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Church and Community News



February
2026

The monthly magazine of
St Blasius Old Parish Church

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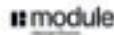
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Shanklin & District History Society



Meetings with a speaker and archive display are held at the Falcon Cross Hall (next door to the library) on the first Thursday of the month at 7.25

Visitors are welcome

For details of talks and other events please see our website
shanklinhistory.net



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To find out what and where to donate or to make a financial donation, please visit our website:

isleofwight.foodbank.org.uk

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rebecca@embracingage.org.uk or Tel. No 07419338066



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St. Blasius Old Parish Church Magazine

**SHARING GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL
Worshipping, Serving, Growing
TOGETHER**

— CHURCH SERVICES —

We warmly invite you to join us - See details on Page 3

For enquiries relating to Banns and Marriage services, Baptisms and Funerals
please contact: Revd. Tony Richards (details below)

Local Minister:	Revd. Tony Richards.	Tel: 863607
Curate:	Revd. Karen Crowhurst	Tel: 867727
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Magazine Advertising:	Miss. Pam Dana.	Tel: 863189
Electoral Roll Secretary:	Mrs Annette Richards	Tel: 863607
Children's Society:	Mrs. Charlotte Coppin	Tel: 07724 852024

Cost of Magazine: £1.00 DONATION

St Blasius Old Parish Church, Church Road, Shanklin, PO37 6QY

NEW website: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16793



Thought for the Month

February can feel like a dull month. Christmas is well and truly over, but spring can still feel a long way off. If we are lucky, we can enjoy bright, crisp days, but so often the days that confront us are cold, cloudy, wet, often windy, and also dark, as night still falls early. It is a month to look for light and hope.

Falling exactly forty days after Christmas, Candlemas (or the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary) is celebrated on 2nd February. Before the 19th century Candlemas was observed as the official end of Christmas. The date itself was a great feast day and is so called because candles intended to be used in churches in the coming year would be blessed on that day. There were also candlelit processions in honour of the feast. If you hate to say goodbye to your Christmas decorations in early January, next year you might consider following the example of our ancestors and leaving your festive decorations up until Candlemas instead of removing them on Twelfth Night.

February 2nd also marks the midpoint of winter, between the shortest day on 21st December and the spring equinox on 20th March, and this perhaps suggests the ancient farming roots of festivities on the day. It was also a day when traditionally the weather for the rest of the winter could be predicted. Cold and bright weather on the day was said to foretell a cold end to the winter, while mild and wet weather was said to predict a gentler transition into spring.

An alternative name for the day was “Badgers’ Day”, as it was believed in some parts of England (and more widely across Europe) that badgers would wake up on that day, go to the entrance of their sett and their actions would predict the weather ahead. If it was sunny, and they could see the shadow of their tail on the ground, then they would go back to sleep as it was a sure sign more cold weather was coming.

But to return to Candlemas, why do we burn candles in church at all? Judaism and other religions in the ancient world used candles in symbolic ways, but they were also an important light source in ancient times. This is probably how the practice of bringing, or lighting, a candle started.

But for Christians, candles in church also symbolise Jesus Christ as the "light of the world". John's gospel begins with a reference to Jesus as this light: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.....In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it", or again in John 8:12: "When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'."

So when we see a lighted candle in church, or light one ourselves when we are praying, we understand that this light represents guidance, hope, and the presence of God among believers.

Reverend Karen Crowhurst

**We thank you, Lord, for candles in the dark,
glimmers of hope in times of despair,
words of love in times of hate,
drops of water in the desert,
promises of light at the end of dark tunnels,
for warmth, for hope, for love.**

Amen.



OUR CHURCH SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

*You are warmly invited to join us for
our Sunday Worship
at 10.15am unless otherwise stated*



Sunday 1st February - PATRONAL FESTIVAL Parish Eucharist

Reverend Karen Crowhurst

Sunday 8th February - Second Sunday before Lent Matins

Reverend Karen Crowhurst

Monday 9th February 10.30am Dementia-Friendly Service

Reverend Karen Crowhurst

Sunday 15th February - Sunday next before Lent Parish Eucharist

(To be confirmed)

Wednesday 18th February - ASH WEDNESDAY 3.00pm Service for Ash Wednesday

Reverend Karen Crowhurst

Sunday 22nd February - First Sunday of Lent Parish Eucharist

Reverend Karen Crowhurst

Christians Working Together in the Bay

Warmly invite you to join them on Sunday evenings in a different Church each week.

Details will be published in the weekly newsletter.

