

FREE

Autumn InDownton



Downton Society to fold

The Downton Society has taken the difficult decision to discontinue. Many services in the village have been funded or supported by the Society over many years including the village website, organising and documenting village walks and providing the Cuckoo on The Borough and the village flower tubs around the village. The tubs will need more volunteers to take them on. The website and village walks will have a new home, and you can read more about these plans on page 5.



In a statement the society said: "It is with considerable regret that after fifty years the Downton Society is closing. The society, whose main aim is to stimulate interest in Downton and to promote high standards in planning and architecture while aiming to preserve, develop and improve the village, can sadly no longer continue.

As a society we have always taken a very pragmatic and independent view about planning issues and it has never been about preventing change. Where necessary we have opposed planning proposals if we felt they were inappropriate but equally we have supported plans often against the views of planning officials. We would like to think that a collective village voice has counted where it matters.

In addition, we have supported organisations and campaigns within the village on a wide range of planning and environmental issues. Unfortunately, with decreasing numbers of committee members and with no persons wishing to be actively involved, the committee has felt there is no other choice but to wind the society up and steps are now underway to do this."

In this issue...

This issue has 20 pages of news of local events and articles on local organisations and local history.

The sad news that the Downton Society is to be wound up means that the village website is to move to a new platform to be integrated with other local websites including the InDownton website and the Discover Downton website. To help make the new arrangements as effective as possible, the current details on the site need checking. Find out how you can help on page 5.

Do let us know if how you think we can keep improving the newsletter. You can contact us through the website at indownton.org.uk.

NEW SALMON FARM STRUCTURE APPROVAL REVERSED

The plans for an inland salmon farm on the site of the former trout farm have been subject to a legal challenge. Wiltshire Council approved Avon Valley Salmon's planning application for a new structure in May. However, in June, Communities Against Factory Farming (CAFF) submitted a judicial review claim to the High Court, arguing that an environmental impact assessment (EIA) should have been carried out. CAFF has said that the council has since written to the group indicating that it intends to rescind the planning permission. Avon Valley Salmon owner, Julian Connor, said that the council had not previously required an EIA but had now decided that one was necessary. He said the change would delay the project by around six months, rather than prevent it from going ahead.



EVENTS IN CHARLTON ALL SAINTS

Charlton's Ride'n'Stride event, organised by the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust, takes place on Saturday 12 September. This is a sponsored walk or ride from Charlton, taking in Bodenham, Nunton and Odstock before heading back to Charlton over the downs.

There will be a Bring & Share Harvest Supper at All Saints' Church on Saturday 26 September, this year including a harvest quiz and corn dolly making. Those attending should bring food & drink to share and a tin for the "Tower of Tins" which will be donated to Downton Foodbank, for those less fortunate. The Harvest Festival follows on the Sunday - a traditional Harvest Communion starting at 9:30am.

Details of Christmas events will be published in the next issue - including information about the Christmas Tree Festival.



Ride 'n' Stride event

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Downton Horticultural Society are hosting Eileen Witt at the Memorial Hall at 7.30pm on Thursday 22 October, when she will present 'A Different Sort of Floral Art Demonstration'. Eileen is the Education Representative for Wessex National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies. The event is open to all, with a basket for donations to DHS funds. There will also be refreshments, a sales table and raffle.

The society's AGM will take place at 7.30pm on Thursday 19 November in the Memorial Hall. After the short business meeting, there will be free mulled wine and nibbles followed by "a light hearted quiz, just for fun".



Eileen Witt

DBC HARVEST FESTIVAL

The Harvest Festival service at the Baptist Church will be on Sunday 4 October at 10.30am. You are invited to bring items for The Larder - particularly donations of cereals, pasta, sauces, tins, crackers and biscuits. Any money donated will also contribute towards The Larder. The service will be followed by a 'Bring and Share lunch' - for which there is a sign-up board in the foyer of the church.

LEARN A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT FOR £1 A WEEK

Downton Band's Beginners Brass is welcoming new members at the Band Hall on Tuesday 8 September at 6pm - whether you're a complete beginner or fancy trying brass out for the first time. All ages are welcome - family and friends learning together are encouraged. For more information email downtonband@gmail.com or message Miriam on 07934 143373.

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DOWNTON MOOT DOG SHOW

The annual Dog Show takes place at The Moot on Sunday 13 September, with gates opening at 2:30pm for a 3pm start. Entry is £3 for adults, £2 for children aged 12 and under. There will be the usual range of classes, including: junior handler, loveliest veteran, most handsome dog, the dog most like its owner, the dog with the waggiest tail. Show classes cost £2 each to enter. Refreshments will be available.



