



**Sight  
FOR WIGHT**

# **Newsletter**

**Spring 2026**

**Your Local  
Sight Loss Charity**

***Focus on Trustee Paul***

***Short Story Writing Competition Award  
Ceremony***

***Be My Eyes - TESCO***

***Revolutionary Eye Injection***

***Wight Sense Update***

***Terry's Ten Teasers***

***Dress for Less***

***Plus much more***

**SCAN &  
LISTEN**



**Millbrooke House, 137 Carisbrooke Road,  
Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1DD**

**Charity number 1149415  
Company Number 06240404**



# Chair Report



A very warm welcome to our latest Newsletter.

As usual, there are many member activities that are there for you to enjoy. There are three new activities on offer, archery, wall rock climbing and tomahawk throwing so make sure you sign up if you are interested.



The Wight Sense Team report is always full of information and they will give advice or help with any sight or hearing concerns you may have.

We are very appreciative of the fact that TESCO has joined the Be My Eyes Scheme.

The Christmas Raffle raised an astonishing amount of money and our thanks go to all those who gave raffle prizes, knitted items or sold them for us. Everyone was so generous and the raffle prizes, organised by Susan, looked amazing. Our fundraising efforts were also boosted by the Short Story Writing Competition; it was such an enjoyable evening and the stories were amazing. Our thanks go to Chris who organised the event.

Jasmine's recent visit to St Francis Primary in Ventnor as our education manager, with her team of volunteers, was very successful. This is due to providing eye health in such an entertaining and informative way. Thank you to you all!

Dress for Less is such a lovely dress agency, managed by Debbie and Tracey, helped by a wonderful team of volunteers. Do make sure you visit when next in Newport.

My thanks, as always, to our wonderful staff, volunteers and trustees, plus a warm welcome to our newest trustee, Paul.

None of the support we offer would be possible without you all; my grateful thanks.

*Sue* Chair of Trustees



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# CEO Update



Happy New Year from Sight for Wight!

As we begin the new year, I want to take a moment to reflect on where we are as an organisation and to look ahead with focus and optimism. Since starting in July last year, it has been a real privilege to get to know our members, staff, and volunteers, and to see the strength of commitment, care, and passion that underpins everything we do. Thank you again for the welcome I have received and for the continued trust and support you show to the Charity.



We enter this year in a positive position, with several important projects already well underway. Our Sensory Garden is now close to completion and will soon offer a calm, accessible outdoor space designed to support wellbeing, connection, and sensory engagement. This development reflects our commitment to creating environments that are practical, inclusive, and genuinely beneficial for people living with sensory loss.

We are also progressing plans to develop our activity room into a more open and flexible conference and community space. This work is about more than improving the building; it is about opening our doors wider. By creating a space that is adaptable and welcoming, we hope to bring more people into the Charity, raise awareness of sensory loss, and ensure our facilities meet the needs of our members while supporting future collaboration with partners and community groups. It is an important step in making the building more inclusive and fit for the future.

Our social and wellbeing activities continue to be a core part of our offer, with strong engagement across groups such as coffee mornings, creative sessions, healthy lifestyle groups like swimming, golf, and our much-valued Striders walking group.



# CEO Update



Our education and awareness work has also continued to develop, helping to build understanding of sight and hearing loss across the Isle of Wight and encouraging more inclusive thinking in schools, services, and the wider community. We have also strengthened how we communicate, ensuring accessibility remains central to how we share information and connect with people.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated staff and volunteer teams. Your commitment, flexibility, and care make a tangible difference every day, and it is important to recognise the vital role you play in supporting members and delivering services. I would also like to thank our members. Getting to know you over the past few months has been one of the most rewarding aspects of the role, and your insight, feedback, and involvement continue to shape our direction and priorities.

This year is very much about working collaboratively. We are keen to build and strengthen relationships with other passionate organisations, community groups, and individuals who share our values and want to improve outcomes for people with sensory loss. By working together, we can extend our reach, share expertise, and make a greater collective impact.

