

December 2025
/January 2026

Downton Parish News



Loving St Laurence

50p

St Laurence Church Downton

Enquiries for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals,
or requests for pastoral visits, should be made to
the team vicar Revd Veronica Batchelor.

Tel. 01725 513878

Email: veronicaforestandavon@gmail.com

Director of Music: Mrs. Elaine Hicks-Arnold 01722 710341

Sunday School: Dr Janet McGee 01725 513869

Church Flowers: Mrs C. Parry 01725 514511

Church website: www.stlaurencedownton.co.uk



www.facebook.com/stlaurencedownton

Anyone is welcome to come and look round this beautiful, ancient church or just take time to reflect and pray in peaceful surroundings. The church will usually be open daily from 9.30 am till 4.30pm



"St Laurence Church explores & builds the Kingdom of God through prayer, learning together & serving the local community."

St Laurence is part of the Forest and Avon Team of Churches, together with St Birinus, Morgans Vale; St Mary, Redlynch; St Andrew, Landford; St Peter, Bramshaw; St Peter, Plaitford.

Downton Parish News is published 10 times a year and is also currently online. Information for contributors and advertisers is at the back of the magazine. If you would like to have the magazine delivered to you, please contact downtonparishnews@gmail.com

Are you prepared for Christmas?

Coming up to Christmas I find myself preparing for services, community events, and the big day itself. I make the time to go into town for Christmas shopping, to visit those I haven't seen in a while and to put up decorations.

December can feel like a rather daunting month. Although we may look forward to everything that happens in December sometimes the to do list of preparation can feel overwhelming. It can be a wonder as to how we manage to fit everything in and find the time to prepare in our already busy lives. Christmas doesn't just happen, it needs time, effort and planning to be able to enjoy and celebrate.

Despite all the hard work, the additional stress and the seemingly never ending to do list, Christmas, and all that it brings, can be wonderful. We spend time with loved ones, embrace the festive celebrations and indulge in special food. It can make all our hard work and preparation worth it, even if we sometimes lose sight of that in the build-up.

God and faith are not different. A strong faith, trust in God and everything that brings doesn't just happen overnight. It takes preparation, time and effort. It's easy to think that we don't have time. Many of us lead busy lives and it can seem a daunting task to fit in even more. Yet, in December we manage. We prioritise the planning and preparing for Christmas, to whatever level suits us. We spend the whole month (and maybe even longer for those organised people!) preparing to celebrate Christmas in all its glory.

Imagine what could happen if we prepared ourselves spiritually to receive God's love as much as we prepare for Christmas. The gift that comes from God's love is so much more wonderful, everlasting and impactful than one day in December. How would our lives be changed if we could find the time in our busy schedules to welcome God into our hearts and home throughout the whole year, not just one month?

So, in our preparations for Christmas, make note of how much time and effort is required. How much effort goes into making such joyous celebrations, how much time we're able to give for others, how wonderful it is to feel the love and light all around us, and be able to share that with our loved ones. Remember how wonderful Christmas is and how much we have to prepare. And I hope during Advent and going forward into next year, we will put time and effort in preparing to receive God's presence and love, with the same dedication and



priority that we give to Christmas. May we all have a Wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Veronica x

Revd Veronica Batchelor, Vicar in the Forest and Avon Team



Forest and Avon Team Services for December 2025

You are welcome to attend any of these local services.

Wed 3rd December

10.45am Informal Service followed by lunch at Woodfalls Methodist

7th December

9.30am Communion Service at St. Peter's Bramshaw
 10.00am Communion Service at Woodfalls Methodist Church
 4.00pm Christingle at St. Andrew's Landford
 6.00pm Village Carol Service (DCT) at St. Laurence Downton

14th December

9.30am Morning Worship at St. Peter's Bramshaw
 10.00am Communion Service at St. Birinus Morgans Vale
 10.30am Communion Service (chancel) at St. Laurence Downton
 10.30am The Gathering at Landford Methodist Hall
 6.00pm Fordingbridge Choral & Redlynch Players at St. Mary's, Redlynch

Wed 17th December

10.45am Informal Service *followed by lunch* at Woodfalls Methodist Church

21st December

10am Café Church with Christingles at Woodfalls Methodist (*breakfast from 9.45am*)
 10.30am Communion Service at St. Laurence Downton
 10.30am Christmas Service at Landford Methodist Hall
 5.30pm Carols Service with Woodfalls Band at St. Birinus, Morgans Vale
 6.00pm Carols with orchestra at St. Peter's Bramshaw

