just come along.

Your Library needs your unwanted books!!

If you have any books you have read or no longer wish to keep, please drop them off with our very own Library Monitor, David Mountford at no. 35 Fishbourne Lane. He will stamp them and deliver them to the library. His tel no. is 01983 882255.

Many thanks.

This is your Newsletter!

Are you happy with the content? Do you find the articles interesting or informative? Please let us know what you would like to see in the Newsletter. Contact: sarah.talbot@fishbourneiow.org.uk

'The Eights'

by Joanna Miller



Set in Oxford in 1920, the book tells the story of four women from different backgrounds who come to live next door to each other in Corridor Eight of St Hugh's College. Each one has been affected by the traumas of the First World War, but each is determined to overcome obstacles and make the most of being amongst the first women ever admitted to Oxford University. Supported by their mutual friendship, the women confront ancient misogyny and institutional sexism to carve a rightful place for themselves and the generations who will follow them. They deal with ludicrous rules, draconian regulations and an organisation that simply does not know how to treat them.

An excellent novel about a trailblazing generation.

Cheryl Fontana

Cat Burglar Charlie

This is our "cat sitter's" last confession. We would like to take this opportunity to offer our heartfelt thanks to him.

Back in my previous life in the Home Counties, my cat-sitting duties very often took me into an extremely opulent gated estate frequented by equally opulent cats of various expensive breeds.

There was the most elegant pair of Somali sisters you could ever meet, living in luxury, the (typically ungrateful) owners of heated beds and silk cushions. Just round the corner lived an immaculately groomed Tiffany boy named Tobias, and a couple of bends further on you'd find an aloof Russian Blue named Mishka. All of these amazing cats seemed to belong in these multi-million pound houses, perfectly matched to their surroundings.

And then there was Charlie. Amongst all this feline finery, in a house in the middle of the estate, lived a scruffy one-eyed rogue of a tabby tomcat named Charlie Slater. It was Charlie who first got me into this tucked away gated world – not by showing me the best way over the security fence you understand, but because his owners were the first there to book my services.

I was responsible for the holiday-visiting care of all of the above cats, plus a few others too, and whilst most of them didn't socialise with each other in any way, they were all well aware of Charlie. This was hardly surprising as, even when I wasn't actually visiting Charlie, I ended up…visiting Charlie. I can't remember a single property in that estate where I didn't find Charlie at some point making use of the resident feline's home or eating their food. On my first visit to the Somali sisters for instance, who should I find laying fast asleep in one of those heated beds? And who is it that regularly broke into Tiffany Jack's timer-feeder, and snuggled up with a certain Russian lady? Yep, Charlie; he was every-where – if there was an accessible cat-flap or an open window, he was through it.

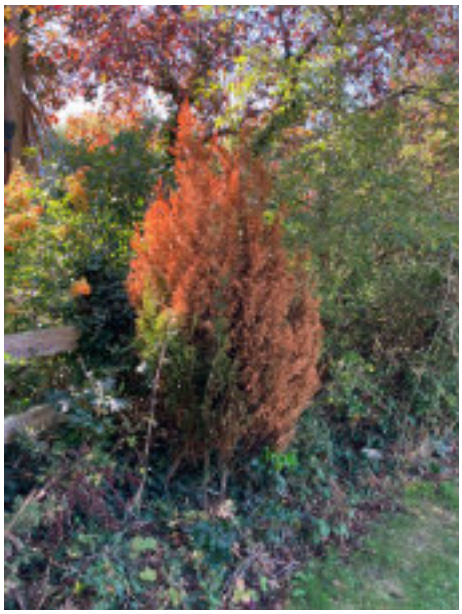
Eventually, however, I took on the job of looking after a Seal Point Siamese named Whisper, knowing that at last, this was one cat who'd definitely be keeping all her food to herself. Not only was Whisper's food safely protected behind a state-of-the-art microchip cat-flap, openable only by Whisper, her garden was protected by an elaborate system of wall-top netting, expertly angled to keep Whisper in and others out. Not even our own expert cat-burglar Charlie could get to that food bowl.

On my third day visiting, having fed and brushed the luxuriantly purring Whisper, we both headed out into the garden. I surveyed the expansive netting atop the walls while Whisper settled down to chew some grass and rip up a couple of flowers. There'd definitely be no Charlie visits here, I thought. I sat with Whisper for ten minutes or so, and then, out of nowhere, a tabby cat landed with a huge thump in the middle of the lawn. I stared aghast, first at the familiar one-eyed face watching me carefully, and then up at the branches of a tree in a neighbouring garden. What a jump!

