

FREE

Spring InDownton



Cuckoo Fair 2026

This year's Cuckoo Fair is on Saturday 2 May. The Borough will be closed to all traffic from 8:30am - 6pm, but may open earlier if the crowds have cleared. There will be at least 60 new stall holders this



year, including 20 who live within 10 miles of Downton. Over 40 of these stall holders will be selling work they have handmade. Many food vendors are returning, but there will also be a new Thai street food vendor, two new coffee stands, and boba tea.

Residents will be issued with a non-transferable parking voucher for the day. Visitors using the car parks will be charged £10 per car, with the proceeds going to the local charities/schools that manage the facilities. The X3 buses will be running (as usual). Toilets in the Memorial Gardens will be closed, but other toilets (including accessible ones) will be available and well signposted around the site.

The Fair Committee works hard to run the Fair as a non-profit making event and has to deal with escalating costs, as well as the requirement to adhere to all health & safety protocols, local guidance, and policies. The ongoing support and cooperation of the local community is always welcome and much appreciated. The committee is, once again, grateful to local company Toomers Limited for their generous donation and providing key safety equipment, and to Batt Broadbent Solicitors for kindly sponsoring the Day Leaflet. For further information visit cuckoofair.co.uk

In this issue...

There are a couple of appeals inside which deserve support.

The post office van that visits the village every Friday needs more business to keep coming to Downton. Read more on page 17.

The Memorial Hall is around 175 years old. On page 8 the Trustees explain how it needs investment to make it fit for today's world.

We love receiving photos of the village and on page 10 we've got some great pictures of Downton's river flooded fields and signs of spring.

The village will be gearing up to welcome thousands of visitors for Cuckoo Fair.

Enjoy spring in our lovely village.

PARISH COUNCIL WORKING WITH THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Parish Council and Downton Primary School are planning a joint project, which has been chosen by the children, who took part in a vote organised by the School Council. Two representatives of the School Council attended the Parish Council meeting in March, to report back on their choice - to organise a village park run. The Parish Council will now allocate a budget and further details of the project will be on the agenda for discussion in April. Meanwhile, Parish Councillors and other volunteers are helping the Primary School to plant some trees in their grounds. The collaboration is a continuation of previous work done in the Memorial Gardens.



EASTER AND HOLY WEEK SPECIAL SERVICES & EVENTS

Downton Churches welcome you to join their Easter celebrations

PALM SUNDAY 31 March	10.30 am 10:30 am	Holy Communion Morning worship, all age.	St Laurence DBC
MAUNDY THURSDAY 2 April	11 am 6.30 pm	Maundy Thursday service with communion Evening Service with simple Passover meal	DBC DBC
GOOD FRIDAY 3 April	9:30 am - 11.30am 1.15 pm - 2pm 2 pm	Easter crafts for families Downton Churches Together Walk of Witness, starting at St Laurence Church and finishing at Downton Baptist Church Downton Churches Together Good Friday Service	DBC DBC
EASTER SUNDAY 6 April	8.30 am 9:30 am 10.30 am 10:30 am	Easter Sunday Reflective Service Light Breakfast Easter Communion Easter Morning Family Celebration	DBC DBC St Laurence DBC

For details of Roman Catholic Services, call 01722 333581 or go to salisburyrcatholicdeanery.org

GOOD FRIDAY CRAFT MORNING AT DBC

A craft morning for families at DBC on Good Friday from 9.30am will be a chance for children to spend a couple of hours using a range of materials. It includes a short Easter blessing.

It promises fun for all ages and there's no charge. It will be in the church garden if the weather permits.

More details at downtonbaptist.org or contact the church.



Crafting at DBC

MOOT EASTER EGG HUNT

The Moot's Easter Egg Hunt is on Monday 6 April, with gates opening at 10:30am for an 11am start. It costs £3 per child (11 years old and under), with no charge for adults. The organisers request no dogs or unaccompanied children. All funds raised will be in aid of The Moot Preservation Trust. Refreshments will be available. In case of bad weather, the alternative date will be Saturday 11 April.



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HOSPICE FUNDRAISER AT MEMORIAL HALL

An evening of photographs of Africa will be held on 29 May at the Memorial Hall, raising funds for Salisbury Hospice. The presenter, Peter Dowling, is promising “a photographic account of recent forays into the bush in Africa”, and it will feature birds and animals of Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia and Botswana. Doors open at 7pm for a 7:30 start. Tickets (available on the door) cost £10, including a glass of wine.



Masai Mara sunrise

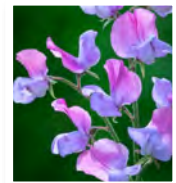
DOWNTON'S SCOUTS AND GUIDES HAVE SPACE

The 1st Downton Guides have space for girls aged 10 - 14 years to join them for weekly meetings at the Baptist Church hall offering “fun, friendship and adventure.” They have a Facebook page and can be messaged for more information.