24th December Christmas Eve

4.00pm Crib Service at St. Birinus Morgans Vale
 4.00pm Tree Service at St. Peter's Plaitford
 5.00pm Christingle at St. Laurence Downton
 6.00pm Carol Service at St. Andrew's Landford

11.00pm Christmas Candlelight Communion at St. Laurence Downton

25th December Christmas Day

10.00am Family Christmas Communion at St. Mary's Redlynch

10.30am Christmas Day Communion at St. Laurence Downton

9.30am Christmas Day Communion at St. Peter's Bramshaw

28th December

10.00am Team Carols and Communion at St. Mary's Redlynch

10.30am Methodist Worship Service at Landford Methodist Church



Forest and Avon Team Services for January 2026

You are welcome to attend any of these local services.

4th January

9.30am Communion Service at St. Peter's Bramshaw

10.00am Communion Christian Covenant Service at Woodfalls Methodist

10.30am Communion Service (chancel) at St. Laurence Downton

10.30am Worship for All at Landford Methodist Hall

Wed 7th January

10.45am Informal Service followed by lunch at Woodfalls Methodist Church

11th January

9.30am Morning Worship at St. Peter's Bramshaw

10.00am Communion Service at St. Birinus Morgans Vale

10.30am Morning Worship at St. Laurence Downton

10.30am The Gathering at Landford Methodist Hall

18th January

9.30am Communion Service at St. Peter's Bramshaw

10.00am Café Church at Woodfalls Methodist (*breakfast from 9.45am*)

10.30am Communion Service at St. Laurence Downton

10.30am The Gathering at Landford Methodist Hall

6.00pm Evensong at St. Mary's Redlynch

Wed 21st January

10.45am Informal Service *followed by lunch* at Woodfalls Methodist Church

25th January

9.30am Silent Prayer at St. Peter's Bramshaw

10.00am Communion Service at St. Mary's Redlynch

10.00am Communion Service at St. Andrew's Landford

10.30am Café Church at St. Laurence Downton

10.30am Methodist Covenant Service at Landford Methodist Church

Other local Church Services

Woodfalls Methodist Church

The Ridge, Woodfalls, SP5 2LH

Service details listed on p.2.

All enquiries to Graham Tanner (01725 512648).



Roman Catholic Services

Church of the Good Shepherd. Barford Lane, Downton, SP5 3QA

The Catholic chapel is now available for private prayer.

At 6.30 pm on Tuesdays the congregation hold a
Service of the Word by Zoom.

There is a Mass in the chapel on the third Thursday of the month.

The next Mass will be on 18th December at 6.30 pm.

If you would like to join the Zoom services or use the chapel for private prayer,
please contact John Elliott on 07980 921558.

St Osmund's Church TV system
can be accessed at: <https://salisbury Catholics.org/church-tv>



Downton Baptist Church

South Lane, Downton, SP5 3NA Tel: 01725 512971

www.downtonbaptist.org | office@downtonbaptist.org

Sunday Morning Worship at 10.30 am:

including groups for young people.

Services can be found on the DBC Church website.

Thursday Morning Worship at 10.30 am:

Followed by a two-course community lunch
every 2nd/4th Thursday of the month.

The PLAYROOM: Wednesday Morning at 9.00 am:

Free Toddler Church playgroup and their adults: from birth to Pre-School.

The LARDER: Food for the Community.

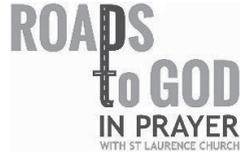
6.00 pm to 7.00 pm Every Monday

9.00 am to 10.00 am Every Wednesday (with refreshments)

Pastors: Rev Philip Rhoades and Rev Katy Ulyyatt

Tel: 07468 491143 or 07786 248880.

In our cycle of prayer for all living and working in our community during **December** we will be offering prayers for:



Weeke Close, Waterside and Natanbury, Church Hatch, Hamilton Park, Twynham Close

In **January**, we will be offering prayers for:

Moot Lane, Bridge House Gardens, Old Tannery Flats

Requests for particular prayers can be made by telephoning Reverend Ron Hart on 01725 514772 or emailing info@stlaurencedownton.co.uk. Any such requests will be kept confidential. You can request prayers at any time – not just when your road is on the monthly list. For more information, please see the Roads to God page on our website: www.stlaurencedownton.co.uk

Roads to God Prayer Group

The next Roads to God Prayer Group will meet on Wednesday **17th December** at **10.30am** in the Lady Chapel and will be led by Rev Ron Hart.



