

# The view from Down St Mary 780 to 2014

## DSM timeline © Roger Steer

**780** The Saxons reach the Tamar. During the period of the Saxons, the natural forests of Devon are gradually cleared and most of the villages and settlements we take for granted in the countryside are established.

**905** Bishop Putta is murdered – some say at the spot where Copplestone cross stands.

**909** Diocese of Crediton created.

**934-53** Bishop Ethelgar collects funds for the building of St Mary's Minster at Crediton.

**974** Copplestone Cross, at the junction of Down St Mary with two other parishes until 1992, is mentioned in a charter, but is much older than that. It is early Celtic interlaced work such as is not found elsewhere in England except in Northumbria. The cross gives a name to a once noted Devon family which comes in the local rhyme:

*Crocker, Cruwys, and Coplestone,  
When the Conqueror came were found at home.*

## Eleventh Century

**1018** Buckfast Abbey is founded under the patronage of King Canute.

**1040** The Manor of Down(e) named after the Saxon settlement DUN meaning Hill, first recorded as being the gift of King Harthacnut. (Harthacnut was king of Denmark from 1028 to 1042 and of England from 1040 to 1042. Some of the glebe land in the manor originally formed part of the Devon estates of Harthacnut's father, Canute, king of England 1016-35.) Tenure is granted to Aelfwein, Abbot of Buckfast in support of the ministry of the Abbey Church. Down St Mary is one of six Devon churches held by the Abbot of Buckfast prior to the Norman conquest, the others being Churchstow, Petrockstow, South Brent, Trusham and Zeal Monachorum.

**1050** The seat of the bishop moves from Crediton to Exeter. Bishop Leofric is enthroned by King Edward the Confessor.

**1066** William of Normandy invades Sussex and defeats and kills King Harold II at the Battle of Hasting and becomes King (to 1087). With the arrival of the Norman conquerors, the diocese of Exeter embarks on a widespread programme of church building.

**1083-4** Devonshire Domesday Book entry for Down St Mary reads: 'The church itself holds Done. In the time of King Edward it paid geld for two hides. There is land for ten ploughs. In demesne are one plough, and seven serfs, and twelve villeins, and nine bordars, with five ploughs. There are eight acres of meadow, and twelve acres of pasture, and seven furlongs of coppice. It is worth three pounds.' The description of the lands of Buckfast Abbey says that, 'the Abbot has a Manor called Dona' with details which more or less match the entry for the village. Buckfast Abbey holds the manor until the dissolution of monasteries in 1539.

**1085** Devon is one of the most populous counties of England – only Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk have more people. The national Domesday Book describes the manor of Downe as amounting to 500 acres of pasture with woodland supporting 82 people, 215 sheep, 10 cattle and 3 pigs.

**1147** Buckfast Abbey, which holds the manor of Down St Mary, is absorbed into the Cistercian order.

**1165** The Bishop of Exeter buys the manor of Morchard Bishop.

### **Thirteenth century**

The flourishing cloth industry is responsible for the development of towns like South Molton, Honiton and Tiverton. Most of the small towns of Devon will become the centre of a cloth industry by the middle of the fourteenth century. Chulmleigh is made a borough by the Courtenay family in 1253. In Devon thousands of new farms come into being in the five generations between 1204 and 1348 when the Black Death stops it all. Most Devon and Cornish farms first appear in records in these years.

**1205** Exeter has a mayor and is one of the first English cities to do so.

**1240** Sir Robert Burnell becomes Lord of the Manor of Down St Mary (?leased from Buckfast Abbey)

**1269** The first toll roads in England are established.

**1275** England now produces the best wool in Europe.

**1280** Approximate date of the first bridge across the River Taw at Barnstaple.

**1282** A petulant Isabella, Countess of Devon, builds a weir across the River Exe to divert sea trade from Exeter to Topsham (hence 'Countess Weir'). Thus the Courtenays (Earls of Devon) force merchants to land their goods at Topsham rather than Exeter. Eventually the citizens of Exeter will build (1564-7) the ship canal, the first of its kind in England which allows small ships and barges to pass right up to Exeter.

### **1284**

**23 April** John de Doune is installed as first (recorded) rector of Down St Mary church. The bas relief tympanum panel in the church porch is one of the few remnants of an original Saxon building. We do not know what it depicts: suggestions include Daniel in the Lion's Den; St George slaying the dragon; a depiction of the 'Black Dog', a ghostly beast said to run through the village at night; and one of the legends about St Anthony. Such tympana are rare in Devon. A similar one is at Shalfleet Church on the Isle of Wight. The whole church at this time consists of the nave and tower.

### **1285**

**22 December** Edward I and his Queen visit Exeter, stay at the Castle in great state and the next day, Sunday, attend mass at the cathedral.

**1286** First record of Cowley Bridge, Exeter.

**1291** Down St Mary is not taxed by Pope Nicholas as it is 'too poor'.

### **Fourteenth century**

**1312-17** The Bishop's Throne in Exeter cathedral is carved and comes to be regarded as the finest piece of wood carving of its age in Europe.

### **1344**

**23 April** John Sampson installed as Down St Mary church rector. He is also vicar of Crediton. He dies five years later in the Black Death.

**1347** Bishop Grandisson arrives in Exeter as the new bishop and writes to Pope John XXII that 'the Cathedral of Exeter, now half finished, is marvellous in beauty and when completed will surpass every Gothic church in England and France'.

**1340** The port of Teignmouth is burnt by the French.

**1348** Black Death reaches England and kills half the population of Devon including Down St Mary's rector in 1349. In England two and a half million people die – half the population of the country. Whole settlements on the edge of Dartmoor are wiped out.

**1349**

**10 July** John Eustace is installed as the new rector of Down St Mary.

**1360-70** Building of Exeter cathedral completed. While most English cathedrals are built in an assortment of styles, Salisbury and Exeter are exceptions. Exeter is entirely in the style of Decorated Gothic architecture. Although the exterior of the cathedral is not impressive because it is rather squat, there is probably no lovelier interior than that of Exeter cathedral. The cathedral clock, constructed in 1376, is one of the oldest timepieces in the world (Salisbury cathedral claims that its clock is older).

**1380** John Wycliff, with a team of helpers, translates the Bible into English.

**1384** Abbot Robert Simons of Buckfast lodges a claim against Walter Rosere and William Buriman, whom he charges with carrying off his villeins, Christina and John Barry, of Downe St Mary. The abbot claims he is injured to the extent of £20.

**1390** Powderham Castle becomes the home of the Courtenay family, the Earls of Devon.

**1394** John Eustace resigns as rector of Down St Mary.

### **Fifteenth century**

The years from 1400 to 1540 constitute the last great period of church rebuilding in Devon – though Norman fonts are carefully preserved and installed in rebuilt churches for they are evidence of the right to baptise a child. In the same period many stone bridges are built across Devon's rivers. Everywhere you go in Devon you see evidence of widespread building activity and this must have supported a major industry, beginning with the quarrying of stone and ending with the wood carvers who produced the magnificent rood-screens, pulpits bench-ends in churches, roof-bosses, and wall plates, and the richly carved woodwork of the larger houses. The building industry, with all its auxiliary trades and crafts, must have been as important in the economy of Devon as the cloth trade and possibly more important than tin-working.

**1413** William Slade, a Devonshire man educated in Exeter, who has acquired a good reputation at Oxford, becomes Abbot of Buckfast. He is not only a scholar and a theologian, but also an artist and spiritual guide to those in his charge and to the parishioners of the churches belonging to the abbey.

**1413**

**15 November** Bishop Edmund Stafford grants to Abbot William Slade indulgences worth 40 days throughout the diocese to finance rebuilding work at the church of Down St Mary. Following the apparent destruction of the Norman church's tower and nave in a severe storm (though some documents suggest the church may simply have tumbled down through natural decay) the tower is rebuilt and a north aisle added. The granite pillars, arcading and granite font also date from this time. The font now has a nineteenth century oak cover.

**1413-18** The great nave in Crediton parish church is built following the construction of the choir in the early 1400s.

**1415** England beats France at the Battle of Agincourt.

**1420-25** Probable date of Down St Mary church's original medieval Rood Screen (restored in the nineteenth century by Zachariah and William Henry Bushell).

**1460** The first stone bridge is built at Bideford.

**1477** William Caxton prints the first book in England at his press in Westminster.

### **Down St Mary under the Tudors**

**1485** Battle of Bosworth ends the Wars of Roses. Richard III killed and Henry VII (Tudor) comes to the throne.

**1492** Christopher Columbus discovers the West Indies.

**1497** Sir Thomas Fulford comes, with the Earl of Devon, to the relief of Exeter when it is besieged by Perkin Warbeck. Warbeck has been persuaded to impersonate Edward IV's son, Richard of York, a contender to the throne of England. Exeter stands firm for the King. Perkin Warbeck, is captured in Devon. A grateful King Henry VII visits Exeter, stays at the cathedral treasurer's House, orders some trees to be felled so he can watch the rebel prisoners who he has had lined up in the close with nooses around their necks. He later gives them a stern address about the meaning of loyalty before pardoning all of them except Warbeck himself who will be executed in 1499. The king presents Exeter with a sword of state and a cap of maintenance which is still carried by the mayor on ceremonial occasions.

**1501** October On her journey to marry Prince Arthur, Catherine of Aragon lands in Plymouth and moves west to Exeter where she spends several days at the Deanery. She is one of the few women allowed the privilege of staying the night in the cathedral close but, unfortunately, it is something of a sleepless one. The weathervane on St. Mary Major church makes such a noise that a servant is sent up to remove it, at not a little personal risk.

**1507** America is named after explorer Amerigo Vespucci.

**1509** On the death of Henry Tudor, his son Henry VIII comes to the throne.

**1517** Martin Luther publishes his 95 *Theses* reinforcing the forces of Reformation in Europe.

**1520** Approximate date at which Simon Warman supplies the present seating to Down St Mary church carved out of oak in his workshop at Taunton. Seating at Lapford, Braunton, Frithelstock and Abbotsham is of a similar design and is thought to come from the same workshop.

**1535** Miles Coverdale, who will become Bishop of Exeter in 1551, is the first man to translate *and print* the entire Bible in English.

**1539** At the dissolution of the larger monasteries in England, representing the greatest transference of property since the Norman Conquest, Buckfast Abbey loses the manor of Down St Mary to King Henry VIII.

**1544** Henry VIII sells the Manor of Downe (~Down St Mary) to Sir John Fulford of Devon and Humphrey Colles of Barton in Somerset for £27 17s 2¼d. In the same year, John Fulford buys the manor and rectory of Dunsford which had previously belonged to Canonsleigh priory. Fulford sells his interest in the manor to Humphrey Colles and until it is disbanded in 1918 the manor remains in the hands of descendants of the Colles family – Burnells, Barrys, Chings, Napiers and Sturts – who are elevated to the peerage in 1876 and take the title Alington.

**1544** The document transferring the manor to Humphrey Colles states that '... (the manor) includes a water mill, now or later occupied by John Avery or his assigns, as well as all the ditches, fish and fishing rights, water courses etc belonging to the mill; also all messuages and lands in Down St Mary

called Barton...; also all the wood called Down Wood (8 acres) ...' Colles builds Bartonbury (on the land called Barton) but doesn't live there himself. The house will be extended 75 years later.

**Middle of sixteenth century** Devon has emerged from being a generally poor under-developed region to become one of the most valuable counties in the English economy – especially its cloth industry. Peter Blundell, one of the most eminent Devon clothiers will amass a fortune of £40,000.

**1549**

**Sunday 2 June** For the last time, the congregation at Down St Mary (and all English churches) worships according to the medieval Latin service books. Seven days later they are introduced to the Book of Common Prayer in English (a product of Thomas Cranmer's liturgical skill and scholarship). However the new prayer book is not popular in the west country and rebels from Cornwall join those from Samford Courtenay and other Devon villages. The uprising is eventually suppressed at Clyst St Mary which is burnt by Lord Russell. Another battle is fought at Woodbury.

**1553** Miles Coverdale is preaching in Exeter cathedral when news come through that, following the death of the young Protestant King Edward VI, the Catholic Mary has succeeded to the throne.

**1558** November 23 Following the death of Mary, Elizabeth I rides into London as Queen of England.

**1562** October John Hawkins sails from Plymouth to Sierra Leone and captures at least 300 African slaves making him the first English slave trader.

**1565** John Hawkins brings sweet potatoes and tobacco to England. Tobacco quickly becomes very popular.

**1569-70** In Elizabethan muster returns, Devon comes out second only to Yorkshire in numbers of able-bodied men.

**1560-1640** The great majority of farmhouses in Devon are either rebuilt or substantially modernised in this period.

**1569** An Indenture states that a holding called Bradford (also spelt Braddiford and Bradiford over the years) 'partly in Saynt Mary Downe' consists of 100 acres, 40 acres meadow, 60 acres pasture, 10 acres wood, 200 acres furze and heath – 410 acres in all.

**1572** Devon pirate, sea captain and explorer, Francis Drake, attacks Spanish harbours in the Americas.

**1573** Devon merchant and naval commander, John Hawkins, becomes Treasurer of the Navy Board and makes the navy fit to beat the Spanish Armada fifteen years later.

**1580**

**26 September** Francis Drake arrives back in Plymouth after an astonishing three-year voyage around the world and carrying treasure beyond imagination.

**1581** Francis Drake, aged 36, moves into Buckland Abbey which he buys from Richard Grenville. The Drake family will live there until 1942.

**1583** Devon explorer and soldier, Humphrey Gilbert, claims Newfoundland for England.

**1584** Devon courtier, explorer and author, Walter Raleigh, tries to establish a colony near Roanoake Island in North Carolina.

**1585** Devon explorer, John Davis, discovers Davis Strait and Baffin Island.

**1588** June Spanish invading fleet first sighted in Devon from cliffs near Hope Cove, although the fleet was first spotted off the Lizard in Cornwall.

**1588**

**19 July** Francis Drake sails from Plymouth to defeat the Armada after playing his famous game of bowls. Many experts think this traditional story is almost certainly true, given Drake's knowledge of tides and winds. Exeter's motto *Semper Fidelis* is later conferred by Queen Elizabeth in recognition of the city's contributions, both of men and money, made to the fleet that beat the Spanish Armada. Most of the leading seamen who chased the Spanish ships along the channel were born in the land of the Tamar, the Tavy and the Dart.

**1590** The first of Shakespeare's plays is performed.

**1595** Spaniards land in Cornwall and burn Mousehole and Penzance.

**1593-6** Exeter Guildhall, with the porticoed Elizabethan front over the pavement, is built as we see it today at a cost of £789. During the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century, Exeter is one of the most important ports in England, her prosperity based largely on her export trade in wool and cloth. This is one of the most notable periods in Exeter's history. Development of the New World encourages trade from all Devon ports and Plymouth, Bideford and Barnstaple soon have strong links across the Atlantic.