Before I could form the words 'Charlie Slater, what the hell?!' he was past me, skidding straight through my legs and into the open back door. He was in. And I'd just been nutmegged by a cat.

I looked at Whisper, she looked at me. She went back to eating grass, I trudged off to perform the all too familiar act of removing Charlie's face from someone else's food bowl. Politely of course and with the offer of appeasing Dreamie cat-treats, because I knew that before long his owners would be on holiday.

And from that day forward, Charlie Slater would be my boss.



Trees and drought

This summer has been truly exceptional: months with little or no rain, days on end with nothing but clear blue skies, and temperatures verging on the ridiculous! For those of you who might be described as sun worshippers you've no doubt enjoyed every minute. For our gardens? Not quite so much.

For shrubs like Hydrangeas, (the clue is in the name) the drought has proved to be nearly fatal if you didn't manage to water most days. I've also seen Hazel and Griselinia losing their leaves and an increasing number of ornamental conifers turning brown. Many will almost certainly fail to come back into leaf next year.

What of our trees? Many species have suffered. I've seen many birch that have almost certainly died from the drought this summer as well as Beech trees, small and large, whose leaves have browned and fallen off. I've also seen quite a few oak trees whose crowns are completely brown which is very unusual for a species which is known to be deep rooted.

The drought has also come on top of and exacerbated existing problems with pests and diseases. Horse Chestnuts continue to be infested by leaf miners (Cameraria ohridella) bringing early autumn colour and leaf fall, and the ever-spreading Ash dieback disease (Chalara or Hymeno-scyphus fraxineus) is increasingly denuding our woodlands. The high temperatures have also made Dutch Elm Disease (Ophiostoma novo-ulmi) more obvious again this year as high temper-atures are needed for the elm bark beetle to fly and spread the fungal infection.

As well as the more immediate consequences of this summer's weather extremes, all tree and shrub species will have been severely stressed by both this summer's conditions as well as last winter's excessive rainfall. Such stresses weaken a tree's ability to protect itself against pests and diseases and we are therefore likely to see more trees showing signs of problems in the months and years to come.

As a tree owner what should you do now? It is unlikely that trees affected by this summer's drought will become unsafe in the short term. Many will come back into leaf next spring if the tree has managed to set buds before losing this year's leaves. However, badly affected trees are likely to have sparse crowns next year and you may see gaps in the crown where individual branches or limbs have died back. You may also see fungal fruiting bodies or bleeding cankers start to appear on the tree in the future where stress has allowed pests and diseases to overwhelm the tree's natural defences.

In short however don't be tempted to have a tree felled immediately unless safety has been severely compromised. Many trees will hopefully recover providing future weather extremes allow them to. The main exception to this general advice though is if you have an ash tree that has lost much of its crown foliage. Chalara disease will almost certainly be part of the cause and, as such, the tree will quickly become brittle and likely to shed large branches or worse. If you are at all concerned about the safety of one of your trees you should seek advice from a qualified and insured arboricultural contractor or consultant – the Parish Council is unable to give detailed advice about your trees as we are not insured to do so.

Remember, if you do need to fell a tree, you must check with the Council to see whether permission is needed first.

Vince Carter, Parish Tree Warden

Royal Victoria Yacht Club



What a fabulous few months we have had both ashore and afloat at RVYC. There was plenty of on-the-water racing for all the sailing classes during the Summer and our annual Merrydown Regatta over the Bank Holiday weekend with superb racing and shoreside fun. We also hosted the Isle of Wight Youth Championships with some of our Under 18's travelling to other island clubs to enjoy their local sailing waters and facilities.

The Scow season came to an end with a gentle race up the Creek – this very successful group now has 12 regularly racing, and more still 'cruising' during our 'Open Sailing' time on a Saturday morning.

Dates for your diary

Spruce Up Day
Saturday 7th November
10am –12 noon
The more the merrier to help keep Fishbourne looking it's very best.

Full Parish Council Meetings 6.30pm 10th November RVYC, 8th December RVYC, 12th January Wightlink Meeting Room

Parish Surgeries 9:30 –10am 24th November RVYC, 26th January RVYC

Coffee Mornings 10.30 –12 noon 5th November RVYC, 3rd December RVYC, please note 7th January at The Fishbourne Inn

Short time of remembrance on Oak Tree Green 10.50am 8th November

December carols on Oak Tree Green arrive 6pm for 6.30, 20th December

Copy for next newsletter
15th January 2027

Particularly popular this year has been the paddling group, short organised excursions in kayaks, canoes and paddle boards have regularly taken place on Saturdays. No previous experience necessary!