We also have ambitions that reflect the confidence and spirit of our community. One such aspiration is that we are exploring taking a few of our Striders group members to take on the challenge of climbing Mount Snowdon later this year. It is an opportunity to promote inclusion, teamwork, and possibility, while challenging perceptions of what can be achieved with the right support.

Thank you for being part of Sight for Wight. Whether you volunteer, attend activities, advocate for our work, or support us behind the scenes, your involvement matters. I look forward to the year ahead and to continuing this journey together.

 CEO



# Member Activities



## Weekly

**By Appointment:** We have Sam on hand to give one-to-one help with accessibility features on your computer, laptop, tablet or phone. **It is essential you pre-book, so please call ahead.**



**Monday:** Swimming at Medina Leisure Centre, Newport (term-time only) between 1.15pm and 2.00pm. Cost is £6.00. Limited transport is available.



**Tuesday:** Yoga at Millbrooke House between 1.45pm and 2.45pm; come along and try gentle yoga. Just £4.00 which includes refreshments. (Yoga currently suspended until April)



**Wednesday:** Coffee and Chat at Millbrooke House between 10.00am and 11.30am. All are welcome to join us for Coffee and Cake. The cost is £2.00 and the group is open to everyone.



**Thursday:** Mix and Mingle at Millbrooke House between 10.30am and 2.00pm. Planned activities include crafts, quizzes and entertainment. The cost is £4.00 plus £3.50 for transport if required.



**Fortnightly Tennis** is held at Ryde Mead Tennis Club on a Monday between 9.30am and 10.30am. Volunteers of the Club are on hand to assist. This is weather dependant.





# Member Activities



## Monthly Groups

**First Tuesday of the Month:** Godshill Coffee Morning 10.30am - 12.00pm held at The Old Smithy Coffee Shop, Godshill. Volunteers, Yvonne and Linda, will be on hand to chat.



**First Thursday of the Month:** Audio Book Group held at Lord Louis Library, Newport, between 2.00pm and 3.00pm; this group is free to attend.

**Last Friday of the Month:** Striders is for members who enjoy walking. The walk is normally between four and six miles, depending on the route and location.

The cost is £4.00 plus £3.50 for transport. The group always enjoys lunch in a local pub and is a great social event.



**Last Sunday of the Month:** Golf at Westridge Golf Centre, Ryde. Members enjoy 45 minutes with a professional instructor available to help the complete novice, to those playing regularly.



**Tandem Bike** sessions are now held on a regular basis. Our pilots and members have been enjoying trips out, mainly along the cycle track. If you would like to have a go and you haven't let the office know, please call and put your name on the list.



**Eye on Social** is our afternoon group held on the second Wednesday of the month. This group is open to everyone; members, volunteers and friends and is a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon, always finishing with tea and cake.

**For more information and to reserve your place, please call Susan on 522205.**



# Volunteers' Update



Welcome to you all and a very special welcome to all our new volunteers to this newsletter. We are very fortunate to have so many fantastic volunteers to help and assist with all the activities, events and services.



Since the last newsletter, our Volunteers have been busy covering bucket collections, serving at Christmas Fairs, helping at the Volunteers Fair, knitting alongside all the wonderful work carried out within activities, Dress for Less and Talking News so thank you each and every one of you; without **YOU** we could not do the many wonderful things we do.

Our calendar is now booked with dates and the first date for our **Volunteer Catch Up is Tuesday March 24th @ 10.00am**, here at Millbrooke House. Please come along and meet fellow volunteers; staff will be on hand to serve coffee and homemade cake. A very important date for your diary is **Friday June 5<sup>th</sup>** when we will be holding a party during Volunteers' Week, here at Millbrooke House for all our wonderful volunteers so book it in now!! More details will follow, along with an official invite.