Keep in Touch with St Laurence Church

Would you be interested in learning more about what’s going on at St Laurence Church? We have a range of exciting events forthcoming, details of which you can see throughout the magazine, with plans for more exciting events and activities for 2026. If you would like to learn more, please sign up to our mailing list, where you’ll receive monthly emails about what’s been going on, plans for the month, and information about our services.

To sign up, please email Revd Veronica Batchelor: veronicaforestandavon@gmail.com

We’re also keen to hear any ideas for activities you’d like to take place in the church – please do let Veronica know if you have any ideas or thoughts!



An Evening with Mark Dawson | 10 October 2025

We were delighted to welcome local author, Mark Dawson, to St Laurence Church for an interview and book signing, as part of the promotional efforts for his latest book in the Atticus Priest series, *The Inheritance*. It was lovely to see the church so packed, with over 200 attendees. We were very grateful to Downton Brewery for supplying the bar, and the event raised almost £1400 for the church.



Friends of St Laurence
Invite you to join them for Community
Carols
on Tuesday 16th December 2025 at:

Wick Estate 6.30pm
|
Charlotte Close 7.00pm
|
The Borough 7.20pm
|
Moot Gardens 7.45pm
|
The Beacon 8.15pm

We very much look forward to seeing you there to
listen and perhaps join us for some of the journey
around the village!

We are promised to be joined by
Father Christmas
To wish you all a very Merry Christmas.





Downton 2025 Christmas Tree Festival

St Laurence Church

Sat 6 and Sun 7 December 10am-4pm

**Christmas exhibits, Gifts, Music, famous Raffle,
Children's Mouse Hunt**

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT FROM:

Saturday		Sunday	
10.00	Downton Training Band	10.00	Christmas music
10.40	Catch of the Day	10.40	Christmas music
11.20	Downton Beginners' Band	11.20	Musical Miscellany
12.00	Downton Community Choir	12.00	DADA/The Sedens
12.40	Fordingbridge Bells	12.40	Christmas music
13.20	Christmas music	13.20	Christmas music
14.00	Woodfalls Singers	14.00	Mandolins
14.20	Pipes and Violin	14.40	Millstream Winds
15.20	Chris Shuker Songs	15.20	The Trafalgar School

Coffee, Tea, Cakes and so much more!

SUPPORTING LOVER BABY BANK AND

ST. LAURENCE RESTORATION FUND

**FRI 5th
DECEMBER
AT 7.00PM**

Downton PRESENTS
**Christmas
Tree Festival**

**THE SALISBURY BIG
BAND IN CONCERT**



**ST LAURENCE CHURCH
DOWNTON, SP5 3PL**

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM
THE BOROUGH CAFE &
ONLINE FROM EVENTBRITE

CASH BAR

PARKING AVAILABLE IN THE
MOOT CAR PARK

**TICKETS
€10**



SCAN THE
QR CODE

IN AID OF THE
LOVER BABY BANK
& ST LAURENCE
CHURCH



ART CLASSES

at St.Laurence Church with



Lucinda Nicholas



TUESDAY'S 10AM - 12 NOON

9 SEP 14 OCT

11 NOV 9 DEC

£15.00 per person

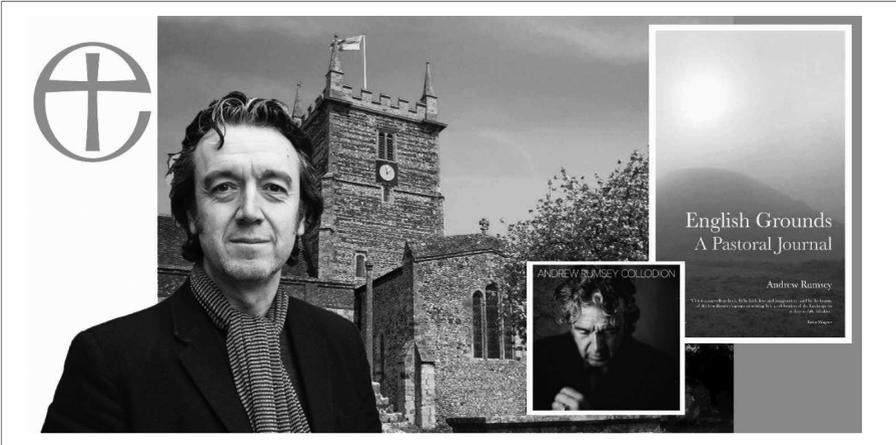
all materials provided

7 places available

Contact Lucinda to book.

