FREE

Christmas InDownton

Downton Christmas Tree Festival Returns



Downton Christmas Tree Festival returns to St Laurence Church on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 December 2026, with decorated Christmas trees, live music, refreshments and stalls.

This year, funds are being raised for Downton Primary School, Trafalgar School and St Laurence Church. The event opens officially on Friday 4 December with a concert by local group Shantoosy starting at 7.30pm, with doors opening at 6.30pm. Tickets (£10) will be available in advance from The Borough Café or on the door. A cash and card bar will be available.

Throughout the festival, local musicians, choirs and community groups will provide entertainment. A full timetable is on page 2. Visitors will be able to view the Christmas trees and exhibits while enjoying homemade cakes, refreshments and hot drinks. The luxury gift stall will be back, alongside a new toy stall featuring good-quality second-hand toys, games and jigsaw puzzles. Details on entering an exhibit or contributing are on page 2.

The organisers say, "We'd love to see you at St Laurence Church this December. Help us make the 2026 festival a wonderful community event."

VILLAGE CHRISTMAS TREE SWITCH ON



Downton Parish Council is inviting residents to the annual Christmas lights switch-on on Friday 4 December at Maypole Green. The gathering will begin at 6.15pm, with the Christmas lights switched on at 6.30pm. The free event will include a festive singalong with Downton Community Choir, mince pies, mulled wine and sweet treats.

DOWNTON MOOT CHRISTMAS TREE SALE



Downton Moot's Christmas Tree Sale will take place on Friday 4 December, from 3 - 6pm, at Long Close Park, with access from The Borough. Locally grown Nordmann fir trees will be available, with prices starting at £50. Homemade refreshments will also be served. All proceeds will go towards supporting Downton Moot.

In this issue...

Our Christmas issue features lots of local festive activities. We had trouble fitting everything in and so please forgive us for having to reduce articles to make them fit the space available. We'll try and provide more space in our Winter issue in January. And in case you haven't noticed, we've got a colour masthead on the front page for the first time. Having more advertising helps us grow!

There's news on page 11 of the new address for the village website. The old site will end soon so do visit downtonvillage.uk and let us know what you think.

Meanwhile, enjoy the Christmas in Downton, and from all of us and our contributors, we wish you a joyful and peaceful festive time.

DOWNTON CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL INFORMATION



Applications are open to individuals, families, community groups, organisations and businesses wishing to enter a Christmas tree, wreath or other Christmas decoration. Forms are available on the St Laurence Church website and at various locations around the village, including the church. The closing date for entries is Friday 27 November.

Donations for the gift and toy stalls, including new, surplus or unwanted gifts and good-quality used toys, games and puzzles are welcome - as well as donations of homemade cakes and other treats. Collection / drop off can be arranged by contacting Rose Bishop - details below. Volunteers are also needed to welcome visitors, serve refreshments and staff the stalls. Volunteer shifts will generally last approximately 90 minutes, so even with only a little spare time, you could make a difference.

For further information, donations and volunteering enquiries contact Rose Bloomfield on rosannabishop@btinternet.com or downtonchristmastreefest@gmail.com, or phone 07521 266328.

Downton Christmas Tree Festival Programme

Saturday 5 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	Musical Miscellany
1.20	Fordingbridge Handbells
2.00	Northumbrian Pipes
2.40	Chris Shuker songs
3.20	Woodfalls Singers
Sunday 6 December	
10.00	St Laurence Bells
10.40	Aleks and Miriam
11.20	To be confirmed
12.00	DADA: Christmas songs
12.40	Millstream Winds
1.20	Feower
2.00	Maerefolk
2.40	Wessex Folk Orchestra
3.20	The Trafalgar School

LEISURE CENTRE CHRISTMAS



Father Christmas will be visiting the leisure centre again this year. His grotto will open for the day on Sunday 6 December, 11am - 5pm. This is a ticket-only event and tickets (for children aged 0 - 11(ish)) can be booked online at a cost of £2. Accompanying adults are free. There will be a chance to meet some of Santa's reindeer this year. All proceeds from the sale of tickets go to the Salisbury Stars Appeal charity. Details from downtonleisurecentre.co.uk The leisure centre held a successful Family Fun day towards the end of the summer - a free event, including a complimentary hog roast. David Taylor, whose company Gymies runs the centre, said: "This year's Fun Day has been the biggest yet. I estimate that we entertained between 600 and 800 visitors. We make it free as a way of giving something back to the community, but of course we want to get people into the centre to show what we do."

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• Cut and blow dries
• Children's cuts
• Gents cuts and fades

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES THIS CHRISTMAS

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

Co-op is open normal hours except for Christmas Eve 6am - 8pm, closed on Christmas Day and open Boxing Day 10am - 7pm, New Year's Eve 6am - 8pm, New Year's Day 10am - 7pm .

Stable and Wick closes early on 24 December, 8.30am - 1pm. It's open again on 28, 29 and 30 December 8.30am - 4pm. It's closed on New Year's Eve and reopens on 8 January as normal, 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 **Downton Store (Premier)** in Salisbury Road will be open Christmas Eve 7am - 8pm, Christmas Day 8am - 4pm, Boxing Day 7am - 8pm, New Year's Eve 7am - 8pm and New Year's Day 8am - 9pm. On all other days it will be open 6am - 10pm.

The Pharmacy is open normal hours except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day, 28 December and New Year's Day when it is closed. It might close early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Ellure Hair and Beauty is open 9am - 3pm on Christmas Eve. It reopens after Christmas on 29 December 9am - 5.30pm. New Year's Eve 9am - 3pm.

