

Looking to God, Looking to Care, Looking to Grow

About Upper Stour

serving the villages of

Bourton
Kilmington
Stourton
Zeals



May 2026

Parish Contacts

Clergy

Revd Dr Graham Southgate, Rector

01747 476 316 / Email: rector@uswmb.co.uk

(day off Tuesday)

Lay Pastoral Assistant

Caroline Worthington 07754 882454

(also Lay Worship Leader)

Enquiries regarding Baptisms/Christenings, Weddings and Funerals to the Rector, Graham Southgate

01747 476 316 / Email rector@uswmb.co.uk

Parish website www.upperstour.co.uk

Facebook Group Parish of Upper Stour

Parish Administrator, Sarah Pike (works part time)

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Tel 01985 844613 email celiacotton1@outlook.com

by **Friday 17th April 2026** please

From the Rectory

Rogation Sunday: Asking, Praying, and Giving Thanks

As May unfolds around us, with hedgerows greening, growing lambs in the fields, and gardens coming to life, the Church marks a lesser-known but deeply meaningful moment in the year: Rogation Sunday, which is always five weeks after Easter Day, falling this year on 10th May.

The word “rogation” comes from the Latin *rogare*, meaning “to ask.” Traditionally, this season has been a time when communities turn to God in prayer, asking for blessing on the land, the growing crops, and the work of human hands. Long before modern farming methods, people were acutely aware of their dependence on the natural rhythms of sun, rain, soil, and season, and Rogationtide became a way of placing all these into God’s care.

While customs have varied from place to place, the heart of Rogation remains the same: a spirit of prayerful dependence and gratitude. It invites us to notice what sustains us and to give thanks. In a rural community especially, we have a strong attachment to the land, whether through farming, gardening, or simply the beauty of the countryside that surrounds us.

Rogation Sunday offers an opportunity to pause and reflect: How often do we consciously give thanks for the food on our tables, for the people whose labour brings it there, for the delicate balance of creation that makes life possible? It also encourages us to pray: not only for good harvests, but for wisdom in how we care for the earth, particularly in a time when environmental concerns are ever more pressing.

There is something quietly powerful about praying outdoors, whether in a churchyard, a field, or a garden. It reminds us that faith is not confined to buildings, but is rooted in the whole of life. God’s presence is not only in the sanctuary on Sunday morning, but in the soil, the rain, and the unfolding of each new leaf.

This Rogationtide, you might like to join in our Rogation Services (either in Stourton or Maiden Bradley) and offer your own prayers of thanksgiving and hope. As you notice the signs of growth around you, give thanks for them. And perhaps, in the spirit of Rogation, ask for God’s blessing on the land, on those who work it, and on the community we share. In doing so, we join a long tradition of people who, in every generation, have looked to God with gratitude and trust, especially in the quiet, growing days of spring.

Graham Southgate, Rector (01747 476316)

St George's 100 Club

Subscriptions are now due.

The next draw will be a double draw
for April and May,
held at the Bourton Village Lunch
on 11th May

– all results in the June magazine

Contact Philip Newton for details
07947 054534

St Martin's Millenium Club

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J Rowe
M Stratton
G Poynton

Next draw: week of 3rd May

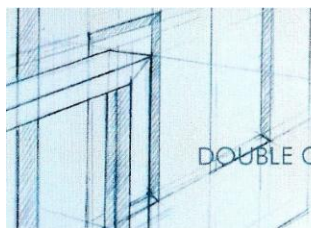
This lottery raises funds in support of
St Martin's church, Zeals. Register
for inclusion at any time in year. For
inclusion in monthly draws or with
questions contact Ashley Kemp:

treasurer@agkemp.co.uk

01747 840272

Mobile Library : May 2026

May 14, 28	Zeals	School, Chapel Lane	10.00-10.40 am
		Zeals Rise	10.45-11.00 am
May 14, 28	Kilmington	Home Guard Club	11.20-11.35 am



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Now read on ...

***The Land in Winter* by Andrew Miller**

My brother and I built an igloo in the winter of 1962-3 and it didn't melt until Easter. We walked on the frozen sea and marvelled at the snow falling for weeks on end. It was exciting.

