

Christmas InDownton

FREE

20 years of InDownton

The first issue of InDownton came out in December 2005. It was a newsletter that would go to every house providing village information for those that don't use social media. It would aim to bring out the best in our village, supporting local organisations and providing a platform to bring people together and be interesting to read. The first issue had four pages, no adverts, and brought together the churches' Christmas services. There were four issues a year, until 2012 when it increased to five, apart from a break during the pandemic when the online site expanded. Today, the newsletter often has 20 pages part funded by increased advertising which has also meant that many pages are now in colour. InDownton has documented the village's growth and changes. It all happened because of the support of Downton Baptist Church which shared the vision and has underwritten the cost since day 1. Advertisers, contributors and a great team of deliverers have kept it going. The editorial team are so grateful to them all as we prepare to see what the future brings. And thank you for the great support from our readers, which always motivates us to keep going! The first page of issue 1 is above. We've reproduced some of our more memorable stories inside on page 16. How many of the stories do you remember?



In this issue:

Welcome to our 20th anniversary issue.

We hope you can forgive a little indulgence as we celebrate our 20 years.

This issue is full of news about Christmas events including the weekend of 5/6/7 December when there are lots of events for all ages as the village gears up for Christmas. We've grouped the events together on pages 2, 3 and 4 to help you plan your weekend.

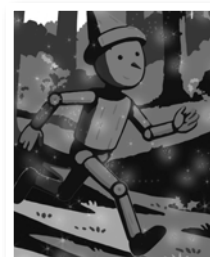
As usual, we've tried to get as much information as we could about the festive opening hours of local businesses. You'll find them on pages 6 and 7, although please forgive errors and omissions.

Finally, we wish you a Happy Christmas from all our contributors.

PINOCCHIO

On Friday 9 January at the Memorial Hall, The Travelling Players (Forest Forge, Bumblefly and Mischievous Theatre) will return with their festive production. This year's show presents the story of Pinocchio, a wooden marionette who seeks to become a real boy. Pinocchio's nose grows whenever he tells a lie. The story follows his encounters with the Fox, his flight on the back of a pigeon, his experience of being swallowed by a giant shark, his attempt to grow gold coins by planting them, and his transformation into a donkey. It will feature live action, music, and puppetry for audiences of all ages. Refreshments and a licensed bar will be available.

It starts at 6.30pm (doors open 5.45pm). Tickets cost £10 for adults, children (under 16) £5. Available from 1 December at the Borough Café (cash only), or by BACS by texting 07760 415818 or 07545 598887 with ticket requirements. Profits go toward the refurbishment of the hall kitchen.



DOWNTON'S BIG CHRISTMAS WEEKEND

On the weekend of 5, 6 and 7 December, there's a whole range of activities to celebrate the Christmas season without leaving the village, with opportunities to support local groups and buy local presents. To help you plan your time, we've put all the events we know about together. We're calling it a village Christmas Festival, although it might just be a set of coincidences!

BIG CHRISTMAS WEEKEND - FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER

Christmas Tree Sale: 3pm - 6pm

Once again locally grown Nordmann Fir trees will be able to buy at Long Close Park in The Borough. Homemade refreshments will be available and the proceeds will go to support The Moot.



Primary School Christmas Fayre: 3.30pm - 5pm

Downton Primary School Association's Christmas Fayre takes place in the school hall and costs £2, but free for children. There will be food, stalls selling crafts, tombola, games and music from Downton Training Band. Bring cash to spend!



Last year's events

Village Christmas Tree Lights Switch on: 6.15pm for 6.30pm

The Christmas Tree lights will be switched on with a festive singalong and free refreshments from the Parish Council. The tree will be on the maypole green.

Salisbury Big Band in Concert: 7pm

The Christmas Tree Festival at St Lawrence Church starts with a concert by the Salisbury Big Band. There will be a cash bar. Tickets are £10 from The Borough Cafe or online at Eventbrite (use the QR code). Parking is available in The Moot Car Park. It's in aid of Lover Baby Bank and St Laurence Church.



DADA DRAMA GROUP

DADA will be performing at the Christmas Tree Festival 12pm on Sunday 7 December. Anyone interested in joining them for some Christmas fun should contact Jane Seden on 511018.

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BIG CHRISTMAS WEEKEND - SATURDAY 6 DECEMBER

Christmas Tree Festival: 6 & 7 December: 10am - 4pm

Christmas Tree Festival with exhibits, gifts, raffle and a children's mouse hunt. There will be entertainment throughout the two days, along with refreshments available. It's in support of the Lover Baby Bank and St Laurence Church. Music programme on the right.

Christmas Repair Cafe at DBC: 10am - 12pm

The Lover Repair Cafe's monthly visit to Downton Baptist Church is available to sort out broken decorations, ornaments and nativity figures with mulled wine available for visitors.

Downton Brewery Christmas Market: 11am - 3pm

Downton Brewery's Christmas Market has handcrafted gifts from over 15 local businesses as well as the brewery shop. It's at the Tap Bar in Batten Road.

Hop Back Brewery Shop Open: 11am - 3pm

For one Saturday only, the shop at Hop Back Brewery in Batten Road is open for stocking up for Christmas.

Santa Paws at The Goat: 12pm - 4pm

A chance for dogs to meet and get photographed with 'Santa Paws' and receive a gift. £10. Booking required.

Festive Saturday Afternoon: 3pm - 5pm

There's live festive music, refreshments and a silent disco for everyone in the Memorial Hall. There'll be a sprinkling of snow; a chance to put on your party gear and bring a friend or neighbour. Book a free place in advance. Text or leave a message for Stephanie on 07816 419095 or email:stephaniejalland1@gmail.com It's funded by proceeds from 'Fridays' cafe in 2024. It's free but there will be an option to donate towards further social events.