Our radio-controlled racing group (RC Racing), continues to grow in numbers. Regular racing is usually on Tuesday and Saturday and will continue (weather permitting!), through to December. Even if you're not racing, it's fun to watch this very competitive group in action. From the smallest yachts, to our largest, our Cruiser members have enjoyed individual trips and group activities over the summer months, including jaunts to Beaulieu, Lymington, Chichester and the very popular West country.

Our pontoon has once again been very busy with visitors from around The Solent (and beyond), discovering our wonderful location and what a warm and welcoming club we are. We have hosted private parties and wakes and look to be a venue for several weddings and engagements in 2027. If any of the community are interested in holding private events – do contact our Rear Commodore House June at rch@rvyc.org.uk

Now that summer is over, the club is closed on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. There is a packed programme of events coming up through the winter months and our popular Wednesday pie suppers and winter talks have now begun – More information on all our talks and other open to all events, including firework night on Friday 6 November, are on our website – www.rvyc.org.uk. Club members enjoy regular social evenings on Fridays with food from our 'galley' and Sunday lunch roasts every week. Lastly, Club members get together for the annual club racing prizegiving on Sunday 13th December and our popular carols night (supported by members of the IoW Symphony Orchestra) on Friday 18th of December. The RVYC is an open to all Club with activities on and off the water throughout the year. You don't have to 'volunteer' to do duties, and actually you don't even have to get into a boat in order to enjoy being a member. You can join any time of year. Enjoy the Autumn months either ashore or afloat and hopefully see you at the RVYC.

Jane Barrett Bellingham (Commodore)

Autumn talks at The Royal Victoria Yacht Club *All Welcome.*

October 28th *Jenny Whelan*
Dogsail

November 4th *Colin Caldicott*
RVYC Quiz

November 11th *Mark Williams*
My life in Motorsport

November 18th *Adrian Robson*
Bring D'Angela Home

November 25th *Nick Pointing*
and Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

December 2nd *Colin Caldicott*
RVYC Quiz

December 9th *Ben Dugauquier*
Family Adventure on bike from Usbekistan and Japan

December 16th **TBA**

Talks Start at 19.30 Food Available Beforehand





The Parish Church of the Holy Cross Binstead

(in plurality with St Peter's Havenstreet, All Saints' Ryde and St John's Ryde)

Portsmouth Cathedral

In 2027 both the Diocese of Portsmouth and Portsmouth Cathedral will celebrate their 100th birthday. The diocese was created on 1st May 1927, carved out of Winchester Diocese, when the church of St Thomas in Old Portsmouth became a cathedral. Planned celebrations include a commemorative history brochure and exhibition in the spring, a Centenary Thanksgiving Service led by the Archbishop of Canterbury on Saturday 1st May, an outdoor family-friendly celebration for thousands on Governor's Green, Old Portsmouth led by the Bishop of Portsmouth on Sunday 18th July and a Festival Evensong on Monday 4th October using the 1927 liturgy. Other events, including on the Island, are also anticipated, so watch for more details as the centenary year gets closer.

Holy Cross Church is, of course, much older, probably having been founded in the twelfth century and having a register of incumbents dating back to the early fourteenth century. It is humbling to think of the many generations of Binstead people who have marked the significant moments in their lives in the church, or who have come to pray about their concerns, including about the Black Death, the Reformation, the Civil War and the two World Wars.

To come up to date, at the start of October we enjoyed a lively concert in the church by the Vectis Brass Band. Mid-October will see the return of Coffee, Chat and Church in a warm space on the third Saturday morning of each month – a chance to meet and talk with neighbours who you may not have previously come across. The annual Memorial Service for the departed takes place on the first Sunday of November, followed by the Remembrance Sunday service on 8th November and the Armistice Day service at the War Memorial at the top of Binstead Hill on 11th November. Advent Sunday is on 29th November and then we will all be busy preparing for and celebrating Christmas.

Our pastoral team continues to organise a Food and Fellowship lunch for those who live alone on the second Tuesday of each month in the Community Centre at Havenstrreet and to make regular monthly visits to Kite Hill, Hazel Lodge, Northbrooke House and Merrydale care homes as well as visiting a number of people who are unable to get to church in their own homes. If you know someone who might benefit from any of these services, please do let us know.

The weekly pew sheet on the website (www.holycrossbinstead.org.uk) provides up-to-date information about all the services and events that are happening. Additionally, remember that Holy Cross Church and its churchyard are open every day for visitors and for those who are seeking a quiet place in which to reflect or pray – or, indeed, just to pop in and read the notices about what's happening in the church.