The 1st Downton Scout Troop also has space for young people aged 10.5 - 12 years. The troop meet Friday evenings 6:30 - 8:30 at the HQ on Barford lane, Downton. If you know of a young person interested in joining them for camping, cooking, outdoor skills, climbing & adventure then get in touch through email scouts@downtonscouts.org.uk or call 07818 872431.

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Horticultural Society are “proud and privileged” to welcome Darren Everest, the Chelsea Gold Medallist, to Downton. He will be giving an illustrated talk ‘Growing Sweet Peas for Showing’ in the Memorial Hall, at 2.30pm on Wednesday 8 April. Darren has been growing and showing Sweet Peas for over 30 years, and also has a passion for dahlias. He will probably have some of his hand packaged Sweet Pea seeds and his book 'Show Time' for sale. Everybody is welcome to come along and there is no admission charge, although the society is grateful for donations from non-members. There will be refreshments, a raffle and a sales table. Additional parking will be available in the Primary School car park as the event is during the Easter holidays.



The Plant and Table-top Sale this year will be on Saturday 9 May. Donations of plants to sell would be welcome on the day of the event. Surplus plants that you want to donate can be taken to the Memorial Hall from 12 noon or contact the society if you would like them to be collected. Tabletops will soon be available to book, at a cost of £5 per table - with no charge for charities. To reserve a table, contact Chris Parry (514511). The summer show will be on June 6. Schedules available from Chris Parry.

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DOWNTON’S MACE: EXPLORING HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS

Hidden deep within the store of Salisbury Museum is the “Downton Mace”. This ‘staff of office’ was made by a London silversmith, Gabriel Sleath, in 1713. It bears the Duncombe coat of arms and the chevron of the Eyre family. It was given by the borough MPs, or perhaps by Sir Charles Duncombe’s heir at the time when the village had two MPs elected by property owners.

It’s a large object, and whether it is correct to describe it as a mace was the subject of correspondence between the curator of Salisbury Museum in 1921, Frank Stevens, and Lord Radnor and his

agent. The mace was inspected by a party of Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries and Mr Stevens reported that it should be more properly described as a Beadle’s Staff. He said that it is unusually ornate for this type of ceremonial staff. Copies of this correspondence are in the Downton History Group’s archive.

Sir Charles Duncombe was a banker and politician who was a Conservative Member of Parliament and Lord Mayor of London and high up in the court of Charles II and James II. He was very rich and is thought to have owned 75% of the burgages in Downton when he died in 1711. He was MP for Downton several times between 1695 and 1711.



Duncombe coat of arms

Elizabeth Hutchinson’s book, ‘Downton, the town that became a village’, relates the story of the political scandal in 1832 when the Reform Act meant the disenfranchisement of the borough. Mr Hobbs was the mayor of Downton and was asked to hand over the mace to the lord of the manor at the request of the manor court. By this time the mayor’s duties were mainly ceremonial but he refused to hand over the mace because the correct papers were not produced. He took the mace with him when he moved to Southampton to a house he named Mace Cottage! The 6th Earl of Radnor purchased the mace for the village in 1921 from a pawnbroker’s shop in Southampton, which will explain why it was the subject of correspondence between Lord Radnor and the museum in the same year.



Chevron of the Eyre family

The mace has been brought out a number of times for special events during the last century, notably when it was carried from The White Horse to St Laurence Church to mark the coronation of Elizabeth II. The museum has a picture of the mace being carried in procession down Minster Street in Salisbury. The last known outing was in 2009 when Chris Hall and David Waymouth (author of

‘Downton 7000 years of an English Village’) were photographed with the mace in the Memorial Hall, although if you know of a more recent outing, do let us know.

It is hoped that the mace may be seen again in the village in the future although it requires special arrangements because of its age and value. The Parish Council owns the mace today, and who knows, maybe at next year’s Cuckoo Fair, visitors might be able to view the magnificent symbol of the time when Downton had a mayor and two



The mace or ceremonial staff



*The mace in procession in Minster Street
Photo: Salisbury Museum*

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FILM EVENING CELEBRATES NEW PROJECTOR AND SCREEN

The Memorial Centre, in conjunction with Film Expo South, is holding an evening for film lovers on Friday 24 April - showcasing the new projector and drop down screen. It starts at 7.30pm (doors open 7pm). Film Expo South has curated a collection of 5 short films (45 minutes in total) and 1 longer film (75 minutes), promoting and inspiring independent filmmakers. The films cover a variety of genres – some are funny, others sad, poignant or thought provoking.

A licensed bar and refreshments will be available.

For more information, including further details of the films, see filmexposouth.com (go to 'festival') or the memorial hall website downtonmemorialcentre.co.uk

Tickets are £10, available from the Borough Café (cash only) or, to pay by BACS, text 07760415818 saying how many tickets you would like. The evening is not suitable for children.



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Playing Away

Aldo and his wife slip off to the seaside to re-live the fun that drew them together all those decades ago.

Night Armour

Make-up, aides, and killer heels boost a young widow's confidence on a blind date, but she didn't bargain on him returning.

What Happened to Evie

A schoolgirl's splintered memories reveal a reality that when revisited from an alternative perspective uncovers a very different truth.

