

Looking to God, Looking to Care, Looking to Grow

About Upper Stour

serving the villages of

Bourton
Kilmingington
Stourton
Zeals



September 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

(also Lay Worship Leader)

Barbara Borwell

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)

Contact her by email: parishoffice@upperstour.co.uk

Contacts for Churchwardens

Bourton Harry Allen 01747 840948 harry.glenis@btinternet.com

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All items for the October 2026 issue

should be sent to the editor Josh Larcombe at

joshlarcombe26@outlook.com / 07487 582243

by **Friday 18th September** please

WHEN THE WELLS RUN DRY

This summer has reminded us rather starkly how dependent we are upon water. After a remarkably dry period, the grass turned brown, streams and ponds became noticeably lower, and by early August, the Environment Agency was reporting that England had received only 6% of its long-term average rainfall for the month. With river flows and groundwater levels continuing to decline, we've experienced our first hosepipe ban in fifty years. Here in the countryside, it is clear that water is not an abstract matter: it is something much needed by our crops, livestock, wildlife, and gardens. Perhaps we're also learning that a good fall of rain is something to be welcomed and not always something about which to complain!

Water is also one of the Bible's most powerful images for the life that God gives. We find it from the opening chapters of Genesis to the final vision of Revelation. Water cleanses, refreshes, sustains and brings life. It is hardly surprising, then, that Jesus chose water when speaking about the deepest needs of the human heart.

In Saint John's Gospel, Jesus meets a foreign woman beside Jacob's well. He asks her for a drink and then speaks of something far greater than physical water. "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again," he says, "but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty." Jesus is not promising that his followers will never again experience ordinary thirst, hardship or sadness. Rather, he is speaking about a thirst that lies deeper within us: our longing for meaning, forgiveness, love and a life that is truly rooted in God.

We can spend much of our lives trying to satisfy that thirst from one source or another: possessions, achievements, other people's approval, entertainment or simply keeping ourselves busy. These things may have their place, but none can finally satisfy the deepest needs of the human heart: their refreshment is real, but temporary.

Jesus does not merely give us something that satisfies for a while and then leaves us thirsty again. He offers "a spring of water gushing up to eternal life". Through him, Christians believe that God's life and love can take root within us, like a spring that continues to flow.

As September arrives and we spot the first signs of autumn, perhaps the memory of this dry summer can become a spiritual reminder. We need water to live, but I think we need Jesus even more. When our own resources run dry, when life feels barren, or when we find ourselves spiritually thirsty, Jesus offers real refreshment: the water he offers is freely given; we need only recognise our thirst and come to him.

Graham Southgate, Rector (01747 476316)

St George's 100 Club

July draw winners:

1st Prize - Judy Crathorne

2nd Prize - Glenis Allen

3rd Prize - Beatrice Weinand

August draw winners:

1st Prize - Charlie Moorby

2nd Prize - Catherine Potter

3rd Prize - Ann Collins

The next draw will be held during
the second week of September

Contact: Philip Newton
on 07947 054534

St. Martin's Church: Millennium Lottery

July 2026 winners:

I Snook, B Moodie, C Maynard,
V Rowe

August 2026 winners:

M Shean, C Hurt, D Gale,
A Etherington

Next draw w/c 1 September 2026

This lottery raises funds in support
of St Martin's church in Zeals

For inclusion in monthly Draws, or
questions, please contact:

Ashley Kemp

treasurer@agkemp.co.uk

01747 840272

Mobile Library: September 2026

September 3,17	Zeals	School, Chapel Lane	10.00-10.40 am
	Zeals	Rise	10.45-11.05 am

September 3,17	Kilmington	Home Guard Club	11.20-11.35 am
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Bourton September Show

Saturday 5th September
at Bourton Village Hall, 2.30-4:30pm

The show will have the usual classes of Fruit and Vegetables, Flowers and Arrangements, Cooking, Crafts, Art/Photography and Children's entries.

Please plan your entries as the more we have, the better the show!
Schedules and entry forms are available from the village shop.



Stourton Memorial Hall

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Book review: All the Beauty in the World

Patrick Bringley – Vintage, 2024

I found Bringley's autobiographical book an enjoyable read and hope you will too. The subtitle to the book is 'A Museum Guard's adventures in Life, Loss and Art.' This is exactly what it is. The guard, Patrick, works in the galleries of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he helps to look after some of the world's greatest artistic treasures. Surrounded by beauty, Patrick reflects on his own life and the lives of visitors to the Museum.