BIRDS AND TREES DANCE SHOW

A double bill of dance performances inspired by nature, entitled "Birds and Trees", is taking place on Friday 16 October at 7.30pm at the Memorial Hall. The show is performed by Dance Six-o, a Salisbury based dance company for people aged 60 and over, which includes two local Downton residents. The dances were originally created for children and have been performed in primary schools across Wiltshire. They have now been adapted for broader audiences. The two pieces are: 'Bird Nerd & The Red List' by Marie-Louise Flexen, billed as "an exciting, dance theatre piece, focusing on popular UK birds on the endangered species 'red list'" and 'The Man Who Planted Trees', by Dance Six-o, a "a meditative dance piece that will take you on an inspiring journey".

For further information and tickets (costing £10) contact rosalindd60@gmail.com. Any remaining tickets will be available on the door.



CHOIR CONCERT FOR CANCER RESEARCH

A concert is taking place on Saturday 10 October at the Memorial Hall, with all proceeds going to Cancer Research UK. The concert features Kate Edgar's Downton Community Choir and her Sea Shanty Choir, Catch of the Day. Doors and bar open at 6:15pm and the concert starts at 7pm. There will be a raffle. Tickets cost £15 on the door or £12 in advance from The Borough Cafe (cash only) or email: pennie.dunlop@btinternet.com.



The Community Choir singing at St Thomas Church in April

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GREAT BUSTARD OPEN DAY

Downton Distillery's Hugh Anderson is taking part in the Great Bustard Group Open Weekend, which will take place at Enford Village Hall on 12th & 13th September.

Throughout the weekend, there will be frequent guided visits onto Salisbury Plain to see the remarkable Great Bustards in their natural habitat, offering a unique opportunity to learn more about the species and the vital work being done to secure its future.

Hugh is presenting his talk entitled 'Great Bustard Gin: The Art of the Martini!' on Sunday 13th at 4pm.

More information from store.greatbustard.org or downtondistillery.com



FROM CHEMIST TO CAFÉ

The Borough Café opened its doors on 11 August 2012. More than 14 years later, it is very much a part of village life.

At the start of 2012, the building (previously Lloyds Bank and, before that, a chemist) had stood empty for some time. The current owners acquired the freehold and work began to transform the characterful old building into the café it is today.

The café was recently given a photograph from the time when it was still a chemist, showing the shop with its Kodak and Ilford film displays. The photographer, E.W. Parker, lived at Gardener's Cottage, Long Close and his daughter, Linda Crocker, remembers visiting the chemist as a child. The conversion presented numerous challenges and unexpected problems, but with the builder's help, patience and ingenuity, the café began to take shape. The work included moving the heavy old bank safes, installing a staircase to create the upstairs seating area and clearing the courtyard, which had become heavily overgrown.

Over the years, the café has employed many local people, including sixth-form students who then went on to university and subsequently returned to work at the café during their holidays. Many locals have now become regulars. The café's pastel de natas have become a popular choice among customers. Homemade cakes and traybakes are also served, alongside Greek-style filo pie and Italian-style frittata. The shelves feature locally produced gifts and treats, including New Forest Shortbread, Fordingbridge Fudge, local jams, honey and soaps, with the more recent addition of New Forest Tea.

Caroline Bromilow says, "We are hugely grateful to all our customers for their support, loyalty and friendship over the years. The Borough Café has become such an important part of our lives, and we couldn't have done it without the wonderful support of the local community."




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borough café

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VILLAGE WEBSITE: CHECK YOUR ORGANISATION'S DETAILS

One of the many services which has been funded by the Downton Society is the village website downtonvillage.co.uk which has been maintained and updated for many years, and has been a valuable source of information about village organisations and events. This will continue to be funded until new arrangements (which are already in the pipeline) can be made. This will involve a new look site with links to information for visitors, news and local events.

Meanwhile the directories of local organisations need updating to make sure that the contact details and meeting times are up to date. Anyone involved in local societies is asked to check the details for your organisation at www.downtonvillage.co.uk. Under the "Directories" tab, local societies and other organisations are listed. The "Regular Events" tab has where and when local groups meet. Send any amendments to editor@indownton.org.uk.



WOODFALLS METHODIST CHURCH EVENTS

Woodfalls Methodist Church is holding a "Folk music and stories concert" on Friday 18 September from 3 - 5pm, featuring folk musicians playing accordion, fiddle, mandolin and clogs. The concert combines folk stories with music, offering an introduction to aspects of history and a range of traditional folk instruments. This is a free event, but needs to be booked by calling 01380 735521 or email: Rebecca.seymour@ageukwiltshire.org.uk

The church is holding a Jigsaw Puzzle Festival on the weekend of 25 - 27 September. The opening times are Friday 3-6, Saturday 10-4, Sunday 12-4. It promises hundreds of puzzles on an ever changing display to buy, small puzzles to make up on the spot, large puzzles to add to while you chat to friends, some puzzles to admire & chat over - and new puzzles to buy, both for adults and children. Refreshments will be available.

The church's Christmas market will be on Saturday 14 November from 10am - 12 noon, and will feature a variety of stalls.

