October 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

Interim Treasurer: Mrs Sheila Latham companydragon@btinternet.com

Church website: www.stlaurencedownton.co.uk

www.facebook.com/stlaurencedownton



Anyone is welcome to look around 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

Too Little or Too Much?

This summer we've had weeks of intense heat and sun with little rain. Whilst the warmth can be a blessing, many gardeners have suffered losses. The New Forest wildfire along the A31 has meant long term losses that will take years to recover. Our local farmers have worked tirelessly to protect livestock and crops and will, in some cases, have to suffer as the value of their harvests will not cover their costs.

The Church calendar, which is intrinsically linked with the seasons, encourages to give thanks for the work, growth and fruits of the harvest. We will also lament with those who have suffered losses.

Creation through its suffering has reminded us of the importance of balance. Unusually long periods of sun or rain mean habitats, shaped over centuries are now challenged by the speed of climate change. Some environments are now failing to provide safe habitats for humans, wildlife or plants, and species once secure are becoming endangered.

The relationship between our faith and responsibility to care for the earth is nothing new. Scripture tells us that God's covenant is with 'all living creatures of every kind on the earth' (Gen 9:16). Jesus in his ministry often used the natural environment to teach his followers about God. Jesus taught that the beauty of God's heavenly kingdom, made possible by him, would come through us, in our words and our actions, and Jesus taught us how we should pray, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'

We recognise the need for balance in our work, home and relationships. A friend who takes but gives little back does not lead to a healthy relationship. The balance of give and take is also relevant to our relationship with the environment and the strength of community. How can we ensure that our levels of 'giving to' and 'taking from' is well-balanced? We might like to consider the ways we 'give', reflecting on how our words and actions contribute positively to the place in which we work and live? We may also wish to consider if we sometimes take more than we return. This consideration to the way we live reminded me of a well-loved hymn 'Make me a channel of your peace', which encourages us to be generous people who bring healing and hope.

This autumn, may we be thankful for all we have received, and may God shape us into 'giving' people, so that our relationships with each other and the environment are well-balanced, helping to make our world a safer and more hopeful place for all.

Veronica x

Revd Veronica Batchelor, Team Rector, Forest and Avon Team

Forest and Avon Team Services for October 2026

You are welcome to attend any of these local services.

Sunday 4th October

09:30	Harvest Communion Service	St Peter's Church, Bramshaw
10:00	Service	Woodfalls Methodist Church
10:30	Communion Service (Chancel)	St Laurence Church, Downton
10:30	The Gathering	Landford Methodist Chapel
18:00	Harvest Praise and Supper	Redlynch Village Hall

Wednesday 7th October

10:45	Harvest Service followed by lunch	Woodfalls Methodist Church

Sunday 11th October

09:30	Morning Worship	St Peter's Church, Bramshaw
10:00	Harvest Communion Service	St Birinus, Morgan's Vale
10:30	Café Church Harvest	St Laurence Church, Downton
10:30	The Gathering	Landford Methodist Chapel

Sunday 18th October

09:30	Communion Service	St Peter's Church, Bramshaw
10:00	Café Church (breakfast from 09:45am)	Woodfalls Methodist Church
10:30	Communion Service	St Laurence Church, Downton
10:30	The Gathering	Landford Methodist Chapel
18:00	Evensong	St Mary's Church, Redlynch

Wednesday 21st October

10:45	Informal Service followed by lunch	Woodfalls Methodist Church

Sunday 25th October

09:30	Silent Prayer	St Peter's Church, Bramshaw
10:00	Communion Service	St Mary's Church, Redlynch
10:00	Pet Service	St Andrew's Church, Landford
10:30	Morning Worship	St Laurence Church, Downton
10:30	Methodist Holy Communion	Landford Methodist Church
16:00	Forest Church	St Andrew's Church, Landford

ROADS to GOD IN PRAYER
WITH ST LAURENCE CHURCH

In our cycle of prayer for all living and working in our community during **October** we will be offering prayers for Squarey Close, The Sidings, Batchelor Way, Moody Drive, Keeley Close, Bundy Grove, Haydon Close.