This novel, *The Land in Winter* written by Andrew Miller, is set against the backdrop of that same gruelling winter when roads became impassable, sheep on the moors had to be fed by dropping fodder from helicopters, food was scarce and all the while, there was a silence. The noise was hushed. It was as if we were all waiting for something. Miller's prose throughout *The Land in Winter* is beautiful, capturing not only the sheer majesty of the snowbound West Country, but above all, that magnificent, slightly unnerving silence brought about by heavy snowfall.

The four main characters are two young couples confined in the snowbound extremities of the village where they live. Both wives are pregnant and it seems all four of them struggle with not only their close, personal relationships, but also in their dealings with their wider families. Both husbands seem to have had difficult and unusual relationships with their fathers. Both marriages are under pressure. Eric is the local doctor and yet embarks on an illicit and unlikely affair with a patient, whilst Bill is trying to establish a dairy herd from scratch with little or no money or experience. He is married to Rita who used to be a dancer in a nightclub in Bristol. She finds living in the country difficult, but has become friends with Irene, the doctor's wife. They spend a lot of time together despite having very different backgrounds, opinions and values.

So, all the ingredients which make a good story are here – love, loneliness, lust, psychiatric problems, money problems, bored housewives, unhappiness, isolation and the harshest winter since 1947. It is a compelling book which has a momentum all of its own and I really enjoyed it – in fact, it was my favourite Christmas present!

***The Giver of Stars* by JoJo Moyes**

Ignore the cheesy title and garish cover of this book.

In the early 1930s, Eleanor Roosevelt encouraged a band of brave young women to form what became known as The Pack Horse Library, the aim of which was to deliver books to isolated families living in the most remote parts of the Appalachian Mountains.

Based on this true story, the novel tracks how the life of Alice Wright quickly turns sour after leaving England to marry a wealthy American. Faced with misogyny, abuse, sexual impotence and cruelty, meted out at the hands of dominant men, Alice builds up a team of strong minded, brave young women who stand up for justice and fight the prejudices and bigotry of small-town America.

This book prompted a very animated discussion amongst members of our Book Group in January 2026 and, against the odds, proved a popular choice!

Sheila Williams

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**National
Trust**

News from Stourhead

With bountiful rhododendron blooms around every corner and across every vista, May is a spectacular time to visit Stourhead.

Throughout the month, visitors can take part in the Spring Scavenger Hunt, an easy-going way to discover the garden while spotting seasonal signs of new life along the paths and lakeside. For those keen to learn more about Stourhead's history and design, daily guided walks, wellbeing walks and wider estate walks continue in May, offering gentle routes through the garden and opportunities to enjoy the calm of being outdoors.

Families visiting over the May half term can look forward to May Play Days in the Stableyard, with games, crafts and creative activities designed to keep our littlest visitors entertained and inspired.

Later in the month sees the launch of *Drawn to Trees*, an outdoor trail and exhibition created in collaboration with artist Luke Adam Hawker. The tree trail takes visitors on a journey through the garden, uncovering the stories and folklore of 17 remarkable trees at Stourhead. The *Tree Zodiac* exhibition will take place on the lawn of Stourhead house and will showcase thirteen etchings inspired by an ancient Celtic zodiac, each associated with a different tree or plant.

Whether joining an organised event or simply wandering through the garden at your own pace, May at Stourhead is all about celebrating spring and finding moments of inspiration, reflection and play in this special place.

For more information on all upcoming events for May, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/wiltshire/stourhead/events

Lucy Fenna, Communications & Marketing Officer
lucy.fenna1@nationaltrust.org.uk or 01747 842032

Country Calendar

May 2026

The Merry Month of May - well it certainly looks like it. The sun is shining, the oilseed rape is in full flower, bees buzzing all over the crop, pollinating and then off to make honey. The grass is growing and the countryside is blooming. I just breathe it in and for a few moments forget the stresses of the global conflict in the Middle East, resulting in the high price of oil and gas, which is hitting not just the farmers' pockets, but everyone's pockets in so many ways.