HAMPTWORTH CROQUET

Hamptworth Croquet Club welcomes new players, including both beginners and experienced players. Visitors are welcome to arrange a visit and try a game of croquet. The club is located at the golf course next to the Cuckoo Inn, with plenty of parking. Players should wear flat shoes and are welcome to stay for as long as they wish. Friends are also welcome. Tea or a beer can be enjoyed with club members after the game. For further information or to arrange a visit, contact Linda Wood on 07761 790341.



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FAMILY FILM AT THE MEMORIAL CENTRE

The postponed showing of the science fiction film Future TX (PG rated, suitable for 8 - 12 year olds) will be at The Memorial Hall on Saturday 19 September at 10.30am. Children must be accompanied. Tickets £5 cash from the Borough Cafe, or by BACS by texting 07760 415818. Refreshments including popcorn and ice cream will be available, with profits going towards the kitchen refurbishment. The film is from Film Expo South, a not for profit organisation that helps upcoming professionals in the film industry.

'Future TX:Destiny is Calling' is a new film starring Griff Rhys Jones and Arran Kemp which hasn't been released in the UK yet. It's a fun and fast paced thriller for all the family. Two kids get their first mobile phones and both receive a call from someone who claims to be from the future. They assume it's a prank call, but the mystery caller proves he's genuine.



GROUP CAPTAIN RON BURROWS: FLYING AND TESTING FAST JETS

A talk by local Group Captain Ron Burrows will take place at St Laurence Church on Friday 2 October at 7pm.

Ron Burrows joined the Royal Air Force in 1962 and flew support missions in the Middle East. In 1970, he graduated from the US Navy Test Pilot School in Maryland. Following his return to Boscombe Down, he tested RAF fast jets and trainers, including Tornados, Jaguars and Harriers. He also worked for NATO and went on to become the RAF's Chief Test Pilot and Head of the Test Pilot School at Boscombe Down. The talk will cover his experiences of flying and testing fast jets during this period, including two occasions when he ejected from aircraft.

Tickets cost £5 and are available from Borough Café or on the door.



GOOSE FAIR

The St Laurence Goose Fair will take place on Saturday 12 September, from 10am to 2pm. Several new stallholders will be attending in 2026. Light lunches and refreshments, including homemade cakes, will be available throughout the day.

Volunteers are needed to help welcome visitors and with refreshments. Donations of cakes for sale are also requested. Anyone able to help or donate a cake should contact Rose Bloomfield at rosannabishop@btinternet.com.



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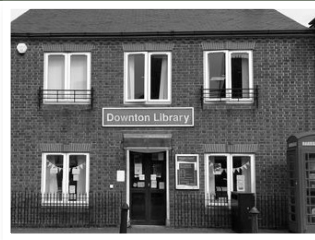
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WILTSHIRE FAMILY HUB AT DOWNTON LIBRARY

Wiltshire Family Hub are offering a regular drop-in service at Downton Library on the 4th Thursday of every month from 10am - 12noon (although it is advisable to check their Facebook page for any unforeseen date / time changes: facebook.com/FamilyHubWiltshirecouncil/)

Support is on offer with all aspects of family life, including DLA applications, co-parenting, early learning, SEND, and signposting to other services. Their aim is to provide early support before challenges become more difficult to manage. When required, families may also be able to access one-to-one support from Family Hub Practitioners through the referral process.

The local Family Navigator is Sam, who is ready for people to come and talk to her about what life is like looking after children and young people, and to come and find out what children's groups, events and support is on offer.



GOOD COMPANIONS

The Good Companions are looking for volunteers to put out tables and chairs on Tuesdays at 1.30 pm and put them away at 4pm. Helpers are welcome to stay for the afternoon free of charge.

Highlights for September include a talk from Marc Heighway on 8th, looking at WWII in the New Forest; a visit from wildlife photographer Brain Pettit on 22nd and a Guess the Baby competition on 29th. Regulars are asked to bring in their old baby photographs to be scanned before the event.

The group meets at the Memorial Hall on Tuesdays from 2 - 4pm. Visitors pay £2.50, which includes refreshments. More information from Edna Pike on 511332.



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INDOWNTON NEWSLETTER

Sponsored and supported by Downton Baptist Church

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For information about contributing or advertising, email:

editor@indownton.org.uk or visit indownton.org.uk

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

We apologise for the mistakes we missed.

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JANE WALKER FROM PCF CHARITY TO VISIT DBC

On Sunday 11 October at 10.30 am, the Baptist Church will be hosting Jane Walker, MBE from the Purple Community Fund (PCF), who will be talking about the work their team does with the most vulnerable people on the dumpsite slums of Manila in the Philippines. Everyone is welcome to come and listen.

The church continues to support the PCF team as they provide education, access into employment and health care for families living in dire conditions. Over the course of the weekend of 3 and 4 October, the church will be hosting many events to raise funds and awareness of the charity's work. For more information on the charity go to p-c-f.org.



THE PLAYROOM AT THE BAPTIST CHURCH

The Playroom welcomes preschoolers and their carers on Wednesday mornings during term time from 9am. The free sessions provide an opportunity for preschoolers and their carers to meet and socialise. Refreshments include a hot drink, squash and toast. During warmer weather, sessions take place in the garden and include activities such as water play and sit-and-ride toys. Each session finishes with a story and singing time.