07876 551622 or email

lucindanicholas63@gmail.com



An evening of songs, stories and poems with Bishop Andrew at St Laurence Church, Downton.

**15th January 2026, 7pm @ St Laurence's Church, Church Hatch,
Downton, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 3PL.**

The Forest & Avon Team Ministry are pleased to announce an evening of songs, stories and poems with Dr Andrew Rumsey, The Bishop of Ramsbury, at St Laurence Church, Downton. The Bishop will bring his rich talents as both a musician and also an author, with recent examples of his works, from his album; *Collodion*, and his book; *English Grounds: A Pastoral Journal*.

Tickets at £12 are available online and includes a welcome drink. There's a pop-up bar in the interval where refreshments will be available. Profits from tickets will be donated to the Forest & Avon Team's local churches and the interval bar profits to charity; *Julia's House*, a hospice located in Corfe Mullen, Dorset and Devizes, Wiltshire.



Buy tickets... £12pp

E-mail: info@stbirinus-church.org.uk

or QR Code: Please scan



Downton Bowling Club – Season Round-Up 2025

Our 2025 season has now finished, and the club will reopen on **18th April 2026**. It's been a great year with plenty of good bowling and friendly competition.

League highlights:

- Westbrook MTL – 7th out of 8 & Cup semi-finalists
- Bournemouth & District Triples – Bustards 4th, Dragons 5th out of 10
- New Forest Division 4 – 5th out of 8, Cup 2nd round

Club Champions 2025:

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

Coffee Mornings

Join us before Christmas for coffee, cake, bingo & chat!

12th November & 10th December, 10am–12 noon – everyone welcome.

Interested in bowls? Contact Ivan on 07910 290735 or buib7@icloud.com



Downton's Mobile Post Office

Every Friday Morning

Moot Lane (near to Recreation Ground): 9.00 am - 10.00 am.

The Bull car park: 10.05 am till 11.05 am.

Goldies Sing-Along Social Group at Downton Memorial Hall

Goldies takes place upstairs at **Downton Memorial Hall** on the **4th Wednesday of the month from 10.00 am**, led by Carole Still. Walk down the side of the Hall and enter through the door on the left.

At Goldies we chat and laugh with friends, whilst singing along to the hits of the 50's onwards, with artists such as Sir Cliff Richard, Tom Jones, Elvis, Dusty Springfield, Petula Clark and many more. Goldies is not a choir, you don't have to be able to sing to join, just love music and socialising.

Goldies Sing & Smile sessions are open to everyone but particularly aim to reduce isolation with older adults. We ask for a £3 donation to attend.

For further information go to the website: www.golden-oldies.org.uk
Or ring Carole Still on 01722 337880



Downton Horticultural Society

We will be holding our AGM in the Memorial Hall at 7.30 pm on Thursday 27th Our Floral Art demonstration during October was wonderful and well attended. Local NAFAS demonstrator, Andrea Hiilyard, supported by her family, created four magnificent arrangements while telling us about her time as a florist in Southampton. This included stories of providing bouquets for Valentine's Day, when she ordered in one thousand red roses, and how she did arrangements for a yacht being used to transport our late Queen. She also explained the background to her brussel sprout wreath which she created for her daughter who posted a picture of it on social media. The post went viral and resulted in Andrea being interviewed on TV. At the end of the evening the arrangements became the prizes in the raffle but the winners had some difficulty choosing which one to take home.

The committee are now busy planning next year's events. Also, please look out for our contribution to the Christmas Tree Festival in St Laurence Church.

Gordon Bishop (511475)

Downton Parish Council News

What a beautiful autumn, golden leaves everywhere, apples and blackberries galore! There has been lots of free fruit around, even quinces which make lovely jelly and can be used wherever apples are used. The trees around the Parish which form part of the Kings Coronation grant are thriving (apart from a couple which will be replaced) despite the dry summer

- Our Parish Steward Steve is busy shovelling, unblocking, weeding and doing all sorts of jobs around the Parish, his next visit this year will be December 9 so please let me know if anything needs doing
- DPC is making sure our Parish is winter ready and resilient, Flood Wardens will be getting together, and Wiltshire will continue to keep an eye and clear our gullies
- Not only has DPC secured funding for the Wooden Spoon crossing improvements but now have approval and funding from Wiltshire Council Local Highways Footpath Improvement Grant for road safety improvements to the Tannery pinch point. There will be 11 points around the village that have been selected for traffic surveys, forming accurate evidence-based data on vehicle numbers, size and speed
- Some sad news: A local eagle-eyed tree surveyor who walks his child to school spotted a tree fungus on one of the beautiful Beeches in the Memorial Gardens. This will have to be felled. The good news is that DPC have applied for an Oak at 80, celebrating 80 years since VE Day and our grant application has been approved. This Oak will take pride of place in the Memorial Gardens.
- You may be wondering where our Speed Indicator Device (SID) is – DPC now have a dedicated SID which will work off solar power, plus the SID shared with Redlynch will also work off solar power which means the volunteers will not have to change heavy batteries so often
- If Downton Parish residents are experiencing anti-social behaviour or any crime or disturbance, it is VITAL to report this to our local Police. The Police do NOT respond to crimes reported on Facebook.
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: if you are experiencing anti-social behaviour, door knocking etc.