Looking ahead, we have many events planned so I will be sending out emails requesting help; together we all make a difference to our Visually Impaired Island residents. Starting with our Easter knitting campaign, please give me a call for knitting and crochet patterns and I will happily send out to you.

Thank you, as always, for your time, help and support; it is very much appreciated.

**Susan** Volunteers & Members Manager



# Recycle Your Bra & Raise Funds for Sight for Wight

We will be placing recycling boxes in Millbrooke House and Dress for Less. Place all unwanted bras in the bin and, in return, we will be raising funds for the Charity – Simple!!

**It's an easy and meaningful initiative that:**

- Promotes textile recycling** and helps reduce landfill waste
- Supports women in need** by giving quality bras a second life
- Raises valuable funds** for our charity

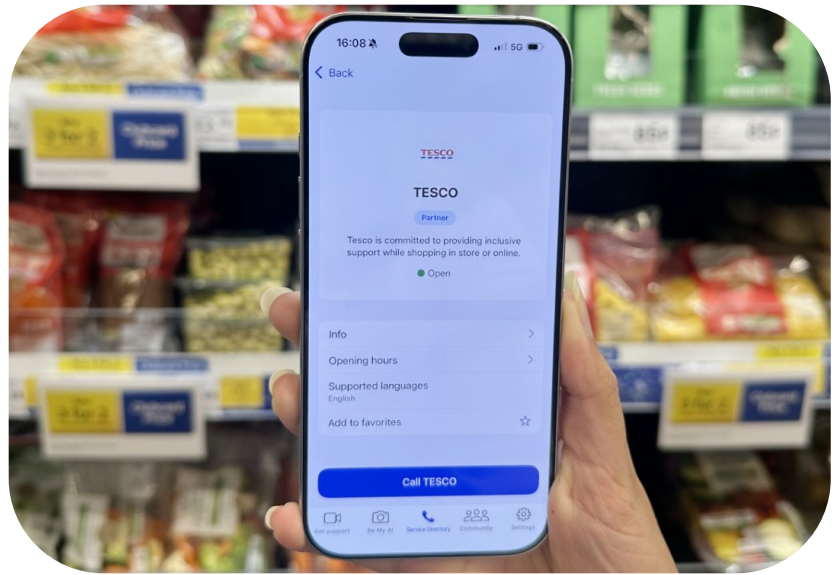




# Be My Eyes & TESCO



With thousands of stores across the UK, TESCO is the first major supermarket in Europe to join Be My Eyes in offering on-demand support for blind and partially sighted customers. This pilot combines TESCO's commitment to inclusive customer service with Be My Eyes' award-winning technology.



Through Be My Eyes, blind and partially sighted TESCO customers can identify products on the shelf and confirm correct sizes, variants or expiry dates, verify special Clubcard offers, promotions and rewards, receive assistance with self-service checkouts, and request immediate support from customer service teams in real time.

This six-month pilot which commenced in October 2025, will integrate Be My Eyes into TESCO's in-store support services, ensuring that blind and partially sighted customers can shop with greater confidence, independence and ease.

This initiative reflects both companies' commitment to ensuring that retail is accessible to everyone, demonstrating how technology can enhance the shopping experience, and marking an important step towards building a more inclusive retail environment across the UK and beyond.



# Fundraising

Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets for our Annual Raffle; we raised an amazing £1750. The Luxury Hamper was won by Mrs Nichol and collected by her son Stuart.

The Festive morning here at Millbrooke House was very well attended and everyone enjoyed Mulled Wine and Mince Pies.

We would like to thank everyone who donated prizes for the raffle, including Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Farmhouse Fayre, Tropics, The Crown Inn, Shorwell and the many members and volunteers who supported it.



Chocolate Christmas Novelties were, once again, a huge success and this year we added Christmas Crackers to the mix.