So when I read that Ministers had ignored a report (which was finished in 2024) saying that Britain's food supply is on course to collapse by 2030 I was not surprised. Climate change, habitat loss and geopolitical instability were undermining Britain's food security to such a degree that it could be "at strategic risk of catastrophic failure". Here we are, witnessing for ourselves the aggressive inflation on virtually everything known to man. Shrinkflation on many items along with a hike in prices, has been common practice in the supermarkets for several years now. There was a prediction last year that, due to our reliance on imported goods which continues to rise, the pressures on supermarkets will lead to food shortages. The grocery industry works on a very quick turnover, any global stress shows their volatility. The food industry is built on efficiency not resilience and only holds less than five days of stock. The shortages have already started to show, by less choice on the shelves and only half the normal amount on display.

So how does this affect us farmers, with fuel and fertiliser doubling overnight? The odds are really stacking against us, and many, many farmers are beginning to question: does it come to a point where we must re-evaluate the whole business and stop farming? We were not and are not getting a fair price for producing food before this crisis, and farming incomes are at a critical all-time low. A third of the world's key fertiliser chemicals pass through the Strait of Hormuz, and prices have risen steeply. So it is not surprising to read what farmers say, "*We're looking at it and just going, 'I do not know why we're doing what we're doing and we're questioning whether we continue to do it.'*"

Even if this crisis comes to a swift resolution, I very much doubt prices will fall, as quickly as they rose. I have gone on about our food insecurity for years, perhaps now the powers that be just might take notice! One can live in hope.

Jane Parker

Craft & Chat



Our meetings continue on Tuesdays at
Bourton Village Hall 2pm-4pm



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DON'T FORGET... 29th May at 7.30pm

**Making Time
with Richard Price**



Please join us in the Village Hall, Bourton on 29th May 2026 at 7.30pm for an entertaining evening with Richard Price - the Antiques Roadshow expert on clocks and timepieces. After an introductory talk Richard has kindly agreed to comment on any watches and clocks we may bring along.

Tickets £10 from the village shop in Bourton from 27th April or on the door.

Glass of wine and canapes included. Bar & soft drinks available

In aid of St Georges Church fundraising for cloakroom and kitchen facilities.

**Saturday 9th May Silton Village Hall
10 am - midday**

Sale of all types of plants including:
Summer Bedding, Perennial & Herbaceous
Vegetable Seedlings, House Plants
There will also be produce and bric-a-brac stalls



Signed from B3092 between Gillingham & Bourton
All proceeds towards the Society of Friends of Silton

About Upper Stour Parish Magazine

Josh Larcombe - Deputy Editor

Josh Larcombe, who lives in Bourton, has become Deputy Editor of this Magazine, with a view to taking over as Editor within the next month or two. Josh finished his PhD at Cardiff University last year and is currently writing a book about the history of the Department of International Development. In his spare time Josh enjoys running and has run widely over local trails for the past 8 years.

Josh says he is looking forward to receiving community contributions from local voices. Please be in touch with him directly from now on and send your contributions to him. His contact details are:

Tel 07487 582243/joshlarcombe26@outlook.com

R I P Luke Davis

We would like to thank the local community for the overwhelming kindness and support that you have all showed us after the recent loss of our son/brother Luke Davis. The meals that you have given us, the cards, the phone calls, the visits: they have all been so much appreciated and so gratefully received. Then when we were trying to plan Luke's funeral and wake, Catherine Spencer and Sarah Bullivant said to us not to worry, they would organise the catering for us with the help of our wonderful community, and to so many of you that either helped on the day or baked or supplied food, drink or flowers, or all of the above, we are eternally grateful. A special mention also to Barbara Borwell for the lovely flower displays in the hall.

So again, thank you so much to all that helped, and sorry not to mention you all by name but I would hate not to mention someone who helped, so please accept this as our personal thank you. You are all so wonderful.