**Shared
Worship**
at 5.00pm

PRAYERS FOR THE MONTH
The Sunday and Special Collects for this month
(with endings omitted)

1st February - The Feast of St Blasius

Hear, O Lord, the prayers of your people,
as we remember and give thanks for the witness of your servant St Blasius,
who gave his life for the sake of the Gospel;
grant that we may rejoice in your peace in this present life,
and come to share in the life of your Heavenly Kingdom...

8th February - Second Sunday before Lent

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and
made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children...

15th February - Sunday next before Lent

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory...

18th February - Ash Wednesday

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts
that we, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness...
one God, now and for ever.

22nd February – First Sunday of Lent

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save...

FESTIVALS IN FEBRUARY

From the Church of England Calendar

1 Brigid, Abbess of Kildare, c.525

2 The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)

3 *Anskar, Archbishop of Hamburg, Missionary in Denmark and Sweden, 865*

3 *St Blasius, Bishop of Sebaste, Martyr, 316*

4 Gilbert of Sempringham, Founder of the Gilbertine Order, 1189

6 The Martyrs of Japan, 1597

10 Scholastica, sister of Benedict, Abbess of Plombariola, c.543

14 *Cyril and Methodius, Missionaries to the Slavs, 869 and 885*

14 Valentine, Martyr at Rome, c.269

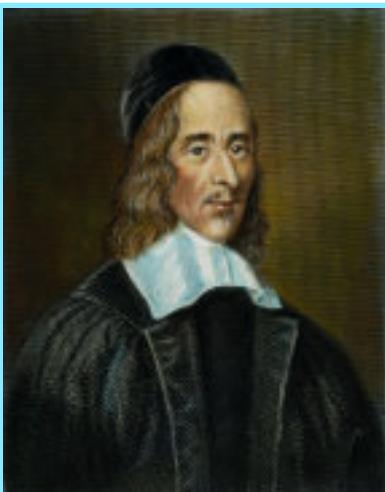
15 Sigfrid, Bishop, Apostle of Sweden, 1045

15 Thomas Bray, Priest, Founder of the SPCK and the SPG, 1730

17 *Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda, Martyr, 1977*

23 *Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, Martyr, c.155*

27 *George Herbert, Priest, Poet, 1633*



Sharing faith across the generations...

Throughout the year, the Church of England lectionary invites us to remember men and women of faith who have helped and inspired others through the example of their life and faith. George Herbert is remembered on 27th February each year. Throughout his life, he wrote numerous hymns and poems, which have resonated in the lives of many across the generations.

George Herbert (1593 – 1633)

Many people know of George Herbert only through his popular and inspiring Christian hymns - *'Let all the World in Every Corner Sing'*, *'Teach me, my God and King'*, and *'King of Glory, King of Peace'*. These hymns represent just three of the poems from his much-admired collection of poetry, *The Temple*, which was published posthumously in 1633. From a young age, George Herbert wrote his devotional and religious poetry in a style that has given them a wide appeal to those both inside and outside the Anglican Church and the Christian faith.

George Herbert struggled for most of his life with conflicting desires. On the one hand, he was a gifted scholar, who shone at school and university and for whom a glittering political career seemed to beckon. On the other, guided by his mother, he was conscious of a constant leaning towards a calling to ordination as a priest. The persistent tension of this inner turmoil was the source and inspiration of much of his poetry.

It was not until the age of 36, after considerable soul searching, that he resolved his innermost doubts. He gave up any aspirations to public life, embraced the priesthood and accepted the living of the small, rural parish of Fuggleston-cum-Bemerton in Wiltshire. It was there that he found inner peace at last, serving God and the local community, and there that his poetic talent was able to flourish. Sadly, this tranquillity lasted for only three years, brought to an end by his early death just before his 40th birthday.

(Biography from www.georgeherbert.org.uk)

Collect Prayer from the Church of England, Common Worship

King of glory, king of peace,
who called your servant George Herbert
from the pursuit of worldly honours
to be a priest in the temple of his God and king:
grant us also the grace to offer ourselves
with singleness of heart in humble obedience to your service;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

The Elixir

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee.

Not rudely, as a beast,
To run into action;
But still to make Thee prepossess,
And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye,
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heav'n esp'y.

All may of Thee partake;
Nothing can be so mean
Which with his tincture (for Thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

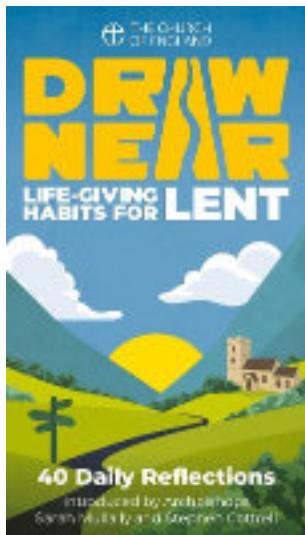
This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told.

