

PARISH NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026



***St Winifred's Church,
Branscombe
Holyford Mission Community
www.holyford.org***



ST WINIFRED'S CHURCH, BRANSCOMBE

FEBRUARY SERVICES

1 st	11.15am	Holy Communion
8 th	11.15am	Morning Prayer
15 th	11.15am	Holy Communion
23 rd	11.15am	Morning Prayer



There is no longer Evening Prayer on a Thursday in St Winifred's

For any questions regarding St Winifred's, please contact the
Churchwarden: Ross Willmington 680264

For the latest information across the Mission Community,
consult the website www.holyford.org if possible, or see the relevant
Church Noticeboards

HOLYFORD MISSION COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Holy Communion	Every Wednesday 10am St Andrew's ,Colyton
Morning Prayer	Weekdays Monday - Friday 8.30am St Andrew's Colyton
Transport to/From Church:	Please contact a churchwarden
Baptisms, Marriages & Funerals:	Call Administrator 01297 552307 or email office@holyford.org
Holy Communion at Home:	Please call a Minister, Reader or Churchwarden



New Year, New You

Ah, January. That magical time of year when we all collectively pretend we're going to survive on kale smoothies and run a marathon by March. According to BBC Radio 4, we spend a small fortune on gym memberships we'll use exactly three times. We buy expensive "fitness tech" that eventually just serves as a very sophisticated way to track how long we've been sitting on the sofa. But what if I told you there is a way to hit those resolutions without the eye watering monthly fees or the lycra induced indignity? So let's dismiss the thought of the young curate in lycra!

Enter the original wellness centre: St. Andrew's Church. If you're looking for a resolution that actually sticks, look no further than some good old fashioned spiritual exercise. It is significantly cheaper than a personal trainer, and let's be honest, the acoustics are far better.

Just think about it:

Cardio: Walking through our stunning countryside to get to the service. It's nature's treadmill, but with better views and significantly fewer mirrors to glimpse that unflattering lycra!

Respiratory Health: Nothing clears the lungs quite like belting out a few rounds of Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer (one of my favourites). It's basically high intensity interval training for your vocal cords. And if you're interested in joining the choir, speak to the Rector; he is incredibly approachable.

Mental Wellbeing: Swapping the "doom scrolling" on your phone for an hour of peace, reflection, and the warmth of a community that actually knows your name.

This brings me to a realistic resolution: the 'Plus One', which I will mention in sermons throughout the year. We often think inviting someone to church has to be a grand theological debate. It doesn't. In fact, the best way to ask is usually the simplest. Next time you're chatting with a neighbour who mentioned they're feeling a bit "New Year blue," try something like: "I'm heading to the service on Sunday, the singing is great for the soul, and the coffee and cake afterwards are even better. Would you like to wander down with me?"

It's low pressure, high reward! Inviting someone isn't about "recruiting"; it is about sharing a bit of the light and love of Christ that we are lucky enough to have. So, let's ditch the overpriced gym gear and lycra! Let's lace up our walking boots, fill our lungs with song, and maybe bring a Plus One (AKA friend) along for the journey. It's the only resolution that pays dividends in this life and the next!

Fr Marc Kastner



Church Floodlighting

If you would like to sponsor the lights, perhaps in memory of someone or to mark a special occasion, please contact Pat Ayles (680328). The suggested donation to church funds for a week of floodlighting is £15.00

**28th December 2025
to 3rd January 2026**

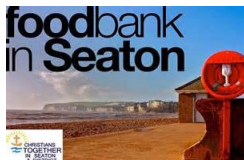
*In loving memory of Gillian Hunt.
From Becci, Daniel, Sarah and Ben
and families.*

**22nd to 28th
February**

*In loving memory of Ron and Dinah Denning
lovely parents and grandparents.
From Richard, Rachel, Lucy and Ellie.*

8th to 14th February

*Remembering Avril Cox on her birthday.
From the Cox Family.*



DONATIONS NEEDED

The Food Bank needs non perishable food, toiletries, washing powder or liquid etc. They particularly need: cold meat (eg ham/corned beef/Spam) *tinned/ jars of hot dogs* chilli con carne*long-life whole milk*baby wipes* toilet rolls*toiletries. Any Christmas foods imince pies,christmas chocolates crackers etc would be gratefully accepted

We are still happy to pick up any items from your house if that is easier. For financial gifts the bank details are available on the Mission Community website
Thanks again!!