The **Borough Cafe** is open 9am - 2pm on Christmas Eve. It opens again on Sunday 27 December 10am - 2pm, 28 - 31 December 9am - 3pm. It's closed New Year's Day. Normal hours resume after that.

Downton Grill and Kebab is closed from Christmas Day and reopens as usual from Tuesday 29 December.

Spinnaker Fish and Chips will be closed between 21 December and 4 January.

The Goat's 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 8pm. On Boxing Day there will be food available until 7pm and the bar will close at 9pm. 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 7pm and the bar will close at 10pm. The pub will be closed between 4 and 6 January for a staff party and a little face-lift.

The Bull Hotel is closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, and will be open as usual for it's carvery on Sunday. New Year opening is to be confirmed at the time of going to print. It's new standard opening hours are Sunday, Monday 9am - 6pm, Tuesday - Thursday 9am - 10pm and Friday and Saturday 9am - 11pm.

The Wooden Spoon is open as usual except for drinks only on Christmas Day 12pm - 3pm and Boxing Day 12pm - 6pm. The kitchen will be closed on these days.

Hop Back Brewery shop shuts early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve when it's open 9am - 10am. It's open 29 - 30 December 9am - 4pm and closed New Year's Day.

Downton Brewery has a **Christmas Market at the Tap Bar** with festive food, beer and stalls with handmade gifts on Saturday 28 November from 11am - 3pm.

Thursday 17 "Thirsty Thursday" tap bar 4pm - 9pm.

Local Businesses This Christmas continued on next page…



WANTED TO RENT

Barn / garage with or without open storage

Secure; dry; 24-hour access needed - electric and water preferred

Please contact Mark 07788 208 586

Special Christmas Services in December at the churches

Sunday 6th	6pm	Churches Together Village Carol Service	St Laurence
Thursday 10th	10:30am	Christmas Celebration, including Fordingbridge Handbell Ringers. Followed by Christmas lunch	DBC
Sunday 13th	10:30am	Christmas cafe church (breakfast from 10:15am) Christmas interactive service, led by Junior Church	St Laurence DBC
Thursday 17th	10:30am	Carol Service + mince pies	DBC
Sunday 20th	10:30am 6:30pm	Holy Communion Morning Advent Service Carol Service + mince pies	St Laurence DBC DBC
Christmas Eve, 24th	5pm 11pm	Christingle Christmas Night Communion	St Laurence St Laurence
Christmas Day, 25th	10:30am	Christmas Day Communion Christmas celebration - bring a present you've already opened to show	St Laurence DBC
Sunday 27th	10:30am	Morning Worship	DBC

Local Businesses This Christmas Continued….

Friday 18 December is "Festive Friday" at the tap bar 12pm - 9pm.

Local deliveries from the brewery shop need to be ordered by 18 December and orders for collection by 21 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 4 January at 8.30am.

Downton Leisure Centre closes early on Christmas Eve at 4pm. It's closed on 25, 26 and 27. It closes again early at 4pm on New Year's Eve and is open on New Year's Day from 9am - 9pm.

LARDER CHRISTMAS MEAL

The Larder Christmas Meal will be held at Downton Baptist Church on 30 December from 6-8pm. Everyone is invited to enjoy a hot meal and companionship to celebrate Christmas and another successful year of the Larder. To go, sign up on the church's website: downtonbaptist.org

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DOWNTON BAND AT CHRISTMAS

The Band is preparing for its annual Christmas activities, with plans to visit as many areas of the village as possible for its traditional carolling (weather permitting). The band will also gather outside the Co-op on Christmas Eve. If you see them out and about, look out for their collection buckets. As a registered charity, the band relies on public donations to support its running costs and development. Another highlight of the festive programme is the band's Christmas Concert at St Laurence's Church on Sunday 20 December at 6pm, featuring a guest performance by Downton Community Choir. Admission is free.

As tradition dictates, the band will also be out carolling around Downton from 4am on Christmas morning. The band hopes to see residents at its Christmas performances and events throughout the festive season.

Village Carolling Schedule, 7-9pm

3rd Dec -Saxonhurst, Moot Lane, Moot Close, Roman Meadow, Avon Meadow, Saxon Meadow

7th Dec -Moot Gardens, Avondyke, Squarey Close, Moot Lane, Downlands Close and Twynham Close

10th Dec - Hamilton Park, The Sidings, Lode Hill, Barford Lane, High Street, Church Hatch

14th Dec - Gravel Close, Long Close, Batchelor Way, Bundy Grove, Moody Drive, Morgans Close

16th Dec - High Street, Church Leat, High Street, The Borough, Green Lane, The Borough

17th Dec - Wick Lane, West Wick, Clearbury View, Mesh Pond, Weeke Close

22nd Dec - Charlotte Close, Marie Ave, Catherine Cres, Joanna Close, Elizabeth Close, Greenacres, Headlands

23rd Dec- Spare night

24th Dec- Co op 10-3pm



SILENT DISCO

A festive Saturday afternoon silent disco for seniors will take place on Saturday 19 December at the Memorial Hall, doors opening at 3pm. The event is open to everyone. Participants are promised "refreshments, snow and a silent disco dance". The event provides opportunities for socialising and dancing, with participants welcome to dance on or off the dance floor, including seated dancing at tables. Donations towards refreshments are welcome but entirely voluntary. The organisers explain, "The joy of a silent disco is you can carry on chatting with friends if you prefer or pop on headphones supplied and listen or dance to the music. Come as you are or sparkle in your party wear."