George Herbert

Are you ready for Lent?

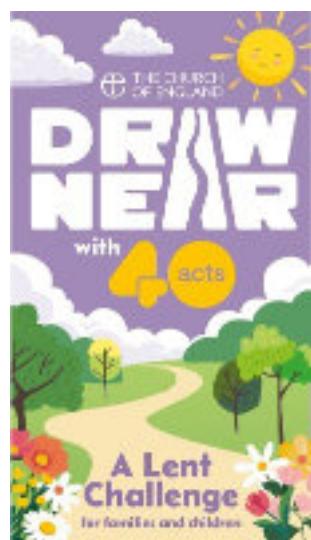
Lent starts early this year. Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of the season of preparation for Easter, is Wednesday 18th February. The Church of England has published Lent resources to help both adults and families with children to explore ways of drawing nearer to God in the way we live our lives. These are available to buy online from Church House Bookshop.

Find out more at: www.cofe.io/DrawNear



Draw Near is the official Church of England booklet for Lent 2026. It invites you to develop a rhythm of life that will help you grow as a disciple of Christ day by day, especially as we prepare to celebrate the mystery of God's saving love at Easter. Each week a different contributor explores an activity central to Christian discipleship: worship, prayer, Scripture, communion, service to others and sharing the good news. For each day of Lent it offers daily Bible readings, images, short reflections, prayers and practical responses to help you draw near to God this Lent and beyond.

The Draw Near booklet for families and children encourages children, families, schools and church groups to build a habit of generosity with the help of 40acts (brought to you by Stewardship). Many people choose to "give something up" for Lent. Draw Near with 40acts invites you to turn that on its head: give things away, give time, give encouragement, and discover the joy of walking in generosity. As well as an act of generosity, each day also offers a simple Bible verse, reflection and prayer ideal for families, children, school and church groups to do together.



Book Review

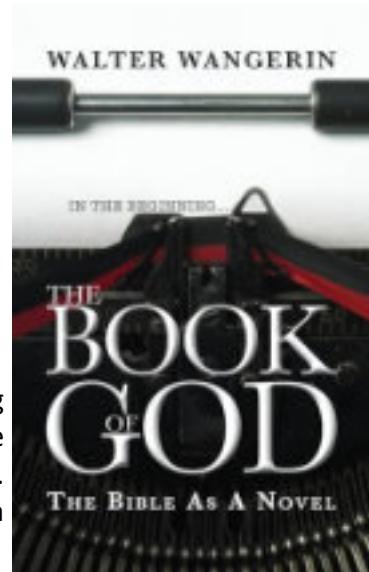
Title: **The Book of God -
The Bible as a Novel**

Author: Walter Wangerin

Publisher: Lion Books

ISBN: 978-0-7459-5539-1

This Christmas, I was given an interesting looking book by a friend. When I saw the title, I did have some doubts about what it would be like to read. The title was 'The Book of God-The Bible as a novel'.



Although, the book is a re-telling of many parts of the Bible, it doesn't include the entire Bible. After a short preface about creation, the narrative begins with the story of Abraham and Sarah. It is still 635 pages...

The author cleverly brings to life many less well-known parts of the Bible. One of the main strengths of this book is how it's divided into eight sections. The titles of these sections help to explain how the various different books of the Bible can be seen together in an historical context: The Ancestors, The Covenant, The wars of the Lord, Kings, Prophets, Letters from Exile, The Yearning and The Messiah. The book isn't really an alternative to reading The Bible. There are certainly lots of examples of when the authors imagination has gone far beyond just retelling the Gospel accounts. This is very clear in the imagined description of Anne and Joachim searching for their daughter, Mary, when she has run away to visit her Aunt Elizabeth. However, it is interesting to read a section of the book and then to read the same passages from The Bible.

When we read the Bible, we do need to bear in mind that it was written a long time ago and that people then had very different views and understandings of the world. The author has used his imagination to create some additional scenes that might be helpful when thinking about the characters and perhaps understanding their actions. Reading 'The Bible as a Novel' can help to 'set the scene' of a particular Bible passage in a creative way and so increase our understanding. It is a little like watching the film of a classic novel, knowing that there will have been 'artistic licence' and a few variations and additions.