Our local PC is Marc Evans, and our local police can be reached through dialling 101, or his mobile 07876 817927 which is active when PC Marc is on duty

The Parish Council meetings are held on the **second Monday of the month in the Bonvalot Room in the Downton Memorial Centre. Meetings start at 7pm.**

There is always a public question time at the beginning of the meeting, so do come along and have your say. **It is YOUR Parish after all!**

Susan Parsons is the Administrative Officer 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 the Parish Clerk.



Pinocchio

Friday 9th January at Downton Memorial Hall, 6.30pm (doors open 5.45pm)

The Travelling Players (Forest Forge, Bumblefly and Mischievous Theatre) are returning with another thrilling festive show. This year, they bring their quirky storytelling, song, merriment, and mischief to the wonderful misadventures of Pinocchio—the story of a wooden marionette who longs to become a real boy.

With a nose that grows at every fib, Pinocchio is naïve, stubborn, thoughtless, and all too easily led. Join him as he falls in with the rascally Fox, gasp as he soars on the back of a pigeon, marvel as he is swallowed by a giant shark, doubt as he plants gold coins in the hope they will grow, and wonder as he is turned into a donkey... but will he ever become a real boy?

We promise live action, music, surprises, a puppet or two, plenty of laughs, and a thoroughly enjoyable, unforgettable adventure! ***For the whole family!***

Refreshments and licensed bar available.

Tickets: Adults £10, Children (under 16) £5, available from 1st December, from the Borough Cafe (cash only). Alternatively you can text either 07760 415818 or 07545 598887 giving details of tickets required (pay by BACS).

All profits will go towards the refurbishment of the Memorial Hall kitchen.



WANTED

Accommodation to rent in the local area.

Please call ANTHONY on 07949416298

Anything considered

BUMBLEFLY
THEATRE

Misch evous
Theatre

FOREST
FORGE
THEATRE CO.

presents
PINOCCHIO

touring from Dec 2015

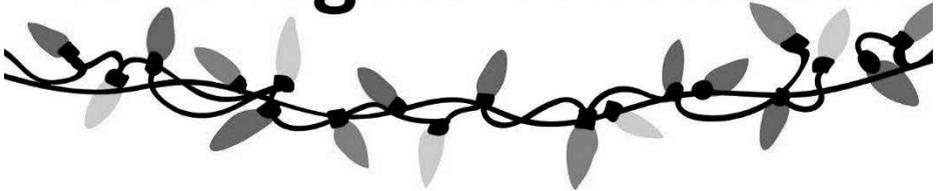




Downton Parish Council
BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

Downton Parish Council invite you to

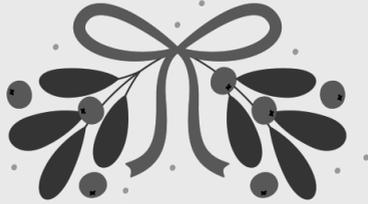
Downton Christmas Tree Lights Switch On



**Friday 5th December
from 6.15pm for lights on at
6.30pm!**

**Join us for a festive singalong
around the tree on
Maypole Green.
FREE refreshments.
Everyone welcome!**





DOWNTON MOOT
CHRISTMAS
TREE SALE

**At Long Close Park
The Borough**

FRIDAY 5TH OF DECEMBER

3PM - 6PM



LOCALLY GROWN NORDMANN FIR
PRICES START FROM £45
PROCEEDS TO DOWNTON MOOT
HOMEMADE REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE

Good Companions

We meet in the Downton Memorial Hall on Tuesdays from 2.00 to 4.00 pm. Regulars pay £2, and visitors, who are always welcome, pay £2.50. Cup of tea and biscuit included. Contact Julia Whitmarsh on 01725 510601 for more information.