We must thank the following people who so kindly sold these on our behalf. The Crown Inn, Shorwell, Gurnard Press & Bistro, Tandem Tea Rooms, Brighstone and Brighstone Village Stores.



We are delighted to announce that £850 was raised for the Charity.

We will, once again, be knitting for Easter so if you, or anyone you know, would be able to knit for us, please call the office and we can either send or email patterns to you.

Our Easter goods will go on sale from 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2026.



# Wight Sense News



Our Hearing Café is held monthly for those with hearing loss, their family and friends on the second Monday of each month 10.30am – 12.00pm.

On 9th March we will be visiting The End of the Line Café in Freshwater and will incorporate our catch up and feedback session for any feedback and ideas for Wight Sense.

April 13th we will be going to Thompson's Nursery, Arreton.

May 11th we will be at Brown's Golf Course Café in Sandown and June 8th we're at the Hungry Caterpillar Café at Butterfly World in Wootton. Please call if you would like further information.

Wight Sense Hearing Impairment assessment work remains steady and constant. Interestingly, Paula has been seeing more people under the age of 65 which brings a greater diversity to the work she does. This is a really good thing inasmuch as once the support is in place and the person is known to Wight Sense, should their needs change, they can self-refer again immediately and receive any additional support they need. It's unfortunate that we're not as well known as perhaps we would like. We do our best to make ourselves visible in the community by attending events and having a social media presence which definitely helps to make people aware of us. We accept referrals from anyone; for example, the person themselves, any voluntary organisations, statutory service providers such as the fire service or family and friends. Please spread the word if you know anyone who would benefit from a visit from us; we are a completely free service and any equipment offered is also free of charge on a long-term loan basis.



# VisionAid

Independent Family Business Est.1996

**Join us for the Sight for Wight coffee morning**

**Explore the latest solutions with our friendly & knowledgeable specialist - Ben Ross**

**Wed 29th  
April 2026**

**10am to 2pm**

**Sight for Wight, Millbrooke House,  
137 Carisbrooke Road, Newport,  
PO30 1DD**

**Proud to be the UK's largest independent provider of low vision and blindness solutions - we're passionate about assisting every person to find the best possible solution for their unique needs.**



## **Voice-activated mobile phones**

- Simple to use
- Clear, tactile, well-spaced buttons
- Loud speaker & high contrast display
- Reads everything out loud: menus, messages, callers etc.
- Easy voice control / dictation
- Smartphone features & apps available



**If you cannot attend this date, please call VisionAid on freephone 0800 002 5555 for a free, no obligation, in-home demonstration**



# Short Story Writing Competition



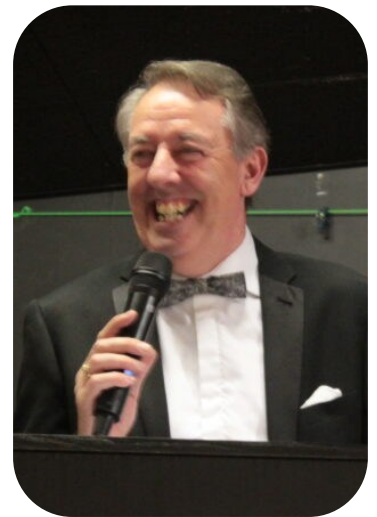
## Award Ceremony 2025

Sight for Wight celebrated its 16th annual Short Story Writing Competition Awards Ceremony at The Riverside Centre, Newport on Friday 12th December to a full house! This year's theme was Superhero! The celebrity readers were Chesney Hawkes (Singer/Songwriter), Richard Cadell (Sooty & Sweep), Kate Weston (Easy Radio South), Andy Jackson (Nation Radio South) and Darren Walsh (Comedian).

Our Master of Ceremonies was Maurice Kachuk.

**Under 8's Winner - Ula Batchelor** with the story, Owlette Saves UK. Ula won an Entertainer voucher, kindly donated by Sandham Office Services.