MAINTAINING THE MOOT: EIGHT ACRES OF DOWNTON HISTORY



Volunteers meet every Thursday to carry out maintenance work across the Moot. Since the previous issue of InDownton, activities have included cutting back hedges and preparing the area beside the pond for new tree planting. A 15-foot silver birch, donated to the Moot, has been planted near the pond, with further planting planned over the winter. Volunteers have also been clearing ivy from the walls in preparation for repointing and structural buttressing work. Work is due to begin in the coming weeks. The recently rendered wall of the loggia is awaiting decoration. Discussions are taking place with Trafalgar School about a design and painting project. During wetter weather, occasional bonfires are used to dispose of waste. These are kept to a minimum and are only lit when necessary and when wind conditions are suitable, to reduce inconvenience to neighbouring properties.

Recent wildlife sightings in the Moot have included otters, mink and muntjac. Photographs of wildlife taken in the Moot are welcomed and may be considered for publication on the Moot's website.

An urn in the Moot was destroyed by three young boys in August. Information provided by visitors and users of the Moot enabled Wiltshire Police to identify those responsible. PC Marc Evans kept the trustees informed throughout the investigation, which has now reached a resolution. The trustees have expressed their thanks to PC Evans and to members of the public who provided information. Although incidents of vandalism are occasional, they are generally rare, and those responsible are usually identified.

To join the Thursday volunteer group to assist with maintenance work, or to report damage or vandalism, email the team at downtonmoot@gmail.com. Dog walkers and other visitors who enjoy the Moot's gardens are also invited to contribute towards its upkeep through a donation to the Trust. Donations can be made online at: totalgiving.co.uk/charity/the-downton-moot-preservation-trust-limited.

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INDOWNTON NEWSLETTER

Sponsored and supported by Downton Baptist Church

Winter Issue: deadline for contributions: 17 January; publication date: 30 January.

Information on contributing or advertising, email: editor@indownton.org.uk or visit indownton.org.uk

Facebook.com/InDownton. Tel: 513191

Whilst we make every effort to avoid errors, we're human! We apologise for and mistakes we missed.

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COMMUNITY CHOIR



Downton Community Choir has had a busy autumn season and is now gearing up for Christmas. The choir has taken part in 2 fund-raising events: a concert in the Memorial Hall, (in conjunction with 'Catch of the Day') raised money for Cancer Research and was very well attended. The choir also recently performed in Salisbury, as part of the Silver Salisbury programme of events.

On Friday 4 December the choir will be at the lighting of the village Christmas tree and on Saturday 5 will be performing at the Christmas Tree Festival in St Laurence Church at 12pm. As usual, they will be singing at the village Carol Service (6pm, Sunday 6 December). On Monday 14th they have a 2pm engagement at Ashley Grange, and the following day at the Good Companions' Christmas party. On Sunday 20th the choir joins Downton Band for a concert at St Laurence Church. The final performance before Christmas is on Christmas Eve at 11am outside the Co-op.

The choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings (term-time) in the Sherwood Rooms by the Leisure Centre. It is open to all - with no auditions - and tackles a varied repertoire. New members are always welcome. The next big event will be in May 2027, when they will take part in a performance of "Well Spring" at the Italianate church in Wilton, as well as performing at the Salisbury Choirs Festival. More information from Choir Director, Kate Edgar: keedgar@aol.com or from kateedgarmusic.com.

DOWNTON PRIMARY SCHOOL AWARDS

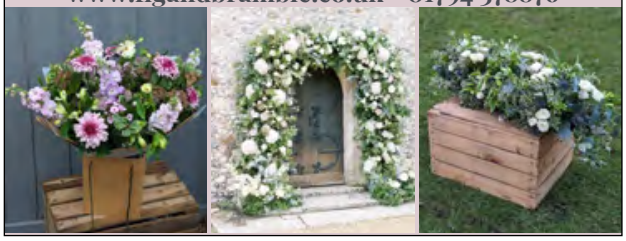
The school has again achieved the Eco-Schools Green Flag award, with distinction. The School council have worked hard for this achievement, running a variety of school-wide events and raising awareness across the school community of the importance of sustainability.

The school has also achieved the School Games Gold Award, recognising its commitment to sporting opportunities and promoting physical activity among pupils. The School Games Mark is a government-led award scheme. To achieve the award, schools must demonstrate how they encourage participation in the School Games and promote daily physical activity, with a target of 60 active minutes per day for every child and 20 minutes for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

DBC WARDROBE CLOTHING EXCHANGE FUTURE DATES

There is no December Wardrobe; the next one will be on 22 January, not the usual 3rd Friday. The Wardrobe offers free, good-quality clothing, with visitors welcome to enjoy tea, cake and a chance to meet others.

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DOWNTON GIRL GUIDING



Halloween Bake Off

Downton's Rainbows, Brownies and Guides have enjoyed a busy programme with opportunities to develop new skills, make friends and take part in community events.

The youngest members, the Rainbows, visited Hobbycraft, where they took part in craft activities. The Brownies enjoyed a day out at Longleat alongside the Guides. Future activities include a Clubbercise session, a visit to Salisbury Fire Station and preparations for Downton's Christmas Tree Festival. The Guides have been involved in planning and organising their own activities as part of Girlguiding's girl-led approach. These included a community litter pick around Downton, a Halloween Bake Off and an evening of Halloween-themed games. The Guides have also visited the Mary Rose in Portsmouth, been part of the village Remembrance Parade and are looking forward to the village's Christmas celebrations.

Downton has three units, providing opportunities for girls to develop confidence, learn practical skills, take on challenges and build friendships through a range of activities. New members are welcome at all three units, which meet on Tuesday evenings at Downton Baptist Church: Rainbows (ages 4–7): 5pm–6pm; Brownies (ages 7–10): 6.15pm–7.30pm; Guides (ages 10–14): 6.30pm–8pm

Further information and details on registering at girlguiding.org.uk/joinus.