As one mum said, "The Playroom has given my children, and I a chance to connect with other children and parents and get to know the area, having recently moved to Downton."



CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVALS - DOWNTON AND CHARLTON

Both St Laurence Church and All Saints Church, Charlton are holding Christmas Tree Festivals this year on 5 - 6 December. The Downton Festival this year is supporting Downton Primary School, Trafalgar School at Downton and St Laurence Church. Both festivals will open on Friday 4 December - Downton with a concert from Shantoosy, and Charlton with a drinks, nibbles and carols evening.

More information on both festivals in the next issue - booking forms for Downton will be available at the St Laurence Goose Fair on 12 September. Donations of cakes for sale and surplus gifts for the gift stall are also requested and can be arranged in advance by contacting Rose Bloomfield at downtonchristmastreefest@gmail.com.



Last year's Christmas Tree Festival at St Laurence Church



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TRAFFIC UPDATES: 20MPH LIMIT AHEAD?

At residents' request, the Parish Council has submitted evidence from Wiltshire Council run traffic surveys - plus a pedestrian survey carried out by Councillors and volunteers - for a 20-mph limit in Downton. This will be assessed by the Traffic Engineering team at Wiltshire Council.

The Council is waiting for a date from the contractor for the reflective surface at the unofficial crossing at the Wooden Spoon.

There will be two "pedestrian in road" signs and "slow" markings on the road in Slab Lane.

A proposal has been made to Wiltshire Council for signage and a post at the entrance of Gravel Close to deter HGV's from thinking access can be had to the industrial estate.

SIGN TAMPERING

An eagle-eyed resident noticed a discrepancy in the speed signs up and down Slab Lane. The Parish Council queried this with Wiltshire Council Traffic Engineering Team and received the following response: "From the images you provided, it looks as though someone may have taken it upon themselves to stick the roundels over the top of the correct (national speed limit) signage. I have asked a technician from Highways to inspect this today. If he is able, he will remove it however, if not we will get the steward to attend with something a bit more substantial to get it off! Thanks for the heads up, if you notice this happen again, please let me know." If the signs are not correct, the implications are very serious.



DBC WARDROBE

The next dates for The Wardrobe Clothing Exchange are Fridays: 18 September, 16 October and 20 November at the Baptist Church. There will be no Wardrobe in December. Volunteers helping to sort the donations will meet at 10am on those dates at the church. Doors open from 2 - 3.30pm and all are welcome to come and take what they like - although these clothes are not for resale. Donations can be left at the church 9.30 - 12.30 except on Fridays and Saturdays. Electrical goods, children's toys or bric-a-brac cannot be accepted.



DBC: THE STUDIO

The Studio is a weekly event on Wednesday afternoons during term time at the Baptist Church, where people can meet to enjoy sharing and being creative. It takes place between 1 and 3pm. You are invited to bring along any craft or art work that you would like - knitting, painting, drawing, sewing or any other crafting project. If you do not have something to bring, the leaders will be happy to share and get you started on something.



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SUMMER 2026

The Baptist Church' field was full of laughter and fun for the 'Great Church Picnic' which kicked off the school summer holidays with a morning of activities for the family and ending with a water fight after lunch.



Charlton's annual BBQ (right) was held alongside a second successful Auction of Promises and raised over £2,000 for the church roof repairs.

The event also provided an opportunity for members of the community to enjoy food and refreshments together. One of the team said, "It was lovely to have the company of a small number of people from Downton - do come again!"



The recent Swift Walk (above and left) in the village attracted a good turnout of more than 30 people. The weather for the evening was perfect and lots of swifts were in evidence. One special moment was catching the sight of a Swift entering a natural nest site, under the roof eaves. Sites visited included Moot Lane and St Laurence church.

Sites visited included Moot Lane and St Laurence church.

The public toilets have now re-opened after being refurbished. Funding for this work came exclusively from the money which property developers are required to give to local authorities to offset any negative impacts of new building projects. This means that no contribution was required from the Parish Council's own funds, which are raised through residents' Council Tax.



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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Our Principles

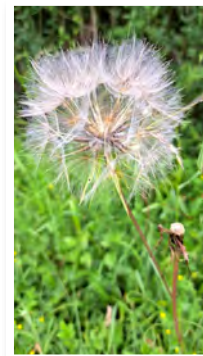
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WALKING ON THE DOWNS FROM ALDERBURY

One of our readers recently walked from Alderbury to Downton, and took these beautiful photos on the way.

"We started at The Green Dragon pub on the Green in Alderbury, getting there at 10.30am for pastries and coffee, outside in the garden. From there we headed down Silver St, towards the church, up Tunnel Hill, onto Old Vicarage Lane, towards Castle Lane. The route then took us over the old railway line at Whaddon, across a couple of fields picking up the railway line again, up to Barford Down then dropping down into Downton at Hamilton Park."