Jill & Tony Johnson

Please support this worthwhile cause.

For anyone who might need to use the Foodbank please contact a member of the ministry team (see inside back cover)



A First Aid workshop has been booked at the Branoc Hall for Wednesday February 11th 2026. The 1 1/2 hour course will start at 6 p.m. and will be led by The British Red Cross.

This short workshop will mainly cover CPR and the use of a defibrillator but will also include some other basic first aid skills.

If you are interested in attending please get in touch with me as soon as possible to book your place as numbers are restricted to approximately 16 places.

There is no set charge for this workshop but a donation on the night to The Red Cross for taking the course would be much appreciated. Many thanks.

Look forward to hearing from you!

Jill Johnson

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February



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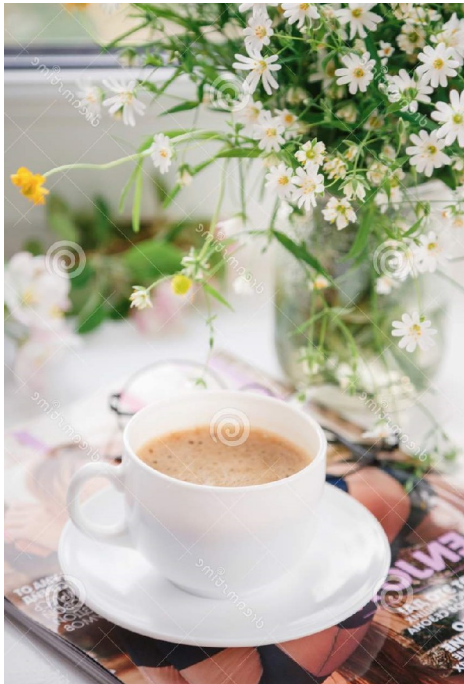


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CAKE AND CHAT

**Wednesday 18th February 2026
2pm-3:30pm in the Branoc hall.**

Open to all, come for a slice of cake and a cuppa. Have a chat with friends, and neighbours, old and new.

Thank you to Oakmead Cafe and Shop for their continued donations of milk each month..

Any help setting up and clearing of the tables and chairs is greatly appreciated.

If transport is required call either Andrea Bass on 01297 680447 or John Bass on 01297 680432.

We look forward to seeing you



I would like to thank you all for your support in my fundraising for my Camps International trip to Cambodia. I have now raised enough to go, and come back!

I am very excited to be going on the 12th July and will make sure I keep a diary so I can let you know all the amazing things I have done and experienced.

Thank you again,
Grace



BRANSCOMBE / WESTON DEFIBRILLATORS

Defibrillators are now kept at the following locations:

Branoc Hall – Branscombe

The Fountain Head - Branscombe

The Masons Arms – Branscombe

The Sea Shanty – Branscombe

Oakdown Caravan Park – Weston

These defibrillators are available for use at the above sites and within the villages of Branscombe and Weston



Branscombe Parish Council

For further information please visit:

<https://www.branscombe-pc.gov.uk/>

Clerk to the council: Nicky Ingarfield

clerk@branscombe-pc.gov.uk

Telephone: 07814 521538

Next Parish Council Meeting

Thursday 5th February – Branoc Hall Social Room 7pm

Nutrient and Energy Recovery Facility

Following the event at Branoc Hall on 14th November, the project team attended the Parish Council meeting on 4th December. This was an opportunity for the project team to further explain their plans and council members to ask questions.

Details of these discussions were recorded in the minutes of the meeting, which are now available on the Parish Council website (address above) - click on "Your council" and then "Minutes" (under "Documents") and the minutes of our 4th December meeting are listed there.

Alternatively, they are directly accessible via

<https://tinyurl.com/4tyndukm>.

The ongoing consultation that the developer was running via their planning consultant's website came to an end on Friday 16th January.

