

those times with words such as “God preserve the British Arms, 1740” and “Prosperity to the Parish of Brixton”.

A tablet within the Church commemorates three Rectors of the church who had the distinction of becoming bishops, for whom the “Three Bishops” public house is named, and whose distinctions are recorded on a wall tablet. The first was Bishop Ken, of Bath and Wells, Rector of Brighstone from 1666-70. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London, for refusing to read James II's Declaration of Indulgence from his pulpit; the second was Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford and later of Winchester, Rector from 1830-40. He was the son of William Wilberforce, famous for his part in the abolition of slavery in the British colonies, and lived at the Rectory in his last years; the third, Bishop Moberley was at Brighstone from 1866-69 before his promotion to the See of Salisbury.

During times of unrest, the parish records mention “sheaves of arrows” and “pikes” kept at the Church, and in 1543 a brass gun was housed in a gunhouse built against the north wall of the church tower. Church records show many references to ammunition for the gun, repairs to its carriage and to powder and arms. The gun was maintained for two hundred years, and is believed to have been incorporated in one of the bells re-cast in 1740. The gunhouse was rebuilt in 1625, demolished in 1843, and a gap can still be seen in the coping of the churchyard wall on the north side, intended to accommodate the barrel of the gun.

BRIGHSTONE LIFEBOAT

Brighstone is situated less than a mile from the sea, on a coast which faces south-west and the full force of the gales which beat upon it. The rocks and submerged reefs are particularly dangerous, even today, and in the time of the old sailing ships, many were lost on this treacherous coastline. Help from the shore at that time was almost impossible with frequent loss of life, but rescue work became better organised and lifeboats were stationed at intervals along the coast. They were wholly reliant on oar and sail, and their launching from the open beach in the teeth of a south-west gale was a task requiring great skill and courage. A lifeboat was first stationed at Brighstone in 1860, the first in the Isle of Wight and its crew and those who launched it were local volunteers whose bravery saved some 433 lives until it was disbanded in 1915. Two RNLI plaques which

commemorate the details of shipwrecks and lives saved can be found in Brighstone churchyard. One particularly hazardous rescue was that of the *Sirenia* grounded on 09 March 1888 on the Atherfield



Brighstone Lifeboat Station, Grange Chine

ledge. The Brighstone lifeboat Worcester Cadet was launched just after 4 p.m. into a heavy sea, rescuing three children and two women from the stricken ship, landing safely ashore at 6.30 p.m. The weather worsened steadily and the lifeboat was launched again just after midnight with swells up to twenty feet high, rescuing some of the crew. Suddenly a huge wave capsized the boat throwing all the men into the water. When it righted itself both the coxswain and second coxswain were missing, together with a sailor from the *Sirenia*, and a second sailor lost his life entangled in the ropes. Only three of the original lifeboat crew were capable of making a third trip out to the *Sirenia*, and one of these was Edmund “Joey” Attrill, coxswain of the Bembridge boat, who had walked fifteen miles across the Island to assist. This walk is celebrated each year in the Isle of Wight Walking Festival.

GRANGE CHINE

This was first recorded c1290 as 'the monks' grange' followed by the Grange of Shute in 1428, with Shute representing the present Shate Farm to the north of Grange. In mediaeval times, it was a grange owned by Quarr Abbey, meaning 'an outlying farm belonging to a religious house where crops are stored'. The Chine is referred to as lacmans Chyne in 1611, and lackmans Chine in 1769, probably from the Jackman family who held Grange in the 16th and 17th centuries.



Grange Chine 1939

CHILTON CHINE

This was known as Celatune in the Domesday Book, followed by Cheltona 1173, Cheletuna c1192, Cheleton 1289 and Chilton in 1306. Its meaning is probably 'the farmstead or estate near the gorge or deep valley, originating from the Old English words ceole and tun. It is also possible for the name to mean 'farmstead or estate belonging to a man called Ceola', from a personal name in Old English. It is also one of the many sites along the Island's coast where you may find the Glanville Fritillary, a butterfly that is somewhat scarce on the mainland, but thriving in good numbers on the Isle of Wight.



Edward McAll, Rector of Brighstone from 1840-66 was responsible for extensive restoration of the Church. The infilling of the ancient Norman arches of the nave was removed, and the small northern aisle built on the foundations of the original aisle of 1190 was reconstructed. This allowed the full beauty of the arcade of Norman arches and pillars to be revealed. The original floor-line of the early Church building was found at some depth below the existing floor. This was dug out and the stone pavement of the Church lowered to its former level, with a considerable gain to the internal height of the building. Work also took place on the chancel, together with the addition of a carved stone reredos, while the removal of a plaster ceiling in the nave and south-aisle chapels revealed the old oak timbers of the roof.