COACH TRIPS TO BSO CONCERTS FROM DOWNTON

Salisbury Friends of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (SFBSO) organises coach trips for music lovers to attend concerts at The Lighthouse in Poole on Wednesday evenings. The BSO is a highly rated professional orchestra and provides a chance to hear excellent concerts without travelling too far.

The coach picks up and drops off passengers from Downton at the bus stop by the Bull. The cost of the concert and coach is between £48 and £53.

The coach service removes the need to drive and park. Contact 01722 782532 or email daphneince3719@gmail.com with BSO in the subject.

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SCHOOL CHOIR PERFORMS AT SALISBURY PLAYHOUSE



Last term, the school choir performed alongside the 2Tenors at Salisbury Playhouse, following lots of preparation and rehearsals. The children worked hard to learn and perfect their songs, culminating in the opportunity to perform on the main stage of the theatre.

Their performance received considerable praise from audience members, with Nessun Dorma proving a particular highlight. Singing alongside professional performers at such a prestigious venue was a significant achievement for the children and an opportunity to demonstrate their musical skills and confidence.

Mrs Carlton, the headteacher says, "A heartfelt thank you to Mrs Sims and Mr Smith for the time, care and enthusiasm they put into preparing the choir. Most of all, thank you to our wonderful children for bringing us so much joy and giving us an evening to remember!"

SCOUT CHRISTMAS POST

Salisbury and South Wiltshire Scouts will once again be running their popular Christmas Post service in Downton. Christmas cards can be sent for just 40p each using Scout Christmas stamps, with 6p from every stamp going towards supporting the Scouts. The last day for posting will be Wednesday 9 December. Cards should be placed in the special Scout postboxes located at the following places in Downton: Hair Design; The Borough Café; Day Lewis Pharmacy; St Lawrence Church; Downton Baptist Church

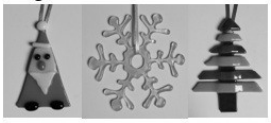
Note that the service is for deliveries only to local locations. A full list of these is available on sswscouts.org.uk/AboutUs/Christmas-Post. Cards must be posted in the special Scout postboxes and not in Royal Mail postboxes. A convenient and worthwhile way to send Christmas greetings while supporting local Scouting!

LYNN PURCELL'S SEASONAL OPEN HOUSE

Lynn Purcell would like to thank her visitors, who raised just over £990 for the Breast Care Unit at Salisbury Hospital through donations for refreshments during Hampshire Open Studios. Sales of her glass creations also supported her continued artistic work. Lynn will be holding another Open House at The Corn Mill on Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 November, featuring smaller glass gifts, Christmas decorations and cards. Coffee and mince pies will be available, with donations again supporting the Breast Care Unit. Those interested in larger sculptural pieces should email Lynn to arrange a separate appointment: lynn@thecornmill.plus.com.

SEASONAL OPEN HOUSE

Lynn Purcell invites you to
The Corn Mill,
High Street, Downton



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ANNUAL DOG SHOW RAISES £771

The Friends of the Moot organised their annual Dog Show in September, attracting more than 40 entrants and raising £771 for the upkeep of the Moot. Competitive classes included Junior Handler, Veteran Dog, Best Trick and the popular Waggiest Tail. The Rescue Dog class featured entrants from Romania, China and Wales. The date of the 2027 Dog Show will be announced once confirmed.







REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

The village marked Remembrance Sunday with the traditional ceremony when the names of those from the village who were killed in wars since 1914 were read out. Wreaths were laid , followed by a two minute silence and a procession to the Parish Church for the Royal British Legion service of remembrance.









COMMEMORATIVE OAK TREE PLANTED



A commemorative oak tree, obtained by the Parish Council to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, has been planted at the top of Barford Lane Cemetery. The tree was planted by Downton Cadets, and the planting was followed by a short remembrance ceremony. Councillor Carter read the citation, and then the Last Post was played by Richard Plaskett, followed by a two-minute silence. Councillor Jane Brentor gave a short speech of thanks and commemoration, and the Cadets laid a poppy wreath.

NEW VILLAGE WEBSITE: DOWNTONVILLAGE.UK



Following the closure of the Downton Society, work has begun on transferring the village website to a new domain, and a new format. The new web-site's address is downtonvillage.uk A link on the old site will take you there. Over the next few months, the old website will fall out of use. The new site is still being developed with the aim of maintaining the wealth of information that was on the previous site, and also linking in the news from the InDownton website and the new Discover Downton site - as well as a new website for the Heritage Trail. It is fully operational, but there are plans afoot to further streamline the information. Thanks go to the Downton Society and in particular, to Rick Ladds, for doing such a good job over several years. Feedback is welcome. If you spot anything on the new site(s) that needs to change, or you want to update your organisation's information, get in touch via editor@indownton.org.uk

DOWNTON DISTILLERY

The distillery is holding an open morning on site on Sunday 29 November from 10am - 1pm. Next year, cocktail making sessions are planned.

The distillery has been shortlisted for a Global Sustainability Award by the Drinks Business. This pitches it against Bollinger, MDCV, Grupo Avinea and the American conglomerate Domaine Bousquet - a little like David vs. Goliath.

A Christmas special – Crème de Cassis is being launched, with limited stock of 80 bottles, using black currants grown by Naked Jam in the New Forest.