Jeremy, Denise and Emily Davis

Parish Magazine Distribution

We are still looking for a volunteer to take over the Stourhead House vicinity round (a small round: 22 magazines once a month). We will show you the round whilst delivering the May magazine. Thank you so much to the current volunteer who is now unable to continue. We are most grateful to him for his years doing these deliveries. If you are able to take this on or know anyone else who would be able to help, please contact me. We very much hope to hear from you.

Diana Tadd (Diana.Tadd@gmail.com / 01747 840663)

St George's CE Primary School & Shining Stars Pre-School, Bourton

End of Spring Term Report

The Spring term has been a busy and joyful one. As always, it has been wonderful to see our school community come together, with children embracing new learning opportunities, celebrating achievements and enjoying time with one another. This term began with a real focus on learning and curiosity across the school. The children have been working incredibly hard. We have seen some fantastic artwork, thoughtful writing and impressive problem solving. We have also enjoyed a number of special events throughout the term. World Book Day was a highlight, with children sharing their love of reading and coming dressed as favourite characters. It was wonderful to see such enthusiasm for books across all year groups.

We were also incredibly proud of our girls' football team, who performed brilliantly in the Davidson Cup. The team showed determination, teamwork and excellent sportsmanship, winning all of their matches to reach the final. It was a fantastic achievement and the girls represented the school superbly throughout the competition. Although they were unfortunately beaten in the final, we are extremely proud of their effort, commitment and positive attitude. They should be very proud.

A particular highlight for our oldest pupils was a special trip to London for our Year 6 children. They travelled by coach alongside Year 6 pupils from our North Dorset Pickwick Academy Trust hub, making the day even more special as the children spent time together with friends from across the trust. The group went to watch the stage production of *Hercules*, which was a fantastic experience for everyone. The performance was energetic, funny and memorable, and provided a wonderful opportunity for pupils to experience live theatre. The children represented the school beautifully throughout the visit and created lasting memories as they move towards the end of their primary school journey.

A particularly special moment for the whole school came as we gathered at church to celebrate Easter together. Each class took part in the service, with our Foxes class (Year 5 and 6) confidently leading readings and helping to retell the Easter story. The children looked fantastic in their Easter bonnets, and it was lovely to see the church filled with families and members of the community. There was plenty of singing, reflection and celebration as we marked the end of the term. As we move into the summer term, we are looking forward to more outdoor learning, school trips, community events and continued progress for all of our pupils.

Jill Farnedale, Executive Headteacher

SERVICES IN UPPER STOUR WITH MAIDEN BRADLEY

MAY 2026

- Sunday 3rd** **Fifth Sunday of Easter**
10.00 Parish Communion at St George's Bourton
- Sunday 10th** **Sixth Sunday of Easter ~ Rogation Sunday**
10.00 Rogation Service at St Peter's Stourton, followed by bread and cheese lunch
15.00 Rogation Service at All Saints Maiden Bradley, followed by tea
- Thursday 14th** **Ascension Day**
19.00 Parish Communion at St Peter's Stourton
- Sunday 17th** **Seventh Sunday of Easter**
10.00 Parish Communion at St Mary's Kilmington
- Sunday 24th** **Pentecost**
10.00 Parish Communion at St Martin's Zeals
10.00 Parish Communion at All Saints Maiden Bradley
- Sunday 31st** **Trinity Sunday**
10.00 Benefice Communion at St George's Bourton

JUNE 2026

- Sunday 7th** **Fifth Sunday of Easter**
10.00 Parish Communion at St George's Bourton

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Weekday Services

- Mondays:** 09.00 Morning prayer at St George's Bourton
Wednesdays: 16.00 Midweek Communion at St Martin's Zeals
Thursdays: 09.00 Morning Prayer at St Mary's Kilmington

From the Registers

Memorial Service

On 27th March at St Peter's Stourton: **Eyre Roland Maunsell**

Wedding

On 28th March at St Peter's Stourton: **Philip Ashton & Gaia De Battista**

Funeral

On 17th April - at St Martin's Zeals: **Nesta Gray**

Parish of Upper Stour – Treasurer

The Parish of Upper Stour is urgently seeking a volunteer Treasurer to oversee the finances of our four churches. This important role is fundamental to parish life and helps support the mission and day-to-day running of our four churches. Key aspects of the role include:

- Keeping clear financial records and ensuring income is properly recorded and banked
- Monitoring income and expenditure throughout the year
- Paying authorised bills and maintaining accurate accounts
- Preparing the annual accounts
- Assisting the PCC with budgeting
- Advising the PCC on the parish's financial position
- Providing general financial information as needed

If you have a good head for numbers, enjoy working collaboratively, and would like to make an important contribution to parish life, we would be delighted to hear from you.