The peal of six bells may be heard across the fields on each Sunday throughout the year, although the early Norman Church probably only had one bell, used as an alarm, which was hung externally over the west gable. Several of the bells were re-cast and re-hung in 1740, bringing the number to five, and until recent times the local inn at Brighstone was known as the 'Five Bells'; although it still stands, the old thatched cottage is now a village store. All the original five bells had inscriptions, which can still be seen today, and speak of

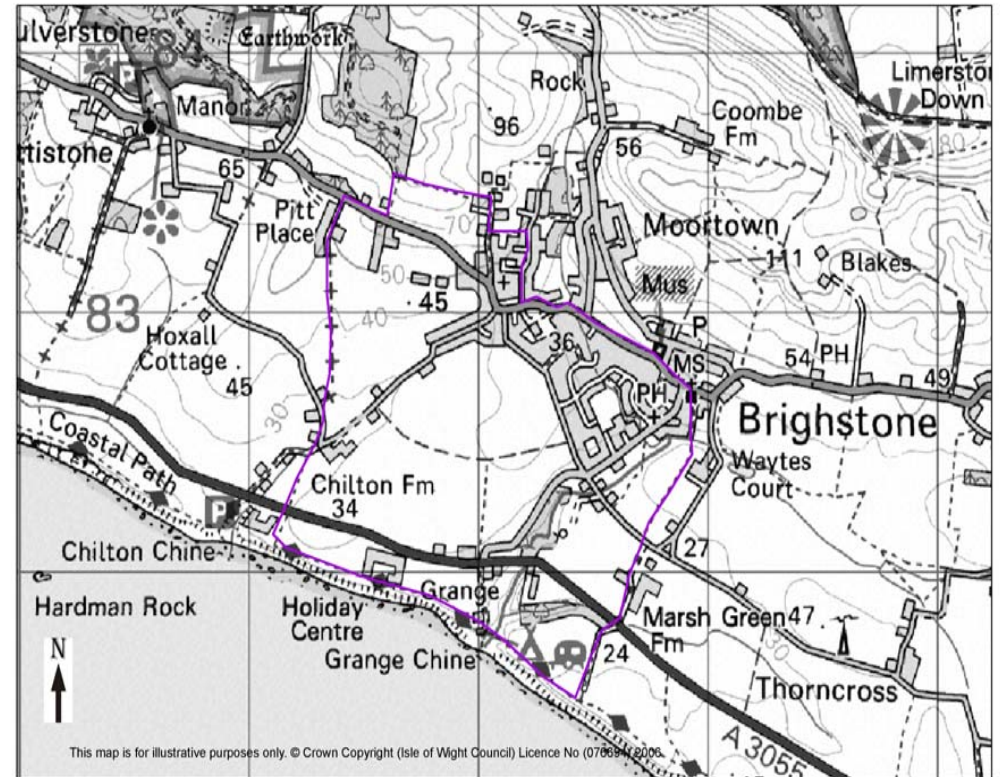


Brighstone village 1930

BRIGHSTONE THEN AND NOW



Isle of Wight
area of outstanding
natural beauty



Walk Leader: Nicky Rogers, AONB Planning Officer
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BRIGHSTONE

The village name has seen many changes, right back from Weristetone in 1086 (Domesday Book) to Breihtwiston 1212, Brichtestone 1257, Brightestone 1276, Brixton 1399, Brighstone 1431 and Brykston 1550. It means the farmstead or estate belonging to a man called Beorhtwig, from Old English tun and an Old English personal name. If the Domesday spelling is correct, which is probable, the Norman scribe must have written Wer instead of Ber. The 14th century spelling Brixton represents the local pronunciation of the name still heard. Although Brighstone was included in a grant of land at Calbourne by King Egbert of Wessex to the see of Winchester in 826, the name cannot possibly mean 'Egbert's estate' as is sometimes claimed.

It was originally included in the parish of Calbourne, but was separated ecclesiastically as early as the 13th century, and Brighstone Parish was formed in 1644. Smuggling was a major occupation in the 18th and 19th centuries, with some smugglers rowing across to France and the Channel Islands in long boats. In recent years, during the conversion of Carrier Stable, a barrel of brandy was found nearby.

ST MARY'S CHURCH

The original Norman Church dating from 1190 A.D. was small and without a tower, with massive pillars and Norman arches on each side, and narrow north and south aisles outside. Only the arches on the north side of the nave remain, and form the oldest part of the existing building. During work on a heating system in 1885, the foundations of some of the original pillars, removed towards the end of the 15th century when the nave was widened, were discovered under the floor.

When this widening took place, the tower was added at the west end, followed by the almost total rebuilding of the chancel, the addition of a south chantry, probably by the owner of Waytes Court, and removal of the north aisle. The original spire once painted white, was a landmark to ships passing that way, but was replaced in 1720 by the current spire, and you can still see the date cut on the cross-beam. The Rectory, also an ancient building, stands close by in an old garden where Thomas Ken wrote his hymns and William Wilberforce spent his last years.

DINOSAURS

Brighstone Bay is famous for the discovery of a partial Sauropod Skeleton by Portsmouth University, and reptile and dinosaur remains are often found along this coastline. A very famous dinosaur hunter was the Reverend William Fox, curate of Brighstone village who spent many hours collecting fossils, much to the detriment of his parishioners, and it was often said of him that it was "always the bones first and the parish next". He was a prolific collector of fossils, and in one of his many letters wrote "I take such deep pleasure in hunting for old dragons". Newly discovered dinosaurs *Polacanthus foxii* and *Hypsilophodon foxii* are named after him.

PITT PLACE

Deriving from the Old English word 'pytt' a pit or quarry, its principal residence is in Mottistone parish near the Longstone. Known in Anglo-Saxon times as the Meeting or Moot Stone, the two stones of the monument are the remains of a Neolithic long barrow on the sandstone ridge above the village. Local legend says the tall stone was thrown by St Catherine from her hill to the east challenging the devil for control of the Island, but his smaller stone failed to achieve the greater distance. His stone lies on its side to offering a seat for weary travellers, while hers symbolises the triumph of good over evil.