Photos below left: Small tortoiseshell and marbled white butterflies



NEBOHO HOME & BOTANICS



Nery is the owner of Neboho Home & Botanics, a floral design studio located in Downton along the River Avon.

The studio is celebrating its five-year anniversary this autumn and specialises in dried flower arrangements for everyday styling, weddings and special events.

Bouquets and wreaths are available to purchase directly through the website, and bespoke orders are also accepted. Orders are placed online rather than by telephone to ensure accurate details and effective communication.

The majority of the botanicals used by the studio are grown and harvested in Nery's private garden. The studio

operates as a private production space rather than a public retail shop, although floral design workshops are occasionally held in response to demand - see Nery's ad.

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A NEW CAFE FOR DOWNTON?

Trimworks2000 in the High Street has lodged a planning application to convert part of the premises into a cafe. Owner Mat Trim says, "My actual goal is to serve the best possible coffee, and to support and sell local produce as much as possible (Nunton milk, local baked goods, cake and food etc). The shop will sell leather and textile goods exclusively manufactured in house by us. There will be a huge emphasis on quality, longevity, sustainability and repair."

The coffee shop will also have an internal drop off and collection lockers for sharpening and equestrian repairs.



DOWNTON MUSIC FESTIVAL

This summer's Downton Music Festival featured a varied programme of music and performances at St Laurence Church. The event was organised by John Elliott, who arranged the performers, programme, printing and recording for Radio Odstock. Cognatum Properties provided sponsorship, while Ben Bennett of Pro Live Limited provided sound equipment and lighting.



The event, which involved a behind-the-scenes team of leaflet distributors, welcome volunteers, drinks team and technical staff, as well as the performers, raised £4,900 towards the maintenance of St Laurence Church.

Plans are being considered for a similar event in the future, and anyone interested in becoming involved should contact the church.

DOWNTON LINK CO-ORDINATORS: CAN YOU HELP?

Volunteer co-ordinators are needed for Downton Link, an organisation run by local volunteers who offer help with transport and act as good neighbours for people in need, regardless of age or circumstances.

The Link serves residents living in Downton and nearby local villages, providing transport for such activities as hospital, surgery, dental and optician appointments, shopping, hairdressers, visiting friends or relatives in hospital, collecting prescriptions, library books, social and house visits and taking clients to day centres. They also provide a befriending service. There is no charge for the service but the Link depends on donations from its users to help run the service. Volunteer drivers receive a mileage allowance and training / information / social events are organised twice a year.

Coordinators take calls at home on the Link phone, and enter client requests into the computer. No experience is needed and training will be provided. For more information and an informal chat call Downton Link on 513807 or email info@downtonlink.org.uk.



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REPAIR CAFE VISIT

Eight-year-old Oscar Wright and his dad, Oliver, from Downton, like to think they are pretty handy when it comes to fixing things. Rather than replacing something when it breaks, their first instinct is to see if they can repair it themselves. But when two much-loved family possessions proved beyond their skills, they decided to seek local help at the Repair Cafe at Downton Baptist Church. The pair had heard about the Repair Cafe through InDownton and the church notice board. It was their first visit, and they were keen to support an initiative encouraging people to repair and reuse rather than throw things away.

"It was Daddy's idea," says Oscar. "We wanted to get a few things fixed."

One of their items was particularly special: a teapot belonging to Oscar's great-grandfather. Its handle had broken several years ago, but the family had kept it in the hope it could one day be repaired. The Repair Cafe team found a volunteer with the right skills, and a couple of weeks later Oscar and Oliver were delighted to hear the teapot was ready to collect.

"I was excited to get it back in great condition and to be able to use it again," says Oscar. Their second repair was a three-strand pearl necklace belonging to Oscar's mum, given to her by Oliver. The connection to the clasp had broken, making it a particularly intricate job. Although volunteers were initially unsure whether they could repair it, they found someone with the necessary expertise. The necklace was successfully restored and returned ready to wear. Oscar and Oliver were impressed by the range of skills among the friendly volunteers, as well as the variety of repairs taking place. Oscar even spotted someone working on a vacuum cleaner. The experience has encouraged them to keep trying to repair things themselves. "It makes us want to try harder to fix things," says Oliver. "It's also good to know that there are people on hand locally to help when you get stuck." The Repair Cafe has no fixed repair charges, instead inviting donations to support charity. It has now raised more than £60,000 for charitable causes. And for Oscar, there was another highlight: "There were nice biscuits as well, which is a great idea!"

Among the charities that have benefited from the £60,000 the Repair Cafe has raised are the Stars Appeal, Salisbury Hospice, Wiltshire Air Ambulance, the Food Bank in Salisbury, the Lover Baby Bank. The summer has been spent repairing and revitalising a number of garden items, as well as some surprise jobs refurbishing and restoring antique treasures. Among these were a Singer sewing machine, a model of the Cutty Sark, a rare French clock and a gong.