**St. Blasius Church Branch
of The Mothers' Union**

On 23rd February, we are off to All Saints' Church in Newchurch to see the beautiful display of snowdrops that annually fill the churchyard. Afterwards, we'll drive to Thompson's Nursery to warm up with a cup of tea.

Our Mothers' Union members enjoyed a busy schedule recently. Our meeting on 26th January was at The Fighting Cocks, Arreton to enjoy a post-Christmas lunch.

The All-Island Advent Service took place at St Blasius Church on 3rd December, when we welcomed MU members from branches around the Island together with our Diocesan President, Felicity Keeping. The Revd. Karen Crowhurst kindly led us in a time of worship, including Holy Communion and reflection in preparation for the significance of the forthcoming season. The afternoon culminated with a delicious, shared lunch – and of course, plenty of mince pies!

The 5th of December saw members tucking into delicious mince pies again, and mulled wine at Suzanne's home. We not only enjoyed eating the pies, but

beforehand we taste-tested them: shop bought versus home-made! We also thoroughly enjoyed listening to each other read Christmas poems: some were amusing, others echoed the arrival of Christ.

In late November we spent a thought-provoking afternoon with the Revd. Karen Crowhurst, who led us through an Advent Reflection focusing on the plight of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The conversations that followed raised some thought-provoking questions.

October saw members busily engaged in filling dainty teacups and saucers with a wonderful selection of flowers and foliage.



Our past visits and speakers were reviewed and suggestions for our 2026 programme were discussed.

If you would like to know more about the work of the Mothers' Union locally and world-wide, please go to: www.mothersunion.org.

Should you be interested in joining the St. Blasius Mothers' Union, do not hesitate in contacting Suzanne Cook on 07484 714892. We are always pleased to welcome new members.

Suzanne V Cook, MU Branch Leader, Shanklin

Diversity is not a barrier, it's a bridge. Our unique traits are puzzle pieces that connect us, revealing how we complement one another in life's grand picture. Embrace your differences, because they light the path to deeper connections.

“Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realize our need of one another.”

Desmond Tutu

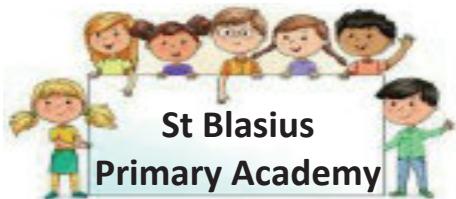
Pause 4 Thought

The Prayer of Saint Columba

Alone with none but thee my God,
I journey on my way.
What need I fear when thou art near,
O king of night and day?
More safe am I within thy hand
Than if a host did round me stand.

St. Columba
Irish Abbot and Missionary 521 - 597

Copy Deadline for February Magazine - Wednesday 11th February



Extracts from Recent Newsletters

By Jemma Powell, Assistant Principal

A Wonderful Start to the New Year!

We are thrilled to share that the children have returned to school with incredible enthusiasm and positivity. Their focus, energy, and readiness to learn have truly impressed us—what a fantastic way to begin 2026! *“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”* – William Butler Yeats.

Worship in the first week of term, was based on John’s message in the Gospel that shares with us that God’s promise had arrived, His light and glory would shine out for all to see. Because of Jesus, we can see the glory of God and step into a new beginning at the start of this new term. We shared our hopes, dreams and challenges for the new year ahead. The Scripture John 1:1-8 was shared with the children to help support this.

Our Year 6 pupils have made a fabulous start to their swimming sessions. Their determination and progress in the pool have been outstanding, and we couldn’t be prouder of their efforts.

Year 6 enjoyed an exciting trip to Gosport, where they took part in an immersive workshop experience. The day was packed with hands-on learning and teamwork, and the children represented our school brilliantly throughout.

Our school therapy dog, Skye, has been spending more time visiting each of the classes. She is growing in confidence every day and bringing lots of smiles to the children and staff alike.

Year 5 welcomed the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) to class for a session on Low Mood Awareness. The children found the activities both useful and supportive, helping them to understand strategies for wellbeing.

We were proud to share videos of our recent promotional work with our children this week, showcasing the vibrant learning and community spirit that makes us so proud to be part of the St Blasius family. These will be shared with you soon... watch this space!

A recent Quote of the Week: *“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”* – Nelson Mandela.

Jemma Powell



We had a fabulous talk from Rachel Richards at our January monthly meeting. Rachel was talking about Pioneering women through history. Amazing, brave and incredible women who changed history and the lives of women today. For example, Violet Markham. (See below).