The book opens with Patrick in a well-paid city job before the searing loss of his older brother in his twenties from cancer. He is so deeply affected that he decides he needs time and space to reflect, leading him to apply for a post as a security guard at the Met. The book is a moving and inspiring account of the ten years he has worked at the Met. He describes the initial training, which is challenging given the size and complexity of the Museum. He writes about some of the paintings in their context; but it is not a book about art, rather the healing power of beauty and quiet reflection. Patrick engages with the different feel of the various galleries, each of which adds real variety and interest to his life, as do the wide variety of people employed at the Museum. That's to say nothing of the visitors!

Patrick becomes aware of the importance of recognising our heritage, often going back to antiquity. This roots his own life in a new perspective. Some of the galleries have lavish collections of funerary items. Showing how different generations and different cultures have expressed their understanding of life and death makes Patrick aware of the universality of the cycle of life and death experienced by us all.

There are intriguing insights into the complexity of such a large museum. For example, he introduces the reader to the 'Mezzanine Floor' where all items not on display are stored while remaining visible to the public. Here visitors can see items which they may recognise from their homes – it is like viewing a national attic! Unlike many European collections, the core of the collection did not come from royalty but ordinary settlers of the New World. Later, and into the modern day, collectors have used their wealth to add items from Europe.

This is an engaging and moving read introducing us to the life and collections at the Met, but also to the impact that art and beauty can have on the viewer, if we have time to look, learn and reflect.

Margaret Martin/ bookworminbourton@gmail.com

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**National
Trust**

News from Stourhead

As summer gives way to autumn, September is a wonderful time to visit Stourhead. The landscape garden is beginning its seasonal transformation, with late summer colour lingering in the borders and Walled Garden while the first hints of autumn appear among the trees.

Reflections across the lake, changing foliage and cooler days make this one of the most beautiful times of year to enjoy a walk through the garden and wider estate. Stourhead's carefully designed vistas are particularly striking as the seasons begin to change.

There is a varied programme of events taking place throughout September. Visitors can explore *Drawn to Trees*, an outdoor exhibition of etchings by artist Luke Adam Hawker, alongside a tree trail celebrating the stories and folklore of some of Stourhead's remarkable trees. Regular wellbeing walks and guided wider estate walks continue throughout the month, offering opportunities to enjoy nature and learn more about the landscape.

Special events include a *Curator's talk: The Secret Lives of Paintings*, on 12 September, revealing new discoveries about artworks in Stourhead house. Later in the month, Jane Austen fans can step into their very own Regency-inspired film experience on 15 September and take part in the monthly Trust10 trail run on 27 September.

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

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

Zeals Village Lunch

The team is looking for more volunteers. There is one lunch a month and each is usually attended by 30 to 35 people. A normal monthly lunch is comprised of three homemade soups with bread, cheese and biscuits, fruit, homemade cakes, finishing with tea or coffee. Everyone is welcome to attend, even if you don't live in Zeals! **Tickets cost £6**. Numbered tickets are available from Zeals Post Office prior to the event so that we can gauge food requirements. Ticket payment is made at the lunch.

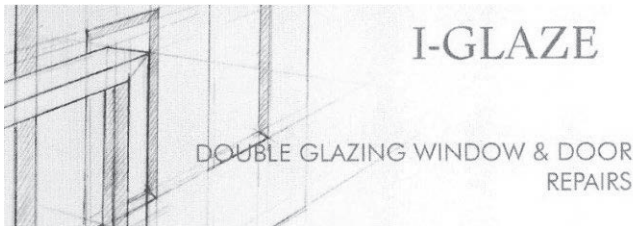
The next lunch will be held at Zeals Village Hall on 21 September at 12.30pm.

If you have any questions, please contact **Vicky Goodfellow** on **07411972955**.

Thank You to Celia

We would like to say a big **Thank You** to Celia Cotton for all her hard work as editor of the Upper Stour Magazine. She worked tirelessly on the magazine every month. Her hard work ensured local people and businesses knew what was happening in our parish. She has been incredibly helpful in getting Josh up to speed as editor. We wish Celia a happy 'retirement', with more time to relax and enjoy beautiful Wiltshire.