**1599** Peter Blundell, English merchant and manufacturer from Tiverton who has made a fortune manufacturing kersey cloth, founds Blundell's School. Tiverton becomes the most flourishing industrial town in Devon.

### **Seventeenth century**

**1600** Approximate date at which the probable original church house in Down St Mary is built, becoming 1-3 The Green, now Marylea Cottage and Wind Whistle Cottage, extended in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Grade II listed in 1987.

early **1600s** Chaffcombe Farm is rebuilt, thought parts are much older. The site is that of a succession of earlier houses where the Domesday manor of Chaffcombe was administered.

### **Down St Mary under The Stuarts**

**1603** Elizabeth I dies and is succeeded by James I of Scotland as James VI of England.

**1604** New church rules cause 300 Puritan English clergy to resign. One third of the clergy from Devon are ejected from their livings. In Down St Mary, Rev Richard Colles stays in his post until 1617.

**1610** Tea is introduced into Europe.

**1620** Pilgrim Fathers sail from Plymouth in the Mayflower to colonise America.

**1623** King James I urges the Lords Lieutenant of Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, and the cities of Bristol and Exeter to encourage the 'better sort of people' to join in the colonisation adventure.

**1625**

**27 March** James I dies at Theobalds and is succeeded by Charles I. Charles marries a French Princess, Henrietta Maria, who is a Catholic. In September Sir Richard Reynell entertains the new king and the Duke of Buckingham in Forde House, Newton Abbot.

**1626** The opening up of new world colonies in the second quarter of the seventeenth century brings a fresh impetus of trade to Devonshire ports. The new plantations need woollen goods and household

stores of all descriptions and they send back tobacco and sugar. Bideford is in the forefront of this development as is Exeter which sends out woollen goods in vast quantities to European markets as well as the American colonies and imports chiefly wine, tobacco and sugar.

**1640** Approximate date at which heiress Margaret Colles marries Sir George Napier of Critchill, Dorset. The manor of Down St Mary therefore passes into the hands of the Napier family (of Middle Marsh and Moor Crichel, Dorset) until 1740.

**1641** Protestation Returns include the names of Thomas Colliton, miller at Down Mills (now The Old Mill), whose family play a key role in the parish for 150 years at Yeo and Middle Down and John Avery, miller – another John Avery will run the Bell Inn (on site of present Village Hall).

**1642** August 22 Charles I raises his standard at Nottingham and the Civil War begins (to 1645). Family loyalties are split. Exeter will be twice besieged in 1643 and 1645-6. Both Charles I and Cromwell, with their troops, move through the area, notably to Bow, Coleford and Crediton. Charles I addresses his troops from the porch of Spencer Cottage, Coleford.

**1649** January 30 Charles I executed after being convicted of treason.

**1652** John Parsons becomes Rector of Down St Mary church (until 1661) having been sacked at Kentisbeare for being too fond of his drink. He is a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford.

**1660** April 22 Convention Parliament recalls King Charles II (to 1685). Exeter is the fifth largest provincial town in England after Norwich, York, Bristol and Newcastle. Its mainstay is still the cloth trade.

**1661** John Parsons is one of at least 132 Devon priests and about 1760 throughout England who are forced to leave their parishes following Charles II's Restoration Settlement of which clergy of Puritan inclinations disapprove. The services of the Church of England after this date are characterised by a higher ceremonial than that to which most English people have been accustomed. Candlesticks are again placed on the altar, organs return to the churches (though not to Down St Mary), the church year with its different seasons is celebrated, crosses and religious practices are commonly used in the furnishings of churches, and gestures expressive of reverence are commonly seen again. However a Puritan influence does still remain.

**1664** British take New Amsterdam (now New York) from the Dutch.

**1665** Great Plague kills 68,596 people in London.

**1666**

**26 August** Great Fire of London. 180 hectares including 89 parish churches are destroyed. Charles II directs the fire-fighters and labours among them.

**1669** Samuel Pepys, his sight failing, makes his last *Diary* entry.

**1670** John Humphrey becomes Rector of Down St Mary church (until 1684)

**1671** John Tucker buys a lease on Bradiford (or part of it) from Arthur Bury of Colleton Manor.

**1673** Rev John Parsons dies in the village.

**1675** Foundation stone of new St Paul's Cathedral laid.

**1677** Tenor church bell inscribed in Down St Mary bearing the name of the then church warden.

**1678-81** Exeter Custom House built on the Quay. It is the first key building in Exeter to be constructed of brick.

**1684** Richard Craig becomes Rector of Down St Mary church.

**1685**

**February** Charles II dies. He has no legitimate children, but by various mistresses he has 14 illegitimate sons and daughters. He is therefore succeeded by brother James II (to 1688). The most well-known of Charles's sons is James, Duke of Monmouth. James returns to England from Holland landing at Lyme Regis in the summer. By 15 June his army numbers about 2000. He proceeds to Taunton where he proclaimed King on 20 June. A few of the local population rally to the intending usurper, but soon a good proportion of them fall away. On their way through Wells his soldiers do a good deal of damage in the cathedral and stable their horses inside. On 5 July James's whole army advances to encamp on the plain of Sedgemoor. He attempts a surprise attack by night at the battle of Sedgemoor which fails miserably and he flees from the battlefield leaving his wretched peasant followers to be butchered. He is captured in a ditch in the New Forest and, despite pitiful pleas to James for mercy, is executed on Tower Hill. The sequence of the Rebellion is the brutal punishment of the rebels by Lord Chief Justice Jeffries in 'the Bloody Assize' (though some historians argue that Jeffries' 'brutality' has been exaggerated).

**1688**

Incensed by James II's attempts to favour Catholics, seven English lords invite William of Orange to England. William (who has married Mary, daughter of the Duke of York, in 1677) lands at Brixham on November 5 and James flees the country.

**7 November** On his way to London, after landing at Brixham, William of Orange reads his proclamation at Forde House, Newton Abbot, proclaiming for the first time his intention to become King of England. From 9-20 November William stays at the Deanery in Exeter all the time gathering support.

**1690** James's attempt to raise an army in Ireland is frustrated when William of Orange defeats him at the battle of the Boyne. The battle is still celebrated annually by the Protestants in Ulster (the Orange Men).

For a generation or so at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, the Devonshire serge industry is the most important branch of England's export trade in woollens, with Holland, Germany and Spain as the biggest customers. Tiverton is the largest industrial town with Exeter the great market and finishing centre. The Devonshire trade will begin to go perceptibly downhill by the middle of the eighteenth century bringing with it the decline of Exeter as a port.

**1695** Window tax (to 1851) is levied on all windows over six in every house worth more than £5 a year. Old houses can still be seen with the windows bricked up to avoid this tax. In the following year, a mint is set up in Exeter for a short period and the present street name The Mint refers to this.

**1698** Celia Fiennes comes to Exeter and writes a description of the city. From 1698-1701 the Exeter canal is deepened and improved.

prior to **1700**, the ancient family of Moon (earlier Mohun) acquire the manor of Chaffcombe in the parish of Down St Mary which dates back to before Domesday.

## **The eighteenth century**

**1700**

**18 September** Richard Craig, Down St Mary rector, dies.

**1700-25** Topsham's beautiful 'Dutch' houses, with delightful small courtyards, are built in the Strand by Topsham merchants from Dutch brick brought back as ballast, and obviously with Dutch

architecture in mind. Holland is the largest customer for Devon serges, and these are the greatest days of Topsham.

**1702** William of Orange dies and is succeeded by his sister-in-law Anne (to 1714).

**1704** An English army, led by John Churchill (later Duke of Marlborough), wins the battle of Blenheim against the French.

**1707** Union of England and Scotland as Great Britain. Scottish Nationalists, led by Alex Salmond, are currently trying to reverse this ancient union.

**1709** In Coalbrookdale, Shropshire, Abraham Darby smelts iron with coke and coal for the first time – one of the British inventions which will bring about the industrial revolution later in the century. Three years later, Thomas Newcomen, who was born and worked in Dartmouth, Devon, will invent the atmospheric steam engine. When John Kay patents his flying shuttle in 1733, James Hargreaves invents the spinning jenny in 1764 and Richard Arkwright the spinning frame in 1764, the industrial revolution in Britain will be well under way.

**1710** St Pauls Cathedral, which is constructed partly of Beer stone from Devon, is completed in London.

**1711** William Tucker, of Bradiford, dies. His will indicates that 'all his wearing apparel and money in his purse was worth £20'; six oxen and steers was worth £40; five milk cows £20; two steer yearlings and three heifers £5 2s 6d; one horse, three mares and their sucklings £23; three calves £3; 20 ewes with lambs and 25 hogge sheep £20; all the silver plate £10.

**1714** Queen Anne dies and is succeeded by the Elector of Hanover as George I (to 1727). The Hanoverians are descended from James I's daughter Elizabeth who had married the Elector Palatine Frederick V, who was chosen king of Bohemia in 1619.

### **Down St Mary under the Hanoverians**

**1718** Diana Napier marries Humphrey Sturt so that ownership of the manor of Down St Mary passes to the Sturt family (who will later take the title Alington when they are elevated to the peerage in the nineteenth century).

**1720** Heavy speculation in South Sea and other companies: 'South Sea Bubble' bursts and many investors are ruined.

**1727** George I dies and is succeeded by George II (to 1760).

**1730** Viscount Townshend begins experiments in agriculture which will usher in the 'agricultural revolution'.

**1732** In London, Robert Walpole is offered No.10 Downing Street as his official residence. He is now called 'Prime Minister' as a term of abuse.

**1739**

**Sunday morning 24 November** John Wesley preaches in Exeter on his way to Cornwall. He will repeat the journey many times in his long life.

**1741** Dr Alured Clarke arrives in Exeter from Winchester and becomes the founder of the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital although he doesn't live to see his foundation completed. The R D and E will open its doors for patients on January 1 1743.

**1742** Handel's *Messiah* has its first performance in Dublin.

**1743** George II leads his troops into action at the Battle of Dettingen - last British king to do so.

**1744** First major cricket match is played in England (All England 40 and 70, Kent 53 and 58 for 1 wicket)..

**1745** Down St Mary's fifth church bell is inscribed.

**1747** Portrait and history painter and art theorist Joshua Reynolds, who was born in Plympton, settles in Plymouth Dock, now Devonport, before moving to London in 1760 (though returning to the west country from time to time). He will become the first President of the Royal Academy and found the Literary Club of which Dr Johnson, Garrick, Burke, Goldsmith, Boswell and Sheridan are members.

**1748**

**27 August** A survey of the manor of Down St Mary reveals that:

Mary Collyton (widow of Andrew) lives at Middle Down (paying an annual rent of £15)

Roger Wreford lives at Barn Shelley (rent £8 10s)

Peter White lives at Ellacombe (rent £45)

George Gregory lives at Higher Thorne (rent £30)

Richard Hole lives at Lower Lamacott (rent £15) and also pays the rent for Lower Thorn (£26)

Mrs Lang lives at North Down (?Higher Living) (rent£30)

William Wreford lives at Woolfins (rent £23).

**1754-1785** 132 people are married in Down St Mary church: 83 of them are unable to write.

**1755** The first carpets are made at Axminster, Devon, and Samuel Johnson publishes his *Dictionary*.

**1758** A journey from Exeter to London by stage coach takes two days and a single fare is 45 shillings.

**1759** At the Bastille of Quebec the British conquer Canada.

**1760** George II dies and is succeeded by his grandson, George III (to 1820). The new King is a simple and kindly man who will be known to his subjects as 'Farmer George'. But he will lose the American colonies and go permanently insane in 1811.

**1762**

**8 November** Frederick Keppel (1729-1777) consecrated Bishop of Exeter. He will gain a reputation for generosity and visit Down St Mary.

**1763**

**5 February** John Oglander, with a BA degree from New College, Oxford, is installed as rector of Down St Mary church. It is unlikely that he is often seen at the church (see 1764). The church patron is Oglander's brother-in-law Sir Gerald Napier of Moor Crichel, Dorset. The Napier estate will pass into the hands of the Sturt family two years later. Oglander will later become warden of New College.

**1763** A document refers to a 'parsonage house about a quarter of a mile from the church' which is 'a very old building of mud walls with a thatched roof'. This parsonage is on the site of the present 'Old Rectory' which will be built in Down St Mary in the nineteenth century.

**1764** Bishop Frederick Keppel confirms 24,000 candidates on his first visitation tour of the Exeter diocese. The record of this tour shows that 'the parsons of Hatherleigh, West Buckland and Down St Mary' all hold offices in Oxford Colleges. The rector of Down St Mary since 1763, John Oglander MA DD, is Warden of New College, Oxford, until his death in 1794. Keppel spends large sums of money on improving the bishop's palace in Exeter and in relieving the needs of the poorer clergy in his the diocese of Exeter.

**1765** Benjamin Donn publishes his map of Devon showing the village of 'Mary Down' with Bradiford, Higher Bradiford, Down Mill, Parkbury and Thorn.

**1765** The manor of Down St Mary passes into the hands of Humphrey Sturt, grandson of Sir Anthony Sturt.

**1769** Fine Assembly Rooms are built in Exeter which are now the Royal Clarence Hotel. It becomes the first hostelry in England to be called an hotel, the name being first used in an advert dated September 7, 1770.

**1771** Spain agrees to cede the Falkland Islands to Britain. Argentina please note.

**1772** Poet, critic and philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge is born in Ottery St Mary.

**1773** At the Boston Tea Party American colonists, in protest against British tax on tea, dump a cargo of tea in the harbour. The American War of Independence will begin in 1775.

**1773** The road from Crediton to Coplestone is rebuilt as a turnpike.

**1773** William Pope 'of Chaffcombe' (probably today's Chaffcombe farm) marries his cousin Elizabeth Huggins. William's descendant, John Pope, solicitor, will move to Down St Mary many years later (see 1989).

**1775** James Watt perfects the steam engine, another huge impetus to Britain's industrial revolution. Two years later he will travel to Cornwall to watch over the building of the first engines at Wheal Busy, the great mine at Chacewater and at Ting Tang mine in Gwennap thus forging a link between the industrial revolution in the Midlands and the west country mining industry.

**1776** Thirteen colonies in America declare their independence from Britain. George Washington will become the first President of the USA in 1789.

**1776** March Bishop Frederick Keppel of Exeter preaches a sermon before George III advocating peace with the American colonists and on his deathbed he will thank God that he has not 'given one vote for shedding American blood'.