We heard about women who took opportunities and created space for themselves when the opportunity really didn't exist. The first women in parliament who stepped in when their husbands could no longer serve as an MP. Women who risked their lives for other women's rights. Women we all felt an affinity with and inspired by. But we also heard about how women were shut down, accused of being too weak and unintelligent to be in positions of leadership. How women were seen as troublesome when challenging the decisions made about them and their lives.

We were reminded of the shocking similarities to today, where police abused women in the 1920s who peacefully protested, and how this was echoed just a few years ago with the peaceful march on Clapham common for Sarah Everard.

How women in the suffrage movement were forced to have treatment against their will, unable to have agency over their own bodies, reflecting the current abuse of women's reproductive rights and freedom to live an unrestricted life in more and more parts of the world.

We left inspired and keen to hear more from Rachel. Her subject a perfect fit for a group of Independent Women, who despite awful weather turned out on mass to celebrate the women we will do our best to emulate in our lives.

If you are interested in joining us, do contact us on our Facebook page.

Liz Carroll

Violet Markham (1872 - 1959), was a writer, social reformer and public administrator. She wrote...

"We believe that men and women are different – not similar – beings, with talents that are complementary, not identical, and that they therefore ought to have different shares in the management of the State, that they severally compose."

In 1937 she was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Unemployment Assistance Board, a position which, according to her obituary in *The Times*, was "probably the most important administrative post up to that time that had been held by a woman."



February

by Francis Brett Young (1884-1954)

**The robin on my lawn
He was the first to tell
How, in the frozen dawn,
This miracle befell,
Waking the meadows white
With hoar, the iron road
Agleam with splintered light,
And ice where water flowed:
Till, when the low sun drank
Those milky mists that cloak
Hanger and hollied bank,
The winter world awoke
To hear the feeble bleat
Of lambs on downland farms:
A blackbird whistled sweet;
Old beeches moved their arms
Into a mellow haze
Aerial, newly-born:
And I, alone, agaze,
Stood waiting for the thorn
To break in blossom white,
Or burst in a green flame....
So, in a single night,
Fair February came,
Bidding my lips to sing
Or whisper their surprise,
With all the joy of spring
And morning in her eyes.**

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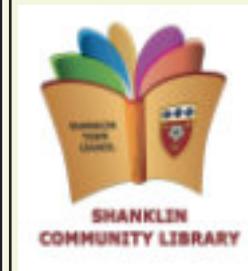
shanklinhydesecretary@gmail.com

**Meetings held at the
The Catholic Church Hall
Atherley Road
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second **Tuesday** of each month

@7.30 pm

(No meeting in August)



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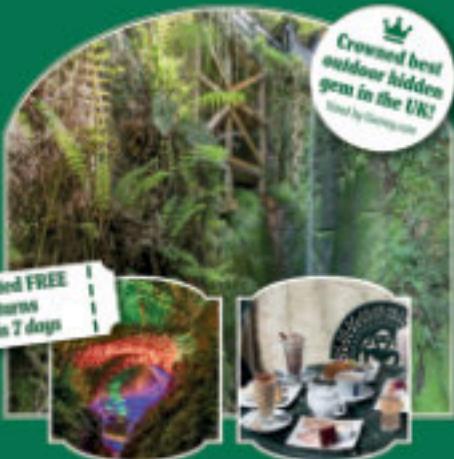


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An Alzheimer Café is a meeting place that gives informal education and advice about dementia and offers guidance and signposting to other services. We welcome people with dementia, their families, carers, professionals, and people with an interest in dementia.

EAST COWES

1st Tuesday of the month
2PM - 4PM
Town Hall, York Avenue
East Cowes
PO32 6RU

COWES

2nd Weds of the month
2PM - 4PM
Football Club
Reynolds Close
(off Park Road)
PO31 7NT

TOTLAND

3rd Weds of the month
2PM - 4PM
St Saviour's
Holy Family Centre
Weston Lane
Totland
PO39 0HE

SANDOWN

4th Weds of the month
2PM - 4PM
The Broadway Centre
1 Broadway, Sandown
PO36 9GG

NEWPORT

Last Thurs of the month
6PM - 8PM
Newclose County Cricket
Ground
Blackwater Road, Newport
PO30 3BE

RYDE

1st Weds of the month
11.30PM - 1.30PM
All Saints Church Hall
Queens Road
Ryde
PO33 3BG

ACE7, an Alzheimer Café for people with young-onset dementia (age 65 and younger) runs on 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10AM - 12PM at Parklands Park Road, Cowes, PO31 7LZ

✉ www.alzheimercafelow.org.uk
✉ info@alzheimercafelow.org.uk
✆ 01983 220200

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