Diana Tadd and Josh Larcombe



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Country Calendar September

TOO HOT TO HARVEST! 2026 will go down in the history books as the hottest we have ever known and the earliest harvest in 50 years. We started in July and finished in July. Normally, we do not start until mid-July and run well into August and, if wet, September. Combining through the night to cut the crop to achieve acceptable moisture levels has become the norm for us and a lot of farmers. During the day, the grain dried to such a level it would not meet the moisture requirements, making it unsellable. High temperatures started the end of May and fortunately we had a bit of rain early June, but such prolonged excessive heat has sent the crops to ground. Plants collapse, wither into the soil or fail to grow upright. Severe heat stress and moisture loss destroy their cellular structure and root support, reducing the yield dramatically.

On top of this, we had the constant worrying of fire. Machinery running hot and drought conditions made everything a tinder box. We had a close call but thankfully managed to deal with it quickly. Many other farmers were not so lucky, losing their combines, tractors and crops. No wonder the farming press state that farmers have mixed feelings about the 2026 harvest, reporting anxiety over severe drought and below-average cereal yields with loss of income. Many are unsure whether or not to drill for 2027 harvest; high input costs and low contract prices for grain mean figures do not stack up. Growers are continually squeezed as input costs soar and grain prices lag! On top of that, many livestock farmers, including ourselves, have had to start and feed the cattle, as their fields and pastures are totally burnt dry. Thank goodness we made enough silage, but many have not. Hey ho, we try to be positive! Hopefully when the rain comes it will be gentle and not torrential for days and days on end, causing floods and more stress.

On a happier note, we had a 1st prize at The Bath and West Show with Stourhead Achilles. An excellent result in a very strong class.

Jane Parker





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SERVICES IN UPPER STOUR WITH MAIDEN BRADLEY

SEPTEMBER 2026

Sunday 6th 10.00	Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity Parish Communion at Saint George's Bourton
Sunday 13th 10.00 10.00	Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity Parish Communion at St Mary's Kilmington Morning Worship at All Saints Maiden Bradley
Sunday 20th 10.00	Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity Parish Communion at Saint Peter's Stourton
Sunday 27th 10.00 10.00	Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity Parish Communion at Saint Martin's Zeals Harvest Morning Worship at All Saints Maiden Bradley

OCTOBER 2026

Sunday 4th 10.00	Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity Harvest Morning Worship at St George's Bourton
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Weekday Services

Mondays:	09.00 Morning Prayer at Saint George's Bourton
Wednesdays:	16.00 Holy Communion at Saint Martin's Zeals
Thursdays:	09.00 Morning Prayer at Saint Mary's Kilmington

From the Registers

Weddings:

Saturday 27th June at St Peter's - Brian Thompson & Helen Hives
Saturday 11th July at St Peter's - Blair McCallum & Alicia Fuller

Funerals:

Burial of Ashes - Eileen Jenner - Thursday 18th June - St George's
Funeral - Maria J Felton - Thursday 9th July at St Mary's
Funeral - Marion Carrick - Friday 24th July at St Mary's
Funeral - William E Wilks - Friday 7th August at St George's

Harvest thanksgiving service

This a time for all ages to be giving thanks for God's creativity, and the hard work of local farmers.
The service is at 10am on Sunday 4th October,
in Saint George's Church, Bourton.

Parish of Upper Stour – Volunteer Treasurer

The Parish of Upper Stour (Bourton, Zeals, Kilmington and Stourton) is looking for a volunteer Treasurer to help care for the finances of our four churches and support their work at the heart of local life.

You do not need to be an accountant: good organisation, confidence with numbers and a willingness to learn are the main ingredients. The Treasurer keeps clear financial records using our new online accounts package, helps make sure income is banked, monitors spending, pays authorised bills, prepares the annual accounts and advises the PCC on budgets and the parish's financial position. You would work closely with the churchwardens and be part of a team helping to bring together all parts of the community.

If you enjoy working with numbers and would like to make a meaningful contribution to parish life, please contact **George Bullivant at georgebullivant@gmail.com or 07939045917. Alternatively, speak to one of the churchwardens.**

Ride + Stride for Churches **12th September 2026**



Join us for Wiltshire Churches' Open Day, whether on a bike, on foot or on horseback to help keep Wiltshire's historic churches, chapels and meeting houses looking beautiful and open for the future. Plot your own route and visit as many churches as you like. You can seek sponsorship from friends, relations and colleagues. Half money raised goes to the church of your choice and the other half to Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust, enabling grants to local churches for urgent repair and maintenance costs.