Rodney Fox (Reader in the parishes of Binstead, Havenstreet and Ryde)



Fishbourne Wednesday walkers

We've been walking together on the second Wednesday of every month since the Spring and would be delighted to welcome anyone who enjoys a convivial stroll in good company with a coffee, cake – or something stronger – to look forward to after an hour or so's good walking and talking.

On Wednesday November 11th at 10 am – meet at the car park at Island Harbour.

On Wednesday December 9th at 10am – not yet decided – all suggestions very welcome!

For more details contact Carolyn Dugdale 07771 767897 or Ann Hodges 07779 349228

Village Carol Singing on the Oak Tree Green

Sunday 20th December
6pm for 6.30 start.
You are all warmly invited

Celebrate the season in traditional festive style with well-loved carols and live accompaniment from talented singers. Join in or simply listen, everyone is welcome to share the warm atmosphere and seasonal spirit.

Bring a flask of something warm, wrap up well, and remember your lanterns or torches. Carol sheets will be provided.

Afterwards, you're welcome to visit the 'Fishbourne' pub for mulled wine and stollen, along with the draw for its now-famous Christmas raffle.



Quarr Abbey

The operation of Quarr Abbey is very much dependent on the work of our staff and volunteers, for which we are truly grateful. The visitor is rarely aware of the enormity of the tasks involved to keep the life of a community of 13 monks in this place. Nor is there an awareness of the financial burdens that need to be contended with each year. We rely very much on donations and grants to enable this operation to keep going, supporting the monks to live our lives of prayer and work, to be a beacon of light to a world that has grown very dark with hopelessness. Recently we received an enormous boost, not directly financial, but a gift of love though the visit of many hearts who came here recently to spend a weekend with us, to work and pray. What was most unusual about this gift is the number of people who came to participate. On Saturday September 19 last month, about 300 volunteers arrived, members of the Church of the Latter Day Saints. They came from all over the country, though mainly from the Portsmouth area, from the very young to the elderly. All participated in a planned program of works to be completed in a day. Quarr has not seen so many workers all together since the building of the monastery, 1901 to 1914.

Needless to say this project involved intensive planning. Discussions began in 2019, but then had to be postponed because of the lock-down. Over the last two years, correspondences between Quarr and the LDS intensified. Our thanks are due especially to President James Grant and his fellow members of the LDS for permitting this plan to go ahead and for securing for us a substantial grant of £35k for the works. Our own staff at Quarr worked extremely hard over this time period too and participated in the works on the day. Wightlink Ferries were very generous in providing free travel both for cars and foot passengers coming from the mainland.

The scale of the works was most impressive: The Woodland Walk was cleared and renewed, including the building of a new hide; the railings around the front of the monastery were painted, following a week's preparation of scraping and sanding; the outside of the workshops were painted; the pathway around the pig area was repaired; fences were mended. All this work was carried out with tremendous coordination and great cheer. Their constant refrain to the monks was 'thank you so much for allowing us to come here and do these works'. We can thank Our Lord for bringing so many of his sons and daughters together like this in a bond of charity.

Fr. Brian Gerard

Quarr Abbey Art Gallery Exhibitions July to October

October 2026

Beatrice Lihou. 22 – 28 October All Day

Suzanne Whitmarsh
29 October – 4 November All Day

November 2026

Variety Pack
5 – 11 November All Day

Celebration of Wool
12 – 18 November All Day

Tilly Fox Art Studio
19 – 25 November All Day

Martin Swan
26 November – 2 December All Day

December 2026

I Love Wight – Christmas Collective
3 – 8 December 10am – 4pm

Christmas Market (Loren Thorn and Friends) 10 – 17 December

Do it while you still can!

Jean Bennett 22nd December 1926 – 19th August 2026

For those of us who only got to know Jean in the last years of her incredibly long life, those words really summed her up. From parachuting out of an aeroplane aged 90, to travelling to the Arctic Circle for a husky sledging experience at the age of 99, she was open to every opportunity and embraced new experiences with gusto. She had lived in her house in Firestone Glade since 1985, when she had moved to the Island with her husband Chris. They retired here with their two children and immersed themselves in Island life and, amongst other things, set up an American square dancing club and became judges in an international competition of Town Criers.