Home To the Hangers

A war-weary soldier finds healing in his familiar haunts. A poem by Edward Thomas.

Ace

Two bored urban boys try to annoy an old man in a mobility scooter by cycling up to him and yelling in his face. His response is anything but predictable.

The Banjo Boys (the longer film)

A journey from the dusty streets of Malawi to the stages of Zanzibar, Europe and the US, confronting the harsh realities of life as artists and embracing the transformative power of music.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Following concerns about road safety, the Parish Council has carried out a pedestrian survey. Together with evidence from the traffic survey strips that were recently placed around the village this will help to inform Wiltshire Council if any further speed restriction measures need to be taken.

Parish Steward Steve, who has been recovering from an injury - and also been doing other work in the county sorting potholes - should be back in April. Let the Parish's admin officer know if you notice any jobs that Steve could undertake.

One of the beech trees in the Memorial Gardens was due to be felled at the end of March due to a fungal disease rendering it unsafe, which is why the whole of the park was recently closed. DPC has obtained a grant for a commemorative oak to mark the end of the Second World War. This will be planted nearby by the Cadets with a short service at 11am on the 11 April.

Volunteers are always needed by the Council for maintenance tasks - eg footpath clearing / sanding down and repairing benches. The Parish needs handy people to help keep it looking its best. The message is: "If you are still feeling blue after all that rain, cheer yourself up by making 2026 the year of volunteering - or why not join the Parish Council as a Councillor? Help influence projects, get things done and make decisions for YOUR Parish!" Parish Council meetings are held on the second Monday of the month in the Bonvalot Room in the Downton Memorial Centre. Meetings usually start at 7pm. There is always a public question time at the beginning of the meeting.

Susan Parsons is the Administrative Officer and Tree Warden for the Parish Council. She can be contacted on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 07483 344035 admin@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk Where appropriate, she may redirect queries to Councillors or to the Parish Clerk.

It is important to report anti-social behaviour or any crime or disturbance to the local Police. The Police don't respond to reports on Facebook. In an emergency dial 999: if there is an immediate danger to life, someone is using violence or is threatening to be violent, a crime is happening right now, like a house burglary or a theft, the suspect is still at the scene. If the problem is a non-emergency, then dial 101: if you are experiencing anti-social behaviour, door knocking etc. The local PC is Marc Evans, and local police can be reached through dialling 101, or his mobile 07876 817927 which is active when PC Marc is on duty.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 2026

The Downton Christmas Tree Festival will be returning in 2026, from 4 - 6 December. As usual, the festival will take place in St Laurence Church, and local musicians are being invited to provide entertainment. Please do get in touch if you can help in any way: by donating to the gift stall; exhibiting an item; helping on the day; baking a cake. Further information from Rose Bloomfield at downtonchristmastreefest@gmail.com

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REPAIR CAFE

The Repair cafe is expecting to receive its 9000th repair job during April - a bottle of Prosecco awaits the lucky client. The cafe visits Downton on the first Saturday morning of each month 10am - 12 noon at the Baptist Church. The next few dates are: 4 April, 9 May (a week later due to Cuckoo Fair), 6 June. Repairs are carried out in exchange for a donation to charity.



Amongst recent repairs are several historic items: a spinning wheel (which the repairer and his family have enjoyed using too!); a 19th century Swiss cylinder music box, which as well as being mechanically overhauled, has had its veneer renewed; and an electro plated, spirit fuelled, tilting kettle (commonly used in the 1900s).

Team members Peter and Lawrence are moving on to new things, as new members, George and Terry, have joined up. For more information contact downtonrepaircafe@gmail.com or visit loverrepaircafe.org.uk

DOWNTON BAND

The band recently competed in the annual Regional Finals in Torquay. Although they did not place as highly as anticipated, the experience was nevertheless positive. This was a first ever competition for some members and a return to contesting for others.




The band at the regional finals

The performance on the day was strong, and the band report that everyone thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Preparations are underway for the spring and summer programme, beginning with the Cuckoo Fair. The Senior, Training, and Beginners bands will all perform during the day, followed by a free concert at 5pm on Sunday 3 May in the Memorial Hall.

GOOD COMPANIONS

Amongst the highlights of the Good Companions programme is a talk by Jim Reid on April 7. Jim provides a personal view of life “on the dry hill of Sarisberie”, explaining why the city developed around the cathedral and how the community evolved. His presentation includes an imaginary walk of Salisbury’s medieval streets, exploring the meaning behind street names and historical development prior to the arrival of the railway. Dave Dawson will be bringing his programme of singing and dancing on April 21, and Carol and Ceri Hurford-Jones will be talking about their sailing adventures on May 19. In between times there are games afternoons, bingo and quizzes. Good Companions meets in the Memorial Hall on Tuesdays, 2 - 4pm. Visitors are welcome - £2.50 for refreshments. More information from Julia Whitmarsh on 510601.