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 **21st October** at **10.30am** in the Lady Chapel and will be led by Rev Ron Hart.

♦ ♦

TOGETHER

The Churches of Downton, Morgan's Vale, Redlynch and Woodfalls invite you to

St Laurence

A service of Commemoration

Remembering our Loved Ones

A Service of Commemoration
for those who have died
at
St Birinus Church, Morgan's Vale
at 3.00pm on Sunday 1st November 2026

For more information, or to request the inclusion of a particular name in the Act of Remembrance, please contact Sheila Youings by telephone 01725 512747 or email sayouings@btinternet.com

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).

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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.
Mass will be in **St Laurence at noon on Thursday 15th October** and **all are warmly invited to attend.**

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://salisburycatholics.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 Ullyatt
Tel: 07468 491143 or 07786 248880.


St Laurence
DOWNTON CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL
5 - 6 DECEMBER 2026



AN EVENING WITH

GROUP CAPTAIN RON BURROWS

COLD WAR TEST PILOT

FRIDAY 2 OCTOBER

DOORS OPEN 6.30 FOR 7 PM START

St Laurence Church, Downton

Tickets £5

Available to purchase from

The Borough Cafe / on the door

BAR

Cash & Card Bar Available

St Laurence

Downton Christmas Tree Festival

We're thrilled to announce that Downton Christmas Tree Festival will be taking place on 5 – 6 December 2026. The festival will open with a concert on Friday 4 December, with local group Shantoosy. Please do save the date and look out for further details about the event over the coming months.

We will be looking for people to enter Christmas Trees for the festival – as well as volunteers to help make the event a success. If you'd be interested in volunteering, please email Rose Bloomfield (downtonchristmastreefest@gmail.com).

We will also be looking for volunteers to help bake cakes and treats for the event to help raise funds for the three organisations we're supporting this year – Downton Primary School, Trafalgar School at Downton, and St Laurence Church.

♦ ♦

2026 UPCOMING EVENTS AT ST LAURENCE CHURCH

2nd October - An Evening with…. Ron Burrows
Experience the highs of a RAF pilot from the Aden 'Emergency' to testing the Tornado

4th December – Shantoosy Concert
Join us as we open the Christmas Tree Festival with a concert by local group, Shantoosy.

5th – 6th December - Christmas Tree Festival
See the beautiful individual Christmas trees decorated by local people. Get your Christmas shopping in early with our famous gift stall. Indulge in locally made cakes & goodies and listen to a programme of music over two days

11th December - An Evening with…. Courtney Spence
Listen to the tales of the life of a West End actor and a rendition of A Christmas Carol

Friends of St Laurence 100 Club

The 100 Club was set up many years ago as a fund raiser to help contribute to the large maintenance expenses of our Grade 1 listed building. There are 4 draws a year with 3 prizes of £50, £35 and £25. The balance of monies is passed on to the church.

If you would like to help St. Laurence by becoming a member of the 100 club, please contact Ken or Jo Parsons on 01725 512738. It only costs £12 per year.

A big thank you to all those of you who already support us

Many thanks. We hope to hear from you.

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Events at Woodfalls Methodist Church

Talkabout Thursday 1st October Talk is on Mercy Ships. Ever wondered what they do, come and find out at 10.30am at Woodfalls Methodist Hall. All Welcome.

Social Saturday 17th October Meal at 5.30 followed by Channel Island Cricket (No ball, no running and no stumps!!) at Woodfalls Methodist Hall. All Welcome. If you plan to come it would help will catering if you rang or text 07816542204 beforehand.

♦ ♦

Downton Music Festival

The organizers of this wonderful 5-day event would like to thank everyone involved. There was a lovely atmosphere every evening, the music was varied and brilliant and there was even dancing. We were delighted to welcome many many people into the church, especially some who hadn't been for a while!

We must thank John Elliott, whose brainchild this was, and who organised the performers, programme, printing and recording on Radio Odstock. We were so grateful to Cognatum Properties for their sponsorship, and to Ben Bennett of Pro Live Limited for providing sound equipment and lighting. There were many many other people involved – thank you to the leaflet distributors, welcomers, the drinks team, the technical people, and especially to all our lovely performers and those who attended the event and gave so generously. We raised the magnificent total of £4900 to go towards the maintenance of our beautiful church – THANK YOU!