RNID NEEDS VOLUNTEER

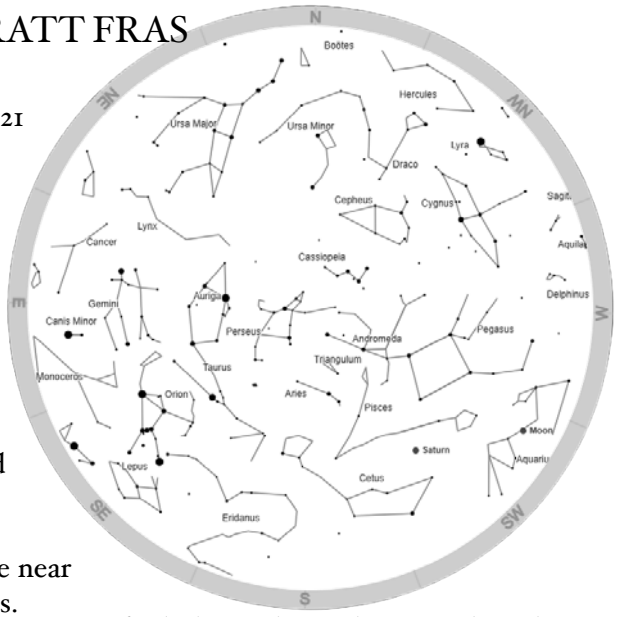
RNID is looking for a volunteer to help distribute hearing aid batteries at its monthly clinic at DBC. It takes just two hours a month, on the first Thursday from 10am to 12pm. Contact Gill Drayson on 07570 670643 or email Gillian.Drayson@RNID.org.uk.





SKY AT NIGHT BY MICHAEL F. BARRATT FRAS

This month, the bright constellations of Orion, Auriga and Gemini can be seen high up in the sky. On 21 December (winter solstice) at 11pm, the waxing gibbous Moon will occult the Pleiades star cluster in the constellation of Taurus. The full moon on Christmas Eve is known as the "Cold Moon" and is a Supermoon.



Map of night sky in mid -December at around 21.00 hrs

All the planets will be visible at some time during the month, although not all at the same time. Mercury rises well down in the eastern early morning sky, at 6 am. However, it soon gets lost in the morning twilight. Venus rises at around 3.45am and outshines all stars and planets. The waning crescent Moon forms a striking pair with the planet on the mornings of 4th and 5th. Mars and Jupiter will both be near the the star Regulus in the constellation of Leo Majoris. Mars moves southwards through Leo as the month progresses. With its rapid movement and distinct salmon pink colour, it should be easy to find and identify. Jupiter rises at around 9pm, shining brightly and will be near the Moon on 27 December. Saturn will be found in the south-west, after darkness falls, setting around 1am. It is easily found appearing reasonably bright just under the Great Square of Pegasus in the constellation of Pisces. Uranus is visible throughout the night and observable with binoculars in Taurus just below the Pleiades. It is just visible with the naked eye. Neptune is in the constellation of Pisces close to Saturn but needs a chart or an app (such as Stellarium) to identify it. The Geminids meteor shower are due between the 7 - 16 December (best between 13 - 15) This year there will be little or no interference from the Moon. Expect to see one streaking across the sky every two or three minutes.

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Horticultural Society's October meeting with NAFAS demonstrator Eileen Witt, explored the use of recycled materials in floral arrangements. One discussion point was about alternatives to Oasis floral foam, which has been banned by NAFAS because it does not biodegrade and has a negative environmental impact.

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PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Downton Parish Council
BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

The public toilets have recently been affected by vandalism, resulting in the men's facilities remaining closed until repairs can be completed. Sadly, the cost of repairing the damage will be met by local taxpayers, reducing the funds available for other community services and improvements. The Parish Council has advised that, if further vandalism occurs following reopening, it may have to consider closing the public toilets before the end of the school day. This would reduce access for residents and visitors who rely on the facilities. Parents and carers are being asked to discuss the importance of respecting public facilities with children and young people. A spokesperson for the council said "Vandalism costs the whole community. These facilities belong to our community. Please help us keep them safe, clean, and open for everyone."

The Parish Council has received two free hedge packs from the Woodland Trust. The wildlife-friendly and colourful saplings will be used to fill gaps in the existing cemetery hedging. Planting is planned for early January. To volunteer to help, contact the Parish Council (see page 19).

BOWLING CLUB – FINAL RESULTS, 2026



16 Downton Bowling Club members competed for the Ralph Bentley Trophy.

2026 was another successful season for the Bowling Club. The New Forest Division 4 team secured 3rd place out of 8, narrowly missing promotion by just half a point. The team were also runners up to Verwood in the final of the Ivor Fourmy Trophy. In the Bournemouth and District Saturday Morning Division 4 League, the Dragons and the Bustards finished 3rd and 4th respectively, out of 10 teams. In the Westbrook Mixed Triples League, the Downton team finished 7th out of 8.

The annual Ralph Bentley Trophy, played in memory of the club's founder, was won by Tony Musselwhite.

Although the outdoor season has finished, the club continues to hold social events during the autumn and winter. Coffee mornings are scheduled 14 December and 11 January, from 10am until midday. Everyone is welcome. The new season is expected to begin in April 2027.

For further information visit downtonbc.co.uk/ or contact Ivan Buss on 07910 290735, email buib7@icloud.com.

GIVE THE GIFT OF CROQUET THIS CHRISTMAS

Hamptworth Croquet Club is offering croquet experiences as a Christmas gift for anyone aged over 15. The experience costs £10, with all equipment provided. No previous experience is required.For further information contact Linda Wood on 07761 790341.