**1778** It takes eight hours to travel from Exeter to Barnstaple via South Molton.

**1779** First cast-iron bridge completed at Coalbrookdale, Shropshire, and Samuel Crompton invents the spinning mule.

**1780** Haldon Belvedere is erected by Sir Robt Palk in memory of his friend Stringer Lawrence, who had been Governor of Madras. To this day the tower can be seen from many parts of Devon.

**1786** Humphrey Sturt, Lord of the Manor of Down St Mary, dies.

**1788** William Wilberforce, supported by Thomas Clarkson, evangelical Anglicans and the Quakers, begins a 19-year struggle for the abolition of the slave trade which ends in success in 1807.

**1789** After recovering from a bout of insanity, George III visits Exeter and stays at the Deanery. The French revolution begins in the same year.

**1790** An heiress of the Tucker family, which has held 'Bradford Manor' since the fifteenth century, marries Benjamin Radford and the manor passes into Radford hands.

**1790s** Copper is discovered at Mary Tavy in large quantities and this causes a kind of West Devon 'copper rush'.

**1793** Rev Richard Polwhele (1760-1838) writes his *History of Devonshire*. He says there are three villages in the parish of Down St Mary. He almost certainly means Down St Mary, Chaffcombe and Lammacott. The Parsonage (on the site of the present 'Old Rectory') is described in as 'a very old building of mud walls, with a thatched roof'. For years no member of the clergy has lived there.

**1794** Down St Mary's (mainly absentee) rector John Oglander dies. Humphrey Sturt's widow Mary puts her own sixth son Wyndham Sturt into the rectory (till 1802).

**1797** Eleven years after the death of Humphrey Sturt, at an auction at the Globe Tavern Exeter, the Sturt family attempts to sell all its property in Down St Mary. William Tucker (descendant of the William Tucker who died in 1711) of Braddiford buys the 'living' of the church, the Bell Inn, the (three) cottages which are now (two) Marylea and Wind Whistle. These cottages date from around 1600 and Mid-Devon District Council believe they were part of the old church house. They have elaborate side ovens suggesting baking was on a commercial scale.

Roger Partridge, a yeoman of Clannaborough, buys South Yeo (alias Middle Yeo) for £558.

Sylvanus Wreford of Nymet Tracey, Bow, buys Higher Thorn and Merrifields for £525.

John Stone of Down St Mary buys Barkabury's Home Tenement (Bartonbury) for £548 (the Stones have lived in the parish since at least the seventeenth century).

John Wreford of Zeal Monachorum buys Lower Thorn for £300.

John Cheriton of Down St Mary buys North Thorn for £491.

William Cheriton of Down St Mary buys Middle Down for £256-10s.

The Sturt family hang on to their property in Down St Mary which they fail to sell at this auction until a grand auction in 1918.

### **The Nineteenth century**

**1800** The population of Down St Mary is 313. Exeter has dropped to fourteenth in size among provincial towns. In Chulmleigh, the woollen industry has practically gone but the cattle fairs, markets and road traffic keeps the town relatively prosperous until about 1850.

**1801** At the first census, Devon is the fourth largest county in terms of numbers of people behind Middlesex, Yorkshire and Lancashire.

**1801** Birth of in Down St Mary of William Towt, one of the first of many generations of blacksmiths of that name in the village. Two of his sons, John and George, become blacksmiths as does George's son, Joseph.

**1801** Act of Union: Ireland becomes part of the United Kingdom and the present union flag is adopted.

**1801** Lady Nelson comes to live at the Beacon, Exmouth, after her separation from Nelson. She will die in London in 1831 but is buried in the SE corner of Littleham churchyard.

### **1803**

**18** September Christopher Cheriton, son of John and Frances, is baptised in Down St Mary church. The Cheritons are a well-known name in Down St Mary for 100 years and some members of the family will have a notorious reputation including doing some spells in jail.

early **1800s** Thomas Moon, originally from Kelland, takes up residence at Eppletons.

**1804** Richard Passmore installs a striking clock (no hands) in Down St Mary church tower. The clock proves troublesome and expensive to maintain and appears to have been no longer in working order by 1858. A new padlock for the church door costs 1s 6d. John Towt is paid 5s 4d for 3 days repair work in the church.

**1805** Nelson defeats the French at the Battle of Trafalgar (but dies aboard HMS Victory). Napoleon drops his plans to invade Britain.

**1806** Down St Mary church organises a thanksgiving for Nelson which raises 1s 6d.

**1806** Princetown prison is built for French prisoners of war, Napoleon's soldiers being joined here a few years later by hundreds of sailors captured in the war in America in 1812. The land is owned (then and now) by the Prince of Wales.

**1808** You could build a three-roomed cottage in Devon, with larder and outhouse, in cob, roughcast and whitewash for about £60.

**1810** Major repairs to Down St Mary church and tower walls (including a cradle suspended from the top of the tower) cost £8 19s 8d.

**1811** Down St Mary church warden's accounts show that a mason is paid £4 10s 0d to repair the tower.

**1811** George III goes permanently insane and his son George is appointed Prince Regent.

## **1812**

**10 February** Thomas Freke, with a BA from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, is installed as rector of Down St Mary church. He is also Vicar of South Tawton (1803-24) where he lives, and Loddiswell (1824-39).

Napoleon retreats from Moscow, loses the Battle of Leipzig the following year, goes to Elba in 1814, then returns but is defeated by the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo in 1815. While the British decide what to do with him he struts the decks of a ship anchored in Torbay much to the curiosity of Devon boatmen. He is exiled to St Helena.

**1812** Prime Minister Spencer Perceval (who is also an active supporter of the British and Foreign Bible Society) is assassinated in the House of Commons.

**1812** Main streets of London are lit by gas.

**1812-1840** The construction of the mile long Plymouth Breakwater by John Rennie (father and son) gives the port one of the largest and safest harbours in Britain. Its scale is admired by Napoleon when he arrives as a prisoner at Plymouth in 1815, to Rennie's gratification.

**1816** Joseph Towt, Down St Mary blacksmith, is paid three shillings for doing ironwork in the church. Was he a brother of William Towt?

**1816** John Heathcote sets up his lace factory in Tiverton.

**1817** summer: gas lighting first appears in the streets and principal shops in Exeter.

## **1818**

**17 August** W T A Radford, later to become rector of Down St Mary, baptised at Chulmleigh.

**1819** After the arrival of preachers Samuel Thorne and Mary Mason, a group of Bible Christians begin to meet in a small thatched cottage in Copplestone. Later they move to more spacious rooms in Elston Farm, just east of the village. They are the forerunners of Copplestone Methodist Church which will be established in the parish of Down St Mary in 1831.

**1819** William Tucker of Bradiford, 'the only gentleman's seat in the parish', dies and leaves nearly £100,000, a huge sum for that time. Most of his property goes to his nephew, Benjamin Tucker Radford, whose son will become rector and restorer of the church.

## 1819

**12 June** Charles Kingsley, novelist, clergyman and controversialist is born at Holne vicarage, on the eastern edge of Dartmoor.

**1820** George III dies and is succeeded by the Prince Regent as George IV. The new king is clever, generous, a patron of the arts and a good linguist. But he is also vain, a drunkard, a gambler and lazy, and faithless to both his friends and his many mistresses.

**1821** Bishop Carey visits the parish of Down St Mary and reports that there are 40 families, no Baptists or Dissenters (Elston Farm, where the Bible Christians are meeting, is not in Down St Mary). Mr Ryder, the curate, lives at Clannaborough and receives a salary of £63 a year. There are services twice on a Sunday, morning and evening prayer, although no evening services in mid-winter. No teaching is given to the young. Few attend catechisings. Holy Communion is celebrated quarterly and about 20 attend. 5 shillings is paid annually to the poor at Christmas from the income of the wood in Eggesford. William Tucker has charged his estate of Bradford (sic) with 25 shillings in bread for the poor at Christmas for 20 years from 1819. The 'Charities House' is in good order. The church chancel is good, although the church needs repair as do the churchyard fences.

**1822-1838** A servant girl living at Ellicombe, Miriam Passmore, has seven illegitimate children. Their father is Joseph Cheriton. Joseph and Miriam will never formalise their relationship but will stay together into old age.

**1824** Zachariah Bushell is born. He will grow up to be Down St Mary church warden, establish a choir and restore the rood screen before his death 88 years later.

## 1825

**16 May** Henry Gerard Sturt is born. He will become Lord of the Manor of Down St Mary and be elevated to the peerage in 1876 taking the title of First Baron Alington.

Stockton and Darlington Railway opens.

**1827** William Cheriton born. His parents are Joseph Cheriton and Miriam Passmore. William will become a colourful figure in Down St Mary, a great huntsman and founder of the Cheriton Otter Hounds.

**1828** John Hawkins is paid £4 15s 0d for 'roughcasting' Down St Mary church tower and £1 14s 7d for roughcasting the wall of the church.

**1829** George Stephenson's *Rocket* wins the Rainhill locomotive trials.

## 1830

George IV dies and is succeeded by his brother William IV (to 1837).

Mr Vowler builds Coplestone toll house built in preparation for the opening the following year of the new turnpike road along the Taw valley to Barnstaple. The house costs £80 to build.

**1830** Bishop Henry Philpotts begins his period as Bishop of Exeter, the diocese still including Cornwall. He is an 'old-fashioned High Churchman'.

## 1831

**24 June** The new turnpike road opens along the Taw valley from Coplestone Cross to Barnstaple via Morchard Road, Eggesford and Newbridge. There is a tollgate at Coplestone. Previously the old Barnstaple road ran from Crediton through New Buildings, Morchard Bishop, Chawleigh, Chulmleigh,

Burrington and Atherington to Newbridge. The new road supersedes the old road which ran over the hills through Morchard Bishop and Chulmleigh.

The group of Bible Christians who have previously met first in a Coplestone cottage and later in Elston Farm, build the first Ebenezer Chapel in Coplestone opposite the present building and since converted into two houses.

**27 December** HMS *Beagle* leaves Devonport with young Cambridge graduate Charles Darwin on board. On the last day of February the following year the *Beagle* will reach South America and Darwin steps ashore on a continent which will raise serious but, at first, secret doubts in his mind concerning the origin of species.

### **1833**

A day school in Down St Mary parish for 32 pupils is paid for by subscription, an allowance from the Poor Rate: payment is a halfpenny a week per child.

The Earl of Shaftesbury's Factory Acts are passed in the Commons: no under-nines are to work in factories and a nine hour day is introduced for 9- to 13-year olds.

### **1834**

**28 January** Sabine Baring Gould, clergyman, author and folksong collector is born at Dix's Field, Exeter.

Fire destroys the Houses of Parliament.

### **1835**

A new road opens from the Sturt Arms to Winkleigh, Beaford and Torrington via Yeo Bridge.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley, a grandson of Charles Wesley, returns to be organist of Exeter cathedral until 1841.

**1836** The inside of the church tower, belfry and porch are whitewashed for £2 9s 6d. Part of the roof is reslated. 800 slates cost £4 18s 10d and 2000 slate nails 5 shillings and sixpence.

### **1837**

**20 June** William IV dies and is succeeded by his niece, Victoria, until 1901. The period from Victoria's accession to the outbreak of the first world war will be the period during which the British Empire reaches its greatest extent: it covers one-fifth of the world's land area and contains about a quarter of the world's population. They will call it 'the Empire on which the sun never sets'.

Thomas Freke resigns as Down St Mary church rector. He is succeeded by Peter Comyns Tucker. The church patron is Benjamin Tucker Radford.

### **1839**

The ship *Tory* sails from Plymouth carrying pioneer settlers bound for New Zealand.

Charles Dickens installs his parents at Mile End Cottage, beside the Exeter road in Alphington.

**1840** Victoria marries Prince Albert of Saxe-coburg-Gotha. Universal penny post is introduced with first adhesive postage stamps. Down St Mary church accounts reveal that postage for a form of prayer for safe deliverance of Queen Victoria in childbirth is 3d.

**1842** A Tithe Map shows: many orchards on the south facing slopes of the village. Higher Living nearer the Old Rectory than it is today. The present Higher Living was built in the 1850s. In 1842 William Searles farms 100 acres at Higher Living. His wife is Sarah and he has four sons, three farm labourers and a servant. On the site of what is now the Old Rectory is the Parsonage but no member of the clergy lives there (see entry for 1793). In 1842 the rector lives at Hill House (now Beech Hill) Morchard Bishop and will continue to do so until The Rectory (now the old Rectory) is built in 1846. Town Court is marked where it is today. There are three village blacksmiths – Willaim Towt, James Gribble and Richard Slocombe.

### **1840s**

Robert May farms Middle and East Lammacott. Roger May farms Higher and Lower Lammacott. The current Mays of Beers and Clannaborough are direct descendants. Lammacott is owned by Down St Mary lord of the manor, the Sturt family, who will rebuild Higher Lamacott in the second half of the nineteenth century. At the great auction of 1918, Henry Cheriton will buy Lamacott from Lord Alington.

Sturt Arms (now Devonshire Dumpling) is built in Morchard Road.

**1841** John and Mary Hammacott farm Courtneys. Although the farm is only 50 acres, the family has two servants Fanny Powdon and George Folley. In the next door cottage, later known as Betty's House, live farmworker John Erland, his wife and five children.

**1842-3** John Moon, from an ancient family also known as Mohun, builds Kelland Barton. John Moon is a judge at Smithfield show for 19 consecutive years.

**1843** Daniel Hammacott, aged 27, inherits the tenancy of Courtneys from his father, John, holding it for 50 years and gradually increasing the acreage.

### **1843**

**14 July** WTA Radford is installed as rector of the church and continues as rector until his death 54 years later. He has a BA from Exeter College, Oxford (1840).

Henry Gerard Sturt, heir to the Down St Mary estate, matriculates at Christ Church, Oxford, after being educated at Eton College.

**1844** Large quantities of copper are discovered 5 miles north of Morwellham at Blanchdown. This becomes the Devon Great Consols mine and for more than 10 years will be the richest copper mine in Europe. In the wonderful years of the mid-nineteenth century, Devon and Cornwall produce more than half the world's supply of copper just as they had produced most of Europe's tin in the twelfth and thirteenth century. The population of Tavistock will rise dramatically.

**1 May** The first train steams into St Davids station, Exeter, from Paddington. After a great dinner in the goods shed at Exeter Station, the return journey begins at 5.20 pm reaching Paddington at 10 o'clock precisely. Sir Thomas Acland from Killerton rises in the House of Commons at 10.30 and says that he has been in Exeter little more than five hours earlier. On September 4 the first excursion train from London to Exeter arrives at St Davids.

### **1845**

A 'voluntary school' is opened in the Coach House close to the (old) Down St Mary rectory. It is supported by contributions and the payments of the children. In the 1850s there are 40 scholars and Samuel Bushell is the master – was this Zachariah Bushell's brother?