Saturday 6 December

10.00	Downton Training Band
10.40	Catch of the Day choir
11.20	Downton Beginners Band
12.00	Downton Community Choir
12.40	Fordingbridge Handbells
1.20	Wessex Folk Orchestra
2.00	Woodfall Village Singers
2.40	Pipes and Violin
3.20	Chris Shuker songs



Last year's tree festival

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Downton4Family are again running a "Reverse Advent Calendar", asking people to use the days in November to collect items to give to a local family in need this Christmas. It's not too late to start - any contributions are welcome, no matter how big or small. Suggestions for items to collect include tinned and packeted groceries, toiletries and Christmas goodies. A full list can be found on the charity's Facebook page: facebook.com/downton4family. Collections can be dropped off at Downton Baptist Church from Monday 24 - Friday 28 November, 9am - 1pm. More information from katedrennan84@hotmail.com.

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BIG CHRISTMAS WEEKEND - SUNDAY 7 DECEMBER

Christmas Tree Festival: 6 & 7 December: 10am - 4pm

The Christmas Tree Festival continues at St Laurence Church in support of the Lover Baby Bank and St Laurence Church. Music programme on the right.

Downton Leisure Centre Santa Treat

New mini-panto with the grinch and a visit to Santa's Grotto for children under 12. Cost is £2.50 with all money going to the Salisbury Stars Appeal. Booking in advance essential.

Village Carol Service at St Laurence: 6pm

A traditional service of lessons and carols with the Downton Bank and Community Choir. Organised by Downton Churches Together with contributions from different village groups.

Sunday 7 December

10.00	Christmas organ music
10.40	Christmas music
11.20	Music Miscellany
12.00	DADA
12.40	Christmas music
2.00	Mandolins
2.40	Millstream Winds
3.20	The Trafalgar School

SCOUT CHRISTMAS POST

The Scout Post is running again for Christmas 2025. Stamps cost 40p. Post boxes & stamps for sale are now at: The Borough Cafe, The Chemist, Hair Design, St Laurence's Church and The Baptist Church. For the first time, Charlton has its own collection box this year. This is in All Saints' Church, open 9am-5pm every day. Charlton readers can buy stamps from Clare Penny in person, or via the PCC on charlton.all.saints.pcc@gmail.com. The list of acceptable destinations for cards is available at sswscouts.org.uk/christmas-post/. Last posting day is 3 December.

LIBRARY NEWS

The Library will be running some extra activities this festive season. Christmas Brick Fun is on 22 December from 3:30 - 5pm (drop-in), and a Christmas Jokes Trail will run throughout December.

Some regular activities are changing times: Rhyme Time will now be from 10:00 - 10:30am - upcoming dates are 12 December, 9 January, and 23 January (no booking required). The Crime and Thriller Group will now meet from 1:30 - 2:15pm. The next dates for this are 15 December and 12 January. Further information is available in the library.


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PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The trees planted as part of the King's Coronation grant are generally thriving, with a few exceptions that will be replaced. Despite the dry summer, most have continued to establish well.

The Parish Steward, Steve, carries out maintenance tasks such as shovelling, unblocking, and weeding around the Parish. His next visit is scheduled for 9 December, and residents are asked to report any tasks that require attention.

The Council is preparing for winter with Flood Wardens while Wiltshire Council will continue monitoring and clearing gullies.

Funds have been approved and secured from Wiltshire Council for the Wooden Spoon crossing improvements and for road safety improvements at the Tannery pinch point. Eleven locations in the village have been selected for traffic surveys to collect data on vehicle numbers, size, and speed. A new dedicated solar-powered Speed Indicator Device (SID) has been installed in Moot Lane. This is in addition to the SID shared with Redlynch PC.

A local tree surveyor who walks his child to school spotted a fungus on one of the beech trees in the Memorial Gardens, and the tree will need to be felled. A grant to replace it with an oak to mark 80 years since VE Day has been approved.

Residents experiencing anti-social behaviour, crime, or disturbances should report incidents directly to the local Police; reports made on Facebook are not monitored by Police. In an emergency, residents should dial 999 if there is an immediate danger to life, if violence is occurring or threatened, if a crime is in progress, or if the suspect is still present.

Parish Council meetings take place on the second Monday of each month in the Bonvalot Room at the Memorial Centre, beginning at 7pm. A public question period is held at the start of each meeting.

EXCITING NEWS FROM DOWNTON'S GLASS ARTIST!

Lynn Purcell was delighted to be selected from 6,500+ entries to take part in ING – Discerning Eye at the Mall Galleries in London (14th – 23rd November). This is the latest prestigious exhibition that she has been selected for in 2025. Others include The Royal Society of British Artists Open Exhibition in February and The Royal Society of Marine Artists Open Exhibition in September. Her work is also currently on display in The Bath Society of Artists 120th Open Exhibition until January 10th and in The Guildford House Open Exhibition until February 28th.

Lynn says: "I would like to say a huge thank you to all those who have encouraged and supported me over the past 13 years while I have experimented with this magical medium of glass, as without you, I wouldn't have had the belief to apply for such renowned events. I count myself exceptionally lucky to have found something in retirement that I love to do and have had a certain degree of success with."

Seasonal Open House
Functional and Decorative Kiln Formed Glass
Sat. 29th Nov. & Sun. 30th Nov. 10am-4pm
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Lots of potential Christmas gifts:
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SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES THIS CHRISTMAS

We asked local businesses to let us know their plans for Christmas. This is what we know, although it can be subject to change and we apologise for any errors or omissions.

Co-op is open normal hours except for Christmas Eve 6am - 7pm, closed on Christmas Day and open Boxing Day 10am - 7pm, New Year's Eve 6am - 7pm, New Year's Day 10am - 7pm.

Stable and Wick closes early on 24 December, 8.30am - 1pm. It's open again on 27 December 9am - 4pm and on 29 and 30 December 8.30am - 4pm. It's closed on New Year's Eve and reopens on 9 January normal hours, 8.30am - 4pm.