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Weekly YARN CLUB @ THE GOAT 6-8pm
(Alternate TUES / WED, Knit & Crochet, Beginners Welcome)
Monthly UNWIND @ STABLE & WICK 1-3pm
(Yarn Club/Art Club/BYO & Chat, Beginners Welcome)
Second SUNDAYS at HOBBYCRAFT, SALISBURY
Morning YARN CLUB - Knit - Crochet - Beginners Welcome
Afternoon WORKSHOPS - Drop Spinning - Peg Loom Rug Weaving - Using an Embellishing Machine - Wet Felting - Slow Stitching
https://www.atailofyarn.com/book-online
07720 255137

DOWNTON BOWLING CLUB SUPPORTS SALISBURY HOSPICE



Paul and the spider

Members of Downton Bowling Club raised a total of £947 for Salisbury Hospice through two recent fundraising activities. Club coach Ivan Buss and his daughters, Katie and Jo, took part in Salisbury Hospice's six-mile Midnight Walk, raising £845 in memory of Ivan's late wife, Karen. In addition, prior to the annual Ralph Bentley Trophy competition, bowls club members took part in a fundraising 'spider' challenge. Similar to golf's nearest-the-pin contest, participants paid £1 per bowl to try to get as close to a target 'spider' in the middle of the green as possible. Paul Bromage was this year's winner and received a goody bag kindly donated by Salisbury Hospice. Ivan matched the money raised through the challenge.

SALISBURY HOSPICE CHRISTMAS TREE COLLECTION



This festive season, you can support local hospice care by signing up to have your tree recycled by Salisbury Hospice Charity. In exchange for a donation, the charity's team of volunteers will collect your real tree, take it away, and recycle it sustainably. Visit just-helping.org.uk/register-tree/ to register your tree by January 5. Tree collection will take place from 8 – 11 January. Donations will help the hospice provide compassionate care and support for patients facing life-limiting illnesses, and their families.

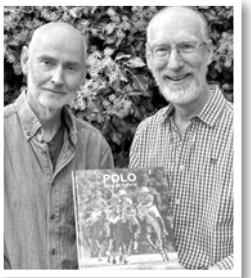
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RESIDENTS COLLABORATE ON BOOK ON POLO



Andy Fitt (left) and Michael Berkeley (right)

Freelance photographer, Michael Berkeley, and graphic designer, Andy Fitt, have worked together to produce a new 'coffee table' book, POLO King of Sports.

Friends for many years, Michael and Andy met through work – and have lived a few hundred metres away from each other in Downton for over 30 years. So, when Michael mentioned that he was thinking of writing a book on the sport of polo, Andy offered to do the artwork.

The book was launched in September this year at Druids Lodge Polo Club near Stonehenge, one of the many clubs where Michael has photographed for almost 10 years. POLO King of Sports is aimed equally at experienced players and those merely curious about the game, and explains what makes the sport so popular. It addresses some issues associated with the sport, such as whether it is solely the province of kings, playboys and millionaires. It is prolifically illustrated, explaining what happens before, during and after a match, and also includes sections on polo in the Armed Forces and arena polo. Michael hopes that it will sell well on the run up to Christmas.

Further information can be found on Michael's website: michaelberkeleyphoto.uk or use the QR code.

GOLDIES – SINGING FOR FUN IN DOWNTON



Goldies, a singing-for-fun group, meets every 4th Wednesday of the month, upstairs at the Memorial Hall. Sessions run from 10am to 11am, and are open to everyone aged 50 and over. The group has branches throughout the country and Cliff Richard is its patron. The Downton group is run by Carole and Phil, a husband-and-wife team from Salisbury. Goldies is not a choir, and no singing experience or ability is required - it is just singing for fun. Participants sing a selection of songs they enjoy, with music ranging from pop classics such as Dancing Queen to songs from musicals and films, including The Deadwood Stage. Refreshments are available following each session - and birthday celebrations sometimes include cake. A contribution of £3 is requested to help cover costs. The group provides an opportunity for people to meet, enjoy singing and socialise in a relaxed setting .The December meeting will take place on Wednesday 9 December, instead of the usual fourth Wednesday, due to other commitments. New members are welcome.

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• Hard & Soft Landscaping • Hedge & Tree Care
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e: info@hmandg.co.uk www.hmandg.co.uk

REMEMBERING PATRICK FOLEY



Many of you will have appreciated the work of Patrick Foley, who sadly died in September. He moved to Downton with his family in 2004 and shortly afterwards he created Downton's first village website, which he ran for many years, celebrating life in the village and giving information and inspiration. In those days, very few villages had websites and its attractive style drew in new residents to join and enhance our village community.

Patrick also brought tai chi to the village, teaching for over 20 years in the Memorial Hall with his wife Jane and performing at the cuckoo fair. He was an accomplished practitioner, recognised nationally and internationally.

Patrick's cooking was known to many in Downton as he loved to feed people. He was one of the first 'fusion' style cooks, bringing the flavours of his childhood Eurasian heritage to the UK. When he first moved to Downton he and Jane opened their house and had annual festive curry feasts. They got to know a lot of people by sharing food. He also did cooking demos and ran a stall called The Satay Hut. He liked his beer and particularly enjoyed supporting both the Downton breweries and the Tap Bar.

He was known for his love of life and his very well attended funeral at St Laurence's Church in October celebrated a good life, with focus on his much loved garden, which he opened for charity as 'The Good Life Garden.'

Donations in Patrick's memory went to Downton Memorial Hall for kitchen refurbishment and to the Trussell Trust.

HOME FOR BEES WANTED

Local beekeeper, Graham Lloyd-Jones, is looking for a suitable site to relocate his beehives. Please can you let him know if you can offer a site which meets the following specifications.

- Location in Downton
- An area big enough to keep 4-6 bee hives (each about 1 m apart).
- Car parking within 10 metres
- Secluded from the public/ neighbours
- Inaccessible to children and pets
- Away from people with a severe sting allergy
- Accessible 24/7 without disturbing others

If you have a site you think might be suitable, give Graham a call on 07969 605222.