Joanne has arranged the following for us:

2nd December (week 1) – Alan Jones will be visiting to talk about all things Christmas

9th December (week 2) – Games and Christmas Bring and Buy

16th December (week 3) – Christmas party with Kate Edgar and Downton Choir

23rd December (week 4) – Games

30th December (week 5) – No Good Companions.

6th January (week 1) – Games

13th January (week 2) – Bring and Buy

20th January (week 3) – Anniversary week with Kate Edgar

27th January (week 4) – Games

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Hearing Aid Clinic

Downton Baptist Church, South Lane

First Thursday of the month from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm. Drop in and get your hearing aids retubed and cleaned and obtain new batteries.

We will only be able to let a maximum number of clients into the room at any one time. Please respect social distancing measures. This service is for NHS Salisbury hearing aid users. Please bring your battery issue card.

We are RNID and together, we'll make life fully inclusive for deaf people and those with hearing loss or tinnitus.



Contact: Gill Drayson 01722 580014 or 07570 670 643 gillian.drayson@rnid.org.uk

Community Café in the Memorial Hall



This regular event takes place at Downton Memorial Hall on the last Friday of each month, from 10.00 am - 12 noon.

Tea, coffee and homemade cake - plus the opportunity to chat to old friends and make new ones. There is a book share, and it is hoped that people will bring and share excess garden produce and flowers.

Everyone is welcome – pop in for a few minutes or stay all morning.

There is no charge but leave a donation if you wish.

If you know anyone who would like to come but needs a lift, please contact stephaniejalland1@gmail.com



The LARDER for our community



Everyone is welcome to come and share from **The LARDER**, situated in Downton Baptist Church. You will find a wide variety of food donated by our local community, including the Co-op and Bidfood. Our hope is that **The LARDER** will reduce food waste and make food available to everyone who would like it. It is absolutely FREE, and anyone can come and access one bag of food per week.

We welcome donations from individuals as well, of items of unopened food, cleaning and hygiene products. We also welcome fresh food. Any financial donations received will go to purchasing more food.

There continue to be many locations where food can be taken. The Collection points are: The Co-op; Ashley Grange; The Cedars at Landford; the Primary School and The Trafalgar School in Downton. You can also bring fresh food and any other items to the church during Larder open times or church office hours. (9.00 am to 1.00 pm Monday to Thursday).

Please see Downton Baptist Church website for further information. www.downtonbaptist.org/Groups/384889/The_Larder.aspx

The LARDER is open each week on Monday Evenings from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm, and Wednesday Mornings from 9.00 am to 10.00 am.



Events at Woodfalls Methodist Church

Talkabout | Thursday 4th December

Coffee from 10.00am, talk starts at 10.30am. A morning of songs by Cosmic Sparkle, with mince pies and Christmas Cake. In Woodfalls Methodist Hall.

No Talkabout in January.

Social | Saturday 13th December

Starting with a traditional Christmas meal at 5.30pm, followed by Christmas games. In Woodfalls Methodist Hall.

Social | Saturday 10th January

Starting with a meal at 5.30pm, followed by Team Higher or Lower. Both in Woodfalls Methodist Hall. To help with catering please ring or text 07816542204 if you plan to come.

Friendship hub an occasional afternoon group for people to meet over refreshments & activities. | Tuesday 2nd December, 12pm

Traditional Christmas Meal In Woodfalls Methodist Main Hall A PLACE TO CHAT TO OLD FRIENDS AND MEET NEW ONES. ALL WELCOME To help with catering rsvp 07816542204 or email atanner.gtanner@btinternet.com by Sunday 30th November. Please let us know of any dietary requirements or allergies.

AGM | Tuesday 13th January 2pm

In Woodfalls Methodist Small Hall, to plan next year's meetings.



Redlynch & District W.I.

December begins with our trip to Winchester on the 3rd, followed by our Christmas meeting on the 9th, so lots to look forward to. Lucinda who is our speaker this month, has hinted that she will be bringing along something for us all to attempt so those with artistic leanings will be in their element and the rest of us can have fun trying?

The old tree in the cemetery has been removed and the new W.I tree will soon be planted, hopefully bringing comfort and succour for many years to come.

We welcome everybody to our meetings and your visit is free so do come along. November 's meeting was early this month, so I can report that all our members have gained weight as we were lucky enough to have Michael from Lyburn Cheeses along to tell us about its beginnings and it's enormous growth. He kindly brought along some tasters of his most popular varieties, so we were able to munch along as he spoke, which explains our weight gain!?

The Winchester trip timings are 9.30 departure from M.V.Village Hall and 4.30 p.m. departure from Winchester. There are still a couple of tickets left at £18. Info from Sandra on 07901717949.