Tythe Map of Down St Mary village shows the Bell Inn; Higher Living farm; and Town Court (referred to as 'Middle Down') owned and farmed by William Cheriton.

## 1846

Down St Mary rectory is built at a cost of £1600. It is designed by Hayward for WTA Radford. Nikolaus Pevsner later (1952) describes the rectory as the 'usual nearly symmetrical gabled composition. Stone tracery in all the windows, two-storey porch, and a well preserved interior with Tudor doorcases and chimney pieces'.

Potato famine leads to severe famine in Ireland and mass emigration to USA and other countries.

## 1847

Henry Gerard Sturt elected Conservative MP for Dorchester, a seat he holds until 1856.

Sir James Simpson uses chloroform as an anaesthetic. Queen Victoria will use it in 1853 for the birth of her eighth child.

## 1848

An aunt leaves Mr Radford a legacy of £100 which he devotes to restoring Down St Mary church chancel.

Gold is found in California leading to a 'gold rush'.

## 1849

A new churchyard gate is hung in Down St Mary costing £7, but at this date and until later in the century there is no reference to a coffin gate or lychgate (probably erected in 1897).

Henry Gerard Sturt, whose family own much of the land in Down St Mary, begins to appear in the list of winning owners on the turf. He is elected the Jockey Club the following year.

## 1850

William White's *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Devonshire* says: 'Down St Mary, 6 miles N.W. by W. of Crediton, has in its parish 407 souls, and 2229 acres of land. Henry Charles Sturt, Esq, is lord of the manor and owner of most of the soil, but Bradford Barton (sic) belongs to B. Radford, Esq, the patron of the rectory, valued in K.B. at £12 13s 4d, and in 1831 at £275. The Rev. W.T.A. Radford BA is incumbent, and has 50A of glebe, and a neat Gothic residence built in 1846, at the cost of £1600. The church is an ancient structure, with a curious Norman tympanum over the south door.

Avery John, beer seller  
Bushell Samuel, school master  
Dunn Wm, vict. Union

Partridge Andrew, vict. Sturt's Arms  
Radford Rev Wm T A, Rectory  
Slee Richard, shopkeeper

### FARMERS

Cheriton, Joseph  
Cheriton J. jun  
Cheriton Wm  
Kelland John

May Roger  
May Robert  
Moon Thomas  
Morris John  
Searl John

Thomas Moon is farming 110 acres at Eppletons and employing five labourers. Three of the labourers are living in the house with Thomas and his wife Sarah.

## 1851

The census shows 25 houses and 109 people in Down St Mary village itself; 9 houses grouped around Union Inn (now Jasmine House) with 49 people plus another 7 in the Sturt Inn at Union Village (now

Morchar Road). The Union is run by a man named Dunn who also farms the glebe land for the Radfords. Of the 76 houses in the parish, 50 are directly dependent on farming. In addition there are 52 'servants', a schoolmaster, 2 tailors, 2 carpenters, 3 blacksmiths (2 named Towt in the village) and 2 dressmakers. The Bell Inn still exists, the innkeeper, John Avery, described as 'beer seller'. William Searle (?at Higher Living) farms 100 acres. At Chaffcombe there are three farms: Eppeltons, Courtenays and Chaffcombe and two other houses. Daniel Hammacott is now farming 67 acres at Courtenays (sometimes spelt Courtneys) employing three full-time men, including his brother Richard.

**May** The railway comes to Crediton. It is laid to the 7 ft broad gauge as it expects to be leased by the Bristol and Exeter Railway (later the Great Western Railway)

**1851** Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace.

**1852**

**2 February** After £50,000 capital has been raised locally, the Hon Newton Fellowes (later Lord Portsmouth) cuts the first sod at Great Meadow, Copplestone, to mark the start of construction of the North Devon railway. This is the site of the heaviest engineering work on the line, a deep cutting through the village. It is also the highest point on the line between Exeter and Barnstaple. Five hundred people watch the ceremony as two bands play. Mrs Mary Tucker, of the Copplestone Cross Inn, lays on dinner. The eminent railway contractor Thomas Brassey will employ more than a thousand men, 195 horses and a locomotive on the work at one stage, and many of the construction materials arrive along the Exeter and Crediton line. The owner of much land in Down St Mary parish needed for construction, Henry Charles Sturt, supports the project and the chairman of the railway company promises him a small station near the Sturt Arms (now Morchar Road station). Newton Fellowes insists that every train stops at Eggesford as part of the price of getting his land.

**8 June** Birth of William Henry Bushell.

**1853** September 10 Henry Gerard Sturt, described as a 'genial and witty man' and heir to much of the land in Down St Mary, marries Lady Augusta, eldest daughter of George Charles Bingham, third Earl of Lucan. They will have one son and five daughters.

**1854**

During the Crimean War Florence Nightingale pioneers modern nursing methods.

**1 August** After delays due to landslips at Copplestone and repeated flooding, the North Devon railway opens through Copplestone and Morchar Road, along the Taw valley (now the Tarka line) to Barnstaple. This is presumably the opening date of Copplestone station. Here they install a public telegraph office at the station, also a signal box and a goods yard; and here the double track becomes a single line to North Devon. The line is later taken over by the London and South Western Railway and is relaid to mixed gauge in which state it will remain until 1892. This is 7ft combined with 4ft 8".

**1855** Torrington turnpike trustees take the inhabitants of Down St Mary to court for not maintaining Yeo Bridge on the road between Morchar Road and Winkleigh (the bridge will be rebuilt around 1900).

**1856**

Down St Mary church vestry meeting decides to reslate the remainder of the church roof.

Down St Mary landowner Henry Gerard Sturt is elected Conservative MP for the county of Dorset.

**1857** Billings Directory of Devon lists John and Joseph Cheriton as farmers at 'Braddeford' as well as Cheritons farming at Hellicombe, Bartonbury and Middle Down.

Robert May farms at Middle Lamacott and Roger May at Higher Summacott. Thomas Moon farms at Eppleton and Thomas Moon, junior, at Brassett's (sic). William Searle farms at Higher Living and William Wreford at Higher Thorn. Richard Slee is shopkeeper and Ann Tawt (sic) is listed as blacksmith.

### **1858**

Down St Mary church clock is no longer in working order.

Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace announce the theory of evolution of species by natural selection.

### **1860**

8 year-old William Bushell becomes a chorister in Down St Mary church choir.

Benjamin Tucker Radford leases Bradiford to Richard and William Cheriton, 242 acres at a rent of £320 a year. Terms of the lease include: the Cheritons must keep in repair the cider press, the thatch and replace trees in the orchard as necessary. They must provide 150 nitches of good thatching reed every year and carry them anywhere in the parish of Down St Mary.

Exeter has dropped to 40<sup>th</sup> in size among provincial towns.

**1861** Prince Albert dies of typhoid. One of the Secretaries for the Great Exhibition (which Albert has directed) and a Devon MP, Sir Stafford Northcote, proposes a memorial to Albert should be established in Exeter. An appeal for funds is launched and a meeting the following year creates the blueprint for the Devon and Exeter Albert Memorial Institution. It is to be a new building on Queen Street housing a museum and art gallery, a free public library, a school of art and a college. The Royal Albert Memorial Museum will be built in Queen Street in 1865-6 and open in 1868. After major redevelopment the museum it will reopen on 15 December 2011.

**1860s** Two unmarried sisters, Jane and Anne Madge from Copplestone House, build Endfield House as a school at the bottom of Beers Hill. They continue to support their 'dame school' until it closes in 1888 and a board school opens at Shirley Corner, Copplestone.

### **1862**

Sturt Cottages built

Richard and Maria Wright move from Colebrooke and take the tenancy of the 27 acre smallholding of Barn Shelley (also known as Barn Farm or Barns Hill). They will have eight children including Henry who will much later will buy Wolfen and James who will be grandfather to Tom, Maurice and Ralph. Richard's son Edwin will buy Barn Shelley in 1918.

Devon copper production reaches a peak then falls away.

**1863** The oldest underground railway in the world opens in London, the first section of which are now the Circle and Hammersmith and City lines and part of the Metropolitan line. The system will go electric in 1890.

### **1865**

Approximate date at which the East Window is installed in Down St Mary church in memory of various members of the Radford family at a cost of £100.

**1 November** From Coleford Junction a double track railway line is extended to Bow and North Tawton. It will reach Belstone Corner (later Sampford Courtenay) station in 1867, Okehampton in

October 1871, Lydford in 1874 (involved building the Meldon viaduct) Tavistock in 1876 and Devonport by 1890 via Bere Alston.

## 1868

Benjamin Disraeli (Tory) becomes Prime Minister for the first time, but at a General Election the same year, William Gladstone (Liberal) takes over. The TUC is formed in the same year.

**5 May** John Hammacott, aged 21, son of Daniel, records in his personal memorandum, that his father is run over by a cart and breaks two ribs. John has probably learned to write at Samuel Bushell's voluntary school in the Coach House, Down St Mary. John's brother William probably went to the same school and possessed a large collection of handwritten sermons. The voluntary school will be replaced the following year by the purpose built school (now the village hall).

**16 May** John Hammacott records that his father is able to come downstairs following his accident and a week later that his father is 'getting round nicely'.

## 1868

**8 June** During a very hot spell of weather, John Hammacott sells a fat bullock at Down St Mary fair for £26.

**21 June** John Hammacott records the first shower of rain since April 28. The hot weather will continue until the middle of September.

Mary Hammacott, John's aunt, dies in Exeter hospital and will be buried in Down St Mary churchward on October 4.

**1868-9** A school, now village hall, is built by the Revd. WTA Radford on the site of the old Bell Inn. The Bell Inn was part of the former 'church house', something between pub and parish hall. The school opens for pupils in 1869.

## 1870

The Elementary Education Act, *Forster's Education Act*, sets the framework for compulsory schooling of all children between ages 5 and 12 in England and Wales. Exeter School Board is set up under the Act.

Revd. WTA Radford builds a row of gothic style cottages in the village as a curiosity. Nikolaus Pevsner later refers to evidence of 'Victorian Gothic' activity in the village and comments on 'a group of three cottages with bands of sgraffito decoration' – the houses currently known as Wisteria Cottage, St George's and the Old Post Office. Mr Radford's cottages replace earlier dwellings in the same site.

**1872** Twenty-year old William Bushell becomes church organist, a post he will hold for the next sixty years.

**1873** The two North Aisle windows are installed in the church at a cost of £135 each in memory of Emily Radford, the Rector's wife. They are the work of Alfred Bell.

**1874** Lucy Slee is the first teacher at Down St Mary school whose name survives in records. The first school log book does not survive.

**1874-1879** The north aisle walls of Down St Mary church are demolished and rebuilt as are the sanctuary, the Lady Chapel, much of the south wall and porch. The font is repositioned. The lectern is carved at the expense of Mrs Thain, the rector's sister, as a memorial to her husband and some deceased children. Mrs Thain also presents the east window of the north chancel to the church at a cost of £100. The sixteenth century pews are restored and refixed. The organ is installed. Apart from gifts, the work is funded by the rector, the Revd. WTA Radford at a cost of approximately £3000. The

Lady Chapel is dedicated to the memory the Rector's wife. J F Gould designs the new brass and iron pulpit in collaboration with WTA Radford. Nikolaus Pevsner later (1952) describes the result of the restoration as 'one of the richest Victorian ensembles in rural Devon'.

## 1876

**15 January** Henry Gerard Sturt, Lord of the Manor of Down St Mary, is elevated to the peerage, taking the title Alington. He is privy to the details of Lord and Lady Ayelesford's separation and is party to what Queen Victoria considers an 'unpardonable' approach to the Princess of Wales by Lord Randolph Churchil who wishes to pressurise the Prince of Wales into preventing Lord Aylesford from seeking a divorce.

William Blackmore, previously from Watcombe, Morchard Bishop, buys the lease on the Sturt Arms (now Devonshire Dumpling) and adjoining slaughterhouse from Mary Ann Partridge. William's daughter Alice (who will become Alice Gunn) is three. She will attend Down St Mary school. Her older brother Albert will run the slaughterhouse at the back of the pub, sending carcasses to London by rail.

## 1876

Rev William Radford, Down St Mary rector who owns Bradiford farm, erects large stone granary barns.

Creation of diocese of Truro substantially reduces the size of the diocese of Exeter.

**1877** Queen Victoria is proclaimed Empress of India

## 1878

Harrod's Royal County Directory of Devonshire describes the living at Down St Mary as 'a rectory, annual value £260, with residence and 50 acres of glebe land in the gift and incumbency of the Rev. WTA Radford MA'. It says that there is a national school for boys and girls and a fair is held on the Monday after the second Wednesday in June. The acreage is 2165 of which the chief owners are Lord Alington (lord of the manor) and the rector. Population is about 430. The list of inhabitants includes: Rev. James Bedford Poulder, MA, curate; William Blackmore at the Sturt Arms and is grocer; James Brookland, bootmaker; Zachariah Bushell, carpenter; William Cann, miller; William Dunn at the Union Inn; William Glandville, baker; Robert Horwill, carpenter and assistant overseer; Richard May, cattle dealer; William Slee, bootmaker; George Towt, blacksmith; and Henry Webber, brick, tile and coal merchant. Farmers include Burrows, Cheritons including William Cheriton at Bradiford, and Richard and Robert May (Robert May is also described as a landowner).

Electric street lighting is introduced in London and the first British telephone company is established following Alexander Graham Bell's invention two years earlier. London's first telephone exchange will open the following year.

## 1879

Zachariah and his son William Henry Bushell begin to rebuild the medieval Rood screen in Down St Mary church using locally grown oak. They have been planning the work for several years. The job takes them two years. John Stabb, in a book on Devon churches (1908) will say that the screen was one of the first in Devon to be restored in the nineteenth century. 'Taken as a whole the screen compares favourably with any in Devonshire'.

**28 December** The Tay Bridge collapses in a gale with a train passing over it. There are 60 known victims, but only 46 bodies are found, two of which will not be recovered until February 1880.

**1882** A group of six Benedictine monks, exiled from France, settle at Buckfast Abbey which once held the manor of Down St Mary, and eventually set about rebuilding the Abbey. They will complete the work in 30 years.

**1884** On the winding up of the Turnpike Trust, Copplestone Toll House is sold to Thomas Moon of Chaffcombe for £100, £20 more than it had cost to build it in 1830.

## **1885**

**28 March** Percival Charles Radford dies suddenly, aged 22.

**10 December** Alice Blackmore (to become Alice Gunn of the Sturt Arms and Woolsgrove and still later Ashbrook) is confirmed in Down St Mary church. She will retain a strong Christian faith all her life (dying at the age of 96), daily reading passages from the Bible and her Prayer Book.