**8 - 11's Winner - Toby Manning** with the story, The Final Piece. Toby won a voucher for a Family Day Out, kindly donated by Hovertravel. Toby's prize included having his story published in the County Press.



**Maurice Kachuk**

**12 - 17's Winner - Evie May Quick** with the story, The Dunes. Evie won a Waterstones voucher, kindly donated by Wight Computers.

**Edana Minghella Award - Katherine Groves** was the winner with the story, Maximus: A Vectis Superhero. Katherine won a voucher kindly donated by Ventnor Botanic Garden.

**18+ Winner - Peter McDonagh** with the story, You Don't Have To Wear A Cape To Be A Superhero. Peter won a voucher, kindly donated by Wightlink. Sadly, Peter passed away in July but had already written his story so his wife, Sue, submitted his entry.

*Chris* Reception Manager



**Under 8's Winner  
Ula Batchelor**



**8 - 11's Winner  
Toby Manning**



**12 - 17's Winner  
Evie May Quick**



**Edana Minghella Award  
Katherine Groves**



**18+ Winner  
Peter McDonagh**



**Huxley Magician**



**Paula Johnson**

We raised £1,457.00! If you'd like to listen to the winning stories and watch the Award Ceremony then please visit our Sight for Wight website.



# Focus On Trustee Paul



I started work as an articled clerk with a firm of Chartered Accountants, preparing accounts and tax returns for local shops and businesses. I married in 1974, and we got news I had passed my Accountancy final exams while we were on our honeymoon. We set up home in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey.

I wanted to work in Industry, and got a job in a large company who manufactured printing ink. Initially as Management Accountant, preparing budgets and monthly accounts, but soon moving on to Computer systems which I found more interesting. I stayed for 43 years until I retired. My career was spent installing and supporting business systems in our subsidiaries in the UK and Europe. In the early days, communications with computers was quite limited, so this meant visiting the local site, and I travelled extensively around Europe for many years.



Meanwhile, we had 3 children, and we came to spend every summer holiday on the Isle of Wight – 2 weeks self catering with our family and my parents. We all have fond memories of this time, and had decided the Isle of Wight was where we wanted to retire.

Around 20 years ago we took the plunge and moved from Surrey to Shanklin with my father and our youngest daughter and her family in tow. We now have 7 grandchildren, and the eldest, who lives on the Island, has a 3 year old son. We are very fortunate to see a great deal of them, and also our 2 children on the mainland and their families visit regularly in the school holidays, so we are kept quite occupied.



# Focus On Trustee Paul



Since moving to the Island, I became interested in gardening, and this now takes most of my spare time. I have a greenhouse, a fruit and vegetable patch, and quite a collection of pots for summer bedding.

My other interest is walking, and I like to do a long walk every week when I can. The Island is an amazing place for walking, with such a variety of landscapes and a tremendous footpath network.

Recently, I came across Isle of Wight Society for the Blind by chance, and have now been elected as a Trustee and Treasurer. It's a steep learning curve, but I am looking forward to becoming more involved, and hopefully contributing to the future success of the Charity.



*Paul* Trustee



# 100 Club



**Did you know we have our own 100 Club?** This is our own lottery but restricted to 100 members. Each month, entrants pay £2.00 for a number with 40% prize money distributed as a single prize and the remaining 60% going directly to support our services.



**This quarter's** winners are Chris, Pat and John.

If you would like to join the Sight for Wight 100 Club, it is just £2.00 a month; you can pay annually or by Standing Order each month.

## Murder Mystery

We are delighted to announce that Sight for Wight is planning to host another Murder Mystery event this summer due to the popularity of our last two; one held at Millbrooke House and the other at the Isle of Wight College Restaurant. Watch this space!