Monthly meetings begin at 2pm in Morgans Vale Village Hall on the second Wednesday of each month. Just turn up - there's always tea and cake! For any further information, contact Ann Kelly on 078438994.



Redlynch and District Local History Society

Our October talk was "The History of Communications" by ex-Royal Corps of Signals. Our November talk was given by Graham Bathe focusing on the early use of bricks in Wiltshire. Despite the use of bricks in the Middle East as long as 12,000 years ago, bricks did not become established in Britain until the mid 16thC. Early use of bricks was limited to ovens and chimneys, for example on the Mary Rose, to protect the flammable surroundings. Another early use was for water courses. Tiles were recognised for flooring and used in Clarendon Palace for example. The problem with bricks was that they were very expensive compared to other building materials. Bricks require suitable clay, a binding agent such as sand, water and large amounts of fuel; in areas without these factors one would have to import heavy brick loads further increasing the cost. A further problem was the lack of skilled labour to make and lay the bricks.

Renaissance Europe adopted bricks and impressive buildings were constructed, these were seen by travelling British gentry and military officers and brick buildings became the "must have" for the ambitious and well to do. The most famous example is Hampton Court which featured functioning water and sewage systems, and another early example is Layer Marney in Essex. Wolf Hall, home to the Seymour family, was greatly enlarged in 1531, bricks were extensively used particularly for the sewerage tunnels below ground which are still there. The birth of Edward 6th, the only male heir to Henry 8th led to great wealth via the Lord Protector (uncle) Edward Seymour, the Duke of Somerset. Seymour instructed his "servant" John Thymme to build three brick houses: Somerset House in London, Syon Park on the Thames and "The Brailes" to replace Wolf Hall.

The Brailes was south of Great Bedwyn and east of Wolf Hall. Little remains apart from a water ditch which on excavation revealed a fresh water brick channel 15 feet below ground level. Documents have revealed the effort and expense required this including the hiring of European brick makers and layers in 1556. On Edwards death the work ceased and The Brailes was never completed, however by that time the skills required for bricks and brick works were established. The advantage of regular sized building blocks and the speed of construction had also now been recognised.

Our next talk is at 7:30pm at Morgans Vale & Woodfalls Village Hall on Tuesday 2nd December entitled “The Duke of Monmouth – how his head was turned and lost” by Jaqueline and Brian Sutton. Our local history link is Alice Lisle.



Redlynch Players Backstage News

Christmas Concert 2025

Do join us! Our annual Christmas Concert, in collaboration with our friends, Fordingbridge Choral Society, takes place on Sunday 14th December at 6pm in St Mary’s Church, Redlynch. Held in aid of a cause close to our heart, Young Lives Versus Cancer, this special evening is always a popular time to enjoy listening to Christmas readings and join the choir with singing some all-time favourite carols. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served following the concert so do come and get festive!



No tickets or but there will be a retiring collection in aid of Young Lives Vs Cancer.

Two - Autumn Production 2025

Thank you for your support for our Autumn production, Two by Jim Cartwright. Tickets sold out early for the run and we loved welcoming you to The Redlynch Tap!

More details will follow in our January edition when we will also be thinking about our next production!

Spring Production 2026 – would you like to join us?

We will begin rehearsals for our Spring Production in the New Year. It is the perfect time to join us as we embark on the exciting journey of lifting the words from the page to create a play for you! Please do get in touch if you’d like to know more

about taking part in any way. We have plenty of roles both on and off stage to suit beginners and the experienced.

Finally, may I wish you all a wonderful, blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year from all at Redlynch Players. Thank you for your support throughout this year – it's been another fantastic one!

Find out more about us!

If you would like to be included on our emailing list, please email:

info@redlynchplayers.co.uk

Alternatively, see our website for recent reviews, how to buy tickets and past productions: www.redlynchplayers.co.uk

We post regular updates on our Redlynch Players Facebook and Instagram pages: @redlynchplayers.

Ali Silver, Chair of Redlynch Players



A Plea to All in Downton

There are often stories in the media of bus services ending or being cut back. Particularly for people with out cars this can cause problems getting out and about. Although there has been no indications of possible cutbacks in buses serving Downton this must be a concern for the future. While the X3 service between Salisbury Railway Station and Bournemouth generally runs half-hourly in both directions and is convenient for people living in the bottom of the village, it is of relatively little use for those living in High Street, Moot Lane, Barford Lane etc.