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THE MEMORIAL HALL NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Downton Memorial Hall was built in the 1850s originally as a school – hence two entrances at the front, one for boys and one for girls. It became the village hall when the primary school was built in 1896. There have been various additions to the hall including the current toilets and entrance in the 1990s and the new extension at the back, housing meeting rooms and the pre school, opened in 2019. The whole building is now known as the Memorial Centre.



Like many old buildings much repair work has been needed over the years. As a public building regular fire safety, electricity and gas checks are required. Currently some of the internal doors are being replaced or improved in order to meet modern fire safety standards.

The building is single skinned and the windows single glazed and there is little or no loft insulation. Consequently the building loses heat quickly. The hall is not climate friendly and the utility bills are high. A recent free energy survey indicated where major savings can be made. The top recommendations are to install solar panels and roof insulation, followed by double glazing and replacing the heating. None of these are cheap and quotes are being obtained and grants investigated.

The kitchen needs refurbishing and that the whole hall needs redecorating. However, there is a damp problem and, until this is resolved, there is no point in carrying out either of these. Funds for sorting out the damp have been raised and further fundraising for the kitchen is ongoing.

The Trustees want to avoid the need to increase hire fees. They are applying for grants but it is unlikely that these will cover all the costs and so they are asking the community for help. They will be setting up a fundraising page, so watch out for that. Meanwhile, if you have experience in applying for grants or can help in more practical ways the Trustees would love to hear from you. Phone Susan on 07875 036879.

DOWNTON DISTILLERY

The distillery has been running a series of ‘Conservation through Conversation’ talks at various venues, in partnership with the Great Bustard Group, which works to safeguard the breeding population of these birds - the heaviest flying birds in the world. The talks are about the Wiltshire Downs and the conservation efforts of the GBG, followed by a small sampling session that relates the distillery’s Great Bustard spirits back to the local provenance and the birds, talking about the partnerships created behind the scenes and how people are indirectly supporting conservation efforts. The recent talk at The Goat attracted plenty of interest. Information about further talks will be advertised on Facebook, and on the distillery’s online calendar. They will also be at the Cuckoo Fair (opposite Downton Brewery) where their spirits and drinks will be available. Cocktail classes are available once a month for up to 10 people during the summer months. More information from downtondistillery.com



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MUSIC FESTIVAL AT ST LAURENCE CHURCH

There will be a music festival in St Laurence church from 9 - 13 June, with a concert each evening, from 7 - 9:30 pm, featuring a variety of musicians. Refreshments will be available - including a bar - and each concert will have a 30 minute interval. Although admission is free, there will be a retiring collection each evening, raising money for the church.

The organisers are keen for people to visit the church and enjoy spending time there: "St Laurence church is a Grade I listed building with its origins in the medieval period, historically the most important building in the village. We hope that through this music festival, the church becomes fully accessible to all the people of the village, so that they are encouraged to use it for a variety of events. It is far too important a structure to be allowed to decline in any way."

The programme for each evening is as follows:

Tuesday 9 June

7-00 Maerefolk

7-30 Trafalgar School Choir

8-00 Interval

8-30 Salisbury Big Band

Wednesday 10 June

7-00 Navy Larks

7-30 Suite Jazz

8-00 Interval

8-30 Woodfalls Band

Thursday 11 June

7-00 AMICI

7-30 Coffee Choir

8-00 Interval

8-30 Downton Community Choir

8-50 Kate Edgar Singers

Friday 12 June

7-00 Halcyon Singers

7-30 Rum's Eg Singers

8-00 Interval

8-30 Salisbury Community Choir

9-00 Larkhill Choral Society

Saturday 13 June

7-00 Downton Band

8-00 Interval

8-30 Amesbury Community Soul Singers

SALISBURY CHOIR FESTIVAL

Downton Community Choir will be performing at Salisbury Choir Festival on Saturday 25 April at St Thomas's Church, Salisbury. The festival is being organised by Kate Edgar, Downton's Choir Director, and includes a packed programme of local choirs, performing from 10am - 8pm. Refreshments will be available all day - and there is no admission charge, allowing the audience to come and go throughout the day. Donations will be collected in aid of "Beyond Dementia" and the church. All 6 of Kate's choirs will be performing, with Downton's choir on stage at 11:30am.





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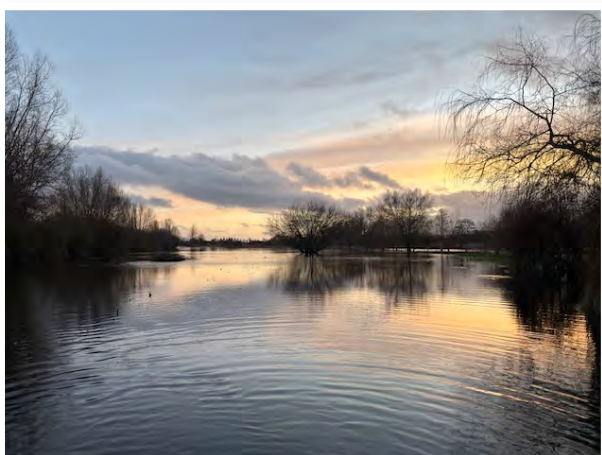
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PHOTOS OF FLOODS AND SIGNS OF SPRING

After Christmas, the rains came and the fields around the village flooded, but the flood defences held. Claire Penny sent us photos of the water around the Millennium Green and Sarah Price photographed the signs of spring.