We hope to run something similar next year, so if you would like to be involved, please let us know.

Many thanks again,

Vicky Cole

Love St Laurence Photography Exhibition

Throughout June, we were delighted to hold a photography exhibition in St Laurence Church showcasing the photographs we received as part of our 'Love St Laurence' photography competition. We were delighted to welcome many visitors to the exhibition to see the range of photographs of our beautiful and historic church.



Visitors were able to vote on their favourite photo, and we are delighted to share that the winning photograph was taken by Jane Launchbury.

Our thanks go to everyone who has submitted photographs to the Love St Laurence inbox (lovestlaurence@gmail.com).

We would be delighted to continue to see images of St Laurence Church, including from our events, church yard, and the church too. If you have any images – please do send them across.

We will be sharing the images submitted so far on the St Laurence Facebook page, so please do take a look, and let us know your favourites.

The church is open daily from 9am until around 4:30pm, so please do pop in.

♦ ♦

Downton Parish Council News

Downton Parish Council
BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

The promise of rain has been teasing us recently, lots has been forecast, but not a great deal of rain has fallen here in Downton. But - beautiful autumn is here again! Take a moment to look up at the racing clouds and watch the leaves slowly change colour.
Why not make 2026 the year of volunteering – footpath maintenance and lots of other jobs like sanding down and repairing our benches – the Parish always needs handy people to help keep it looking its best….OR why not join the Parish Council as a Councillor? Help influence projects, get things done and make decisions for YOUR Parish: local democracy at its best! Please do contact me, many hands make a considerable difference

- Look out for details of volunteering to rejuvenate the Borough tubs, only a couple are looking their best, and not like the beauties in Moot Lane. We are looking for local businesses to sponsor tubs and volunteers to help with maintenance – no planting involved. We will be planting up with drought resistant plants in the future
- The Remembrance Sunday road closure will be from 10am-11am on Sunday 8 November. Notices with details and who to contact are on social media and will be posted on noticeboards
- Wiltshire Council's Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme means that Downton Parish Council will be collecting grit, more flood road signs and gel sacs. Downton's Parish Steward is clearing the surface of gullies and if you notice any blocked gullies please contact me. All part of our Parish resilience for the coming winter months
- Parishioners may have noticed that the greens and other grassed public areas have not been maintained properly by our contractor. It may be that the green by the dentists has to be reseeded again by the electricity company (only after the Triffids have been pulled up)….DPC are on the case and will be carrying out an inspection with the grass cutting contractor

- If 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 Marc Evans has now transferred to another department and DPC do not know who the replacement is yet. Local police can still be reached by dialling 101.

The Parish Council meetings are held on the **second Monday of the month in the Bonvalot Room in the Downton Memorial Centre. Meetings usually start at 7pm.** There is always a public question time at the beginning of the meeting, so do come along and have your say**. It is YOUR Parish after all! Come and hear what your Parish Council is doing for you and your community**

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.

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Redlynch and District Local History Society

Our October meeting is on 6th October, venue as above, and features the very popular Jim Butt who will talking about his restoration work on local cathedrals and other historic buildings. We anticipate this will be well attended so be prompt to get your favourite seat.

This meeting starts with our AGM which we endeavour to make as swift as possible. This year there will be a motion to raise the visitor entry price to £5 and the annual membership to £12.50; this is in line with inflation since the last increase 5 years ago. We are also looking for new members to join the committee, including the positions of the long-standing Chair and Secretary. If you are interested in joining, please contact one of the committee members or email agatha_1@hotmail.co.uk.

Also please note we are holding our 30th anniversary exhibition at the above Hall on 10th October. There will be displays, access to our files including maps and a local walk.

Downton Bowling Club – Final 2026 Update

The green will close on Sat 26th Sept & that's it now until April 2027. However, during autumn/winter the club will run coffee mornings, skittle nights, race nights & other social events, which will be open to anyone to attend. When available, more details will appear on our website & on social media.