For more information or to express interest, please contact **George Bullivant at georgebullivant@gmail.com or 07939 045917**
Alternatively, speak to one of the churchwardens

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News from Parish Councils

Bourton

Progress continues on the Jubilee Meadow Play Area & Community Space. A planning application for change of use is due to be submitted, with work focused on the site's layout and funding arrangements. This project remains a key priority for the Council due to the effective absence of a children's play area in Bourton, and further updates will be shared.

Councillors and Village Hall Trustees met with the developer of the Sandways site, Aaron Pierce, who has since issued an updated plan. The front row of houses has been moved 2m back from New Road, and Mr Pierce confirmed that the designated play area and parking land on the east side of the upper field will not be built on. The revised layout also rotates the NVH building by 90 degrees, placing the hall in the bottom field beside the green space which will include a large playing field.

The Council has received reports of ash dieback affecting trees within the parish. Residents are encouraged to provide specific property locations and report this to Sovereign Housing. Concerns have also been raised regarding a large minibus regularly parked in Mead Close, effectively blocking residents' narrow access road. As this is a private vehicle, residents have been advised to speak directly with the owner and/ or contact Sovereign. The Council continues to act as a point of communication but does not have authority to intervene in private parking matters.

The next Parish Council meetings will be held on Wednesday 22nd May.

Eve Wynn, RFO & Clerk

Email: clerk@bourton-pc.gov.uk Website: <https://bourton-pc.gov.uk/>

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/639361217139818>

Kilmington

Since the March Parish Council meeting, the Council has received the traffic survey data for the B3092 junction at Norton Ferris. This information will now be reviewed and used to inform further discussions with Wiltshire Council regarding traffic volumes, speeds and road-safety concerns at this location.

The Parish Council has also submitted a formal response to the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service consultation opposing the proposed closure of Mere Fire Station. As Mere provides essential first-response cover for Kilmington and surrounding rural communities, the Council's response highlights concern about increased response times and the additional pressure that closure would place on Gillingham Fire Station. Residents are encouraged to take part in the consultation, which closes on 15 May 2026. Further details can be found on the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service website.

Residents are reminded that the Annual Parish Meeting, followed immediately by the Annual Council Meeting, will take place on Monday 11 May 2026 at 7.30pm at the Stourton & Kilmington Home Guard Club.

The Annual Parish Meeting gives residents an opportunity to hear updates on parish matters, ask questions and raise issues of local concern. This is followed by the Annual Council Meeting, where councillors confirm appointments, roles and arrangements for the coming year. All residents are very welcome to attend both meetings.

Steven Willis, Clerk clerk@kilmingtonwiltshireparishcouncil.gov.uk

Stourton with Gasper

The next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 6th May at 6pm in the Memorial Hall, Stourton. This is the annual meeting where local voluntary or community groups are invited to give reports of what they have been up to in the past year and what they are planning for the next. This is an opportunity for members of the public to question councillors and organisations on any issues relating to the village. The agenda is published on the website www.stourton.org.uk three working days before the meeting.

Many thanks go to Connie and Mima Gray for organising the successful litter pick on Saturday 11th April. We had approximately 20 volunteers from across the parish and age ranges who met at the Airfield off Bells Lane. Many new faces were seen. A great job was done by all, even though the verges and hedgerows have started their Spring growth and were a little overgrown.

There will be another litter pick organised later in the year, where we are hoping to see everyone again and maybe a few more! Keep your eyes out on the parish council website.