## **1886**

**27 January** Town Court (previously known as Middle Down) is auctioned at the Union Inn, Morchard Road.

The 'four light' window adjacent to the pulpit is installed in Down St Mary church in memory of the Radford family. It depicts four miracles relating to the resurrection. In the same year the 'three light' window is installed in the Lady Chapel in memory of the Thain family at a cost of £100.

## **1887**

Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee

The timetable shows seven trains from Copplestone to Barnstaple and six to Exeter. The morning mail and newspaper train arrives at Copplestone at 3.59 am.

## **1888**

**January** Board School opens at Shirley Corner, Copplestone. Chairman of the board is General Sir Redvers Buller, VC, of Downes who, a decade later, will shortly relieve British soldiers under siege at Ladysmith in the Second Boer War.

Jubilee Terrace, Copplestone, is built for William Pope of Copplestone House.

The brickyard in Morchard Road closes as a commercial concern. 28-year-old Walter Howard and his wife Hannah move into the cottage later owned by his grandson Frank.

George Towt marries

**6 August** John Tucker marries Martha (daughter of George and Ann) Towt in the church.

**5 November** The present Copplestone Methodist Church (Ebenezer Chapel) opens. The first Ebenezer Chapel across the road continues to be used as a Sunday School room. The new chapel (still Bible Christian in 1881) is built in Bewsley stone from a small quarry just north of the village – a gift from Jane and Annie Madge of Copplestone House. The stone has been carted to the church free of charge by local farmers. Preachers at the opening ceremony are the Rev. W.J. Trengrove and W. Treffry.

## **1889**

**Early summer** Ernest Bevin, aged eight, arrives in Morchard Bishop and attends the primary school.

**October** George and Mary Pope (Bevin's elder half-sister) move to Tiddly-Winks (now Lee Mount), Copplestone, and Ernest attends Sunday School in the newly-built Ebenezer Chapel and Colebrooke's board school on week days. Bill Steer, Copplestone postman and great uncle of the author of this timeline, will live in Lee Mount in the 1940s and 50s.

## 1890

**8 August** Ernest Bevin leaves Colebrooke school and attends Hayward's School in Crediton until 1892.

The twin light 'Jesse Window' is installed in the west wall (north aisle) of Down St Mary church. It is by Alfred Bell and is a memorial to the Thain family.

London Underground becomes the first system in the world to operate electric trains. In the same year, the water-operated cliff railway between Lynton and Lynmouth opens.

**1891** The census shows:

Robert and Susan May farming at Merrifield

Christian and Ann Dunn farming at 'Bartonberry Farm'

two families, the Partridges and Woodmans, at Higher Thorn

ten year-old Ernest Bevin living with his half-sister Mary Pope and her husband George at 'Bassets'

Blackmores living at the Sturt Arms and Mortimers at the Union Inn

Walter (31) and Hannah (32) Howard living at Brickyard Cottage, Morchard Road, with their six children

Leach and Tucker families living at Little Bradiford and the Pearce family living at Great Bradiford with two servants

62 year-old William Cheriton at Ellicombe with his three children aged from 29 to 41 and one servant George and Ann Tout (sic) living in the village with four children

32 year-old Joseph Cheriton at Higher Living with his wife, Emma, and their four children and two servants

72 year-old Revd. WTA Radford living with his son and three servants at 'Parsonage House'

35 year-old William Cheriton living at Middle Yeo with his wife, sister, four children and a servant.

The same census shows an inspector, a station master, two signalmen, two porters and a platelayer attached to Morchard Road station.

Henry Cheriton is born at Higher Living.

**1892** Fanny Hammacott, daughter of Richard and now married to Thomas Ward, inherits the tenancy of Courtneys farm. Fanny will leave Courtneys to Theophilus Bolt, great grandson of James Bolt. Theophilus will remove the thatch, tile the roof, and sell the place to Reuben Roberts.

**1890s** The water-wheel stops turning at (what is now named) The Old Mill. John Bibbings Cann (he and his father William Cann have been millers at the mill through much of the nineteenth century) move into Sturt Cottages.

## 1892

**10 February** Following the death of his first wife, Down St Mary landowner Henry Gerard Sturt marries Evelyn Henrietta, daughter of Henry Blundell Leigh.

William Gladstone (Liberal) forms his last government, aged 80.

**March** Ernest Bevin begins work as a farm boy at Chaffcombe, ten hours a day for a wage of sixpence a week. In the evenings he reads out items of news and leading articles from the Bristol papers while the family sits round the fire in the farm-kitchen.

**Winter** Ernest Bevin moves to Beers farm and lives in a room in an outbuilding overlooking the farmyard. William May pays him a shilling a week in addition to his board. Bevin leaves a little over a year later after a quarrel with his employer.

## 1893

Keir Hardie forms an independent Labour Party

**6 April** Joe Cheriton, of Higher Living, leads the Cheriton Otter Hounds hunt from outside the Union Inn along the Knightabrook (Knighty Brook). They have no trail to Braddiford Weir, but on reaching the old ash tree they picked up a scent. After three and half hours, Joe Cheriton tails the otter.

A Devon farm worker typically earns 11s 8d a week. Weekly budget: rent is 1s 4d, bread 4s 2d, cheese 9d, butter 7d, tead 6d, sugar 6d, salt 1d, oil for lighting 4d, soap 3d, soda 2d, coal 7d, clothing club 7d, sundries 3d. Total 11s 7d. Result: happiness.

## 1894

**Spring** Ernest Bevin moves to Bristol and finds regular work as a van driver delivering ginger beer. He later becomes general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union the largest trade union in the world. In May 1940, Winston Churchill appoints him minister of Labour and National Service. When Attlee forms his government in 1945 Bevin becomes Foreign Secretary. He dies in 1951 and is almost certainly the only Cabinet Minister ever to have lived in Down St Mary parish.

Parish Councils are established nationally and one is formed in Down St Mary with Charlie Towt as one of the first members.

## 1895

Birth of Percival Towt to Charlie and Harriet.

First London motor-car exhibition. The following year the Red Flag Act is repealed and the speed limit is raised to 14 mph. Two years later, the first car to enter Exeter, a Benz, will be shown in a circus in Pinhoe road as a special attraction. In 1898 a Daimler will be driven (and pushed) into Exeter by a Mr Sturmeon on his way from Land's End to John o'Groats.

## 1896

Rev WTA Radford dies after 53 years as rector of Down St Mary and restoring the church.

Copplestone postmaster Thomas Edwards issues a gun licence to James Wright so that his 11-year-old son Bert (father of Maurice) can carry out his new job working for William Cheriton at Ellicombe. He has left school and part of his job will be to shoot broken down horses, donkeys and failing stock, butcher them and feed them to the Cheriton Otter Hounds.

Guglielmo Marconi patents a wireless in England.

## 1897

Robert Kestell Kestell-Cornish MA, DD, becomes the new rector of Down St Mary church. He has been the first bishop of Madagascar from 1874-96.

Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee celebrations

Down St Mary churchyard is extended to the west and north on land given by Lord Alington and WTA Radford. The lychgate with its unusual coffin gate is probably erected at this time. The broad, flat wooden top of the revolving gate is designed as a rest for a coffin.

**1 July** Mary Anne Bushell, Zachariah's wife, dies.

Birth of Charles Leonard Towt to Charlie and Harriet

## 1898

A fifteenth century wayside cross, found in a river near Chagford and given to the church by the Revd F Barker from St Olave's, a clergy rest-haven in Chagford, is erected west of Down St Mary church tower.

Burrator Reservoir is built on Dartmoor to solve Plymouth's water problems. It will be increased in size in 1928.

## **1899**

**4 July** The Duke and Duchess of York (soon to be George V and Queen Mary) visit Exeter. The Visitors' Book of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum shows their signatures when they open new buildings which have been added with funds raised in honour of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

The Second Boer War begins including sieges of Kimberley, Ladysmith and Mafeking. Sir Redvers Buller, with the Devon and Dorsets, relieves Ladysmith with Roger Steer's paternal grandfather within.

The first motor-buses operate in London and the first radio transmission is made from England to France.

## **Twentieth century**

### **1900**

The population of Down St Mary is 337.

The Union Inn, Morchard Road, is run by Henry Mortimer who buys Bartonbury.

On his return from South Africa, General Sir Redvers Buller is given a hero's welcome and pupils at Shirley Corner school, Copplestone, of which Sir Redvers is chairman of the board, are given a day off.

Second and third Down St Mary church bells inscribed.

George Towt dies. Charlie and Jack Towt now run the blacksmith business as brothers.

around **1900** Yeo Bridge, on the road between Morchard Road and Winkleigh, is rebuilt. Walter Howard, grandfather of Alf and Frank, dresses the stone for it.

From approx **1900** Lewis Discombe runs the old smithy in Copplestone, across the road from the current car park outside the Nisa shop.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Edwin Bere will erect the building which became Copplestone Stores until 2011.

### **1901**

Queen Victoria dies and is succeeded by her son, Edward VII (to 1910). Marconi sends a radio signal from Cornwall to Newfoundland.

Birth of Joe Towt to Charlie and Harriet.

Mrs Steer, aged 100, photographed in the village.

Alice Blackmore, who moved to the Sturt Arms when she was three and later worked in the bar, marries William John Gunn whom she has met in the pub. William Gunn is a carpenter and wheelwright who also has a contract with the Royal Mail to collect and deliver the post, by pony and trap, between Morchard Road station and the villages of Morchard Bishop, Black Dog, Puddington as

far as Witheridge. William and Alice walk up the hill to Down St Mary to get married and then return to the Sturt Arms to serve at the bar. William and Alice will live for a couple of years at Beech House, Copplestone. Alice Gunn's granddaughter is Pat Dockings.

**1902** The Cheriton Otter Hounds are sold and Bert Wright finds a job with the Drakes at Cheriton Fitzpaine, walking ten miles every Monday morning to get there, staying until the Saturday.

### **1903**

**December** Albert Blackmore (Alice Gunn's older brother) buys two acres in Morchard Road and builds the large brick house, Woolsgrove, and a new slaughterhouse. Alice and Will Gunn return to live at the Sturt Arms with their two children Bert and Ernie. Kath will arrive the following year. Alice Gunn acts as a dentist, giving her patients/customers a 'fair drop to drink' then pulling their teeth out with a pair of pliers.

**1903-1911** Thomas Edwards is chairman of Down St Mary Parish Council. His son, Charles, lives at Chaffcombe Farm, and will chair the council from 1918 to 1931.

### **1904**

**17 February** Down St Mary landowner Henry Gerard Sturt dies at his home, Crichel, near Wimborne, Dorset. In his will he leaves a set of waistcoat buttons to King Edward VII and £100 to Queen Alexandra.

### **1905**

**11 February** Joe Cheriton, of Higher Living, dies, aged 46, apparently after going hunting when he has a cold or touch of flu and catching pneumonia. His funeral (beginning with a procession from Higher Living), conducted by Rev Thomas Woodman, is the largest funeral in Down St Mary since that of Rev WTA Radford, the church restorer and long time rector. He is mourned by his widow, Emma, his sons Cecil and Henry, daughters Evelyn and Minnie, sisters Mary and Mrs Moon. Among the many mourners present are the Wrights from Barn Shelley, Mr Tolley, formerly the Morchard Road station master, Mr Blackmore from the Sturt Arms (now Devonshire Dumpling), the Whites of Merryfield, the Edwards from Copplestone, the Hammacotts from Chaffcombe, Mr Spreadbury from the Yeo Vale Hotel, Lapford, Mr Lindsley, the Coldridge schoolmaster, Mr Coombe from the Railway Hotel, Crediton, Frank Saunders from Rudge Farm, Mr Trick from Braddiford, and Mr W Roach, barman of the Cheriton Otter Hounds.

Emily Edwards, aged 14, arrives at the Sturt Arms, Morchard Bishop, to work as maid/home help. She will live with Will and Alice Gunn until she dies.

### **1906**

William Alfred Davey, from Bondleigh, opens Davey's Mill in Copplestone. It will become, for a while, the biggest outlet in the West Country for BOCM. William's son Percy will take over running of the mill just before the First World War.

Meda Jane Coombe becomes head teacher at the village school and will remain so for 22 years. She lives at No. 3 The Green (now Wind Whistle Cottage).

### **1908**

**30 March** Meda Coombe gives a 6 year old boy the cane on the hand for being impudent to his teacher. The boy's mother, Mrs Drew, comes to the school with the rector, Thomas Woodman, to ask why her son has been 'unduly punished'.

**25 May** The rector at the school gives each scholar at the school an orange in commemoration of Empire Day. Meda Coombe slaps a pupil for telling her a lie.

## 1909

**26 March** William Cheriton dies, aged 81, four years after his son Joe. He is buried in Down St Mary churchyard after a 'riding funeral' at which six of his nephews preceded the coffin on horseback. His unmarried daughter, Mary, will farm at Ellicombe and Wolfin until 1918 when she will move to the Glebe House in the village and continue to work for the church as she has done all her life.

Francis Down (father of Cecil) marries Bessie Russell and moves to Bradiford as a tenant of WTA Radford (son of the former Down St Mary rector). Bradiford is 262 acres, the largest farm in the parish.

**8 November** Meda Coombe records in the school log that 'Mrs Tancock came up this morning and was very abusive. I had occasion last week to send a message to her about her three children – their heads were very dirty indeed. This she denied and said she would take her three children up to Zeal school.'

**9 November** Meda Coombe sends a message to Mrs Tancock to keep two of her children home for a day or so as their faces are badly scabbed. The scholars sing the National Anthem and a couple of national songs in celebration of the King's birthday.

**13 December** Meda Coombe complains to Charles Towt (school manager) that 'Ivy Brawn (Braund) is very dirty and that vermin is crawling over her head. Her sister's attention has been called to attend to it, but no notice seems to have been taken'.

**14 December** Ivy Braund is not at school. Her sister takes her to Crediton to have her hair cut off.

## 1910

**10 January** Ivy Braund returns to school after the Christmas holidays and the log records that 'her head is much better'.

**29 April** An NSPCC inspector calls at the school accompanied by PC Phillips. They visit the Braund home 'in order that (the inspector) may see surroundings'.

**8 June** Meda Jane Coombe records in the school log that 'On Monday afternoon of this week I received an impudent letter from the mother of one of the scholars, after having had occasion to tell the lad, Tommy Cann, that he was looking dirty: *Madam You said Tommy was dirty this morning which I can say is a lie as I wash him myself. You have been on a little bit too much lately so please mind your own business in future ... I shall send Tommy to Copplestone School tomorrow. I am not going to be upset by you every day Yours truly E Drew.*

Mrs Coombe records in the log that '(Mrs Cann) sent him to Copplestone. The school was close on account of an epidemic among the scholars, and he came here again on Wednesday.'