Asda Express Longford Service Station is no longer open 24 hours a day. It's open 5am - 11pm except Sunday when it's open 6am - 10am. Check for any festive hours changes.

The new **Downton Store (Premier)** at the corner of Salisbury Road and Long Close will be open Christmas Day 7am - 6pm, Boxing Day 7am - 9pm and New Year's Day 7am - 6pm. On all other days it will be open 6am - 10pm. We'll have more news about Downton's newest shop in the next issue.

The Pharmacy is open normal hours except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day when it is closed. It's open Saturday 27 December as normal 9am - 12pm.

Carter's Barbers is open 8am - 1pm on Christmas Eve. It reopens after Christmas on Saturday 27 December 9am - 2pm. On 29 December 9.30am - 6pm, 30 December 8.30am - 6pm. New Year's Eve 8.30am - 12.30pm, then 8.30am - 5.30pm on 2 January.

Downton Grill and Kebab is open Tuesday - Saturday 1.30pm - 10pm and Sunday 1.30pm - 9pm, except for closing on Christmas Day, so if you don't fancy cooking on Boxing Day, there are other options. There's a new Downton Grill app available to download for online ordering.

Spinnaker Fish and Chips will be closed between 22 December and 5 January.

The Goat will continue with live music every Sunday 4pm - 6pm.

On Saturday 20 December there's more live music when Harry Budd does a Michael Bublé tribute.


On Saturday 6 December the Santa Paws Santa Grotto for dogs from 12pm will include a photo opportunity and a goodie bag included. Booking is required. Check The Goat's website for more details.

The kitchen is closing at 9pm on Christmas Eve and the bar is open as normal until 11pm. On Christmas Day the bar is open for drinks between 11am and 2pm. On Boxing Day there will be food available until 8pm and the bar will close at 10pm. On New Year's Eve there will be food until 7pm and the bar will close at 10pm. On New Year's Day there will be food available until 8pm and the bar will close at 10pm.

The pub will be closed between 5 and 7 January for a staff party and a little face-lift.

The Bull Hotel is open for food 12pm - 3pm and 6pm - 9pm. These times can vary for Christmas meal bookings. On Christmas Day, only the bar will be open for drinks 12pm - 2pm and again on Boxing Day 12pm - 4pm. A new live music night, 'Cut The Bull', is starting on Saturday 29 November from 5pm with five local music acts.

The Wooden Spoon is open as usual except for drinks only on Christmas Day 12pm - 3pm and Boxing Day 12pm - 4pm. The kitchen will be closed on these days.



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Local Businesses This Christmas Continued....

Hop Back Brewery shop has a special opening on Saturday 6 December 11am - 3pm. It shuts early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve when it's open 9am - 12pm.

Downton Brewery has a **Christmas Market at the Tap Bar** with festive food, beer and stalls with handmade gifts on Saturday 6 December from 11am - 3pm.

On Friday 19 December it's "Festive Friday" at the tap bar between 12pm and 9pm with food from Indriya's Kitchen.

Local deliveries from the brewery shop need to be ordered by 15 December and orders for collection by 19 December. The shop will be open on 24 December and New Year's Eve (collections only) 8am - 12pm. It's closed on the public holidays but open as normal on other days.

Downton Tyre and Autocare closes for the Christmas and New Year holidays at 11am on Tuesday 23 December and reopens again on Monday 5 January at 8.30am.

Downton Leisure Centre closes early on Christmas Eve at 5pm. It's closed on 25 and 26 and open for reduced hours on 28 December and 29 December 12pm - 5pm. It closes early at 5pm on New Year's Eve and is open on New Year's Day from 9am - 9pm. It has a special Christmas offer for new members joining in December, who get the month free of charge!

DOWNTON SOCIETY

At the Downton Society's AGM, Helen Roberts gave a talk on the creation and restoration of the hillside map of Australia at Compton Chamberlayne. She spent more than four years coordinating a team to restore the chalk outline, originally created by members of the Australian Imperial Force stationed at Hurdcott Camp during the First World War. Restoration was completed in time for the 100th anniversary of the end of the war, and Anzac Day has been marked at the site annually since. The map is visible from the A30.



Hillside map

Over the summer, Society members took part in local projects including footpath clearing and a planting initiative with the Parish Council. The Committee also addressed planning matters and organised social activities such as a summer party and a visit to Downton Brewery. The next project is an exhibit for the Christmas Tree Festival.

The Society welcomes new volunteers and members. More information at thedowntonsociety.org.

DOWNTON PRIMARY SCHOOL: CLERK NEEDED

Downton Primary School is looking for someone with excellent administration and IT skills to be their next clerk to the governors. This is a paid part-time position (approx 2 hours per week) and involves helping to set and circulate agendas / minute-taking for 6 full governing board meetings per year, as well as the associated admin. Training will be provided. More details from admin@downton-pri.wilts.sch.uk

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FRIDAYS COMMUNITY CAFE.

The final coffee morning of the year will take place on 28 November - but the cafe will be back in January.

September's coffee morning raised over £478 for Macmillan Cancer Support, which the team topped up to send in a total of £500. In October, the cafe was Halloween-themed, with small pumpkins on the tables and ghost-shaped biscuits and cakes. Dave Mace provided keyboard music.

These events are supported by a team of volunteers who help with various tasks. This includes washing tablecloths, baking cakes, washing up, and setting up and clearing away tables and chairs. During the school holidays, additional help is on hand to tidy up - perhaps encouraged by the availability of cakes!



TALKABOUT AT WOODFALLS METHODIST CHURCH

December's TalkAbout is entitled "Cosmic Sparkle!" and features Robyn, singing songs from her repertoire of vintage, swing, jazz and songs from the shows. It's on Thursday 4 December, 10:00 for 10:30am. Admission: £4, includes refreshments. Call 07760 224990 for more information.