Lisa Gilby, Parish Clerk clerk@stourton.org.uk

Zeals

The next Parish Council meeting will be on 21st May at 7pm in Zeals Village Hall. This will be the annual meeting where voluntary or community groups are invited to give reports. It is also an opportunity for parishioners to question people and organisations on any issues relating to the village. The agenda will be published on the website www.zealspc.org.uk three working days before the meeting.

The time of year has come round again for allotment renewals, and this year we have sadly lost some of our allotment holders, for a variety of reasons. We now have 2 larger plots and 2 smaller plots available. It's the perfect time of year to be starting out, and if you're not handed a well-manicured plot, this is the best time to get the plot dug over and start to get your plants and vegetables planted. The larger plots are £30.00pa and the smaller plots are £15.00 pa. If you are interested in taking on a plot, please contact the clerk on the email address below to get started.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the annual meeting on 21st May

Lisa Gilby Zeals Parish Clerk clerk@zealspc.org.uk

Wincanton Choral Society

Neil Moore music director, with orchestra and soloists

Peace in our Time

KARL JENKINS

The Armed Man - A Mass for Peace

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

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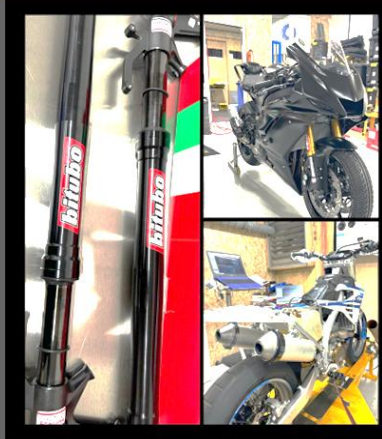


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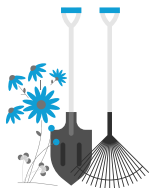
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Green Fingers: Notes from a Fairweather Gardener May



The month of May is the gateway to summer.

April has been quite a weather rollercoaster. We have had rain, winds, frosts and even hail and some light snow, but in theory, all danger of killer frosts has now passed, so we gardeners are free to plant out all our tender plants that we have been nurturing through the early spring.

Now is the time to take stock of all the half hardy flower seedlings looking for a home in the garden. Traditionally, these would have been planted out in neat patterns to replace the bulbs and early spring flowers such as forget-me nots, but a modern, less interventionist approach to gardening in general makes this a less attractive option. The question then remains as to where we should plant the brilliantly coloured petunias, zinnias, cosmos and the like. Some of these may well fit into your planting schemes, but the lower growing annuals I find can be difficult to place so that they don't get lost amongst the taller perennials.

One answer is to put them into pots. These days, you need not stick to traditional pots. What about using some old clay drainpipes or perhaps an old metal bucket, watering can or old wheelbarrow. Although plants in pots can be more needy in terms of watering and feeding, a selection of pots is a truly versatile way of growing all sorts of plants. Carefully arranged and planted, they can make a garden in miniature.

Although annuals are an obvious choice for pots as they can be emptied out and replaced after flowering, most perennials and even some trees will grow in pots if given the right conditions. This is especially true of plants that would not otherwise be happy in your garden, maybe because they need ericaceous soil. Hydrangeas, azaleas and acers are all happy as long as the pot is large enough. Pots with a large display of one type of plant in a single colour always look stunning. Think of the displays of red pelargoniums in colourful olive oil cans outside almost every house in a Greek village. Alternatively, a collection of pots could house a Piet Oudolf style prairie garden with softly waving grasses to soothe the soul on a summer day. You need never feel that a plant will not grow in your garden as long as you have a pot to put it in.

Daphne Knott

Cognitive Decline - Take Heart!

There was an interesting article in the press last month on this important if depressing subject (from the Science Correspondent of The Times). The article reports on a study which explains that “the long slow slide into cognitive decline and frailty as we age is far from inevitable and almost half of people actually improve mentally or physically as they grow older. What the study reveals is “Many people equate ageing with an inevitable and continuous loss of physical and cognitive abilities. What we found is that improvement in later life is not rare – it is common”.