Graham with his bees





CLEAN GREEN WORKSHOP

Make your own eco-friendly cleaning products! Downton Green Network, in conjunction with the Green Gram in Fordingbridge, is holding a Clean Green Workshop on Wednesday 20 January at the Memorial Hall. The evening will be full of information about how to keep your house clean using a selection of home-made planet friendly products made from readily available ingredients - and how to recognise those that aren't so good for the environment. It will be in the format of a workshop, so those interested in taking part should aim to bring a spray bottle, a pump bottle and a small screw-top jar to take home the cleaning products that they will make. If that's not possible then there will be a selection of spare containers available for use. The cost will be £5 - just to cover ingredients. Tickets are available in advance from The Borough Cafe (cash only) or from 07979 630588 for those who wish to pay by BACS. Numbers are limited, so you are advised to get your tickets early.

REPAIR CAFÉ NEWS



Members of the Repair Café team recently visited Whiteparish WI to explain the work of Repair Cafés and the team also visited the NHS Allotment in Salisbury, where Ben and his team provide facilities to support people recovering from mental health difficulties. The Repair Café donated a battery strimmer, winter ground sheeting and an earth tiller to assist with the allotment's activities. Any organisations interested in arranging a visit from the team are invited to get in touch.

A carved oak pair of antique fire bellows was amongst other recent repairs. The bellows were in poor condition and the restoration involved sourcing suitable leather, carefully removing the worn material, refurbishing the wooden components and securing the new leather in place with pins. This project demonstrates the specialist repair skills available through the Repair Café and the value of restoring traditional household items.

The Repair Cafe is in Downton on the first Saturday of each month, at DBC from 10am - 12pm. It continues to operate from its base in Lover at Redlynch Village Hall on Wednesdays and Fridays. More information from downtonrepaircafe@gmail.com - or visit the website: loverrepaircafe.org.uk.

TALES OF A WEST END ACTOR AT ST LAURENCE CHURCH



An evening with West End actor Courtney Spence will take place at St Laurence Church, on Friday 11th December. The event will include stories from Courtney's life and experiences as a West End actor, followed by a reading of A Christmas Carol. A cash and card bar will also be available. Doors open at 6.30pm, with the event starting at 7pm. Tickets (£5) are available from The Borough Café or on the door.

More than 90 people attended an evening with Ron Burrows at St Laurence's in October. Ron shared stories from his career as a fast-jet pilot and aircraft test pilot, describing his experiences flying a wide range of aircraft.

CHRISTMAS AT GOOD COMPANIONS

Nigel Revill joins the group to perform popular Christmas hits from the past on 1 December. The Christmas party is on 8 December, featuring Kate Edgar and the Community Choir. The following sessions include a Bring and Buy afternoon and a quiz. Meetings resume on 5 January with another Bring and Buy, a quiz and an anniversary tea on 19 January. The Good Companions meet every Tuesday from 2 - 4pm at the Memorial Hall. Visitors pay £2.50, which includes refreshments.

The group still needs volunteers to help set out and put away tables and chairs from 1.30pm Helpers are welcome to stay for the afternoon, free of charge. Further information from Edna Pike on 511332.

TALKABOUT – THE SERENDIPITY SONG BOOK

TalkAbout's next meeting on 3 December at Woodfalls Methodist Hall starts at 10.30am The Serendipity Duo, David and Julie, will present an hour of musical nostalgia. Christmas cake and mince pies will also be served. Admission is £4. For further information, call 07760 224990.

What, Where, When

November				
Friday	27	10am - 12 noon	"Fridays" Community Cafe, Memorial Hall	
Friday	27	10am - 12 noon	Saintly cafe, Charlton All Saints Church	
December				
Thursday	3	10am - 12 noon	Hearing Aid Clinic, Downton Baptist Church	Page 11
Friday	4	3 - 6pm	Christmas Tree Sale in aid of The Moot, Long Close Park	Page 1
		3:30 - 5:30pm	Downton Primary School Christmas Extravaganza	Page 20
		6:15 for 6:30pm	Lighting the Christmas Tree, Maypole Green, The Borough	Page 1
		7:30pm	Shantoosy at St Laurence Church (Christmas Tree Festival)	Page 1
Saturday - Sunday	5 6	10am - 4pm	Downton Christmas Tree Festival, St Laurence Church	Pages 1 & 2
Friday - Monday	4 8	Various times	Charlton Christmas Tree Festival, Charlton All Saints Church	Page 20
Sunday		6pm	Village Carol Service, St Laurence Church	Page 4
Tuesday	8	7:30pm	Downton Band at Charlton, All Saints Church	Page 20
Wednesday	9		Last date for Christmas Scout post	Page 9
Friday	11	6:30 for 7pm	An evening with Courtney Spence, St Laurence Church	Page 17
Saturday	19	3pm	Silent Disco, Memorial Hall	Page 5
Sunday	20	6:30pm	Downton Baptist Church Carol Service	Page 4
		6pm	Downton Band / Community Choir concert, St Laurence Church	Page 5
Thursday	24	5pm	Christingle Service, St Laurence Church	Page 4
January				
Thursday	7	10am - 12 noon	Hearing Aid Clinic, Downton Baptist Church	Page 11
Friday	8	6:30pm	Jack and the Beanstalk / The Frog Prince, Memorial Hall	Page 20
Wednesday	20	7:30pm	Clean, Green Workshop, Memorial Hall	Page 17
Friday	22	2 - 3:30pm	The Wardrobe, Clothing Exchange, Baptist Church	Page 7
Friday	29	10am - 12 noon	"Fridays" Community Cafe, Memorial Hall	

Commission a portrait of your pet

A3 hand-drawn portraits from £100 including delivery. Framing at additional cost.

Previous commissions include work for private clients in the UK and overseas; British Armed Forces; Radisson Edwardian hotels.