Meanwhile, the 44 buses which serve the whole village, and also go via Salisbury Hospital, only run every 90 minutes. At various times of the day they often have very few passengers when they go up or down Lode Hill. It is therefore important that people make use of these buses to ensure they are never withdrawn, as some years ago they used to run every 40 minutes.

Therefore, a plea, please use the 44 as much as possible!! Remember that currently single fares are capped at £3 by the Department of Transport and pensioners get free travel if they have a bus pass which is available from Wiltshire County Council.

Downton Band

One of the delights of living in Downton is listening to our wonderful bands play Christmas music. This year both the band and the training band will be very busy, and this is where they will be playing during December:

Downton Band

- 1st - Carolling – Moot Lane North, 7pm
- 5th - Royal Oak, Fritham, 7pm
- 7th - Village Carol Service, 5.50pm
- 8th - Carolling - Moot Lane South, 7pm
- 11th – Carolling -The Sidings, 7pm
- 13th - Lyndhurst concert, 6pm
- 15th - Carolling - Old Wick, 7pm
- 16th - Charlton all Saints concert, 7.30pm.
- 18th - Carolling - The Borough, 7pm
- 19th - Carolling - Morgan Close and Downton Brewery, 6pm
- 20th - Tesco Extra, Salisbury, 9am-3pm
- 21st - DOWNTON BAND concert, 6.30pm
- 23rd Carolling spare night, 7pm
- 24th - Carolling – Coop, 10am-3pm
- 25th – Carolling all around the village, 4am

Downton Training Band

- 5th - Downton Primary School Christmas Fayre,4.15-5pm
- 6th - St Laurence Christmas Tree Festival, 10am-10.30am and Beginners brass 11.40-12.10pm
- 6th - St Thomas Church, Salisbury Christmas Tree Festival, 5.20-5.50pm
- 17th - Carolling - New Wick/Gravel Close, 6.15pm
- 22nd - Carolling - New Wick/mesh Pond, 6.15pm

Lover Repair Café

CHRISTMAS IS COMING, IT'S TIME TO BRING THOSE BROKEN TREE LIGHTS AND NATIVITY FIGURES ALONG TO BE REPAIRED AT THE REPAIR CAFE. SO COME AND JOIN US, YOU MAY EVEN GET A MULLED WINE AS WELL AS A CUP OF TEA.



Ah! Memories of years gone by. On the left, a DIY Christmas Tree we constructed for the Saint Lawrence's Church Christmas event. We hope to create another one for this year, so look out for it.

Covid Christmas (on the right) – that was the last time Father Christmas paid us a visit.

I hope he is OK, because we want to send him a Wish Letter asking for an Additional Book Repairer, Seamstress and Wickerworker!



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News from the Repair Cafe: - Our Christmas Opening Times:-

Wed. 24 th Dec (Christmas Eve): Drop-off / Pickup only	Fri. 26 th Dec (Boxing Day) – Repair Cafe Closed
Wed. 31 st Dec. (New Years Eve):- Drop-off / Pickup only	Fri. 2 nd Jan. –Drop-off / Pickup only
Wed. 7th Jan. – Normal Service Resumes - Open as usual	



Just another reminder:
Our Helpers are waiting to get your Christmas Lights & ornaments up and working for you.
This chap on the right is one of the Three Kings repaired and ready to offer his Frankincense again this year. Have you checked that all yours are on order?



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All box and line advertisements in this magazine are accepted in good faith

Sending editorial copy:

Articles and notices of events for the **February** issue to be emailed to the Editor by **7th January**. Please contact the Editor if you wish to submit a paper copy.

Articles will be shortened if space is limited and any received late may not be used. Please use black and white clipart rather than coloured items. Word documents are preferable to pdfs or jpegs. **Email: downtonparishnews@gmail.com**

Opinions expressed or implied in the Downton Parish News are not necessarily those of the Editor or Parochial Church Council, and no responsibility can be accepted for



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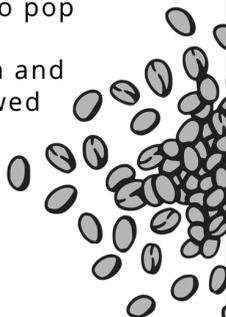
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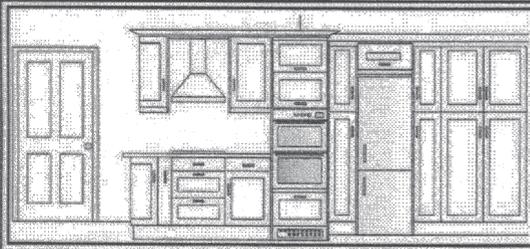
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