Edward VII dies and is succeeded by George V (to 1936)

## 1911

WTA Radford junior of 'Braddiford, Morchard Bishop', who has inherited them from his father, sells cottages 1, 2 and 3 The Green, (1 and 2 The Green now comprise Marylea Cottage and No. 3 is known as Wind Whistle Cottage).

**28 July** Joseph Towt (Madeleine Bullock's father) has a bicycle accident. His face is so disfigured that he does not go to school for a week. The following year he receives an honourable mention at school for Scripture.

## 1912

**11 January** Zachariah Bushell dies aged 87.

Zachariah's son William, who has already been organist for 40 years becomes, in addition, church warden and holds the post for another 35 years.

Cecil Down (son of Francis) is born. His is christened in Down St Mary church by the Rev Thomas Courtenay He will grow up at Bradiford, the largest farm in the parish of Down St Mary.

**24 May** Empire Day The school scholars march through Down St Mary village singing the song 'Flag of Britain', salute the flag, sing the National Anthem, are given sweet-meats and cakes by Mr Oldfield and then given a half holiday.

Head teacher at the village school is still Mrs Coombe. Her assistant is Polly Bradford. Pupils at the school include Marjorie and Dorothy Wright, Ernie, Kath and Bert Gunn, Sid Turner, Joe Towt (father of Madeleine Bullock), Fred Tonkins, Hannah and Katie Howard.

James Wright is elected to Down St Mary Parish Council, after his father James steps down.

**1913**

Ann Towt, mother of Charlie, Jack and at least nine other children dies, aged 89.

Betty Howard born.

**1914**

**28 June** A Yugoslav nationalist assassinates the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. This results in a Habsburg ultimatum against the Kingdom of Serbia. Several alliances formed over the previous decades are invoked, so within weeks the major powers are at war. Via these countries' colonies, the conflict soon spreads around the world and the first world war begins.

**1915**

Zeppelin airships raid London.

Birth of Arch to newly married Sid and Frances Howard in 1 The Green (the eastern half of present Marylea Cottage). Sid is the son of Walter Howard. While Sid is in France at the end of the war, Frances will take up the job of cleaning Down St Mary church and will continue to do this for nearly 50 years. Sid will become church sexton, digging graves, keeping the churchyard tidy, stoking the church boiler and 'blowing' the organ.

WTA Radford (son of the former rector of Down St Mary) dies.

**1916**

The *Western Times* reports: 'William Cheriton, 76, an old age pensioner formerly of Nymet Rowland was brought up on a charge of sleeping out at Sandford Ash on 11 January. PC Holloway said that for some time past he had received complaints about the defendant, and he found him in an outhouse belonging to Mr Edwards of Copplestone. After some discussion the bench decided to give him a chance to amend his ways and not go sleeping out ...'

Cecil Cheriton's sister Minnie, a 'brilliant young teacher', dies of TB.

The Union Inn is closed for being a 'bad house'. Landlady is Mary Jane Mortimer ('Granny Mortimer') who has a reputation for drinking heavily. Mary is the daughter of William Dunn who ran the pub for many years. The Union Inn belonged to the rector of Down St Mary, the Rev WTA Radford, though in

its last 20 years it is owned by Radford's son and later by his son's widow. William Dunn and Thomas Mortimer farm the glebe land as well as running the pub. In the days before mains water, most people at Morchard Road get their water from the pump outside the Union Inn, now Jasmine House. Granny Mortimer will end her days in the workhouse in Exeter.

Ena Bicknell (daughter of Harry and Ann, granddaughter of Mary Mortimer) is a child at Bartonbury at this time and remembers the high-backed curved wooden settee by the smoky fire in the old kitchen. Her father, Harry, shoots the rooks at Bradiford. After the war, Harry Mortimer will buy Bartonbury farm from Mary Radford. The mortgage is not paid off until after his death in 1935.

**29 April** Charles Leonard Towt, a private in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Devon regiment, dies, aged 18, as a result of wounds received in battle in Mesopotamia.

**24 May** Empire Day The school pupils parade through Down St Mary village and some adjoining farms as usual. They sing patriotic songs. Two girls in fancy dress make a house to house collection to get funds to provide some comforts for the boys who are serving King and Country and who are formerly school pupils.

**1 July** First Battle of the Somme. The British Army suffers the worst day in its history, with nearly 60,000 casualties. Tanks are used for the first time. Germans shell the English coast.

Lloyd George becomes Prime Minister.

## 1917

Bert Wright buys the former Union Inn and its associated buildings from Mary Radford, widowed daughter-in-law of Rev WTA Radford.

Tom Wright born, son of Bert and Flo.

US declares war on Germany. The Royal family adopts the name of Windsor and drops all German names and titles. Balfour Declaration: Britain promises Palestine home for Jews. British capture Jerusalem.

## 1918

**24 September** Before the First World War, Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George has imposed new taxes on landowners in his 'people's budget'. There is now a crisis in confidence brought on by the war, land values continue to be low and crisis measures are called for. Most big landowners sell off a part of their estates. Lord Alington (successor to the Sturts) at an auction conducted by Knight, Frank and Rutley at the Royal Fortesque Hotel, Barnstaple, puts up for sale his Devon estates – 2,630 acres in all of which 1000 acres are in Down St Mary. About half the parish catches the 9.10 train from Morchard Road to Barnstaple to attend the auction.

Henry Wright buys Wolfin (house and 83 acre farm) for £1750. The tenant is Mary Cheriton. Henry and his son Leonard will farm Wolfin for almost 40 years before selling it to John Pike.

Albert Blackmore, whose meat and livestock trading business at Woolsgrove has been doing well, buys Lamacott for £3320. The tenant is John Watts. Blackmore buys this property on behalf of William Cheriton who cannot bid because of a dispute with the Allington estate. Albert demands £100 for William for his trouble: after a serious row they settle for £50.

Thomas Ward buys Higher Living for £3100. The tenant is Henry Cheriton.

Edwin Wright, aged 56, buys the 27 acre small holding of Barn Shelley for £575. He has previously been the tenant. A few months later, Edwin's wife, Kittie, dies aged 40.

Jane Partridge buys Wales (now Oak Tree Farm) for £2500. She has previously been the tenant.

OGF Dunn buys Middle and South Yeo for £2550 The tenants are Thomas and Frank Ward,

Jack Towt buys 1 Sturt Cottages and the wheelwright's shop for £255. He has previously been the tenant.

Jane Partridge buys 2 Sturt Cottages for £215. The tenant is Sid Howard.

Mrs Pugsley buys 3, 5 and 6 Sturt Cottages for £660. The tenants are Charles Towt, Charles Bishop and Henry Webber.

J and S Searle of Bow buy Ellicombe and North Yeo for £5000. The tenant is Mary Cheriton. Ellicombe includes Brickyard Cottages.

A few days before the Armistice, Cecil (son of Joe) Cheriton dies, aged 35, from the deadly Spanish flu epidemic of that year. He was educated at Crediton Grammar School and (it seems) Blundells School, Tiverton before moving to London. Cecil's son Joe and Phyllis will go to live with their uncle, Henry Cheriton, at Lamacott. Their sister Betty will move to Plymouth and adopt the name Cherry. She will become a successful playwright and college lecturer (with progressive views and social concerns) and marry George Vooght. Cecil's sister Evelyn marries Cyril Edwards of Copplestone and is described as 'tall and beautiful ... blonde ... with blue eyes'.

**11 November** Armistice with Germany.

Charles Edwards, of Chaffcombe Farm, son of Thomas, takes over as chairman of Down St Mary Council until 1931. Charles's younger brother Cyril farms at Dulings. Until the 1880s, Dulings was a pub, the Copplestone Inn. Cyril is a short thick-set man with a strong character who marries the beautiful Evelyn Cheriton from Higher Living. Cyril will be succeeded by Edgar Edwards, father of the current Charles Edwards of Dulings.

**1919**

**17 January** Marjorie, Aubrey and Gladys Wright are absent from school for a week following the death of their mother.

**June** Alcock and Brown make the first non-stop transatlantic flight

Alf Howard born

Alice Gunn's mother dies. Alice and Will move from the Sturt Arms to Woolsgrove, taking Emily Edwards with them. Will's younger brother Joe, a former policeman with the 'Met' in London, takes over the Sturt Arms. Joe's father has run the Hare and Hounds at Witheridge and other relations have run the Black Dog. Joe is married to Alice Tucker of Slade Farm. Joe also sells petrol and oil from a pump on the corner of the Sturt Arms. Joe has a coal business at the back of the pub employing Jimmy Harris who lives at the brickyard. The long building at the side of the pub will later become a rifle range.

**1 December** Lady Astor (Tory) takes her seat as MP for Plymouth Sutton, the first woman MP.

**1920**

Ralph Wright (son of Bert) born at the former Union Inn, Morchard Road. During the 1930s he will work as Rev John Milford's gardener and chauffeur. After the war he will become a builder, working first at Joe Towt's yard and then on his own. He will do much work for the council and also for Down St Mary church (often without mentioning it to anyone and humming hymns as he works). He will be a church bell ringer with his brother Tom.

Irish Republican Army (IRA) begins a guerrilla war.

**1920s**

Bert Wright sells the former Union Inn, now Jasmine House, to Alfred White of Hemyock and its outbuildings become an egg-packaging station, employing more than a dozen people, until it closes in 1968.

Sid and Frances Howard move from 1 The Green to Stopgate on the Winkleigh road. They will spend many hours walking up the hill from Yeo Bridge to the church.

John Ridd (Edie Southwood's father) from north Devon buys Sharphay farm, then 72 acres.

Cecil Down regularly walks cattle from Bradiford farm to Coplestone market.

A man named Olding, from Allerbridge, calls every week at Bradiford with a pony and trap and buys eggs and butter from Cecil Down's mother to sell at Exeter market.

Bertie Lee, from Town Court, is church warden. William Henry Bushell is also warden and will continue in the job for 35 years.

## **1921**

Drought. Only the Town Field well still yields water. The pump and trough have since been moved and stand next to the bus shelter.

Francis Down buys Bradiford from the widow of WTA Radford junior.

**8 April** Eclipse of the sun. The children assemble on Down St Mary village green, with smoked glass, and watch.

**15 July** An aeroplane flies low over the school. Head teacher Meda Coombe lets the children out 'for a few minutes' to watch it.

## **1922**

**15 February** Head teacher Meda Coombe has a bad bilious attack but still comes to school. She records in the school log that the pupils 'seeing how ill I was, were very good indeed and carried on their work very well'.

BBC founded.

Henry William Armstrong becomes rector of Down St Mary church (until 1933).

Dr Herbert Rowse Bastard arrives at Bow and will look after many Down St Mary patients until his death in 1954.

## **1923**

**24 April** Mrs Armstrong, wife of the new rector, calls at the school and invites all the pupils to the rectory to tea and games on Thursday afternoon to mark the marriage of the Duke of York.

Stanley Baldwin becomes Prime Minister.

Frank Howard born.

Frank Shapland buys Shobrooke.

Thomas Ward marries Fanny Hammacott. They will farm Courtneys.

**23 November** The school nurse visits. She finds that 8 out of 28 pupils present are not clean. She cautions them and requests that every child should have a tooth brush which can be obtained from the Education offices for 5 pence.

## **1924**

**January** Ramsay Macdonald becomes Prime Minister of the first Labour Government, but at a General Election 8 months later a Conservative Government is returned.

Bert Wright (father of Tom and Maurice) sells the former Union Inn to Alfred Wide of Hemyock who starts an egg-packing station which grades eggs and sends eggs and rabbits by train until 1968. The packing station is later run by a family called Hill who are active in the Salvation Army. Since they cannot be seen entering the Sturt Arms across the road, the daughter Elsie goes into the pub by the back door to play with Nell Gunn whose family run it. By the mid-1930s, three drivers will collect eggs from farms. After the war the packing station will employ fifteen or more employees.

Bert Wright buys Barnfield, a holding of 25 acres with a large barn, and converts it into a house where he and his wife Flo will live for the rest of their lives,

Henry Wright (son of James and brother of Bert) builds a new house, Eppfield, and will live there with his wife Louie and two children, Ella and Leonard. Leonard Wright will become a rather half-hearted farmer. Louie, a redoubtable lady, will live to the age of 98.

**23 July** Mrs Vernon sends a message to the school that her sons have not shirts and that she cannot send them to school.

**22 September** Meda Coombe hears that the Vernons are going to live near Broadclyst.

Meda Jane Coombe is still head teacher at the school. Her son has fought in the war. Mary West is her assistant. Pupils include Sis, Stan and Joe Gunn, Doris Turner, Tom, Sylvia and Zena Wright, Fred Marlow, Freda and Arch Tonkins, Betty Down, Doris Harris and Sid Smith.

Charles and Mary Edwards leave Chaffcombe after 15 or more years. Percival Luxton buys Chaffcombe Farm becoming the first owner-occupier for at least 250 years.

## 1925

**26 April** Frank Howard born in Down St Mary – a brother for Alf born 15 June 1919. They live their early years in 1 The Green (now part of Marylea Cottage) next to the village hall, before moving to Stopgate to the west of Yeo Bridge on the Winkleigh Road.

Charlie Towl, blacksmith, dies, aged 69, after 31 years' service on Down St Mary parish council, acting as manager of the school and local correspondent of the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*. The Revd Henry Armstrong conducts his funeral and a muffled peal is wrung on the church bells. Charlie's brother Jack will serve for a further fifteen years. In 2012 Julie Giles-Bullock (Charlie's great grand-daughter) is chairman of the parish council.

## 1926

**26 January** In his laboratory in Soho, London, John Logie Baird demonstrates a television system that can broadcast live moving images. In Down St Mary they think that such new-fangled devices will never catch on.

**21 April** Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor born at 17 Bruton Street in Mayfair, London. No one immediately thinks she will become Queen since her father isn't the oldest son of King George V. No one guesses she will live to become the second longest serving monarch in our history – probably going on to be the longest.

On this date in future, Frank Howard is told: 'It's Princess Elizabeth's birthday so yours must be in five days!' Many years later, Frank will carve a garden seat from Devon oak and present it to Queen Elizabeth at her Silver Jubilee.

**4 May** A general strike lasts for nine days.

## 1927

Joe Towt marries Ellen (Nell) Knapman, a schoolteacher at Down St Mary and Lapford schools. Her aunt is Bessie Brookland, from whom in the 1930s she will take over the village shop and open the post office. Joe and Nell have one daughter, Madeleine (now) Bullock. Joe will captain Down St Mary bell-ringers for many years.

**27 July** Maurice Wright (son of Bert) born at Barnfield.

Walter Howard (father to Sid, and grandfather to Alf and Frank) dies. Twelve coffin-bearers (rather than the usual six) are required to carry his body up the hill from Brickyard Cottages to Down St Mary church.