We've had another very good season. In the Westbrook Mixed Triples league our team came 5th/8. Our New Forest div 4 team came 3rd/8, missing promotion by just ½ point. We play in the NF Ivor Fourmy Plate final on Sat 12th Sept. The result will be shown in a future edition & on our website. In the B&D Sat morning div 4, the Dragons came 3rd & the Bustards finished 4th/10.

The internal club comp finals are being played on Sun 13th Sept & Sat 19th Sept. The results will be shown in a future edition & on our website.

The winner of this year's annual Ralph Bentley Comp, played for in memory of our founder was Tony Musselwhite (see below - 1 - Ivan presenting Tony with the trophy. 2 - all 16 players that took part).

On behalf of the club, I would like to thank everyone at the magazine for your support this season.

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





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

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Redlynch & District W.I

What a Party!!

Our September meeting saw us celebrate our 110th Birthday!

Members past and present and invited guests were treated to an inspirational and factual talk by Baroness Minette Batters DL. Minette was the first female president of The National Farmers Union (NFU). Minette talked about her early love and passion for cows (and horses): her passion for British food Production, navigating the UK Political System and maintaining Food Production during the Covid years. The UK has the most stringent food and animal welfare production in the world: something to be very proud of and maintain. Copies of Minettes book ' Harvest' were very popular with our members. The Afternoon was rounded off with Afternoon tea including a beautifully iced Celebratory cake and a glass of Fizz. Thank you to everyone who helped on the day.

Autumn Gathering and AGM: 14th October 2026 at City Hall Salisbury.

More information on next meeting contact Nora Barker on 01725 511982 or itsthebarkers@aol.com .

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 Edna Pike on 01725 511332.

Joanne has arranged the following:

- 6th October - Games and Bring and Buy; Please take home anything of yours that does not sell.
- 13th October - Bingo
- 20th October - Dave Dawson will be joining us for a Sing along. (No microphone to pass around anymore).
- 27th October - Games

On the 8th September Marc Heighway's talk was "Hidden in plain sight". Reminders of WW2 in the New Forest. There were lots of different activities going on in the New Forest. There were 56 acres of land and Barnes Wallace tested his bouncing bombs, and his grand slam bomb created a 70ft deep hole when it exploded. Beaulieu Village in 1940 took fortified defence measures. Churchill had a Secret Army Auxilliary Unit who lived in underground hideouts and came out when there were dangerous happenings they were trained to deal with. There were also landing strips for aeroplanes. Eight hundred soldiers were based at High Cliff. There were also air raid shelters. Aviation Fuel was stored at Hale. German planes were shot down over the New Forest. There were many more activities taking place in the New Forest. It was an enlightening and very interesting talk.

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Could you help edit the Downton Parish News?

We are looking for new volunteers to help edit the Downton Parish News to support our existing team. Editing the Parish News involves writing to our regular contributors to advise them of the submission deadline for the month, updating the document, arranging proof reading and liaising with the advertising co-ordinator to confirm page numbers, as well as arranging the printing of the document to the agreed deadline. Full training is provided.

If you are interested, please contact Rose Bloomfield (rosannabishop@btinternet.com) to have an informal discussion about volunteering.

Downton Horticultural Society

Our Autumn Show at the beginning of September was very successful although the number of exhibits was much lower than in previous years due to the exceptional long and very hot summer.

Many of our flower exhibitors simply did not have anything worthwhile to exhibit. We were also disappointed that so many of our local flower arrangers did not exhibit. However, overall there were some lovely flowers, fruit, vegetables and home baked items on show. We were also very pleased with the number of people who visited the show and enjoyed the home-made refreshments.

Our next event which will be held in the Memorial Hall at 7.30pm on Thursday **22nd October** when Eileen Witt will be giving a different sort of floral art demonstration. Eileen is a member of the NAFAS education team and no longer does the normal type of floral art demonstration, so this promises to be an interesting evening. Admission is free and as usual there will be refreshments, a sales table and a raffle. Non-members are also very welcome to come along and there will be a basket for small donations.