PLANNING FOR THE 2026 CUCKOO FAIR

The date for the 2026 Cuckoo Fair has been set for 2 May. The Core Team is focusing on potential improvements based on feedback collected during the post-fair review meeting. All volunteers who joined in 2024 to help organise the 2025 event have confirmed their intention to return for the 2026 fair.

The overall format of the event is expected to remain similar, with plans for additional stalls and attractions. More than one third of the stalls at the most recent fair were new, reflecting the work of the Bookings Manager in recruiting first-time exhibitors.

Stall costs for exhibitors have been increased due to rising expenses. Prices must be set in October, even though the final costs of the fair are not known until closer to the event.

Budgeted items include medical cover for approximately 18,000 attendees, insurance, security, entertainment, marquees, bins, toilets and the printing of 5,000 day leaflets.

The total cost of running the 2026 Cuckoo Fair is estimated at around £45,000. The event also provides fundraising opportunities for schools, churches, pubs, clubs and charities. For example, Trafalgar School operates one of the car parks and retains income from car park charges.


Toomers Ltd will again sponsor the fair and supply the road barriers, and Batt Broadbent Solicitors will once again sponsor the day leaflet.

Volunteers interested in assisting before or during the event can make contact via cuckoofair.co.uk/contact-us.



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SKY AT NIGHT BY MICHAEL F. BARRATT FRAS

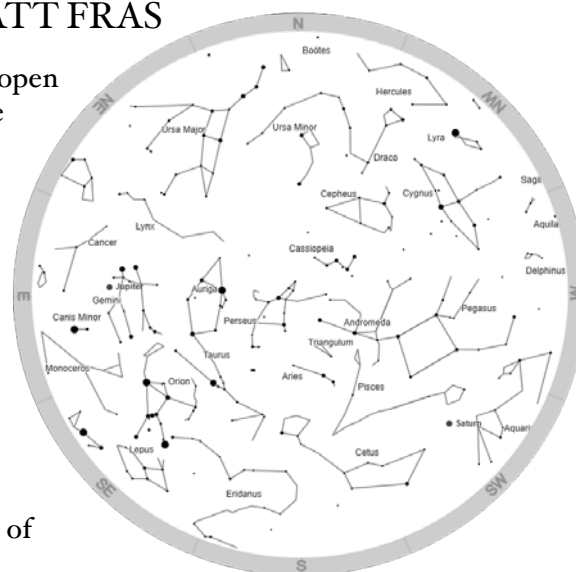
Winter constellations are now visible. The Pleiades open star cluster is now very prominent in the night sky in the east, together with its sister open cluster, the Hyades, both in the constellation of Taurus the Bull.

Mercury is at its morning brightest during the first half December, rising in the east at around 6 am. On the morning of 17 December, it will appear just to the left of the waning crescent Moon. Venus and Mars are both lost to the sun's glare this month. Jupiter is the brightest planet visible in the sky. It rises at around 6pm. and shines brilliantly all night. It will be found in the constellation of Gemini (the Twins) close to its two brightest stars, Castor and Pollux. Saturn, the other gas giant, can be seen after dark just under the Great Square of Pegasus, setting around midnight.

Three Comets have been visible in the night sky recently. Comets SWAN and Lemmon are periodic comets which come from the Oort Cloud and which orbit the Sun, whilst ATLAS is an interstellar object which has come from another star system and is merely passing through our own solar system. More information from the Society for Popular Astronomy (popastro.com).

The full moon on 4 December is known as a "Cold Moon". It will be a "Supermoon" (when it is also at its closest point to Earth in its orbit) as well as occulting (covering up) the Pleiades star cluster.

The Geminid meteor shower is best observed on the night of 13/ 14 December but will be visible for a few days either side - you can expect to see the remnants of Phaethon (an asteroid) streaking northwards across the sky. The Ursids occur every year on the night of 24/25 December. This year, the moon sets early, so the shower should be clearly visible.



MAP OF NIGHT SKY IN MID-DECEMBER 2025
(AROUND 2100 Hours GMT)

LATE SUMMER BALL

The Late Summer Ball at the end of September raised £4,600 for the charity Young Minds. It opened with a display by the Forest School of Dance, followed by performances from local party band Shantoosy and comedian Tank Sherman.



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CHARLTON CHRISTINGLE AND NATIVITY

There's a Christingle Service at All Saints' Church on Sunday 14 December at 3:30pm, led by the Revd Maggie Metcalfe. Refreshments available as well as a Christingle to take home. On Christmas Eve there will be an informal nativity at the church - you are invited to come dressed as your favourite character from the nativity and join in to re-tell the Christmas story. This will be led by Revd Dr Ruth Howlett-Shipley and is billed as "suitable for ages 0-100". At both these events, two young ladies who are pupils at Downton Primary School and live in Charlton, have offered to run a hot chocolate and gingerbread stall, with proceeds going towards the upkeep of the Church building.

Fundraising for this cause was also boosted when the church was packed for the recent concert given by the Mevagissey Male Choir, where £1000 was raised.



Last year's services

DOWNTON DISTILLERY

Situated at the top of Wick Down, and drawing inspiration from the surrounding chalk landscape, Downton Distillery produces international award-winning spirits. The distillery works closely with growers and conservation partners - for example, Great Bustard Gin supports the protection of one of Britain's rarest birds found on the Downs and showcases the botanicals the birds forage for. The Orchard Spirits range uses surplus fruit that would otherwise go to waste. Every bottle from this range was a finalist in the Great British Food Awards 2025. The team focuses on reducing waste, using recycled glass bottles and running a refill programme. Locally, bottles can be refilled at Downton Brewery. Short supply chains keep more money in the hands of regional businesses. This work is now being recognised, and the distillery has been shortlisted in the Drinks Business Ethical Awards against some of the largest wine producers globally. Online shopping is available at downtondistillery.com - look out for new Christmas editions: Nocino, a walnut liqueur and their Pommeau, a fortified apple juice (using apples from Cranborne Chase Cider).