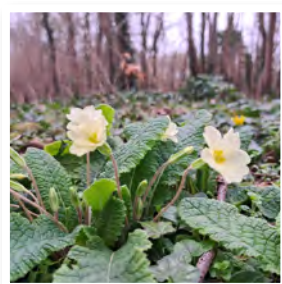
Frog spawn



The river in flood



Snowdrops



Wild primroses



The millennium green meets the river

MEET THE DOWNTON FREEMASONS

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.

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THE GARDEN AT DBC

The Garden at Downton Baptist Church has a newly opened cabin, which has meant that there is a dry space to work in. Volunteers report that it's a good place to stop for a cup of tea too.

As spring approaches the team and volunteers have been busy preparing the raised beds for sowing. Already two rows of first early potatoes have been chitted and planted up, with successional planting to follow ensuring a long harvest. Carrots and leeks have been sown, following the third rotation of the planting masterplan, which is planned carefully to follow a four year cycle between the raised beds, so that pests and diseases do not build up in the soil. The wet weather and colder temperatures have left the compost very wet, although the soil is warming quickly in the raised beds. Earlier this year three apple trees and a plum tree were planted - the buds are now swelling and ready to break. The team is hopeful that this will be a great season of harvest to fill The Larder with fresh organic vegetables.

Everyone is welcome to visit or volunteer at The Garden: details are on the church's website downtonbaptist.org



The Valentine's Day gangster themed gala, held at the Memorial Hall: sharp suits and 1920s fashion were on display. A raffle raised money for Salisbury Hospital Stars Appeal.

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SKY AT NIGHT BY MICHAEL F. BARRATT FRAS

The full moon on Thursday 2 April is known as a “Pink Moon” – named after the herb moss “pink” or wild ground phlox, a widespread flower of spring. On the night of 18/19 April, the thin crescent moon will pass the bright planet Venus and the Pleiades star cluster, creating a good photo opportunity. The next full moon (“Flower Moon”) is on Friday 1 May. There is a second Full Moon in May on Sunday 31, known as a “Blue Moon” - nothing to do with its colour, but the name given to the second of two full moons in the same month.

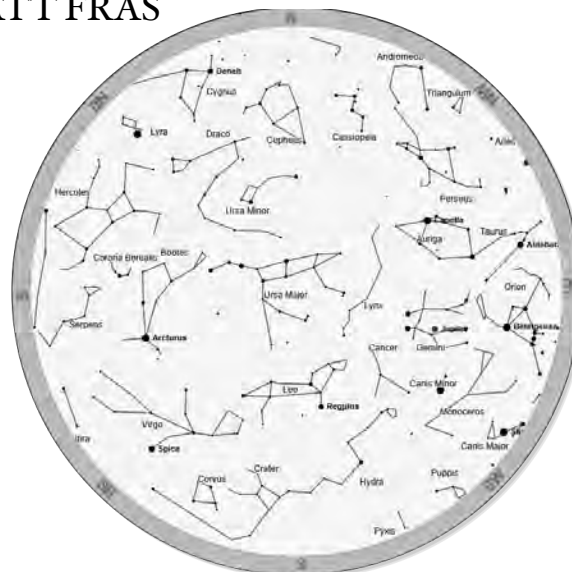
The well-known winter constellations will have all but disappeared by May, with the summer ones rising in the east, including the Summer Triangle, in the north-east, made up of the bright blue stars Deneb, Vega and Altair.

Some planets are now too close to the sun to be observed. However, Venus is particularly brilliant now, and by the end of May will not be setting until nearly midnight. It is the brightest object in the night sky, apart from the Moon. Jupiter continues to linger on as that bright “star” in the south-west as the Sun goes down. It is one of the brighter objects until towards the end of May when it will no longer be visible. If you’re looking for the planet Uranus, it will be found just to the left of Venus on the evening of 23 April. It was not discovered until 1781, when the astronomer William Herschel spotted it from his back garden in Bath. Uranus becomes less visible as May arrives. Mercury will join Venus and Jupiter in the early evening sky from May 20 and by the end of the month it will be setting after 11pm - a great opportunity to find and observe this elusive planet. Saturn returns to the morning skies in May, rising at around 3am in the east.

There may still be displays of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) during April. There are a number of good apps which provide alerts – AuroraWatchUK is recommended.

The Lyrid meteor-shower is active during the third week of April, peaking probably in the late evening of Wednesday 22 / morning of Thursday 23. Fortunately, this year’s peak coincides with a crescent Moon and is expected to be good to observe before midnight. The meteors seem to radiate outwards from a point in the constellation of Lyra (the Lyre), near the bright blue star Vega. This shower is made up of debris left from Comet Thatcher and often leaves glowing trails of dust. On May 6, Eta Aquarids – debris from Comet Halley - can be seen in the late evening, as the Gibbous Moon does not rise until the early morning.