Contact: whct.rs@btinternet.com 01380 831199

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Film Nights at Stourton Memorial Hall

Friday 11 Sept - Mother's Pride

2026 comedy drama starring Martin Clunes, James Buckley, Jonno Davies, Mark Addy and Gabriella Wilde, about a failing community and a grieving family whose lives are changed by brewing real ale and entering the Great British Beer Awards.

Cost of supper is **£12.00** per head. Cost for the film is **£5**, to cover the licence. Ideally, we would ask that you to pay by BACS - ahead of the viewing: ie **£17.00** for film and supper

Stourton Memorial Hall, Lloyds Bank 30-93-45, account no 00658821

Reference 'Film Sep 26'

Cash can be taken on the night - but whichever way you pay please let us know if you are coming. If you would like to join us, email me letting me know if it is the film and supper, or just film, and if you've paid. *If you would like to be on our mailing list, please email us at stourtonfilm@gmail.com*

Jane Joyce/ <j-joyce@dircon.co.uk>

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Rokit and Henry Spencer return to St. Peter's on

Saturday 12th September at 6.30 pm.

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from Jane Joyce – 01747 840149/ j-joyce@dircon.co.uk

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News from Parish Councils

Bourton

The Parish Council submitted a planning application to Dorset Council for the proposed Jubilee Meadow Play Area and Community Space. Plans include natural-style play equipment, located at the eastern end of the field, seating, landscaping and improved access. Many residents support the project, highlighting the need for improved local facilities, especially a good play area, as the lease for the original play area site terminates at the end of this year. Renewal via the Pickwick Academy Trust, granted a 125 year lease by Dorset Council for the school and entire school field, including play area, would be extremely expensive and have an unpredictable outcome. Parishioners can view the application on the Dorset Council website and submit comments at <https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk>, application number: P/FUL/2026/03709. Dorset Council is currently consulting on its updated Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), which sets out how the Council intends to manage, maintain and enhance the county's public footpaths, bridleways and byways. The consultation invites residents, landowners and community groups to comment on priorities such as accessibility, signage, maintenance, countryside access, and how rights of way can better support walking, cycling and outdoor recreation. - *Eve Wynn, RFO & Clerk* - clerk@bourton-pc.gov.uk

Kilminster

Councillors received the results of the recent traffic survey carried out at Kilminster Common. While the findings suggest vehicle speeds may warrant further consideration of speed management measures, clarification is being sought from Wiltshire Council regarding an apparent discrepancy within the report before any next steps are considered.

At its July meeting, the Parish Council agreed in principle to replace the shared Speed Indicator Device (SID) after the existing unit suffered significant water damage. Following this decision, Zeals and Stourton with Gasper Parish Councils have both agreed to participate in the purchase of a new shared device. The replacement SID will include the ability to record traffic data, providing useful information to support future highway and road safety initiatives. The councils are now finalising the arrangements and hope to have the new device in operation soon.

The Council was pleased to welcome PCSO Alice Moore to its July meeting, where she provided an update on local policing matters and answered questions from councillors. More recently, Wiltshire Police's Mobile Police Station visited Kilminster, giving residents the opportunity to speak directly with neighbourhood policing officers.

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on **Monday 14 September at 7.30pm** at the **Stourton & Kilminster Home Guard Club**.

Steven Willis, Clerk - clerk@kilminsterwiltshireparishcouncil.gov.uk



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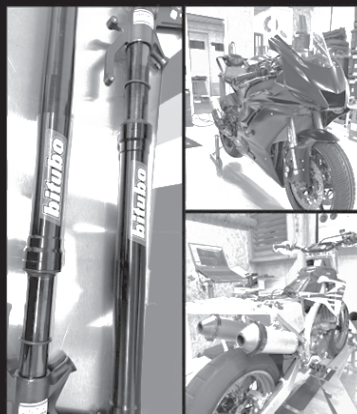


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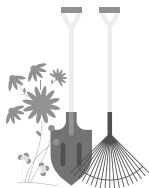
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Green Fingers:

Notes from a Fairweather Gardener

September



The new awareness of the value of biodiversity for farmers means that we see more stunning cornfields full of poppies, bringing flashes of brilliance to many a dull motorway journey. In our own gardens, we might

not appreciate the appearance of what we might consider to be weeds in our carefully curated patch of paradise, but now is the time to branch out and sow a wildflower meadow. This need not be a total break from traditional gardening and the benefits both to nature as a whole and your own garden will be felt even if you only make a small area of the garden a home for wildflowers. Wildflower meadows, big and small, attract pollinators and encourage birds and other harmful bug predators to your garden.