Gordon Bishop (01725 511475)

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Why not buy a Downton Cuckoo Fair bag or tea towel?

Good value, and unique to our village

Contact Edna Pike on 01725 511332

Jute Shopping bags	£4 each
Tea towels	£2.50 each

♦ ♦

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.

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

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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

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Downton Community Choir

Concert for Cancer Research, 10th October at 7:00 PM in the Memorial Hall.

Tickets cost £15 on the door or £12 in advance from The Borough Cafe (cash only) or email: pennie.dunlop@btinternet.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.

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Remembrance in Downton

Remembrance Sunday this year falls on the 8th of November. An opportunity for us to "Remember" the service and sacrifice of those who have defended out freedom, way of life and continue to do so. Nationally there will be a Poppy Appeal from the 24th of October to the 7th of November. Here in Downton, the events for Remembrance are:

Poppy Appeal 2026
Our Poppy Collection Organiser (PAO) has retired after 28 years as PAO. PAO Salisbury has taken over and there will be a limited distribution of poppies this year, with a return to normal next year. Door to Door collections will be undertaken, but limited. Poppies will be available at the schools, shops, petrol station and pubs in the village.

Remembrance Day
Wednesday 11th November. Crosses will be laid on the War Graves in The Cemetery and St Laurence's prior to a short ceremony outside The Goat, by the Village Cross at 11am.

Remembrance Sunday
Sunday 8th November. Wreath Laying and the Act of Remembrance will take place at the Memorial Hall, starting at 10am. This will be followed by the parade marching to St Laurence's Church for the Village Remembrance Service. The parade will be led by the Downton Band and will include members of The Royal British Legion, Parish Council and Youth Organisations. The Wreath Laying and Church Service will be led by the Rev Veronica Batchelor, our Vicar.

Road Closure
The Borough/High Street from The Memorial Gardens to Church Hatch, will be closed from 10am to 11am on Remembrance Sunday 8th November, to allow a safe Wreath Laying and movement of the parade to the church. The road will be re-opened as soon as it is safe to do so. Please bear with us.

Could the man in your life be living his best life?

Saturday 10 October 2026 | 10am–12 noon | Salisbury City Hall | Free entry

Men and Women across Salisbury are being encouraged to bring the men in their lives along to **Men Matters 2026**, a free, friendly drop-in event designed to help men discover the activities, support, friendships and opportunities available to them in the city and surrounding area. Whether it's a partner who has become isolated, a dad who has stopped seeing friends, a brother who could do with some support, or simply a friend who could benefit from trying something new – **Men Matters is about helping men find the things that can make life healthier, happier and more fulfilling.**

The event, hosted by **Safer and Supportive Salisbury** and funded by the **Salisbury Area Board**, brings together organisations offering practical advice, support and opportunities for men of all ages. Visitors can find out about everything from **getting active and stopping smoking to sexual health, gambling support and money worries**. There will also be information about **peer support groups, caring responsibilities, friendship and social opportunities, veterans' groups, talking therapies and youth support**, alongside much more. And importantly, **you don't have to come alone**. Friends and partners are very welcome to join the event; there's even free tea and coffee throughout the morning too.

Belinda Chandler, Project Manager for Safer and Supportive Salisbury says "The message behind Men Matters is simple: **men matter, their wellbeing matters, and nobody should have to tackle life's challenges on their own".**

"For some men, the hardest part can be recognising that something needs to change. For others, it might simply be that they haven't yet found the right activity, group, hobby or source of support".

"Attending doesn't mean something is wrong, just that you would like to see what else is out there for you and Men Matters provides an easy, no-pressure way to find out more – without having to make a big commitment".

So, if there's someone in your life you'd like to see **healthier, happier, more connected or simply getting more out of life**, why not suggest that they come along? You could even come with them or come along and pick up our directory of clubs, activities, groups and support services to take away.

Men Matters 2026 takes place at **Salisbury City Hall, Malthouse Lane, Salisbury, SP2 7TU, on Saturday 10 October from 10am until midday. Entry is free.**

Redlynch Players – Backstage News

Announcing our Autumn 2026 Production!