The cafe comes to Downton every first Saturday of the month between 10am and 12 noon in Downton Baptist Church. Usually 10 or 12 workers turn up to help or advise on all sorts of domestic problems and repairs. The cafe continues to be open every Wednesday and Friday morning at Redlynch Village Hall.



Restored clock and Cutty Sark model

Clare Kaye Bookkeeping
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SKY AT NIGHT BY MICHAEL F. BARRATT FRAS

The Autumn equinox in September makes for longer periods of dark sky observations. Our next closest galaxy, Messier 31, can be seen overhead in the constellation of Andromeda. It is the furthest object that humans can see without optical aids.

In October and November, if you stay up into the early hours of the morning the winter constellations, such as Orion (the Hunter) and Taurus (the Bull) are starting to appear over the eastern horizon.

The full moon on 26 September is the 'Harvest Moon' and on 26 October it's the 'Hunter's Moon'.

In September, Mars rises in the early hours and will be directly in line with Gemini's leading stars, Castor and Pollux in the early morning of 25th - and of similar brightness. The crescent moon will be seen just to the left. In the early hours of 11 October, it will be right in the middle of the Pleiades star cluster.

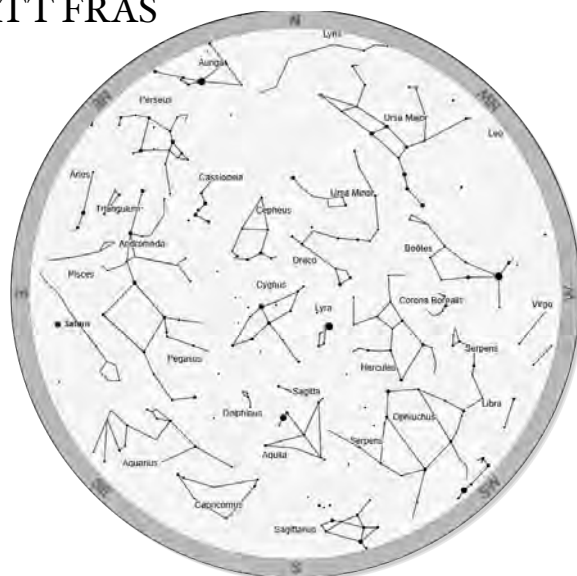
Jupiter rises a bit later and will be close to the moon on 8/9 September, in the constellation of Cancer - far brighter than the stars that make up the constellation. In October it will be rising at around 2am in the constellation of Leo.

Saturn is the easiest planet to observe as it rises around 8pm and can be seen underneath the stars that make up the Square of Pegasus. It will be at its brightest and most visible on 4 October and with a small telescope you will be able to make out its rings and possibly glimpse its moon, Titan.

You will need binoculars to spot Uranus (in Taurus) and Neptune (just to the right of Saturn). Neptune will be at its closest point to the earth on 25 September.

The Orionid meteor shower display, consisting of fast-moving debris from Halley's Comet smashing into the Earth's atmosphere, will peak on the night of 21/22 October - although it will be easier to spot after midnight when the moon has set.

Contact Michael at mootastro@yahoo.com or visit his Facebook page for more information.



Map of Sky at night-mid September at around 21.00 hours

PARISH STEWARD SEPTEMBER VISIT

The Parish Steward, Steve, will be visiting on the 10 and 14 September. Contact the Parish Council Admin Officer, Susan Parsons, with details of any blocked gullies/drains, weeding of footpaths etc. and they will be added to the list of tasks.

Susan is also the Tree Warden for the Parish Council. She can be contacted on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 07483 344035 or email admin@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk.

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THE GARDEN AT DBC

The Community Garden has had a busy summer, coping with unprecedented high temperatures and drought.

Regular daily watering rotas have kept the vegetables alive, but it's been a challenge.

However, the Downton Larder has been supplied with carrots, salad crops, courgettes and radishes. And there were even some prize winners in the Horticultural Society's Summer Show. The green beans were late to start but are still cropping. The summer raspberries were very welcome and leeks are growing well for a harvest later in the year.

The tomatoes have struggled with the high temperatures and dry weather. Their skins have concentric and radial cracks - a condition caused by the spikes in heat which speeds up the plant's growth, but makes the skin less pliable. When the fruit expands after watering, the inside swells faster than the skin can expand. They still taste good though!

The choice of vegetables to grow has begun to reflect the changing climate, with this year's good crop of peppers grown outside. Brace for 2027 - it's likely to be even hotter!

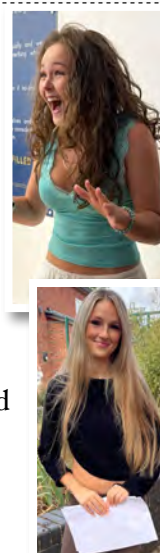
The Garden is open every Sunday between 2.30pm and 4.30pm, weather permitting. Everyone is welcome to come and help with planting, sowing, harvesting. Or just have a cup of tea and a chat.