Development behind The Fountain Head

After investigating the status of this planning application for the last newsletter, of course everything moved forward—just after the newsletter went to press!! The revised S106 legal agreement for this development has now been signed, and the grant of full planning permission issued by EDDC (see planning updates on the next page).

Grit bins and Parish Maps

The icy weather at the start of January highlighted the need to check our grit bins in the Autumn in preparation for Winter. We'll make sure that's done properly in future. Many of you already check your nearby bin—we'll make sure none of our bins slip through. If you find a bin empty, please report it at DCC's website via

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/safe-travel/winter-travel/grit-bins/>

There's a map of the bin locations and a number of other maps on the Parish Council website under the "Village Info" menu. We can make printed copies available on request.

Mike Pellatt
Chair, BPC

Planned Road Closures/Delays

25 Feb—27 Feb Two BT Openreach closures for pole replacement:
 2026 Road from Higher Barn to the Old Cider House .
 09:30 – 15:30 Location – between the Old Cider House and road to Bulstone.
 Locksey's Lane. Location - Close to Wobble..

PLANNING

Four decisions from EDDC this month. One earlier refusal appealed.
 Three new applications (one already decided)

Date	App ref	Description	BPC Response	EDDC Decision
28/03/23	23/0557/MRES	Land Adjacent The Fountain Head Berry Hill Branscombe Reserved matters application for Details of layout, scale, appearance, access and landscaping	Noted conform- ance with outline permission, ex- pressed various concerns	Approved with condi- tions 26/11/25
27/06/23	23/1375/V106	Land Adjacent The Fountain Head Berry Hill Branscombe Application for the modification of S106 agreement to allow changes to a) the approved ecological mitigation require- ments, and b) the timing of the reserved matters viability assessment	Supported ecologi- cal mitigation. Unable to com- ment on timing of reserved matters viability assess- ment .	Legal agreement agreed and issued 21/11/25
13/09/24	24/1912/FUL	Maycoes Branscombe EX12 3DN Erection of Replacement Gabion Retaining Structure	Object – see EDDC planning portal for grounds.	Refused 28/08/25 Appeal filed 14/11/25
31/10/25	25/2236/FUL	Higher Bulstone Farm The Bulstone Brans- combe Seaton EX12 3BL Change of use of existing guest house/bed and breakfast accommodation (Use Class C1 Hotels) to form apartment hotel com- prising four units (Use Class C1 Hotels) and a separate dwellinghouse (Use Class C3 (Dwellinghouses)	Support	Approved 24/12/25
24/11/25	25/2381/FUL	Leigh Farm Weston Devon EX10 0PH Garage conversion into incidental use an- nexe.	Support	Awaiting decision
08/12/25	25/2270/FUL	Kingswood Branscombe EX12 3BP Retrospective application for the reconstruction of storm damaged timber garage with new brick built garage	Support	Approved 13/01/26
19/12/25	25/2551/COU	Crosswinds Farm Branscombe EX12 3BL Change of use of part of field to garden	Support	Awaiting decision

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BRANOC HALL – COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Hall Committee in July, and in the absence of any other applicants for the position, I was again appointed Chair. I have agreed to continue, but it is our intention to appoint my replacement as soon as possible and certainly before the next AGM.

I would also like to thank Sue Hawkins who has come forward to take on the Bookings Officer position, in a caretaker role, until we can find a longer-term applicant.

We are therefore eagerly seeking applicants for both the Chair and Bookings Officer positions.

Should you, or anyone you know, like to know more about either of these voluntary positions, I would be delighted to meet up and discuss exactly what is involved.

These are important positions in the Branoc Hall Committee which continues to provide a superb facility for the use of the people of Branscombe and wider afield.

I look forward to hearing from you.

01297 680777 or chairbranochall@gmail.com

David Lamb

Chair of Trustees.