We are very excited to announce that this autumn we will be performing

'Teechers' by John Godber



Described as Godber's comic masterpiece, it is a fast-paced, funny, and touching comedy play, 'Teechers' centres around three students, Salty, Gail and Hobby who are about to leave their tough, underfunded secondary school. Encouraged by Mr Nixon, their somewhat optimistic new drama teacher, the three students put on a play detailing their turbulent year, and through it, find a platform to express their frustrations, fears, and hopes for the future beyond school. Their play introduces us to the disciplinarian Deputy Head, eccentric drama-loving Head, and bully-in-chief Bobby 'Oggy' Moxon as well as a host of other brilliantly observed characters. Written during the 1980s Thatcher era, its themes reflect a period of major political and educational reform in the UK, highlighting the inequalities of a two-tier system. Directed by Lloyd Perry, rehearsals are in full swing amidst much amusement! Tickets go on sale soon - please see our flyers and social media for details! **'Teechers' will be performed on Redlynch Village Hall from Wednesday, 25th November until Saturday, 28th November.**

2027 - Our Platinum Year

Next year we will be celebrating 70 years of Redlynch Players, and we are already planning some special events to mark the occasion. Of course, there will be cake! To make this year even more special, we are looking for people who may like to be try out something new. It doesn't have to be acting as there are many other roles that are needed to bring a play to the stage. We'd really like to grow our group. If you would like to come along for a chat and watch a rehearsal to see what goes on and find out if it's for you, please do get in touch. We can be contacted via email info@redlynchplayers.co.uk Information about us, reviews, photos and awards may be found on our website: www.redlynchplayers.co.uk

Thank you for your continued support.

Ali Silver, Chair of Redlynch Players

Lover Repair Café

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We would like to thank Jane for making the wonderful illustrative cake, on the left.
On the right is a group picture of our wonderful Helpers available on the day, many others work from home.
Just to give you some idea of how the funds were raised - Folk are happy to make voluntary donations for repairs. Items like Bikes, Lamps & Elect. Goods are given to us, repaired and sold, increasing our ability to give.



LATEST NEWS: -

1. We look forward to doing a (Fun) Repair Cafe Presentation to the Ladies of Whiteparish WI this month.
2. We are very keen to involve Downton more in understanding what our Repair Cafe can do for them and in this regard we particularly want to thank Oscar, a lad who came and saw us, then wrote a brilliant supportive article in the InDownton Newsletter for us. Thank you, Oscar.

DONATED GIFTS AVAILABLE (The cost is whatever you wish to pay)

Gents Dawes Bike	Grill Roaster good for caravan	B&D Cord Circular Saw	McAllister Hedge Trimmer
22" LG Television	Energiser Battery Charger	Super Ser Gas Heater	Citizen Carriage Clock
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Mountfield Petrol Mower	Near New HP Printer	Delongi Coffee Maker	Karcher Jetting Washer

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Well, the autumn wind has started to blow and so, once again can this lovely old carved oak pair of Fire Bellows.
These Bellows were in a really bad state when our specialist Helper Vivian undertook to reinstate them. Which required, sourcing the right leather, carefully removing the worn material, refurbishing the woodwork and finally repinning the new leather in position.



We are here to help you by repairing furniture, ceramics, electrical goods, clothing, books & other old treasures etc. So, please VISIT US at:

REDLYNCH VILLAGE HALL - Every Wed. & Fri. Morning, 10am to 12pm, or
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Contact: loverrepaircafe@gmail.com or downtonrepaircafe@gmail.com
Visit our Website https://loverrepaircafe.org.uk

WILTSHIRE SKY AT NIGHT – OCTOBER 2026

by Michael F. Barratt FRAS[i]



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

Nova in Sagitta – Mars amongst the Pleiades star cluster and in close lunar conjunction – Jupiter now rising in the early morning – Saturn at opposition – Orionids Meteor Shower