TRAFALGAR GCSE RESULTS AMONGST THE BEST

Students, families and staff at The Trafalgar School have been celebrating their GCSE results, which matched the strong performance of 2025. This placed the school as the highest performing non-selective school in South Wiltshire. A number of students have performed particularly strongly with Eva (top right) and Amelie (bottom right) achieving a suite of the top Grade 9s and two Grade 8s.

Headteacher, Jy Taylor; "We are so proud of all of our students, many of whom have faced exceptional challenges and overcome many barriers in order to achieve their grades. We all know that Covid didn't end with the final 'lockdown' and for many of these children the social impact of the pandemic has lasted throughout their secondary education. No matter what their results they, and their families, should be incredibly proud of what they have achieved. Some of our students have performed exceptionally highly, demonstrating that it's not only children at the selective schools locally who can celebrate the very top grades."



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Gardeners' World Fair Spring
PLATINUM AWARD 2026

Gardeners' World Fair Spring
BEST SHOWCASE GARDEN 2026

MORE PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Anti-social Behaviour

If Parish residents are experiencing anti-social behaviour or any crime or disturbance, the Parish Council stress that it is vital to report this to our local Police. The Police do not respond to crimes reported on Facebook and these won't be recorded.

The advice is in an emergency always 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 - eg if you are experiencing anti-social behaviour, door knocking etc.

The temperature may have cooled a bit, but the crispy, parched earth will take a bit longer to recover. Please ensure no bonfires are lit and any cigarettes are extinguished correctly and disposed of. The local PC is Marc Evans, and the local police can be reached through dialling 101, or his mobile 07876 817927 which is active when PC Marc is on duty.

Any Volunteers

A Parish wide bench inspection has just been carried out by councillors, if you are a handy person and would like to help with painting, replacing seat slats and rubbing down, please contact the Parish admin officer. Handy people are always needed to help keep the village looking at its best. Volunteers can help in a variety of other roles - eg footpath maintenance.

You could also volunteer to join the Parish Council as a Councillor and help influence projects, get things done and make decisions for Downton: local democracy at its best! If you can help at all, contact the admin officer - many hands make a considerable difference.

Free hedging for the cemetery

The Parish Council has qualified for a couple of free Woodland Trust hedge packs, both wildlife friendly and colourful. These saplings will supplement the holes in the existing hedging in the cemetery. The saplings will arrive in November, so volunteers will be needed - look out for information on planting dates nearer the time.

Contact the Parish Council

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.

The Parish Council meetings are held on the second Monday of the month in the Bonvalot Room in the Downton Memorial Centre, usually starting at 7pm. There is always a public question time at the beginning of the meeting, when all are welcome to come along and have a say.




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Second SUNDAYS at HOBBYCRAFT, SALISBURY
 Morning **YARN CLUB** - Knit - Crochet - Beginners Welcome
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THE MOOT GARDENS: EIGHT ACRES OF DOWNTON'S HISTORY

Tucked in the heart of the village, the Moot is one of Downton's best-kept treasures, shaped by remarkable hands for nearly a thousand years. The mound at its centre began life as the site of a Norman castle, part of the wave of motte-and-bailey fortifications raised across the country after the Conquest to hold newly won territory. Long after its military purpose faded, the site's dramatic earthworks remained, waiting for a new chapter.

In 1725, the owners of Moot House embraced the fashion of the age for landscaped "pleasure gardens." They transformed the old castle site with a stone bridge, a temple, a loggia and an amphitheatre, turning a piece of medieval defence into a place for the village to enjoy.

The gardens remained part of Moot House until 1970, when the two were separated and the Moot began a long period of decline. It was rescued in 1988, when a charitable trust of local villagers took on the responsibility of caring for it - continuing until today.

Maintaining the gardens costs the Trust around £10,000 a year. The Friends of the Moot lead the fundraising efforts throughout the year, with events including a Christmas tree sale, an Easter egg hunt and more - all to keep this historic space open and thriving for everyone in Downton to enjoy.

Volunteer at The Moot

Each Thursday, a group of volunteers meets at the Moot to keep the gardens safe, clean and tidy. Strimming and grass cutting take up much of the time in summer, but the team also works on longer-term projects to improve the gardens.

Regular users of the Moot will have noticed that the crumbling plaster on the front of the old loggia wall has been removed and a new render applied to protect the brickwork for the future. The intention is for the Moot to partner with Trafalgar School to produce a mural there. Sadly, the wall was vandalised within hours of the plasterer finishing his work. If you know who was responsible, please do call the police - it is most dispiriting for those who gave up their time to do the work.

The next big project is to preserve the many beautiful walls around the Moot, some of which have deteriorated over time. Volunteers have begun removing ivy in preparation for a team of builders to repoint the walls and build new buttresses where needed over the coming months.

Occasionally a bonfire is necessary to dispose of waste, and the team knows that these can be an inconvenience for neighbours. They burn only when absolutely necessary and when winds are low.