For more information, follow Michael on Facebook at “Moot Halt Observatory” or contact him at mootastro@yahoo.



Map of Sky at night-mid April around 22.00 hours

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NEW LIFE FOR THE STAG IN CHARLTON ALL SAINTS

The former Stag Inn public house in Charlton All Saints, is now home to a modern, patient-focused dental practice and wellbeing centre including physiotherapy, beauty therapy, hairdressing, and a dental implant hub. The aim is to provide high-quality, friendly dental care in a calm and welcoming environment for individuals and families in the local community.



The practice offers a full range of general dental services, with a strong focus on prevention, patient education, and long-term oral health. A spokesperson for the practices says, “We are passionate about making dentistry a positive experience and are excited to become part of village life in Charlton and the surrounding area. We look forward to welcoming both existing and new patients and building lasting relationships within the community.”

LAURA LEAVES THE LIBRARY AND OTHER NEWS

Downton Library’s Laura Mellodey is leaving her job. She said, “if you know me, you will know I love a chatty, lively library and it’s been great celebrating all things books, singing and crafting and getting to know you all. Thank you to the volunteers who make the library such a friendly and welcoming space. I am sad to be leaving but happy to have had such a wonderful experience.”



The library has been celebrating the ‘Year of Books’ and the challenge to read a range of new books which was reported in the last InDownton can be joined at any time of the year.

There is currently a pause on Rhyme Time and Brick Creators Club. For more information, what’s on at Downton Library can be found on the Wiltshire Libraries website at libraries.wiltshire.gov.uk.

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BOWLING CLUB

Downton Bowling Club's full-size green reopens for the season on Sunday 19 April with a Members' Charity Fun Day. Players of all abilities are welcome - from those interested in competitive league play to those who simply would enjoy playing socially.

The club is actively seeking new members and will be pleased to welcome both experienced bowlers and complete beginners to one of their regular roll-up sessions: Monday afternoons from April 20, 2-4pm; Friday evenings from April 24, 6-8pm (excluding bank holidays).

There will also be free fun taster sessions on Sundays: May 10, 17, 24 and 31, from 2-4pm. All equipment, tuition, and light refreshments will be provided at no cost.

A spokesman for the club said, "Bowls isn't just a sport for older generations — it's a game for everyone! Whether you're young or old, bowls offers a great way to stay active, meet new people, and have lots of fun."

For more information, please contact Ivan on 07910 290735, email buib7@icloud.com, or visit www.downtonbc.co.uk.



CROQUET AT HAMPTWORTH

Free taster sessions of croquet are available on Sunday 10 May and 14 June, from 2 - 4:30pm at the club located at Hamptworth golf club, close to the Cuckoo Inn. Sessions are followed by tea and cakes. Apart from the requirement to wear flat shoes, all equipment will be provided. There are five well tended lawns that are used by players from a variety of different backgrounds - and who play the game for a variety of reasons. Seasoned players win competitions at home and abroad, but are always ready and willing to spend time tutoring newcomers. Members can join in 'mix ins' to get to know other players as well as take part in 'apres croquet' social events. Play can take place any time that a lawn is free. There is a modern club house with changing facilities, bar and restaurant: the terrace has far reaching panoramic views across the forest. More information from Linda on 07761790341 or just turn up to one of the taster days.

MILLENNIUM GREEN

The AGM of the Millennium Green Trust is on Thursday 9 April in the Bonvalot Room at the Memorial Hall at 7pm. In addition to the AGM business there will be a presentation from Hadrian Cook, the Chair of The Harnham Water Meadows Trust. All are welcome. Refreshments will be available and the Trustees are looking forward to meeting those who are interested in the work of the charity.



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CHARLTON EVENTS

29 March, 3:00pm

A Palm Sunday procession will take place from Warrens Lane to the church, followed by a short service in the church. An invitation to “wave palms and Sing Hosannah!”

11 April, 10:00am

A spring clean at All Saints’ Church. Participants are invited to bring cleaning equipment and join their neighbours in making the church spick and span.

17 April, 7:30pm

A quiz night will be held in the Radnor Hall. A fish and chip supper will be available.

26 April, 10:00am

A 175th birthday communion service will be led by Bishop Andrew at All Saints’ Church. This will be followed by birthday cake and a small exhibition.

9 May, 10:00am

A plant swap event will take place at All Saints’ Church - bring spare plants and seedlings to exchange. Refreshments will be available. This is an EcoChurch event.

19 May, 7:00pm

A talk titled “All Saints, Charlton All Saints: the Church and its Architect” will be given by Dr John Elliott at All Saints’ Church. Ticket information will be provided separately.

21 May, 7:00pm

A talk titled “Britford & its Church – views from local historians” will be presented by Hadrian Cook and Dr John Elliott at St Peter’s Church, Britford. Ticket information will be provided separately.

7 June, 2:00pm

A nature count will be conducted in All Saints’ Churchyard. Wildlife recorded will be submitted to the National Biodiversity Network Atlas. Refreshments will be available. An EcoChurch event.