DON'T FORGET - CLOCKS GO BACK ON SUNDAY 25th OCTOBER

We have had so many wonderful astronomical events over the last couple of months, despite the night skies being so light and devoid of planets. We have had a wonderful display of the Perseids Meteors in August on the same day as a substantial partial solar eclipse (see my images under this month's star chart. Additionally, a nova appeared in the constellation of Sagitta (the Arrow) visible in binoculars. This nova consists of two (binary) stars in orbit around each other, one of which has taken so much material by gravitational force from its neighbour that it can't hold it and has exploded. Now, as we prepare to put the clocks back, and with the nights becoming darker, it is exciting to think that the three brightest planets further away from the Sun than Earth are now making their presence felt in the eastern skies – Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

Although the nights are getting darker earlier, but we still have the "Summer Triangle" and the Milky Way prominent overhead as well as our nearest galaxies – Messier 31 in Andromeda and Messier 33 (Triangulum Galaxy) high up - and if you stay up into the early hours of the morning those wonderful winter constellations, such as **Orion** (the **Hunter**) and **Taurus** (the **Bull**) are starting to appear over the eastern horizon. A great time for viewing our neighbouring galaxies through binoculars and being able to boast that you have looked over 2 million years into the past!

The **Sun** is in the constellation of **Virgo** (the **Virgin**) until the very end of the month.

Note that British Summer Time ends in the early morning of Sunday 25th October. Clocks should be put one hour back. Always remember the following : "Spring Forward" and "Fall Back" as we move back to Greenwich Mean Time or Universal Time.

This month the lunar cycle starts with the **Moon** being at **Last Quarter** on Saturday 3rd October at 2.25 pm waning to **New Moon** at 4.50 p.m. on the following Saturday (10th). It will then begin to wax to **First Quarter** at 5.12 p.m. on Sunday 18th October and **Full** (known as **"Hunter's" Moon**) on Monday 26th October. It takes this name from the North American Indians who would go out and hunt for provisions to see them through the winter). The Moon skims over **Mars** on the morning of 5th October when it will be only 25 arcminutes above it. A great photo opportunity. The waning crescent Moon will be just above a rising **Jupiter** on the following evening (6th).

Mercury and **Venus** are both too close to the Sun for observation this month.

Mars, at a magnitude of +1.0 is moving through the constellation of **Cancer** (the Crab) this month and rises at about 0.30 a.m. In the early hours of Sunday 11th October, the planet will be found right in the middle of the **Pleiades** (**Seven Sisters**) star cluster. Definitely an event not to miss with binoculars or camera.

Jupiter will be found in the constellation of **Leo (the Great Lion)** shining at a bright magnitude of -1.9, and rising around 2 a.m. For insomniacs or enthusiastic (mad?) astronomers, it will be interesting to watch its gradual earlier risings morning on morning.

Of the more outer planets, **Saturn** reaches opposition on Sunday 4th October when it is at its brightest and visible all night. With a small telescope you will be able to make out its rings and possibly glimpse its biggest moon, **Titan. Uranus**, will be found in the constellation of Taurus and **Neptune** is visible through binoculars in **Pisces** just a few degrees from Saturn setting about 5.30 a.m. with a magnitude of +7.7.

METEOR SHOWER

2026 is not such a good year as 2025 for observing the **Orionid** meteor shower. These meteors consist of fast-moving debris from Halley's Comet smashing into the Earth's atmosphere. The display will peak on the night of 21/22 October - the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar! Unfortunately, there will be a waxing gibbous Moon for the early part of the evening so best seen after midnight when the Moon has set.

	1st	*6th*	*11th*	*16th*	*21st*	*24th*	*28th*	*31st*	
SUNRISE+	**07:06**	**07:14**	**07:22**	**07:30**	**07:38**	**07:43**	**07:50**	**06:56**	**LOCAL**
SUNSET+	**18:44**	**18:33**	**18:22**	**18:11**	**18:01**	**17:55**	**17:48**	**16:42**	**LOCAL**
MOON PHASES+	**New Moon:**		**10th**			**First Quarter:**		**18th**	
	Full Moon:		**26th ("Hunter's")**			**Last Quarter:**		**3rd**	

MAP OF NIGHT SKY IN MID-OCTOBER 2026
(AROUND 2100 Hours BST)



Some of the author's images of August's Partial Solar Eclipse taken from Downton, Wiltshire –



[i] **Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society**. Michael is also a Member of the **British Astronomical Association** and a Council Member of the **Society for Popular Astronomy** (*popastro.com*). He regularly gives talks and presents outreach events including lectures and talks on cruise liners on behalf of **Go Stargazing** (gostargazing.com). Locally, he is also a member of the **Fordingbridge Astronomers** in Hampshire and has his own Facebook Page – ***Moot Halt Observatory***. He can also be contacted at *mootastro@yahoo.com*.