About the Freemasons

We are a members' organisation which has thrived for over 300 years.

We have no political connections, we have members of all ages, races, religions, cultures and backgrounds.

Freemasons have met in Downton for over 30 years and currently meet at the Downton Football Club.

MEET THE DOWNTON FREEMASONS

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Our Principles

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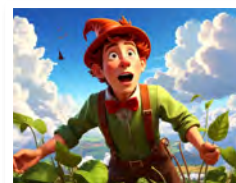
REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY



Scenes from this year's Remembrance Sunday ceremony outside the Memorial Hall. Wreaths were laid by Cllr Zoe Clewer, Parish Council Chair, Jane Brentor, PC Marc Evans, Svitlana Kondzelia, Rick Ladds, Evie Baldwin, Sam Azizi, Jasper Newstead, Millie Warren, Faeryn Shaw, and Poppy Hitchens.

CHARLTON VILLAGE PANTO

Charlton village Panto this year is Jack & the Beanstalk, as re-told by Alys Hunter. Performances are at The Radnor Hall, Bodenham on 27, 28, 29 November at 7:30pm (£20 to include a hot supper provided by the Radnor Arms). There is a Saturday Matinee on 29 November at 2.30pm (£10 for adults and £5 for children 16 and under, to include tea, squash & cake in the interval) All proceeds go towards supporting The Radnor Hall. Tickets from newsandnotes.net/event-list.



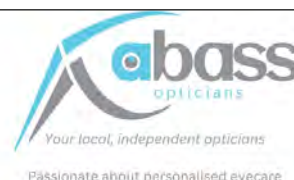
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STABLE & WICK BAKERY AND FARM SHOP

Stable & Wick has launched its build-your-own hampers for Christmas. Christmas cakes can be pre-ordered in both large and mini sizes, and the shop is taking orders for festive essentials including fruit, vegetables, bakery items, cheeses, and meats. In 2026, Stable & Wick plans to expand its connection with Wick Farm by offering more opportunities to buy homegrown produce, including Wick Farm lamb and beef. Following the success of summer yoga sessions provided by Yoga with Polly, there are plans to continue with outdoor wellness sessions when the weather allows. Planning is also underway for pick-your-own sunflowers and guided farm tours next year. The S&W Run Club continues every other Saturday at 7:45am, offering a 5-6K farm run followed by refreshments. Stable & Wick are grateful for the support they have received during the year: "The community that has grown around S&W means so much to us and we can't wait to share another year with you all!"

REPAIR CAFE

The Repair Cafe team would like to remind people that they are available to sort out broken tree lights, Christmas ornaments and nativity figures. As an added incentive, mulled wine will be on the menu this year. The cafe visits Downton on the first Saturday of every month, from 10am - 12 noon, so will be ready to receive your repair jobs at the Baptist Church, on 6 December, 4 January and 7 February.

The team currently has vacancies for a book repairer, a seamstress and a wickerworker.

Over Christmas, the cafe at Redlynch Village Hall will be open for pick-up and drop-off only on 24, 31 December and 2 January. Service will resume in the New Year - Wednesday and Friday mornings, 10am - 12 noon. More information from downtonrepaircafe@gmail.com or loverrepaircafe.org.uk.



CHAPLAIN CAFE AT TRAFALGAR SCHOOL SEEKS DONORS

The Chaplain Café opens every Thursday morning at Trafalgar School and has become an established part of the school calendar, offering a welcoming space for students to talk and spend time together at the start of the school day. Hot drinks are provided - the ever popular hot chocolate with whipped cream and marshmallows being a staple.

Harry, who hosts the cafe, is on the lookout for donors to help with the running costs. He says, "Support in sourcing provisions would enable the café to continue running and maintain this important weekly provision for students." Local sponsors (businesses or individuals) can contact Harry at harry.mensah@the-bridge.org.uk

Harry serving at the cafe



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Special Christmas Services in December at the churches

Wednesday 3rd	9.30am – 11am Farm Nativity with animals, The Playroom, Baptist Church Field
Sunday 7th	6pm Churches Together Village Carol Service with Downton Band, St Laurence
Thursday 11th	10.30am Christmas Service with carols and mince pies, Baptist Church
Sunday 14th	10.30am Christmas Service led by and for young people & Families, Baptist Church 3.30pm Christingle Service with tea and cake, All Saints' Charlton
Thursday 18th	11am Traditional Christmas Service followed by lunch, Baptist Church 6.30pm Mass and Carol Service, Church of the Good Shepherd (Roman Catholic)
Sunday 21st	6.30pm DBC Candlelit Carol Service followed by refreshments 7pm Christmas Service, New Life Community Church, Memorial Centre
Christmas Eve 24th	4pm Informal Nativity, come dressed as a favourite nativity character, All Saints' Charlton 5pm Christingle Service for families supporting The Children's Society, St Laurence 11pm Candlelight Midnight Communion, St Laurence
Christmas Day 25th	10.30am Christmas Morning Holy Communion, St Laurence 10.30am Christmas Celebration, children invited to bring a gift to show, DBC
Monday 29th	6pm The Larder Christmas Meal. Book on DBC website

For details of other Roman Catholic Services at Christmas go to salisburycatholic.org (Salisbury) or avonstour.co.uk/parishes/fordingbridge/ (Fordingbridge)

BAPTIST CHURCH – CHRISTMAS EVENTS

New this year is the DBC Escape Room: "Mission See the Light!", a free experience, running all day from Monday 8 December – Friday 12 December. It's an escape-room-style experience for young people to explore the Advent story by solving puzzles and challenges. Schools, organisations and family groups of up to 10 children can book via the church website. It's a free event.