Discover the charm of Mere on a relaxed walking weekend. Enjoy six enticing walks in and around this beautiful historic town, taking in peaceful countryside, hidden paths, and wonderful views. A perfect chance to stretch your legs, explore somewhere special, and enjoy great company along the way.

Fancy a challenge? Complete all of the walks, about 18 miles, and earn a medal!

For more information and to book your place on one or all of the walks please use the QR code below.

The event is being organised by Mere Town Council with support from Mere Footpath group, and the Wiltshire Towns Fund.



We would like to thank the following sponsors/supporters



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Logo designed by Karen Miller

Let the bells ring out!

Do you ever listen to your local church bells and wonder who is ringing them or how they are being rung? Possibly not but, if you enjoy hearing them, please read on! Bellringing is an artform steeped in history that has been passed down through the generations. It is an important part of the fabric of a local community and provides much more to it than simply calling worshipers to church on a Sunday morning.

Four years ago, I saw an article in our village news, inviting people interested in ringing to come and try it out. I'm not a churchgoer but this wasn't a pre-requisite and, since I enjoyed hearing the bells, I thought I'd have a go. I innocently thought that it would only result in ringing for services in my local church and felt like a good way to contribute to the village life that I have enjoyed for so many years. It hasn't quite turned out that way and has become a far larger part of my life than expected! Firstly, there is a lot more to "full circle" ringing than one might expect. That said, there are no special requirements to start learning. Can you push a child on a swing? Can you ride a bicycle or drive a car? If so, you can probably learn to ring bells. We have ringers that are still at primary school and others who have been pensioners for a decade or two. Church bells are big and heavy but ringing them is all about technique. Once you have "learnt the ropes" (pun intended!), they are as safe as the aforementioned bicycle and car in the right hands.

Learning to ring takes time and attending the weekly practice sessions take a little commitment. However, I can assure you that you will be amongst the friendliest group of people who have all been there themselves and will give you all the encouragement and support that you need. We will work to find the best way to help you progress and gain confidence.

Having learnt the basics, you will soon move on to "change ringing" in the group and be one step closer to joining the band that you've been hearing on Sunday mornings. All of a sudden, you'll find that your new-found skill enables you to ring at other churches. In our parish, we have four churches that hold services in rotation. Three have 6-bell towers, so we ring at all three and, in our case, a fourth church in a neighbouring parish that holds its service a little later.

In addition to church services, we ring for weddings (for which we get a small fee) and special occasions such as the VE & VJ-Day anniversaries and royal events. The local Guild organises occasional trips further afield to ring at other churches and then you'll find yourself with the chance to ring at churches with 8, 10 or even 12 bells. Small groups of advanced ringers hold separate practice sessions to work on more complex ringing "methods" (like musical tunes). Before you know it, the family calendar in your kitchen has bell ringing events all over it!

But not everyone wants to progress beyond ringing for services and that is fine. For some, the social interaction amongst friends is almost as important as the ringing and this brings me back to my point regarding its importance to the local community. Fancy a go? Get in touch with your local church or with me

Harry Lauder (harry_lauder@hotmail.com)



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Bourton Village Hall

- **Village Lunch** – Monday 11th May (delayed due to Bank Holiday).
12.30-14.00, pay on arrival - £5
- **Bourton Film Nights:**
 - **Wednesday May 6th – Song Sung Blue (12A)**
 - This is a highly rated 2025 biographical drama film featuring Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson (Oscar Nominee) as a married couple who form a Neil Diamond tribute band, "Lightning and Thunder". Based on a true story, the film follows their journey from dive bars to success amidst personal challenges. Lots of opportunity for audience sing-alongs!!
 - **Wednesday June 3rd – Hamnet (12A)**
 - William Shakespeare and his wife, Agnes, celebrate the birth of their son, Hamnet. However, when tragedy strikes and Hamnet dies at a young age, it inspires Shakespeare to write his timeless masterpiece "Hamlet." This is an historical fiction, based on some true facts. Featuring Best Actress Oscar Winner, Jessie Buckley, as Agnes.
- **Dates for your Diary**
 - **Friday 8th May – The Bourton Players present - *The Allotment Plot***
– A Murder Mystery Play. Tickets £15 must be bought in advance from Bourton shop or from TicketSource online. Includes a light supper.
see ad on page 29 
 - **Friday 29th May – Making Time with local Antiques Roadshow expert, Richard Price.**
After an introductory talk on clocks and timepieces Richard has kindly agreed to comment on any watches or clocks that you may bring along. Tickets £10 from Bourton village shop. Bar & soft drinks available. *In aid of King Georges Church fundraising.*
 - **June 17, 23 & 27 – England World Cup fixtures on the BIG screen**
– late evening kick offs.