To volunteer on Thursdays, or to report any damage, email downtonmoot@gmail.com. If you enjoy the Moot, consider supporting its upkeep with a donation: using totalgiving.co.uk/charity/the-downton-moot-preservation-trust-limited.



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MYSTERY PHOTOS

The answers to the village photos we published in the summer issue and at the Cuckoo Fair are below. Did you know them all?



1. Bridge over Newcourt Carrier, the Borough; 2. The Goat, The Borough; 3. Downton Primary School, Gravel Close; 4. Cottage on the north side of the Borough opposite Maypole Green; 5. Lode Hill / Slab Lane junction; 6. Pinchpoint, The Borough; 7. St Laurence Church clock; 8. Bench outside the Borough Cafe; 9. Cottage on south side of the Borough, between the dentist and The Headlands; 10. Bridge over Newcourt Carrier, The Borough; 11. St Laurence Church gate; 12. Memorial Gardens mural

MISSING STREET SIGNS REPLACED

Thanks to a Local Footpath and Highways Improvement Grant, Downton has had some missing street signs replaced: Downlands Close, Avon Meadow, and Castle Meadow. Replacement bollards have also been fixed in the Tannery pinch point.



DOWNTON BOWLING CLUB – 2026 SEASON UPDATE.

The 2026 season has a few weeks left to run and club competitions are in full swing, with the finals to be played in early September. In the Westbrook Mixed Triples League, the Downton team, a mix of novices and experienced players, is currently 6th out of 7 teams, with 5 matches still to play. Downton finished a close 3rd in the New Forest League (division 4) just missing out on promotion.



The two teams competing in the Bournemouth & District League (division 4) are currently placed 3rd (The Dragons) and 4th (The Bustards) out of the 10. Both teams have 2 remaining matches and the results will be finalised as this newsletter is published.

The club holds weekly roll-ups every Monday from 2 - 4pm and Friday from 6- 8pm (excluding bank holidays). These are for both experienced players or those who would like to give bowls a try. If you're considering going along, do remember that there are only a few weeks of the season left.

All equipment, tuition, light refreshments and parking are provided free of charge, and the club would love to see you. For more information, please contact Ivan on 07910 290735, email buib7@icloud.com, or visit downtonbc.co.uk.

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What, Where, When				
September				
Saturday	5	2 pm	Horticultural Society Autumn Show, Memorial Hall	
Saturday	12	10am - 2pm	Goose Fair, St Laurence Church	Page 6
Saturday	12		Charlton: Ride and Stride	Page 2
Sunday	13	3pm	Moot Dog Show, Downton Moot	Page 3
Friday	18	2 - 3:30pm	The Wardrobe, Clothing Exchange, Baptist Church	Page 9
Saturday	19	10:30am - 12	Film: 'TX: Destiny is calling', Memorial Hall	Page 6
Friday	25	10am - 12 noon	"Fridays" Community Cafe, Memorial Hall	
Saturday	26		Charlton: Bring & Share Harvest Supper, All Saints Church	Page 2
Sunday	27	9:30am	Charlton: Harvest Festival, All Saints Church	Page 2
October				
Thursday	1	10am - 12 noon	Hearing Aid Clinic, Downton Baptist Church	
Friday	2	7pm	An Evening with Ron Burrows, St Laurence Church	Page 6
Sunday	4	10:30am	Baptist Church Harvest Festival	Page 2
Saturday	10	7pm	Choirs concert in aid of Cancer Research, Memorial Hall	Page 3
Sunday	11	10:30am	Jane Walker talking about the Philippines, Baptist Church	Page 8
Friday	16	2 - 3:30pm	The Wardrobe, Clothing Exchange, Baptist Church	Page 9
Friday	16	7pm	Dance Show: Birds & Trees, Memorial Hall	Page 3
Thursday	22	7:30pm	Horticultural Society: Floral Art demonstration	Page 2
Friday	31	10am - 12 noon	"Fridays" Community Cafe, Memorial Hall	
November				
Thursday	5	10am - 12 noon	Hearing Aid Clinic, Downton Baptist Church	
Thursday	19	7:30pm	Horticultural Society AGM, Memorial Hall	Page 2
Friday	20	2 - 3:30pm	The Wardrobe, Clothing Exchange, Baptist Church	Page 9
Saturday	21		Christmas InDownton publication date	

ASHLEY GRANGE FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Free activities and entertainment
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DOWNTON DOWNTIME

Activities for anyone with memory
problems or who feels isolated
Tuesdays 10.15am - 12pm Free
Downton Baptist Church
hello@beyonddementia.org.uk

GOOD COMPANIONS

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

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

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 Friday 10am - 5pm
 Saturday 10 - 1

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 Sat & Sun 9am - 5pm
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downtonleisurecentre.co.uk

LOVER REPAIR CAFE

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

MEMORIAL CENTRE

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 contact Hilary Mace 07760 415818
 email: bookingsecretary@downtonmemorialcentre.co.uk

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: 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
stlaurencedownton.co.uk

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 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