The Farm nativity on Wednesday 3 December, 9.30am – 11am with real farm animals on the church field is open to all, but especially for young children and their adults.

On Thursday 11 December at 10:30am there's a carol service, followed by mince pies. The following Thursday, 18 December, there will Christmas Service at 11am followed by a free community lunch at 12pm. Contact the church office to attend or volunteer to help.

The Larder will remain open as normal throughout the Christmas period. Salisbury Food Bank's opening times are available on their website. The Larder Christmas meal is on Monday 29 December, 6pm, and open to anyone who wishes to attend. Book a place via the church's website.




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DOWNTON BOWLING CLUB – SEASON ROUND-UP 2025

The season has finished, but social events continue with a coffee morning (involving a game of Bingo) on 10 December. The club will reopen in April.

A spokesperson for the club said, “It’s been another enjoyable and successful year for Downton Bowling Club, with plenty of friendly competition, fine bowling, and great company along the way. Teams from the club competed in various leagues and acquitted themselves well. The year’s Club Competitions were closely fought.”

If you’re are interested in playing bowls, contact Ivan on 07910 290735 or atbuib7@icloud.com. Competition results:

Novices: Steve Tanner; Sets: Paul Tanner; Two Woods: Ivan Buss; Mixed Triples: Paul Tanner, Ivan Buss & Colin Morris; Ladies Pairs: Shelley Head & Ann Noble; Men’s Pairs: Steve Tanner & Martin Davies; Aussie Pairs: Paul Tanner & Paul Bromage; Ladies Singles: Jane Smith; Men’s Singles: Ivan Buss; Champion of Champions: Ivan Buss. Special awards also went to: Ralph Bentley Cup: Janet Barnes; Green Keepers Cup: Colin Morris.



Ivan Buss presenting the Ralph Bentley Cup to Janet Barnes

CROQUET AT HAMPTWORTH

Taster sessions are available with the Hamptworth Croquet Club at Hamptworth Golf Club. Call Linda Wood on 07761 790341 or go to croquet-websites.org.uk/hamptworth/.



GOOD COMPANIONS


The club meets on Tuesdays in the Memorial Hall from 2 - 4 pm. Regulars pay £2 and visitors pay £2.50. Refreshments are included. Highlights for December and January include a Christmas Bring and Buy on 9 December and a party on 16 December, when the Community Choir will be providing the entertainment. The last meeting before Christmas is on 23 December. More games take place in January, with Kate Edgar visiting on 20 January. Contact Julia Whitmarsh on 510601 for more information.

WARDROBE

The wardrobe has grown enormously since its creation with lots of donations each month. A huge effort goes in to enable the Wardrobe to take place. A small army of helpers sort the clothes, set up and clear away. More help is always welcome to pre-sort from 10am on Wardrobe dates, and clear away from 3.15pm onwards. The first three Wardrobes for 2026 are on 16 January, 27 February and 20 March at Downton Baptist Church. Everyone is welcome to find clothes that they need.



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A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM PC MARC EVANS

As we head toward Christmas, life in the village naturally gets a little busier — and sometimes a little more rushed! Please take extra care with your speed when driving through the village. The darker mornings and earlier evenings make it harder to see, and we often have excited children about.

I'll be around the village over the coming weeks, keeping an eye on speeding and parking. I've also been working closely with the Parish Council to address some parking concerns that have been raised - particularly around junctions where poor parking can cause real safety issues. Please remember that buses, HGVs, and other larger vehicles still need space to move safely through the village.

Fraud Awareness: Unfortunately, there have been a few recent reports of fraud in our local area. Please take a moment to read these reminders and share them with friends and family:

Police Impersonation Calls: A genuine police officer will never ask you to act on their behalf or assist in an ongoing operation. If you receive a call like this, hang up immediately and do not engage further. If the police genuinely need to speak with you, we will visit in person. If in doubt, contact a friend or call me directly — together, we can help stop these scams from spreading.

Fake Parking Tickets: If you receive a fine for parking somewhere you've never been, your vehicle registration may have been cloned. Please do not pay the fine —, report it to the police straight away.

Door-to-Door Sales: Be cautious of uninvited sellers offering services such as gardening, roofing, or property maintenance. As a rule, if you didn't ask for them to visit, it's safest not to open the door. If you do need work done, research local traders and always get a written quote and invoice. If you feel pressured — or think a neighbour might be at risk — call 101 or email me directly.

A Few Final Safety Tips: As Christmas approaches, please make sure your home is secure when you go out — lock all doors and windows. We've had some daytime burglaries in the Downton area previously so a few extra precautions can make a big difference.

Thank you for your help in keeping our community safe, friendly, and mindful during this busy season.

Pc Evans Email: Marc.Evans@wiltshire.police.uk. Mobile 07876 817927 when on duty or call 101.



PC Evans on Remembrance Sunday

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

At the society's recent meeting, Floral Art demonstrator, Andrea Hillyard, created four floral arrangements. She described making a Christmas Brussels sprouts wreath for her daughter, a photo of which was posted on social media and then went viral, resulting in Andrea being interviewed on TV. Raffle winners were able to take home one of the four pieces created during the demonstration.



The brussels sprouts wreath

The society will be contributing to the Christmas Tree Festival at St Laurence Church.



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Miss Wiggledownton's Lifestyle Column



Welcome, dear readers!

Or should I say "oi oi" - for I have been lifting weights and getting strong! You can probably feel my newfound power emanating through the page. This is all thanks to Penny of Clubbercise fame, who also runs group personal training sessions from her home in the village.