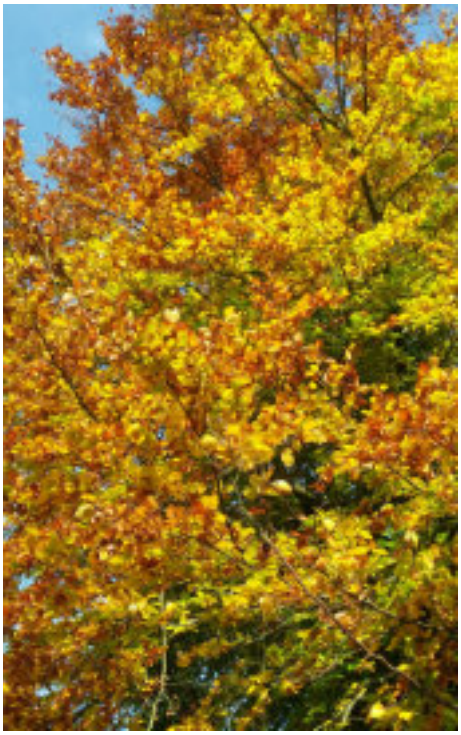
Jean loved travel, animals, and her garden and she was a keen student of calligraphy, remaining independent in her own home until a couple of months before she passed away. Anyone who met Jean was always impressed by her huge positivity and her capable nature. It is no surprise that she was heavily involved in the scouting movement in her younger years or that she had joined the Women's Junior Air Corps towards the end of the Second World War. Indeed, she had been evacuated from London twice during the war, once to Hertfordshire and once to Wales. All these experiences moulded her into the sociable adventurer that she became. Many of us had thought that she might celebrate her 100th birthday, but the fact that she had been on her last adventure in Norway and had really completed her bucket list means that she had lived her life to the full with no regrets. If ever there were a template for old age, Jean certainly showed us how it should be lived!

Cheryl Fontana



NATURAL LINKS

Nature Notes from Natural Links



Autumn Colours

The colour of our landscapes is transformed in autumn as the leaves of deciduous trees, bushes and plants turn to varying shades of yellow and red. Leaves are coloured by pigments, and during the spring and summer months the predominant pigment is green, from the chlorophyll that turns sunlight into energy. But before the leaves are shed, and trees in particular, pass into dormancy for the winter, the shorter days and lower temperatures destroy the chlorophyll, and the yellow and red pigments are revealed.

Dry, sunny autumnal weather usually produces redder leaves whereas colder conditions produces the yellow colouration. In the UK, some of the most vibrant trees in autumn are Field Maple, Beech (above left) and Oak and wild roses (above right) can show mixed vivid colours.



Dispersal from the Dens

November sees the peak period for young male foxes to leave the family group and search for vacant territories. Competition is fierce and if they cross the paths of well-established adults, fighting may occur if vocal threats do not suffice. Both male and female cubs may leave the dens within their first year of life, such is their desire to lead independent lives. With adults patrolling protecting territories and young males on the search for their own space, it is one of the most active times of the year in the Fox calendar and certainly one of the most vocal.



Winter Thrushes

Each autumn we see the arrival of tens of thousands of thrushes into the UK from Northern, Central and Eastern Europe and Iceland. Fieldfares and Redwings are sometimes referred to as winter thrushes and can often arrive together and stay together in large flocks between October to April.

The Fieldfare is the larger of the two, just slightly smaller than a Mistle Thrush, and is quite colourful with a grey head, chestnut brown back, speckled breast, grey rump and black tail. The bill is bright yellow with a black tip. Fieldfares are usually very vocal and have a very characteristic loud call which can be likened to a ‘chak-chak’ or ‘chuk-chuk’. Up to 750,000 individuals can reach the UK,





but they are also a very rare breeder here, with 1 or 2 pairs usually present in northern England or Scotland.

A Redwing is about the same size as a Song Thrush, though more slender and they appear much darker with dark brown upperparts. The creamy-white stripes above the eyes is very evident and the breast and belly is heavily streaked. They are named after the red markings on the flanks and underwings. They are much less vocal than Fieldfares, often heard only when in flight, giving a high-pitched ‘seep’ call. Although a very rare breeder in the UK, they can reach into double numbers in pairs in some years, mainly in Scotland.

Both Fieldfares and Redwings have a varied diet ranging from berries and fruit to insects and earthworms, which means they can often be seen feeding together either in trees/bushes or on the ground.

Shielded from the Winter

Still active into the autumn, it will not be long before adult Hawthorn Shield Bugs hibernate for the winter. It is the largest shield bug found in the UK at just under 2 cms long. They are also referred to as ‘stink bugs’ as when threatened they are able to exude a foul-smelling fluid to deter would-be predators Hawthorn Shield Bugs are widespread across southern England and have undergone an expansion northwards in recent decades.