BRANOC HALL



GUINNESS



2026

SIX NATIONS

ENGLAND Fixtures vs

ROUND 1

WALES Sat 7 Feb 4.40

ROUND 2

SCOTLAND Sat 14 Feb 4.40

ROUND 3

IRELAND Sat 21 Feb 2.10

ROUND 4

ITALY Sat 7 March 4.40

ROUND 5

FRANCE Sat 14 March 8.10



**BAR WILL OPEN 1 HOUR
BEFORE KO**

		Branoc Hall bookings – February 2026
Su	1 st	
M	2 nd	SCHOOL MAIN HALL 9.00 -10.00AM
Tu	3 rd	
W	4 th	POST OFFICE FOYER 2.00 - 3.00PM SNOOKER ROOM EVENING 6.00-10.00PM
Th	5 th	BPC MEETING SOCIAL ROOM 7.00-10.PM
Fri	6 th	
S	7 th	SOCIAL ROOM RUGBY ENGLAND V WALES K/O 16.40
Su	8 th	
M	9 th	SCHOOL MAIN HALL 9.00-10.00AM
Tu	10 th	MAIN HALL PRIVATE HIRE 2.00PM -6.00PM
W	11 th	POST OFFICE FOYER 2.00-3.00PM MAIN HALL 6.00 -10.00PM FIRST AID COURSE SNOOKER ROOM EVENING 6.00-10.00PM
Th	12 th	
F	13 th	
S	14 th	SOCIAL ROOM RUGBY ENGLAND V SCOTLAND K/O 16.40
Su	15 th	
M	16 th	SCHOOL MAIN HALL 9.00-10.00AM
Tu	17 th	
W	18 th	POST OFFICE FOYER 2.00-3.00PM CAKE AND CHAT MAIN HALL 2.00-4.00PM SNOOKER ROOM EVENING 6.00-10.00PM
Th	19 th	MAIN HALL ALL DAY 9.00 - 6.00PM PRIVATE BOOKING
F	20 th	MAIN HALL ALL DAY 9.00-6.00PM PRIVATE BOOKING
S	21 st	MAIN HALL ALL DAY 9.00-6.00PM PRIVATE BOOKING RUGBY ENGLAND V IRELAND K/O 14.10 PAVILION
Su	22 nd	MAIN HALL ALL DAY 9.00-6.00PM PRIVATE BOOKING
M	23 rd	SCHOOL MAIN HALL 9.00-10.00AM BRANSCOMBE PROJECT MAIN HALL/KITCHEN 6.00-10.00PM
Tu	24 th	
W	25 th	POST OFFICE FOYER 2.00-3.00PM SNOOKER ROOM EVENING 6.00-10.00PM
Th	26 th	MAIN HALL PRIVATE 2.00-6.00PM PRIVATE BOOKING
F	27 th	
S	28 th	

To book the hall please contact Sue Hawkins 01297 680466

**THE BRANSCOMBE PROJECT
WINTER TALKS - BOOK LAUNCH - EXHIBITION**

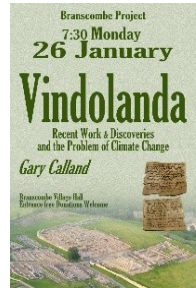
January 26

Monday 7.30

VINDOLANDA

Gary Calland

Recent Work and Discoveries and the Problem of Climate Change
We had a brilliant talk on Vindolanda last year but it was blowing a hooley that night and so the audience was small. We have asked for another talk, including a discussion of how they're tackling, in the face of climate change, the fact that peat is drying out and the Roman artefacts are disappearing.



February 23

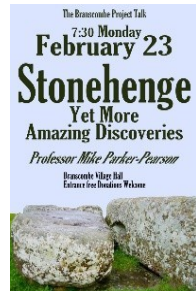
Monday 7:30

STONEHENGE

Yet More Amazing Discoveries

Mike Parker-Pearson

Mike promises that, yet again, we will be amongst the first to hear of new discoveries at Stonehenge and further afield



March 23

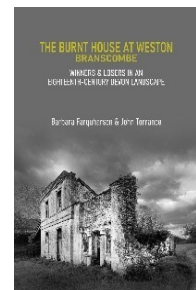
Monday 7.30

THE BURNT HOUSE AT WESTON

Winners and Losers in an Eighteenth-century Devon Landscape

Launch of Barbara Farquharson and John Torrance's book

A bit of a talk, by Barbara, and, if things go according to plan, a bit of a drama doc



THE BRANSCOMBE PROJECT WINTER TALKS#

2026 SATURDAY March 28 & SUNDAY March 29 10am-5pm

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE

THIRTY YEARS OF THE BRANSCOMBE PROJECT

Exhibition Boards - Interactive Favourite Places - WW2 Video -

Talking Head Video - Cream Teas



S.O.S— CAN YOU HELP!!