Volunteers Always Needed

New in the village? No major commitment expected, just do what you can when you can. If you'd like to know more, please email hello@bourtonvh-dorset.org and we'll get back to you.

The Bourton Players present

The Allotment Plot

By Emma Northcott

By arrangement with Lazy Bee Scripts

A Murder Mystery Play with Light Supper

*Watch events unfold and use your investigative
skills to work out whodunnit!!*

Friday 8th May

Bourton Village Hall

6:30pm for 7pm start

Tickets - £15

*Tickets must be purchased in advance
from Bourton Garage
or online from TicketSource*



CELEBRATING
Age Wiltshire

**Free Concert and information about a new
Memory Support Group for Mere
at Castle Lodge Care Home.**

Thursday 11 June 2026 2.00 - 4.00pm



All are warmly welcome to this event to experience the friendly hospitality of the new care home team at Castle Lodge, and to meet with members of a brand new memory support initiative, starting in Mere in the Autumn.

- 2.00pm - free concert with popular local singer, Frankie Simpkins.
- 3.00pm - tea & cake served and a chance to find out more about the new memory support initiative.

Castle Lodge, Norwood park, Castle Street, Mere, BA12 6LA
To register interest call Castle Lodge on 01985 440321
If you require transport call Wiltshire Connect on 01225 712900

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Diary Dates

May 2026

Wednesday 6 th	Film "Song Sung Blue" BVH	page 28
Wednesday 6 th	Stourton PC Annual Parish Meeting, SMH	page 19
Friday 8 th	Play "The Allotment Plot" 6.30 pm BVH	page 28/29
Saturday 9 th	Plant Sale, 10am-midday, Silton Vill Hall	page 11
Monday 11 th	Bourton Village Lunch 12.30pm BVH	page 28
Monday 11 th	Kilmington PC Annual Meeting 7.30pm HGC	page 19
Tuesday 13 th	Mobile Library, Zeals & Kilmington	page 4
Sunday 17 th	Concert @ Wincanton Sports Centre, 7.30pm	page 20
Tuesday 21 st	Zeals Parish Council Meeting, ZVH, 7pm	page 19
Wednesday 22 nd	Bourton Parish Council Meeting, BVH	page 18
Sat-Mon 23-25	Mere-athon Walking Weekend	page 24
Tuesday 28 th	Mobile Library, Zeals & Kilmington	page 4
Friday 29 th	Making Time with Richard Price 7.30pm BVH	page 11/28



Regular Weekly Events

Weekdays 08.45-09.15 **Preschool meeting** at the Preschool playing fields, West Bourton (*term time only*)

The ZAC Zeals Afterschools Club meets daily 3.15 – 6 on school days at the Playing Field, Wolverton Lane, drawing children from 5 local schools. Contact Sarah on 07908 664 676; zealsafterschoolsclub@gmail.com

Tuesdays **Toddlers sessions:** 9am-12pm (term time only) at Bourton Village Hall. Contact Caroline Worthington 07754 882454

Craft & Chat – every Tuesday in Bourton Village Hall at 2pm

Wednesday **Bellringing practice** at St Martin's church Zeals. Beginners and lapsed ringers welcome. Contact Georgina Muir 01985 844245

Fridays **Choir Practice:** most Fridays 5.30-6.15pm at St Martin's Zeals. New singers welcome. Contact Tom Wheare 01747 840622

**All items for the June 2026 issue by
Friday 22nd May 2026 please**