# Revolutionary Eye Injection



Doctors say they have achieved, what was once thought impossible: restoring sight and preventing blindness in people with a rare and dangerous eye condition called hypotony. Moorfields Eye Hospital in London



has become the world's first dedicated clinic for the disorder, and a pilot study shows seven out of eight patients responded to a pioneering new treatment.

One of them is Nicki Guy, 47, the first patient to receive the therapy. She describes the results as "life-changing," saying she has gone from counting fingers to being able to read most lines on an eye chart. While she may not regain the legal vision needed to drive, she says the improvement has given her independence and the ability to watch her child grow up.

Hypotony occurs when pressure inside the eye becomes dangerously low, causing it to collapse and potentially leading to blindness. It can result from injury, inflammation, surgery, or medication. Previous treatments, such as steroids and silicone oil, often failed to restore vision and could be toxic over time.

Doctors at Moorfields tried a different approach, injecting a clear, water-based gel called hydroxypropyl methylcellulose (HPMC) into the eye. Unlike silicone oil, the gel is transparent and allows better vision. Consultant Mr Harry Petrushkin said the decision was nerve-wracking but produced remarkable results, calling Nicki's recovery "completely remarkable."



# Theatre Trip

**70 Girls 70**

**At the Apollo Theatre, Newport  
Saturday 25th July 2026 7:30PM**

When they learn their retirement home is due for the wrecking ball, some feisty old folks resort to stealing and reselling furs. The tuneful Kander & Ebb score includes “Coffee in a Cardboard Cup” and “Yes”.

Tickets only £12.00 each; please book your seat by calling the office. £5.00 deposit required.



## **New Activity Opportunities**

We have the chance to try Archery, Tomahawk throwing, Wall Rock Climbing or Kayaking but need a list of interested members to be able to book a day. The Activity Centre is local and we can arrange transport to take you if required.

Please call the office and put your name down on the list.



## **Indoor Bowling**

A bowls club on the Isle of Wight has nominated us as their charity of the year this year. Due to this support they have also offered us a taster session at their facilities. If this is something you would be interested in, please call the office so we are aware of numbers before we plan an actual date to hold this.





As we start 2026, I wanted to take the opportunity to look back over 2025 and everything we have achieved at Dress for Less.

One thing stands out above all else and that is that it would not have happened without all of our amazing volunteers.



Their dedication, time and willingness to step in whenever they are needed has made a real difference. They helped organise our amazing Fashion Event back in March, whether behind the scenes or just turning up with a smile. With donations in hand, they made the event the success it was.

Volunteering isn't always easy, it takes energy and commitment and they have all that and more. The extra shifts and all the effort shown day after day is amazing. They even smile when I say it's time for a big sort out!!

Because of these ladies, we have supported lots of local people through many different and difficult situations. Our shop has become a positive and safe place to come and have a chat and feel supported.



Ladies, I look forward to another positive year ahead.

A BIG Thank You !!

If you think you would like to come and volunteer at Dress for Less we would love to hear from you. You can either just pop into the shop or you can call me on 01983 523197 or email [retail@iwsb.org.uk](mailto:retail@iwsb.org.uk)

*Debbie* Dress for Less



# Education Update



We visited St Francis Primary School in Ventnor over two days, working with pupils from Years 1 to 4. This was the first time the Sight for Wight Education Programme had been delivered at the school, making the visit particularly significant. The children and staff were welcoming, and there was a positive atmosphere throughout.



Each session began with a PowerPoint presentation introducing Sight for Wight, the work we do, and how different eye conditions can affect sight. We also highlighted the importance of eye health.

After the presentation, pupils were divided into three small groups to take part in interactive activities related to sight loss. These hands-on games were both educational and engaging. One activity focused on Braille, allowing children to write and read it themselves, helping them understand how people with sight loss access written information. A true-or-false quiz at the end helped reinforce learning and check understanding.



Overall, the sessions were very successful.