I admit, I signed up with the sole aim of building muscle and bone strength (so important in middle age and beyond) and was not expecting to enjoy it at all - but it's a hoot! Groups of three or four ladies meet on Monday afternoon, Thursday evening or Friday morning and work out in a circuit style format, completing sets of tailored exercises using an impressive selection of equipment, under Penny's expert supervision. The best bit is the banter - yes I said banter - everyone enjoys a good chin wag and a giggle, making the hour fly by. I'm loving it and am feeling and looking stronger and trimmer after only a couple of months. More info at myhhf.co.uk

In my mission to look after my body and mind I also tried out Laughter Yoga with Katie Gape at Downton Memorial Hall. Laughter yoga is based on the principle that the body doesn't distinguish between fake and real laughter, so intentionally laughing can provide the same physical and mental benefits. It combines deep-breathing with playful exercises, and simulated laughter to increase oxygen to the brain and body, reduce stress hormones like cortisol, and improve mood. Apparently the practice doesn't require a sense of humour but having experienced it - I think it definitely helps! You have to leave your inhibitions at the door and go with the flow. Also, it has nothing to do with traditional yoga, so don't turn up in full yoga wear with a mat like I did - at least it made the others laugh! Email kgape01@gmail.com.

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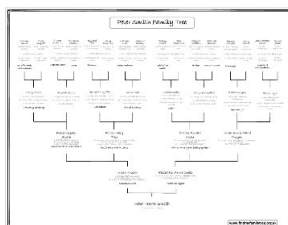
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What, Where, When**November**

Thursday	27	7:30pm	Horticultural Society AGM: Speaker David Long, Memorial Hall	
Friday	28	10am - 12 noon	"Fridays" Community Cafe, Memorial Hall	
Saturday	29	10am - 4pm	Lynn Purcell's Open House, The Corn Mill	Page 5
Sunday	30	10am - 4pm	Lynn Purcell's Open House, The Corn Mill	Page 5

December

Wednesday	3		Last date for Christmas Scout post	Page 4
Wednesday	3	9:30 - 11am	Farm Nativity, Downton Baptist Church	Page 13
Thursday	4	10am	TalkAbout: Cosmic Sparkle, Methodist Church, Woodall's	Page 8
Thursday	4	10am - 12 noon	Hearing Aid Clinic, Downton Baptist Church	

Friday 6 - Sunday 7: Downton's Big Christmas Weekend. Pages 2, 3, 4.

Saturday	6	10am - 1pm	Repair Cafe in Downton, Downton Baptist Church	Page 12
Friday	12	6pm	Newlife Community church Movie Night, Memorial Hall	
Tuesday	16	7:30pm	Downton Band at Charlton, All Saints Church	Page 18
Sunday	21	6:30pm	Downton Baptist Church Carol Service	Page 13
Sunday	21	6:30pm	Downton Band / Community Choir concert, St Laurence Church	Page 18
Monday	22	3:30 - 5pm	Christmas Brick Fun, Downton Library	
Wednesday	24	5pm	Christingle Service, St Laurence Church	Page 13

January

Friday	9	6:30pm	Pinocchio, Memorial Hall	Front page
Friday	16	2 - 3:30pm	The Wardrobe, Clothing Exchange, Baptist Church	Page 14
Friday	30	10am - 12 noon	"Fridays" Community Cafe, Memorial Hall	

**ASHLEY GRANGE
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DOWNTON DOWNTIME

Activities for anyone with memory
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Tuesdays 10.15am - 12pm Free
Sherwood Suite, Wick Lane SP5 3NF
Jane Abel musecic@gmail.com

GOOD COMPANIONS

Activities for older people
Tuesdays 2pm - 4pm £2.50 fee
Memorial Hall

INDOWNTON NEWSLETTER

Sponsored and supported by Downton Baptist Church

Winter Issue: Deadline for contributions: 18 January 2026

Publication date: 1 February 2026

Distributed to every house in the village, 5 times a year.

For information about contributing or advertising, email:
editor@indownton.org.uk or visit indownton.org.uk

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Telephone: 01725 513191

Whilst we make every effort to avoid errors, we're human!

We apologise for the mistakes we missed.

Production Team: Rosemary Leo, Paul Leo, Natalie Wright

DOWNTON BAND AT CHRISTMAS

The band is preparing for its busiest time of year, including its usual events and full carolling schedule. The band plans to cover all areas of the village and aims to visit as many residents as possible, depending on weather conditions. Members will gather outside the Co-op on Christmas Eve from 10am, and, in keeping with tradition, will be carolling around the village from 4am on Christmas morning.

Collection buckets will be available during appearances; Downton Band operates as a charity and relies on donations to support its future activities and development. On Sunday 21 December at 6.30pm, the band will be joined by the Downton Community Choir for a Christmas Concert at St Laurence Church. The band will also attend Charlton-All-Saints church on Tuesday 16 December at 7.30pm for its annual Christmas Concert. On Friday 19 December the band will be at Downton Brewery from 7pm.

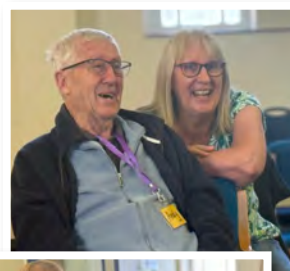
Village Carolling is from 7pm - 9pm on the following: 1 Dec - Moot Lane North, Saxonhurst, Moot Lane, Moot Close, Roman Meadow, Avon Meadow, Saxon Meadow; 8 Dec - Moot Lane South, Moot Gardens, Avondyke, Squarey Close, Moot Lane, Downlands Close and Twynham Close; 11 Dec - Sidings, Hamilton Park, The Sidings, Lode Hill, Barford Lane, High Street, Church Hatch. 15 Dec - Charlotte Close, Marie Ave, Catherine Cres, Joanna Close, Elizabeth Close, Greenacres, Headlands; 18 Dec - The Borough, High Street, Church Leat, The Borough, Green Lane; 19 Dec - Morgan Close and Downton Brewery.