Palm Sunday



Old image of All Saints Charlton



Britford Church



Watching nature

TALKABOUT AT WOODFALLS METHODIST CHURCH

On Thursday 2 April, presenter Tom Cunliffe talks about his novel, ‘Hurricane Force’. Tom recounts how his own experiences at sea - a boat holed in mid-Atlantic, a dodgy job on a fancy yacht, an undertow of eco-vandalism and a sailor with an ugly choice - have become the basis of his acclaimed novel. Copies of the book will be available for

purchase after Tom’s talk, price £9.99. TalkAbout is at Woodfalls Methodist Hall, The Ridge. Doors open at 10am for a 10:30 am start. Admission: £4, includes refreshments. More information from 07760 224990.



Downton Baptist Church has a strong focus on living out our faith in Jesus through serving and over the years has developed deep rooted relationships in the community. Our community facing initiatives such as the Larder, Garden and Wardrobe are all growing, with an increasing number of volunteers helping to run them.

DBC is pleased to advertise a new role of:
Community Programme Coordinator
 to help our current team with coordination, administration and pastoral support of these ministries.

A job description and requirements for the role are detailed on the church website along with details of how to apply. Follow the link to “jobs at DBC” www.downtonbaptist.org

ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS HERE!

1,900 copies of InDownton are printed five times a year. It’s delivered to every house in Downton and Charlton All Saints villages and also distributed through local shops and pubs. Adverts can be for a single issue or a year’s run of 5 issues in black and white or in colour, including changing the advert each time to advertise seasonal offers. More details at indownton.org.uk or email adverts@indownton.org.uk

SEEDY SUNDAY BRINGS IN THE CROWDS

Downton Green Network’s recent “Seedy Sunday” attracted a crowd of visitors from within and outside the village. A range of stalls, including the Repair Cafe, The Garden, The Moot and the Millennium Green, showcased commitment to sustainability within the community, and there was a chance for gardeners to take home seeds and plants that others had brought to swap. There were additional stalls on a ‘green’ theme, with stone painting and seed planting for children.

The event raised money will go towards keeping the Green Network’s operation going in the village. More information at downtongreengroup.org.uk.



BASS OPTICIANS SERVICES NOW INCLUDE HEARING CARE

Bass Opticians (in the Borough) has introduced a new in-house hearing care service. The service includes free hearing tests, as well as ear wax removal, and the latest in hearing aid technology. Home visits are available for those who are unable to visit in person. The service will be run by Debbie Risbey, an audiologist with over 25 years of experience in hearing care. Patients are promised “competitive pricing and personalised care, helping them to find the most suitable hearing solutions, along with a friendly, patient-centred approach, helping people reconnect with the sounds that matter most.” The practice points out that regular hearing checks are an important part of overall wellbeing, supporting communication, independence, and cognitive health. Appointments can be booked in person or online.



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SCHOOL GOVERNORS WANTED

An opportunity has arisen for those who are interested in making a difference to the community – you are invited to become a School Governor at The Trafalgar School in Downton. The governors within Magna Learning Partnership come through a variety of routes and with a range of different backgrounds, skills and experiences, but they are all volunteers who work together for the benefit of the schools. The trust is seeking new governors and would be delighted to hear from anyone who has:

- the ability to work well with others
- an open and enquiring mind
- the ability to look at issues objectively
- the confidence to ask questions and join in debate
- a willingness to support and enhance the values and ethos of the school

More information from Shona Desmond, Governance Manager at sdesmond@magnalearningpartnership.org.uk

THE WARDROBE

The next Wardrobe Clothing Exchange will be at Downton Baptist Church on Friday 15 May, as there is no event in April. The organising team have been thankful for the recent continuing range of good quality donations.. Please remember that bric-a-brac, children’s toys and electrical goods cannot be accepted.

POST OFFICE VAN UNDER THREAT

The visits by the mobile Post Office van may not continue unless its usage increases. It currently stops at Moot Lane and The Bull car park on Friday mornings, but the current usage needs to increase and some residents are concerned that they could lose this vital service.



Miss Wiggledownton’s Lifestyle Column



Dear reader, for this issue I have been researching the importance of our often neglected lymphatic systems - the one-way network of vessels, nodes, and organs that circulates and drains fluid using muscle movement. It’s important because it maintains fluid balance, removes waste, and supports the immune system. Modern sedentary lifestyles work against it, so I visited Lymflex in Salisbury for a Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) session. After an in-depth consultation I prepared to be squeezed like an accordion or wrung out like a cloth, but the massage is surprisingly gentle. The lymphatic system lies just below the skin, so a precise, gentle nudging is all that is needed to get it moving in the right direction. It was relaxing and afterwards I felt an increase in energy and my skin felt clearer. MLD is especially helpful for those recovering from injuries, but regular massages along with dry brushing and cold showers are recommended for everyone for optimum lymphatic vitality. Sessions are £60 at Lymflex.com.

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THANK YOU!

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

Thank you to Wiz Gerschweiler, Mark and Philippa Merrill, and Susan Parsons for all of your hard work setting up and running Downton Christmas Tree Festivals.
The new organising team.