To commission a portrait, email a clear photo of your pet to:

anthonywoodwardpaintings@gmail.com or call: 07949 416298

anthonywoodwardpaintings.com

WANTED TO RENT

Self-contained annex, studio flat, outhouse etc (not necessarily furnished)

for a professional, single male, with no pets

Needs a new home after 21 years of renting, as house is being sold.

All references provided
07949 416298

DOWNTON DOWNTIME

Activities for anyone with memory problems or who feels isolated

Tuesdays 10.15am - 12pm Free

Downton Baptist Church

hello@beyonddementia.org.uk

GOLDIES

Singing for fun for everyone aged 50 or older

4th Wednesday 10am - 11am

£3 contribution. Refreshments

Memorial Centre (upstairs)

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

WILTSHIRE COUNCILLOR
Cllr Richard Clewer
53 Highlands Avenue, Whiteparish,
Salisbury SP5 2SZ
01794 884550
richard.clewer@wiltshire.gov.uk

MOBILE POST OFFICE
Fridays
Moot Lane 9am - 10am
The Bull 10.05am - 11.05am

HIGH STREET PHARMACY
Monday to Friday 8.30am - 6pm
(closed for lunch 1-2pm)
Saturday 9am - 12pm
Tel: 01725 510388

LIBRARY
01725 511003
Opening Hours
Monday 2pm - 7pm
Tuesday 2pm - 5pm
Wednesday 2pm - 5pm
Thursday 10am - 1pm
Friday 10am - 5pm
Saturday 10 - 1

LEISURE CENTRE
Mon - Fri 6.30am - 10pm
Sat & Sun 9am - 5pm
01725 557268
downtonleisurecentre.co.uk

LOVER REPAIR CAFE
Fixing household items
1st Saturday of each month
10am - 12pm at DBC
Wednesdays / Fridays 10am - 12pm
at Redlynch Village Hall SP5 2PG

MEMORIAL CENTRE
To book hall or meeting rooms
contact Hilary Mace 07760 415818
email: bookingsecretary@
downtonmemorialcentre.co.uk

NEW VILLAGE WEBSITE
downtonvillage.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 Ullyatt: 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
Forest & Avon Team Rector: Revd Veronica Batchelor 513878;
veronicaforestandavon@gmail.com
achurchnearyou.com/church/9474/

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD *(ROMAN CATHOLIC)*
Barford Lane, Downton SP5 3QA
Mass 3rd Thursday of the month 12pm
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@salisburycatholics.org

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
Sundays 2.30 - 4.30pm

THE WARDROBE (DBC)
Free Clothing Exchange
Usually 3rd Friday 2 - 3.30pm

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

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

CHARLTON CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



Charlton Christmas Tree Festival will take place at All Saints' Church from Friday 4 to Tuesday 8 December 2026. The event will feature Christmas trees decorated by local families, clubs, community groups and businesses, marking the 175th anniversary year of the church.

The festival will open on Friday 4 December at 7pm with a drinks reception among the decorated trees. The evening will include carols, the switching-on of the tree lights, a bar and entertainment for adults. Tickets (£15 - including canapés and a glass of fizz) are available from newsandnotes.net/event-list or by contacting Chris Clark on 01725 510891.

The trees will then be on view from Saturday 5 to Monday 7 December, between 9am and 5pm, with the Saintly Café being open on the Saturday, from 2pm to 5pm. Activities for children will include a Star Hunt around the church and a colouring corner. Visitors will also be able to vote for their favourite Christmas tree, take part in a Facts and Figures Quiz and contribute a message to the church's giant 175th birthday card.

A new audio tour of the church will be launched during the festival, and can be accessed using a mobile phone.

The festival concludes on Tuesday 8 December with a Christmas concert by Downton Band, beginning at 7.30pm, with admission from 7pm. Entry is free, with a retiring collection shared between the band and the upkeep of All Saints' Church.

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK AND THE FROG PRINCE



Bumblefly Theatre visit the Memorial Hall on Friday 8 January, with two traditional fairy tales. The first production, Jack and the Beanstalk, follows the traditional story of Jack's life-changing experiences after becoming the owner of some magic beans. The second production, The Frog Prince, tells the story of Princess Polly, who is asked to marry to save the kingdom. Having lost her golden ball, she finds herself pursued by a frog. The show is billed as: "a night of merriment, puppets and song as the players bring to life these stories in their usual magical, mischievous and festive style."

A licensed bar and refreshments will also be available. Doors open at 5:45pm and the performance starts at 6:30pm. Tickets (adults £12, Children £6) are available from the Borough Café (cash only) or by texting 07760 415818 with the required number of tickets. Payment can be made by BACS.

PRIMARY SCHOOL EXTRAVAGANZA



Last year's Extravaganza

Downton Primary School Association will hold its annual Christmas Extravaganza on Friday 4 December, from 3.30- 5.30pm, on the school playground. The event will include a prize raffle, tombolas, games, stalls and Santa's Grotto (which is now fully booked). Entertainment will be provided by Downton Band and the school choir. Refreshments will include hot food from JJ's Snack Shack, hot drinks from Rozzie Coffee and mulled wine. The raffle (billed as 'bigger than ever') will feature a range of prizes, including family days out, leisure memberships, vouchers and cash prizes, generously donated by local businesses and supporters. Tickets can be purchased online by scanning the QR code.

Last year's event raised funds for an additional set of iPads, ensuring that every phase of the school has access to up-to-date technology. This year, the Association is raising money to provide shaded areas in the playground for use during the summer months. The DPSA say, "We would love to see lots of familiar and new faces from the village come along, support our school and enjoy a wonderful festive afternoon. Everyone is welcome – we look forward to seeing you there!"