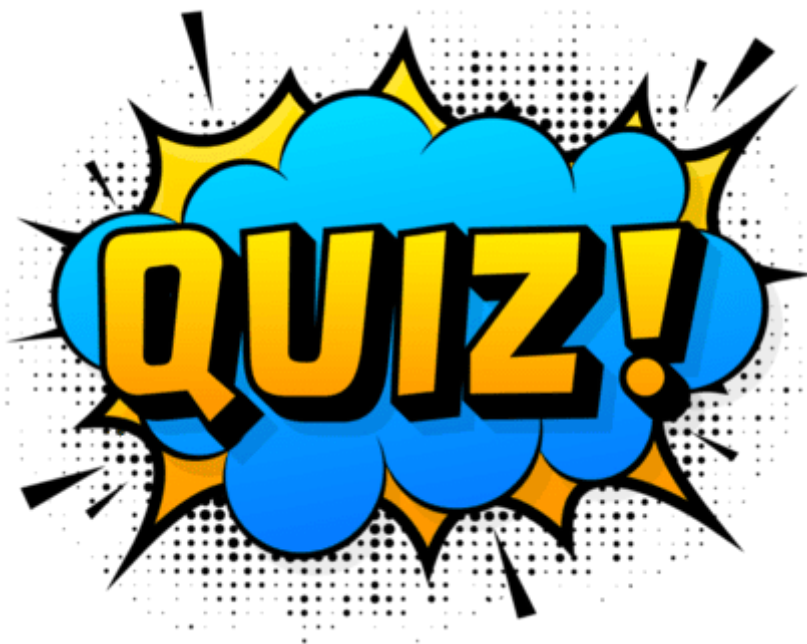
The children were enthusiastic, engaged well with the activities, and asked thoughtful questions, showing a genuine interest in sight loss and eye health.

The volunteers, once again, played a vital role, supporting the sessions with enthusiasm and professionalism and contributing greatly to the success of the visit.

*Jasmine* Education

## QUESTIONS:

- 1 Who is Santa Claus named after?
- 2 Why does condensation form on some windows?
- 3 Which is larger, a robin or a sparrow?
- 4 What is the hedging plant which, in its winter seeding stage, is known as "old man's beard"?
- 5 Why do we refer to the twelve days of Christmas?
- 6 In which month do the clocks always go forward?
- 7 Is there really a place called Christmas Island?
- 8 What was M. Braille's first name?
- 9 Can you think of five species of tree which have only three letters in their name?
- 10 (Terry's Terrible Teaser!) - The Jules Rimet trophy, which was the FA cup at the time, was stolen in 1966. A dog found it under a garden hedge in south east London. What was the dog's name?





# Terry's Ten Teasers Answers



- 1 It is a corruption of the name St Nicholas.
- 2 When the outside of a single-glazed window becomes colder than the inside, the moisture in the air changes from being gas to becoming a liquid.
- 3 A robin is generally approximately twice the size of a sparrow.
- 4 It is the seed stage of a wild climbing clematis, often known as Traveller's Joy.
- 5 They are the days between Christmas Day and Epiphany, when the kings, or wise men, were said to have taken their gifts to give to the baby Jesus.
- 6 March.
- 7 Yes (it's an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean, with a population of a little under 2000 people).
- 8 Louis.
- 9 Oak, ash, elm, fir & yew.
- 10 Pickles (well done if you got that without chatting with Mr Google first)!

**SIGHT FOR WIGHT** (01983) 522205 [enquiries@iwsb.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@iwsb.org.uk)  
[sightforwight.org.uk](http://sightforwight.org.uk)

**WIGHT SENSE** (01983) 240222 [info@wightsense.org.uk](mailto:info@wightsense.org.uk)  
[wightsense.org.uk](http://wightsense.org.uk)

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm

**DRESS FOR LESS** (01983) 523197 [retail@iwsb.org.uk](mailto:retail@iwsb.org.uk)  
57 Pyle Street, Newport, IOW PO30 1UL

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