Barbara: hello everyone! Happy New Year! We're beginning to turn our attention to March when we'll be celebrating 30 years of the Branscombe Project. See above. We thought it'd be nice to have some memory boards. So we would like you to cast your minds back and let us know:



What were your **favourite exhibitions**, and why?

Your favourite **drama-documentaries**, and why?

Your favourite **books** ...

Your favourite **walks** ...

Your favourite **talks** ...

And anything else that I've forgotten ..

My email address is b.bender@zen.co.uk

Thank you





THE PACHA POSSE

Another year has been and gone and I have now officially been an alpaca keeper for 3 years and my little herd has increased from 5 to 9. I think its probably one of the best decisions I've made, they are such lovely gentle creatures, not that clever but bags of personality and all very different.



Christmas has also finished which means of course it's time for the alpacas Christmas treat – a discarded Christmas tree or two. Many thanks to those who have delivered or offered a tree – they really have been gratefully received. I would just like to say, that although you may be able to see the boys in the background looking sad they did eventually get their own tree but just like children, they still wanted the girls tree because it was better than theirs – in their imagination, although not helped by what looks like a smirk plastered across Coca's face.

They are still happily munching through a helping of pumpkin and apple every morning with breakfast, although the apples are now very nearly gone and I can't believe how long the windfalls lasted. The grass is still relatively good but not much of it but the hay is going down well which means, so far, I haven't really needed to buy any additional food so they are proving quite economical to run so far this winter. That said I do have an open bag of short cut grass in the food room and as I was feeding the girls I left the door open only to turn around to find Jester's head fully in the bag making contented munching noises! It's got to be said he did try the "who me" look after I caught him, but he didn't appreciate it was quite obvious with the amount of food and a green tinge all round his muzzle!



It was also Vitamin D time for the herd and quite amazingly we seem to have got it down to a fine art – this is the first time that not a single drop got spat back at anyone or generally smeared around a face. Bonus.

I have also finally sent off the next batch of floss to be processed, and I am really looking forward to getting it back as it will include the first shearing from Inti, this should be some of the softest best quality yarn I have had so I am really looking forward to making something with it. I have really enjoyed weaving scarves and fabric with my first batch of spun floss, most of my creations this year were presents for friends and family this Christmas and I am happy to report everyone seemed to appreciate their gifts. I also had 1 commission this year which was lovely as weaving is still relatively new to me, but all parties were happy with the result and proceeds are going to charity so it's a win-win.



THE SEA SHANTY BEACH CAFÉ

The cafe is open 9.00am to 3.30pm Thursday to Sunday

Breakfast menu is served from 9.00am

Last order - 11.15am Thursday and Friday, 11.00am Saturday and Sunday

Lunch menu is served from 12.00pm to 2.30pm

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National Trust Countryside Update

A Combe with a View

It's a little-known fact that Brian May, guitar-toting champion of the humble badger, is an ardent fan of certain birds, one of which is the yellowhammer. So besotted is the frizzy rocker with this citrusy wonder, that he once penned a song about the time he spent eagerly anticipating the descent of one onto his feeder, propped up next to one of Anita's gnomes. However, he got short shrift from the others in the group when it came time to put their upcoming album together. Freddie in particular was too busy to give Bri much attention; he was spending all his time getting Roger Taylor to realise that not everyone shared his interest in dentistry-over-the-airwaves, and *Radio Gargle* might not be the best choice of title for the lead single. So Brian wearily went back to the drawing board, changing *Yellowhammer to Fall*, to the slightly less esoteric *Hammer to Fall*.