We don't all have a large grassy area that we would be willing to fill with wildflowers, but we probably all have a small patch that could be used in this way. A small area of grass or even a small patch in the border would give at least some of the benefits of a larger meadow.

It is probably easiest to start with an annual meadow which will show quicker results and be easier to maintain, or eradicate if you really hate it. Not all wildflowers are happy in any soil type, so if you are serious about this, find a specialist supplier who will be able to sell you a mix of flowers which will do well in your soil. Prepare your chosen area by getting rid of the weeds you don't want – bindweed, docks and dandelions are not very welcome. Then mix your wildflower seeds with sand. This has no particular horticultural value, but it will help you to see where you have scattered the seeds. To achieve a natural look, it is best not to plant the seed in rows. This is where the sand comes into its own. As you scatter your seed and sand mix, you will be able to see where you have sown and ensure that you have an even scattering.

Press your seeds down with the back of a rake, water gently, especially in this dry weather, and cover with fleece to keep the birds away for a couple of weeks. You will have seedlings in a few weeks and a glorious meadow in the spring.

Daphne Knott

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Bourton Village Hall

Village Lunch

You can attend a Bourton Village Lunch on the first Monday of each month. Put **Monday 7th September**, 12:30pm to 2pm, in your diary for the start of the new season. It's just £5 and you'll be well fed.

Bourton Film Night

Bourton Film Night is on the first Wednesday of each month. We start again on **Wednesday 2nd September**. The film is **The Midwinter Break**, a drama.

Film Night costs £6 a ticket but there is a secret way of getting a great price and showing your support for the Village Hall in general and Film Nights in particular ... ask us about the "Founders' Club" membership. But be quick; there is a limit as to how many of these special deals are available.

John Blashford-Snell Lecture - Saturday 19th September - 7PM

Last year, John's lecture was so well received that he is back to deliver another one for us.

This year's is titled **The Darien Gap Breakthrough**.

Tickets are available online at: siltonvillage.co.uk/event/the-darien-gap-breakthrough - or cash only from the Bourton Garage.

Want to know more about any of these events? email
hello@BourtonVH-Dorset.org.

Advance Notice of Hallowe'en Fun Dog Show:

Saturday 24th October 10.30am at Bourton Village Hall

There will be a raffle and refreshments - more information next month
All proceeds to the animal charity 'Pets As Therapy'

Craft & Chat

at Bourton Village Hall

8th September and each Tuesday following.

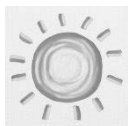
2.00 – 4.00 pm

£3.00 includes tea and biscuits

Diary Dates for September

- 2nd** Film night (The Midwinter Break) at Bourton Village Hall (p.23)
- 5th** Bourton September show (p.4)
- 7th** Bourton Village Lunch (p.23)
- 11th** Film night (Mother's Pride) at Stourton Memorial Hall (p.14)
- 12th** Concert at St Peter's, Stourton (p.16)
- 12th** Wiltshire Ride and Stride (p.13)
- 14th** Kilmington Parish Council meeting (Home Guard Club) (p.17)
- 17th** Mobile Library: Zeals (School and Rise) and Kilmington (Home Guard Club) (p.4)
- 19th** John Blashford-Snell Lecture at Bourton Village Hall (p.23)
- 21st** Zeals Village Lunch (p.9)

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

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| Tuesdays | <p>Toddlers sessions: 9am-12pm (term time only) at Bourton Village Hall. Contact Caroline Worthington 07754 882454</p> <p>Craft & Chat – every Tuesday (from 8 September) in Bourton Village Hall at 2pm</p> |
| Wednesday | <p>Bellringing practice at St Martin's church Zeals. Beginners and lapsed ringers welcome. Contact Georgina Muir 01985 844245</p> |
| Fridays | <p>Choir Practice: most Fridays 5.30-6.15pm at St Martin's Zeals. New singers welcome. Contact Tom Wheare 01747 840622</p> |

**All items for the October 2026 issue by
Friday 18th September please**