DOWNTON DOWNTIME

Downton Downtime is a weekly term-time gathering for people living with dementia, their carers and older adults. It's open to everyone who would like to be involved. Sessions run every Tuesday from 10am - 12pm at Downton Baptist Church.

The group offers a relaxed, inclusive space with refreshments and a chance to meet others. The activities vary from week to week, from Move & Make Music with Sounds Better CIC, to crafts, games, puzzles, or gentle movement. Participation is optional, and volunteers are on hand to provide support. Carers are warmly welcomed - to join in, take a breather, and connect with others who truly understand. More information: Slock@beyonddementia.org.uk or visit a session.



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THANK YOU!

A big thank you to Veronica Batchelor at St Laurence Church for doing such an amazing job at our son Archie Ray Philpot's christening. We had the most wonderful day, and everyone commented on how fantastic you were. We are so grateful - thank you! Many thanks, Jessie M Philpot

The Cuckoo Fair would like to thank the generosity of local business Toomers Ltd for once again sponsoring the Fair and providing the road barriers. Equally our thanks go to Batt Broadbent Solicitors who are again sponsoring the printing of our Day Leaflet.

Stable & Wick would like to say a huge thank you to everyone. "The community that has grown around S&W means so much to us, and we can't wait to share another fantastic year with you all! A special thank you goes to our incredible S&W team for their hard work, enthusiasm, early mornings, and the effort they put in every single day to make S&W what it is."

Do you have someone in the village that you would like to thank? Let us know: editor@indownton.org.uk

'Fridays' Community Cafe wouldn't be possible without the unsung heroes that turn up each month: Sylvia, who washes the tablecloths; bakers Jane, Mandy, Jan, Susan, Hilary, Kate and Terry who regularly bring homemade cakes. Where would we be without our washer uppers, Mo, Jane, Mandy, Jane, Carol, Terry, Jan, Terry, Ellen? Last but not least, we have Andy, Will, David and Steve who set up and put away table and chairs each month. When school holidays permit, Oliver & George help with tidying up. Thanks to all of you.

A huge effort goes in to enable the Wardrobe to take place each month. Thank you to everyone who has donated, sorted, helped set up/clear away during 2025 and for partnering with us.

The Larder would like to thank our generous community for harvest gifts and continuing support. Particular thanks go to Downton Primary School, The Trafalgar School, St Laurence Church, contributors at the Co-op, and the Lover/Downton Repair Cafe.

Malcolm Dean, would like to thank those who came to the Late Summer Ball, and everyone who helped.

DOWNTON COMMUNITY CHOIR

Christmas is a busy period for the Community Choir. This year, the choir will perform at the village Christmas tree lighting on the Borough on Friday 5 December, at the St Laurence Christmas Tree Festival on Saturday 6 December, at the village carol service on Sunday 7 December, and at the Good Companions Christmas party at the Memorial Hall on Tuesday 16 December. The choir will also sing outside The Goat on Christmas Eve.

New members are welcome. The choir is non-auditioned and open to individuals with a range of musical experience. Rehearsals take place from 7:30pm - 9pm every Wednesday during term time in the Sherwood Room at Downton Football Club on Wick Lane. The choir is happy to sing at local fundraising events - if you are organising something, then do get in touch. For further information, contact keedgar@aol.com or visit kateedgarmusic.com.



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 Office Hours: Monday - Friday
 10am - 3pm
clerk@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk
admin@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk
downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

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VILLAGE WEBSITE

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DOWNTON BAPTIST CHURCH (DBC)

South Lane, Downton SP5 3NA
 Sunday Service: 10.30 am (check website for latest details)
 Rev Philip Rhoades: philip@downtonbaptist.org 07468 491143
 Rev Katy Ulyatt: katy@downtonbaptist.org 07786 248880
 Church Office open Monday - Thursday, 9am - 1pm 512971
 Email: office@downtonbaptist.org Web: downtonbaptist.org

ST LAURENCE PARISH CHURCH (C of E)

Church Hatch, Downton SP5 3PU
 Sunday Service: 10.30 am (check website for latest details)
 Cafe Church 4th Sunday 10.30 - 11.30am
 Team Vicar: Revd Veronica Batchelor 513878;
veronicaforestandavon@gmail.com
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CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD (ROMAN CATHOLIC)

Barford Lane, Downton SP5 3QA
 Mass 3rd Thursday of the month 6.30pm
 Service of the word Tuesdays 6.30pm (via zoom on weeks when no mass on Thursdays). To join, contact John Elliott 07980 921558
 Telephone: 01722 333581; office@salisbury Catholics.org

NEW LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH (NLCC)

4th Sunday of the month Word & Worship Service: 7pm
 Bonvalot Room, Memorial Centre, The Borough, Downton SP5 3NB
 Life Group Wednesday evenings (contact office for details)
office@newlifecommunitychurch.co.uk

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH (C of E)

Lower Road, Charlton All Saints, SP5 4HQ
 Parish Communion 4th Sunday 9.30 am (check website for latest details)
 Chalke Valley Team Rector: Revd Dr Ruth Howlett-Shipley 01722 697022
achurchnearyou.com/church/9472/

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BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP @ DBC

Wednesdays 11am - 12.30pm
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LITTLE BUDS (NLCC)

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 Bonvalot Room, Memorial Centres

THURSDAYS (DBC)

10.30am coffee/cake
 11am short church service
 2nd & 4th Thursdays lunch @ 12pm

THE GARDEN (DBC)

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 Open for gardening or to share tea in the garden
 Sundays 2.30 - 4.30pm

THE WARDROBE (DBC)

Free Clothing Exchange
 Usually 3rd Friday 2 - 3.30pm
 See article to confirm dates

THE LARDER (DBC)

Free food, every week.
 Open for donations and collections
 Monday 6 - 7pm
 Wednesday 9 - 10am