Before Works

This brightly-befeathered member of the bunting clan is our subject today, because it has recently been given a bit of a house makeover courtesy of our redoubtable rangers, over on Salcombe Hill. Next time

you go for a stomp up there, head out from the car park to the cliffs, and you'll see over towards Sidmouth that an even more wondrous vista than usual has been revealed. This is due to the gorse cutback that's been undertaken, in a bid to control the growth and encourage other plant life to thrive, increasing the range of food on offer to the birds that are currently inhabiting the area, including, of course, the good old



After works



Strimming

yellowhammer. Adhering to best environmental practice, the rangers do this kind of work on a rotational basis, allowing any animals who live among the gorse to escape to neighbouring patches. And they always avoid nesting season as a matter of gorse er course.

Right about now is an excellent time to catch these lemon-hued lifters in the flesh around Salcombe Hill. They often tend to winter in these parts, owing to the abundance of oily seeds, a delicacy they profess a huge liking for. Nettle, dock, knotgrass and chickweed are singularly tasty treats as far as they're concerned, and they're partial to a bit of wheat and oats too. Insects can breathe a sigh of relief for the moment, as they tend not to feature on the menu until the breeding season, when chicks get flies, beetles and spiders mixed in with their Cow & Gate.

Yellowhammers are remarkable not just for their vivid lemon colour scheme, but also for their song, which is as bright as their plumage. It's a very distinctive rattle followed by a sustained cheep. More poetic souls than I have given it the following translation:

A little bit of bread and no cheeeeeeeeeeeese

I've listened to many yellowhammers, both in person and online (the evenings can be very long in my house) and I've yet to really hear anything like the above, but perhaps I'm not listening closely enough. In common with a lot of life's baffling nonsenses, it's Enid Blyton we can blame for the widespread uptake of this anthropomorphised utterance, including it in her poem *The Yellow-hammer* and *Five Go Off in a Caravan* (I blame the lack of decent washing facilities).

The Yellowhammer's cultural talonprint doesn't end there. No less a literary luminary than Robert Burns penned *The Yellow, Yellow Yorlin* about our bird of the moment, although it was less about the yellowhammer as such and more just an excuse to put some thinly-disguised saucy intentions regarding a pretty maid down on paper. Meanwhile, the poet John Clare got a bit of a theme going with *The Yellowhammer*, *The Yellowhammer's Nest*, and finally *The Yellowhammer Strikes Back*.

Lastly, and perhaps most impressively, it's thought that none other than Beethoven was inspired by the song of the yellowhammer, so that the musical phrasing of the little chap (the bird, not Ludwig van B) can be heard in the Fourth Piano Concerto, two piano sonatas, and perhaps even in the opening of the Fifth Symphony. All of which makes it about as musically impactful as any modestly-sized critter in history (although Vaughan-Williams' lark might raise a contesting chirrup). It certainly dwarfs Gerry and the Pacemakers' tale about a furry fella they knew over on the Wirral. As it happened, *Ferret Across the Mersey* had to be renamed in any case. See Brian? It's not just you.

If you'd like to get involved in our work out in the countryside, or perhaps help us run Manor Mill or assist with guided walks, do get in touch with me at m.jenningswright@nationaltrust.org.uk or 01297 680507.

Martin Jennings-Wright
Volunteering and Community Officer

Photos :Copyright Emily Lancaster and NT



Community
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Branscombe Parish Directory

Rector	Revd Dr. Steven Martin	553180 rector@hollyford.org
Assistant Curate	Revd Marc Kastner	642061 curate@hollyford.org
Hon. Assistant Priests	Revd Nigel Freathy	07519978319
	Revd Canon Colin Preece	552154
	Revd Canon Karen Curnock	07460 244475
	Revd Ghislaine Shortland	priest@hollyford.org
	Revd Ann Stuckey	07473 664328
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Readers	Dr Charles Hill	07709 980640
Youth and Family Worker	Vacant	youth@hollyford.org
Organist	Dr Geoff Butler	21375
Church Secretary	Sue Hawkins	680466
Church Treasurer	Pat Ayles	680328
Friends of St Winifred's	Emma Cox, Chairman	680392
Bells	John Bass	680432
Mission Community Office	Caz Jefferies	552307
	Admin Tues,Thurs Friday 9.30 – 1.30pm	office@hollyford.org
Church Flowers	Sallie Herniman	553482
Branoc Hall Bookings	Sue Hawkins	680466
Web		www.hollyford.org



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The Oakdown Family



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Email: enquiries@oakdown.co.uk

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