**6 October** The Eggesford Hounds meet on the village green. Since the weather is fine, and a meet is rare in the village, Meda Coombe, who has been head teacher at the school since 1906, allows the children out of school to watch. Meda is a strict but fair head and has a wry sense of humour.

## 1928

**22 February** Head teacher Meda Coombe is very proud when a Diocesan report on religious instruction at the school reports: 'There was an atmosphere of deep reverence in this school... The children entered into the spirit of the work with quiet enthusiasm, and it is evident that they have been trained in sincere and definite lines ... Thanks are due to Mrs Coombe for the many years of devoted service to the general welfare of the children who have passed through her hands.'

**3 September** Alexander Fleming returns to his laboratory in St Mary's hospital, London, having spent August on holiday with his family. Before leaving, he has stacked all his cultures of staphylococci on a bench in a corner of his laboratory. On return, he notices that one culture is contaminated with a fungus, and that the colonies of staphylococci that have immediately surrounded it have been destroyed, whereas other colonies farther away are normal. He has discovered penicillin (the name he will give to the mould the following year). Lots of people in Down St Mary, and millions throughout the world, will benefit from this wonderful new substance which Fleming has discovered by chance.

## 1929

**7 November** During dinner hour, a portion of plaster falls from Down St Mary school ceiling (now the village hall). Meda Coombe consults the managers who decide to close the school for the rest of the week since the children are in danger.

## Early 1930s

The 1931 census reveals that 310 people live in the parish of Down St Mary.

Ellen Towt, niece of Bessie Brookland, takes over the village shop and will run it for over 20 years.

Sid Howard, assisted by his son Alf, rebuilds the garden wall at Zeal Monachorum rectory, re-using cob from the old wall, mixed with fresh straw. Alf will become famous for building with cob.

Cyril Lattimer and his mother arrive in Down St Mary and build Mardale, the redbrick house between Sharphay and Eppfield, where Toby Newstead now lives and runs his building firm. Cyril is a trapper with a pony and trap. He will send his rabbits, packed in wooden boxes in the guard's van, to Birmingham or London by train from Copplestone station earning about six pence a rabbit.

Henry Cheriton, from a well known Down St Mary family, improves the land at Waterbridge transforming and draining it from a wet, fuzzy and thorny area into good pasture: for this he wins the West of England Grassland Society Cup. The land is now the Waterbridge golf course.

From the 1930s to the 1960s Dan Stevens runs Copplestone slaughterhouse. A meat train every evening takes lamb to Smithfield Market in London from many parts of Devon – Barnstaple, Lapford, Morchard Road and Copplestone.

A third of the village of Coplestone is in the parish of Down St Mary. In 1931 Coplestone Methodist Church celebrates the centenary of Methodism (originally the Methodists in this part of Devon were known as Bible Christians) in the area. Anglican John Madge Pope, from Coplestone House, attends – his first nonconformist service. In his after dinner speech he recalls his mother telling him that the coming of the Methodists to Coplestone improved the morals of the village and that their influence had been remarkable.

### **1932**

A specialist team restores the organ in Down St Mary church to mark a remarkable event: 79-year-old William Bushell has served for 60 years continuously as organist. He will live on in the village for another nineteen years, dying aged 98 in 1951. Sis Gunn (daughter of Joe and Alice Gunn of the Sturt Arms, now the Devonshire Dumpling) takes over as organist. She has been taught the piano by Mary West, assistant teacher in Down St Mary school. Alice's sister, Nell, also plays for the Sunday School and is church organist for a while.

Nell will also play the accordion in Tom Wright and Reg Burrow's Skylark dance band. Joe Gunn junior plays the piano, violin and, later, piano accordion as well as ringing the treble bell in the church. Sis Gunn also helps in the Sturt Arms and will become a driver in the WAAF in the war before marrying and emigrating to Canada.

### **1933**

The 'Martyrs' Memorial Trust' takes over as patrons of Down St Mary church. The Revd John Milford becomes rector after having worked at Wippell's in Exeter to earn enough money to train for the Anglican ministry.

**August** Will Gunn organises a Grand fete at Morchard Road, where Allington Terrace now stands, to raise money for a new treble bell in the church. His first grandchild (now Pat Dockings) is born the same day. Will's efforts are rewarded when they raise a grand total of about £60 towards the cost of installing the new bell.

**18 September** Head teacher Meda Coombe finds that more plaster has fallen from the school ceiling over the weekend.

**6 November** A naughty dog comes into the school porch and gobbles up two children's dinners. The teachers take pity on the children and give each of them half a pound of biscuits.

**20 December** Christmas party at the school. Mrs Snell and helpers provide a delicious tea. After a short concert programme, Mrs Milford and Mrs Searle distribute prizes from the Christmas tree which has been provided by Mr Towt.

### **1934**

**Easter Day** 76 people attend the Revd John Milford's first Easter Communion. The previous year, only 28 people turned up. Ralph, Aubrey and Maurice Wright, Jack Tucker, Henry Shapland, Leslie and Kenneth Clark, Frank Howard, Paul Staddon and Les Vodden sing in Mr Milford's junior choir. Pat Dockings, Jean and Fred Cann are among those who teach in the Sunday School.

### **1935**

The new treble church bell is inscribed after much hard work by Will Gunn and others in raising the money for it. They don't actually hang the bell for another two years.

Will Gunn becomes church warden as will his son Ernie after the war.

Harry Mortimer of Bartonbury dies. His wife Ann will live on with her son Tom and his wife Marjorie until the age of 98.

After being a farm worker for years, Jim Ford begins to rent the Devon County Council farm at Middle Yeo. He pays £66 a year for 44 acres.

At Sandringham, Princess Elizabeth's grandfather, King George V, is a sick man. The First World War has taken a toll on his health, and his heavy smoking has exacerbated recurring breathing problems. He has been suffering from emphysema, bronchitis, chronic obstructive lung disease and pleurisy.

## 1936

**15 January** Evening: King George V takes to his bedroom at Sandringham House complaining of a cold. He will not leave the room alive, becoming gradually weaker, drifting in and out of consciousness.

**20 January** The King is close to death. His doctor, Lord Dawson of Penn, issues a bulletin with words that will become famous: 'The King's life is drawing peacefully to a close.' Later Dawson's private diary, unearthed after his death, will reveal that the King's last words, a mumbled 'God damn you!', are addressed to his nurse when she gives him a sedative that night. Dawson later writes that he hastened the King's end by giving him a lethal injection of cocaine and morphine, both to prevent further strain on the family and so that the King's death can be announced in the morning edition of The Times newspaper. The King dies at 11:55 p.m. His son Edward VIII, Princess Elizabeth's uncle, ascends the throne but only until 10 December.

Back in Down St Mary, William Towt dies. You can see his grave to the left of the path as you enter the church.

Joe Cheriton (son of Cecil) is tragically killed in a motorbike accident.

Tom Wright (son of Bert) forms the Skylark dance band with Reg Burrows playing several times a week. One Saturday night, playing at Lapford, he meets his future wife, 17-year-old Marjorie Benfield.

**11 December** Edward VIII makes a broadcast to Britain and the Empire, explaining his decision to abdicate. He famously says, 'I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as King as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love.'

Edward is succeeded by his younger brother as George VI (who will reign until 1952). It looks now as if the 10 year old Princess Elizabeth will one day become Queen.

Stanley Baldwin retires and Neville Chamberlain becomes Prime Minister.

## 1938

**26 May** A dog causes more trouble at Down St Mary school. The log records that, 'during the dinner hour, Mrs Armstrong's niece sent her dog after the children and that one child was bitten in the arm.' Head teacher Meda Coombe sends a curt note to Mrs Armstrong, widow of the former rector and still living in the village.

**29 September** Chamberlain meets Hitler and, with a policy of appeasement, returns to London claiming to have achieved 'peace for our time'. But sadly, he has not read Hitler correctly and there will be no peace in our time.

Back in Down St Mary, unable to stay at Lamacott following the shock of his nephew's death on his motorbike, Henry Cheriton, now aged 47, and his wife Dorothy move to Clannaborough Rectory. They keep 65 acres of land and let the rest of Lamacott to Reuben Roberts who will stay there for 30 years. Henry Cheriton begins to concentrate on his public life as a grader of livestock, show judge of sheep and the instigator of Bow Young Farmers Club which will later meet at Clannaborough Hall, next to the Rectory.

Unlike some Cheritons, Henry is a man of high morals disapproving of any kind of 'philandering' or alcohol. Henry's mother, Emma, will live at the Rectory with Henry and Dorothy until the age of 100, keeping up with politics and current affairs until a few weeks before she dies.

Arthur and Gladys Tucker take over The Cross Inn at Coppleshone. They are the parents of Mary Rice who will acquire the licence in the 1980s and run the pub with her husband Sid until 2001. Sid will also run a petrol filling station and workshop on the site of the current Nisa Shop and car park. Prior to 1938 the Cross Inn was run by several landlords including WJ Milford, father of Bill Milford the butcher. During the Second World War, Bill Milford's wife Olive will become the local chimney sweep for 20 years travelling around in an Austin Seven with her brushes tied in a neat bundle in the back. In the 1930s she runs the Coppleshone Ladies' Cricket team, playing in the field on the site of the present Coppleshone Primary School.

Francis Down (father of Cecil) builds a bungalow at Bradfield, keeping 36 acres of Bradiford as a small holding. He lets the remainder to Cyril Tucker.

**23 November** More trouble for poor Meda Coombe: a very high wind blows and, since the school ceiling has many bad cracks, head teacher Meda consults the school manager William Bushell. A telephone has been installed in the school and they ring the education office. The local authority staff order the school to be closed. While they are on the phone a piece of plaster falls on Meda Coombe's table. She records in the school log: 'Luckily no one was hit.'

Devon County Council builds Allington Terrace, Morchard Road. The first occupants are from the condemned Brickyard Cottages. The spelling of the terrace is odd since it is named after landowner Lord Alington (Lords of the Manor of Down St Mary, the Alingtons, were Sturts before their elevation to the peerage back in 1876).

## 1939

Popular church rector, the Revd John Milford, dies from cancer. An oak tower screen is erected in the church as a memorial to him.

A photograph is taken of the Down St Mary bellringers with Joe Towt as captain, France Andrews, Joe Gunn, Harry Dockings, Tom and Ralph Wright and Tom Mortimer.

**3 August** Partly but not entirely because of the state of the ceiling, the school (located in the current village hall) closes and the children are transferred in the first instance not to Coppleshone but to Bow.

## The Second World War

**1 September 1939** Germany invades Poland. Britain and France declare war on Germany two days later.

## 1940

**29 March**, Alf Howard, serving with the British Expeditionary Force in France, is one of the last six soldiers to be evacuated from Dunkirk in a small boat to Margate. Joe Gunn, from the Sturt Arms, is also evacuated from Dunkirk.

Alf Howard is sent by train to Yelverton. When he realises he is back in Devon he makes his way home. His mother has had a telegram from the War Office: '*regret to inform you that your son Alfred is reported missing*'. Alf will never forget his mother's face when she answers his knock at the door!

**10 May** Clement Attlee confirms that the Labour party will no longer serve under Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. Chamberlain goes to Buckingham Palace to resign and advises the King to send for Winston Churchill.

Three days later, Churchill tells his Cabinet and the House of Commons: 'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.' Churchill comments privately to General Ismay: 'Poor people, poor people. They trust me, and I can give them nothing but disaster for quite a long time.' The Battle of Britain and the Blitz follow.

Ralph Wright, from Down St Mary, serves as a radar operator with 505 Squadron during the Battle of Britain.

While Alf Howard is on coastal defence at Dover during the Battle of Britain, he meets his future wife, Betty. Betty's father's second wife is Bessie Howard, Alf's aunt.

John Pope, of Down St Mary, is a Lt Colonel in the Royal Artillery throughout the war and fights in India and Burma.

Margery Wright joins the Civil Nursing Reserve from Lapford and does hospital service throughout the war in Newquay, Falmouth and Bideford.

During the war Gilbert and Edie Southwood take over the 72 acre Sharphay farm from John Ridd, Edie's father. By 2002, John Southwood will increase the acreage to 120 acres.

## **1941**

Joe Gunn, of the Sturt Arms, (having been evacuated from Dunkirk) transfers to the RAF and becomes a fighter pilot flying Spitfires in 1435 Squadron Central Mediterranean Forces during the defence of Malta and in the Italian campaign.

Cyril Lattimer, from Mardale, serves in 27 Battalion in the Netherlands, Germany, Ceylon and India. He is torpedoed and sunk on *HMTS Anslow* but survives.

Peter Knight and his family are evacuated to Devon and rent 2 Wisteria Cottages from Joe Towt. Joe is now the local carpenter and builder who also runs the smithy at the village crossroads. Joe's wife runs the village shop. Their daughter is Madeleine Bullock.

Throughout the war there is no electricity in the village. Lighting is by oil lamp. The Knight family toilet is in a shed down the road. They fetch water with a bucket and frame from the village well by Bushell cottages. Mrs Armstrong, the widow of the former parish rector, still lives in the village and takes Peter Knight on nature rambles through the woods. At Christmas Mrs Armstrong throws parties with a tree and presents. She gives Peter books which he will still treasure many years later.

The Japanese attack Pearl Harbour and the United States is brought into the war. Alf Howard serves in Algiers with the 1<sup>st</sup> Army and fights his way to Tunis to link with the 8<sup>th</sup> Army. He fights with the 8<sup>th</sup> Army as a sergeant and lands in Sicily seeing fighting at Monte Cassino and making his way through northern Italy to Austria.

## **1942**

Exeter is bombed by the German Luftwaffe when a total of 18 raids between 1940 and 1942 flatten much of the city centre. As part of the Baedeker Blitz and specifically in response to the RAF bombing of Lübeck, forty acres of the city, particularly the High Street and the old Bedford Circus and Southernhay areas are levelled by incendiary bombing. The cathedral is damaged.

Kath Gunn (daughter of Will and Alice, sister to Bert and Ernie), and married to Jim Riddick, is very religious like her mother. She leads prayers during Exeter bombing raids.

## **1943**

**14 January** Winston Churchill and President Roosevelt meet in Casablanca, Morocco, along with the Combined Chiefs of Staff, to discuss strategy and study the next phase of the war.

Life carries on as normally as possible in mid-Devon. Ella Wright (daughter of Henry, granddaughter of James) marries Harold Williams (1943). Harold runs a transport business at Eppfield Yard. Ella will be organist at Copplestone Methodist Church for half a century and, on her death in 1998, will become a generous benefactor to Copplestone Methodist Church, Down St Mary Church (where she is buried) and the Centre for Christ, Burstone Manor, Bow.