Thank you to Peter and Lawrence from the team at Downton Repair Cafe - and good wishes for the future.

Downton Clothing Exchange
Grateful thanks to Jerry - and we wish him well in his new adventures.

Thank you for making my time at the library so wonderful. It has been an absolute pleasure and I will miss it enormously. If you know me, you will know I love a chatty, lively library and it's been great celebrating all things books, singing and crafting and getting to know you all. Thank you to the volunteers who make the library such a friendly and welcoming space. I am sad to be leaving but happy to have had such a wonderful experience. From Laura.
Editor: Thanks to you Laura - we'll miss you!

DISCOVER DOWNTON VISITOR STRATEGY

The new visitor strategy for Downton is continuing to develop with the support of the Parish Council and with funding from Wiltshire Council's towns' grant.

Following the purchase of the telephone box by the library by the parish council, the project team have investigated using it as an information point for visitors. Around the country, old telephone boxes have been used in this way and there's a good example of this nearby in Upavon.

Brown tourist destination signs are included in the plan, along with other new signs to highlight walks and other features of the village.

A key attraction is the walks around the village and up onto the downs which form part of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. The village is also on the Avon Valley long distance path and it's possible to walk or cycle into the New Forest.

Meanwhile, the Parish Council has joined Visit Wiltshire, which means that the village will have a profile when the county is promoting places to visit.


More information is at discoverdownton.uk and at the Cuckoo Fair where the team will have an information point at the Primary School entrance.





Upavon's telephone box information point

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What, Where, When				
April				
Thursday	2	10am - 12 noon	Hearing Aid Clinic, Downton Baptist Church	
Friday	3	9:30 - 11:30am	Good Friday : Easter crafts, Downton Baptist Church	Page 2
Wednesday	8	2:30pm	Horticultural Society: Growing sweet peas for showing, Memorial Hall	Page 3
Thursday	9	7pm	Millennium Green AGM, Memorial Hall	Page 14
Friday	24	10am - 12 noon	"Fridays" Community Cafe, Memorial Hall	
Friday	24	7pm	Film Expo, Memorial Hall	Page 5
Saturday	25	11:30am	Community Choir at Salisbury Choir Festival, St.Thomas Church	Page 9
May				
Saturday	2	10am - 4:30pm	CUCKOO FAIR	Front page
Sunday	3	5pm	Downton Band Concert, Memorial Hall	Page 7
Thursday	7	10am - 12 noon	Hearing Aid Clinic, Downton Baptist Church	
Sunday	10	2 - 4pm	Bowling club taster day, Wick Lane (and 17, 24, 31 May)	Page 14
Friday	15	2 - 3:30pm	The Wardrobe, Clothing Exchange, Baptist Church	Page 17
Friday	29	10am - 12 noon	"Fridays" Community Cafe, Memorial Hall	
Friday	29	7:30pm	Photographs of Africa, Downton Memorial Hall	Page 3
June				
Thursday	4	10am - 12 noon	Hearing Aid Clinic, Downton Baptist Church	
Week of	9 -13		Downton Music Festival, St Laurence Church	Page 9

ASHLEY GRANGE FRIENDSHIP GROUP
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DOWNTON DOWNTIME
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 Jane Abel muscec@gmail.com

GOOD COMPANIONS
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 Tuesdays 2pm - 4pm £2.50 fee
 Memorial Hall

INDOWNTON NEWSLETTER
 Sponsored and supported by Downton Baptist Church
 Summer Issue: Deadline for contributions: 31 May
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Distributed to every house in the village 5 times a year.

For information about contributing or advertising, email:
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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

VILLAGE INFORMATION & REGULAR EVENTS

PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Melanie Camilleri
 Telephone: 07798 698199
 Office Hours: Monday - Friday
 10am - 3pm
 clerk@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk
 admin@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk
 downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

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VILLAGE WEBSITE

downtonvillage.co.uk

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: kathy@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
 Forest & Avon Team Rector: Revd Veronica Batchelor 513878;
 veronicaforestandavon@gmail.com
 stlaurencedownton.co.uk

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NEW LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH (NLCC)

3rd & 4th Sunday of the month Word & Worship Service: 7pm
 Memorial Centre (upstairs), The Borough, Downton SP5 3NB
 Refreshments from 6.30pm
 office@newlifecommunitychurch.co.uk

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH (C of E)

Lower Road, Charlton All Saints, SP5 4HQ
 Morning Prayer 2nd Sunday 9.30am
 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/

THE PLAYROOM (DBC)

Toddler Church
 Wednesdays term time 9 - 11am

BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP @ DBC

Wednesdays 11am - 12.30pm
 Wiltshire Breastfeeding Support

LITTLE BUDS (NLCC)

Free postnatal group
 Tuesdays term time 1 - 2.30pm
 Bonvalot Room, Memorial Centres

THURSDAYS (DBC)

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

THE GARDEN (DBC)

A garden for everyone to grow food
 and flowers for The Larder
 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