+Ephemerides supplied by World Clock; Map supplied by in-the-sky.org

🧱 Update on St Birinus **'Sponsor a Brick'** crowdfunder appeal 🧱
- Helping to restore the St Birinus Wall -

Thank you so much for the generous support of so many of our community to support our 'wall appeal'. Many of you might have noticed that the wall at the front of St Birinus was in poor condition for some time until the recent renovations in the school summer break. Sadly, it also suffered additional damage in a 'hit-and-run' road incident earlier in the year.

The church building insurance covered some of the repair costs, but since additional work was badly needed to stabilise the wall, we still needed to raise funds for this restoration.

We have had a wonderful response to our online 'Crowdfunder' appeal, and also at a recent coffee morning in August, when we had a lovely social occasion on the front lawn.
However, if wished there is still time to 'sponsor a brick' or to donate towards other repair work: There will be some repairs still to the 'hopper' connecting the guttering to downpipes around the back of the church, and we are having a roofing survey with repair quotes conducted also.
If you would like to do this, please see below or contact one of the St Birinus Churchwardens for more details.

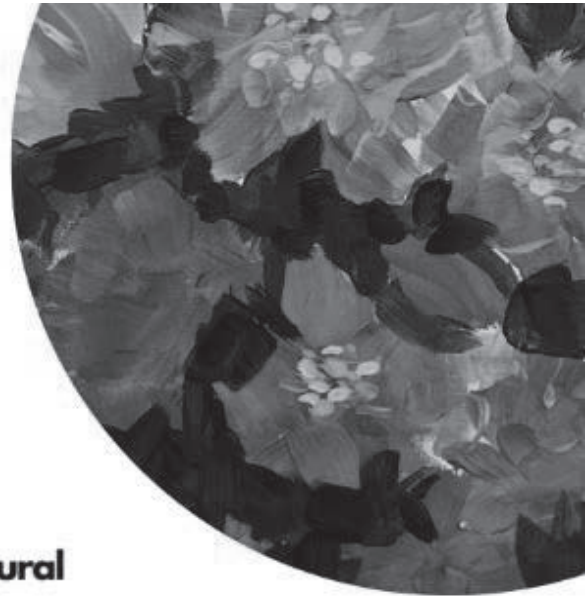
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Those who support the appeal will be recorded in our list of benefactors, becoming part of the history of St Birinus. Every donation, however small, will make a difference.

👉 Donate via the QR code above or this link:
https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/help-re-build-our-boundary-wall

Thank you for your support and for helping us restore St Birinus for future generations. 🙏



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Articles and notices of events for the **November** issue to be emailed to the Editor by **7th October**. 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**

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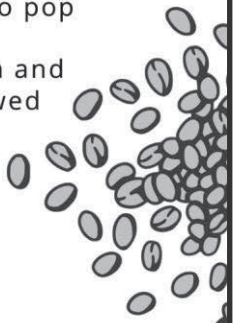


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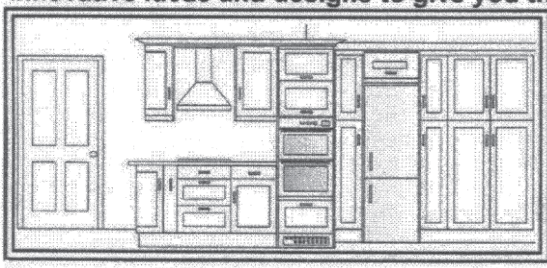
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F. Frith & Co. Ltd.
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Salisbury. SP2 8PU
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Email: thefrithgroup@btconnect.com

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