## 1944

**15 November** Two Halifax bombers collide above Morchard Bishop and 13 airmen are killed.

## 1945

**7 May** Germany surrenders marking the end of the war in Europe.

**6 August** An American B-29 bomber drops the world's first atom bombs over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki killing approximately 200,000 people. A few days later Japan surrenders and the second world war ends.

### After the war

With Britain at peace again after six years of war, Tom Wright marries Margery Benfield who was originally from Ealing, London. They go on to have two daughters Carol and Heather. Margery will become secretary of the first Down St Mary Women's Institute and later President.

Joe Towt buys Higher Thorne – the present home of David and Eunice Petherick.

## 1946

Cecil Down (son of Francis) marries Phyllis Wood from Morchard Bishop. Cecil sells Bradiford, the largest farm in the parish, to Colin Rowe's father. Colin leaves school and begins to work on the farm. Employees George Rice and Jack Jennings work from seven in the morning until half past five in the evening, are given half an hour off at ten, and an hour for lunch. Colin and his brother Philip work all the hours they are needed.

**11 November** Great excitement in the area as the now 20-year-old Princess Elizabeth travels through Copplestone. The headmaster of Copplestone school allows the children to abandon their lessons for 20 minutes to watch her go by.

## 1947

Down St Mary church bellringers notice that the bells are not performing as they should. They discover that one corner of the bell frame has dropped, putting the bells out of alignment. One of the beams holding up the frame has rotted due to a combination of deathwatch beetle and rainwater being driven by westerly winds through the porous stone.

Nell Gunn, daughter of Joe and Alice Gunn who run the Sturt Arms (now the Devonshire Dumpling), marries Wilfred Elworthy and moves to Middle Week.

**8 June** William Bushell celebrates his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**20 November** In Westminster Abbey, 21-year-old Princess Elizabeth marries Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The people of Britain can celebrate some good news after the bleak years of war.

**Just before Christmas** Frank Moon dies at Bartonbury, followed by his wife Emma, aged 95, three weeks later. Previously they have lived at Eppletons, Chaffcombe.

## 1948

Alf Howard marries Betty Pearce and will take ownership of Brickyard Cottages, Morchard Road, and restore them to a habitable state.

Following the death of his father, Ralph Page in his teens takes over the running of Middle Yeo farm.

## 1949

Builders render Down St Mary church tower to prevent water soaking through the walls and pouring into the belfry. The bells are rehung in a steel frame supported by steel girders

**Saturday 17 September** The Bishop of Exeter, Robert Mortimer, rededicates the church tower and bells after they have been silent for two years and two months. The parish has raised £1,100 to repair the tower. A photograph is taken of the Bishop with Prebendary EV Cox, Revd David Sale (rector), Revd EH Smith, Revd CC Kelway, Tom and Ralph Wright, France (sic) Andrews, Cecil Ward, Ernie and Joe Gunn, Harry Dockings, Tom Mortimer, Bill Browning and Frank Shapland. After the rededication service, lunch is served to 200 people and 400 people took tea in a marquee with sports, skittles and a tug of war. Sixteen teams from all over Devon compete in a bellringing competition.

At an event in the old school room (now the village hall) Doreen Martin and Ralph Wright sing *Now is the Hour*, *Goodnight Irene* and, since the church bells have been rehung, *The Bells of St Mary's*.

Devon historian WG Hoskins speaks about Chaffcombe Farm in a radio broadcast on the BBC's West of England Home Service. He explains that the site dates back to the Domesday Manor of Chaffcombe. Professor Hoskins is interested in the steep approach to the farm with its obvious defensive advantages. He is also interested in Bartonbury and later will write about it on pages 95 to 100 of his book *Devon and its People* (1959).

Edwin Wright dies and his son Aubrey takes over farming Barn Shelley.

## 1950

Thirteen months after taking over the farming of Barn Shelley, Aubrey Wright dies. The house and land pass to Aubrey's sister Marjorie who has married William Browning, an insurance agent. Marjorie's daughter Kitty will marry Desmond Webber and live at Barn Shelley for over 50 years. Marjorie's sister Gladys also lives at Barn Shelley for some years after her marriage to Jim Cann. They have four children, Jean, Walter, Fred and Kathleen.

Down St Mary churchyard is extended to the west and southwest on land given by William Henry Bushell. The extension includes a plot for cremated remains.

## 1951

The census reveals that 337 people live in the parish of Down St Mary.

At a public meeting, parishioners discuss whether Down St Mary village hall, which had been a Church of England school from 1869 to 1939, should now be used as a church hall or a community hall. Sid Howard and Bill Browning lead a campaign to make it a community hall and many parishioners raise money to make this possible.

**2 March** William Henry Bushell (who, with his father Zachariah, rebuilt the church rood screen) dies in his cottage (behind what is now Bushell House), aged 98. He has been a church chorister for 12 years, church warden for 35 years and organist for 60 years. He has made his own coffin 20 years earlier. He has lived through 49 years of the reign of Queen Victoria and the reigns of Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII and George VI.

Hilda Snelling moves from 2 The Green (now the western half of Marylea Cottage) into the cottage where William has lived. Later Hilda will build the brick Bushell House nearer to the road and live there.

**14 April** Ernest Bevin, almost certainly the only Cabinet Minister ever to have lived in the parish of Down St Mary, dies. There is a plaque celebrating his time in the area on Lee Mount, Copplestone, opposite what is now Parnell Lang's yard.

**1952**

### **Princess Elizabeth becomes Queen**

**6 February** Elizabeth returns to Sagana Lodge, Kenya, after a night spent at Treetops Hotel. Word arrives of the death King George VI, the Princess's father. Philip breaks the news to his 25 year-old wife.

The couple fly back to London to be met by a group of Government ministers led by Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The mood is sombre but hopeful that a new Elizabethan age is about to begin.

It takes 16 months to plan the Coronation.

**1953**

**29 May** Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay reach the summit of Mount Everest.

**2 June** The news of the ascent of Everest comes through in time to add a further note of joy to the celebrations when Queen Elizabeth II is crowned monarch in a lavish ceremony steeped in traditions that date back a millennium. A thousand dignitaries and guests attend the coronation at Westminster Abbey, millions listen on radio and for the first time watch the proceedings on live television. After the ceremony, rain-drenched spectators cheer the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, as they pass along a five-mile procession route in a gilded horse-drawn carriage.

Down St Mary celebrates the Coronation with sports including a race around the village.

Bert Lee and Joe Towt sign a conveyance on behalf of the Parish Council to buy the hall for the village at a cost of £975. Electricity is installed.

Down St Mary Women's Institute is founded with 33 members from a wide range of ages. To join, you are charged an annual subscription of 3 shillings and 6 pence (17.5 p). Lilian Ward, Marjorie Browning, Joyce Page, Dorothy Gunn, Mrs J Ridd, Margery Wright, Edith Dockings and Frances Howard form the first committee.

**1954**

Joe Towt dies, aged 53, from emphysema marking the end of many generations of blacksmith business in the village.

Bertie Lee, who has chaired the parish council for 39 years, builds a bungalow for himself and family in Town Court orchard.

Brian and Anne Kaye live at Eppletons before moving to Chaffcombe Farm. Anne is known as 'Freddie' because she is the daughter of radio presenter Freddie Grisewood, who often stays at Eppletons. Roger Steer will broadcast a question to an *Any Questions* panel chaired by Freddie Grisewood at the Great Hall, Exeter University, in November 1964. Brian and Anne Kaye throw the first cocktail parties to arrive in this part of Devon. Brian looks after a herd of Ayrshire cows at Eppletons.

Colin Rowe's father, Fred, now a widower, retires and moves to Bow with his daughter Mary. Colin marries Julie (Fry) in June and his father dies the following November.

Alf Howard builds a piggery for 100 pigs in the old Morchard Road brickyard close to his home. A thousand hens supply Wide's egg-packing station at Union House.

**Christmas** The Women's Institute throws a party with entertainment provided by Tom Wright and Reg Burrows' Skylark Band.

## 1955

Tom Wright (son of Bert) becomes a Down St Mary parish councillor after his father steps down.

Winston Churchill retires and Anthony Eden becomes Prime Minister. Atlee retires as Labour leader and is succeeded by Hugh Gaitskell. The University of Exeter receives its charter.

## 1956

**5 May** John Reginald Jackson becomes rector of Down St Mary church, aged 31, and lives with his mother in the large old rectory. He is an evangelical, introducing men's meetings and becoming involved in the Worlington Bible teaching convention. He becomes well known in evangelical circles in Exeter chairing Scripture Union quizzes. Unmarried when he arrives, he marries towards the end of his time at Down St Mary when he moves to Georgeham in north Devon (1968).

The church choir in Mr Jackson's day has Pam Hoyle, David and Pat Gunn, Tom Wright, Henry Dockings, Marion Page, Rosina Palfrey, Barbara Keenor, Carol Wright, Wendy Tonkins and Evelyn Webber.

## 1957

Sid Howard completes an extension to the village hall with kitchen and toilets. His payment for the work includes a grant from the Ministry of Education of £310.

On the retirement of Anthony Eden due to illness, Harold Macmillan becomes Prime Minister.

Colin Rowe acquires his first combine harvester at Bradiford. It is Swedish and supplied to Colin by Stoneman's of Copplestone for £650.

## 1958

Throughout the 1950s Down St Mary boasts perhaps the most successful bell ringing team in Devon winning the Devon Association six-bell competition four times, but losing to West Down on 31 May 1958. The team consists of Harry (captain) and Henry Dockings, Maurice, Tom and Ralph Wright, Harold Adams, France Andrews, Reg Keenor and Tom Mortimer. Harry Dockings rings bells for 60 years, 40 of them at Down St Mary.

Copplestone Methodists install an electrically-blown pipe organ in Ebenezer Chapel.

Dick Richards takes over from Harry Pinfold as landlord at the Sturt Arms (now Devonshire Dumpling) and will stay until 1971.

## 1959

The first stretch of the M1 motorway opens and the Conservatives increase their majority in a General Election to 100.

Commander William Pope, son of John Madge Pope, sells Copplestone House to the Pennington family.

Jim Elston and Fred Cann's thrashing business at the old brickyard, Morchard Road, closes.

## 1960

Express Dairies buys the egg-packing station at Union House (now Jasmine House), Morchard Road. It will close in 1968.

Alf Howard buys Davidsland on the road to New Buildings and farms it until 1982. Later he buys Furzedown Cottages, Copplestone.

**26 November** After redecoration, the installation of a false ceiling and three electric heaters, Down St Mary Village Hall, which was a Church of England school from 1869 to 1939, is reopened as a Community Hall by Bill Browning and Frances Howard.

## 1961

Eric Lee, of Town Court, son of Bertie who chaired the parish council for 39 years, dies aged 38. He has suffered from asthma.

Alf Howard is elected to Down St Mary parish council.

After a long stint as church warden, Frank Shapland hands over to Henry Dockings as church warden – a job Henry will keep for over 40 years.

(In the 1960s) Reuben Roberts buys Courtneys, which has previously been farmed by the Hamacott family.

(In the 1960s) Margery Wright (wife of Tom) opens a shop at Skybells, Morchard Road.

## 1963

Percy Davey, who ran Davey's Mill in Copplestone for many years, dies. The mill is inherited by his son Anthony with Jack Smith of Copplestone as manager.

The Beatles pop group achieves international fame.

**22 November** John Fitzgerald Kennedy, President of the United States, is assassinated in Dealey Plaza, Dallas, Texas.

## 1964

Brian Ashelford starts work at Bartonbury and is paid £11 a week. He works six and half days a week and is granted one week's holiday. The Ashelfords live at 6 The Terrace, a tied cottage. In about 1980, Tom Mortimer of Bartonbury will sell the cottage to Brian.

## 1964

Labour wins the General Election and Harold Wilson succeeds Alec Douglas-Home as Prime Minister.

## 1965

Dan Stevens, owner of Copplestone slaughterhouse, is killed in a car crash. His son, John, takes over management of the business.

## 1966

Maurice Wright launches out on his own as a builder.

**27 August** Barnstaple man Francis Chichester leaves Plymouth in his ketch Gipsy Moth IV and will return there after 226 days of sailing, having circumnavigated the world, with one stop (in Sydney, Australia). He is later knighted by the Queen.

## **1967**

Rita Western takes over from Reg Keenor as Down St Mary's first woman bell ringer. Tom and Ralph Wright are not impressed at having a woman in the team but they accept Rita when they discover she can ring.

## **1968**

Ernest Garlick, formerly a Congregational Minister, becomes rector of the church. He will be the last rector to live in what is now called the Old Rectory.

On a Spring Sunday morning, Ernie and Dot Gunn are coming on to the main road from Clannaborough Church. They are hit by a car and Dot is killed instantly. After a spell in hospital, Ernie will live at Woolsgrove with Pat and Henry Dockings. Still later he will marry Vera Fawden. The Dockings will stay at Woolsgrove until 1996 with Henry farming at Sharland. Pat becomes Sunday School teacher at Down St Mary and Henry church warden.

Ruby Adams, who has been maid and later housekeeper to Henry and Dorothy Cheriton at Clannaborough Rectory, marries farmer's son, Bob Walters, from Newton Abbot.

The egg packing station in the outbuildings of what is now Jasmine House, Morchard Road, closes.

Mid Devon District Council build three houses and three bungalows (and garages for rent) on formerly allotment land owned by the Diocese of Exeter.

## **1969**

Ruby and Bob Walters move into Lammacott, renting from Henry Cheriton.

**1 July** Prince Charles' role as heir to the throne is formally acknowledged when the Queen invests him as Prince of Wales at Caernarfon Castle. The ceremony is watched on television by 200 million people worldwide.

**21 July** American Neil Armstrong becomes the first man to walk on the Moon. He reports the lunar module's safe landing with the words: 'Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed.' As he puts his left foot down first he declares: 'That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.'

Troops are set to Northern Ireland to deal with riots and terrorism.

The first television film about the family life of the Royal Family is watched by 23 million viewers and includes footage of the off-duty activities of The Queen and her family.

Carby Milton dies, aged 96. He ran Copplestone village tailor's shop, was a leading figure in the Methodist Church and a JP.

## **1970**

Tom Wright becomes Mid Devon District Councillor and is also a self-appointed welfare officer for the parish taking a special interest in housing issues. He is given the nickname 'the Mayor of Down St Mary'. He also does meals on wheels twice a week, chairs Down St Mary youth club and represents local farm workers in union negotiations with the NFU. He is a member of Down St Mary church choir for 75 years, rings the treble bell and captains the ringers.

Alf Howard becomes chairman of Down St Mary parish council and holds the position for 22 years.

Conservatives win the General Election and Edward Heath becomes Prime Minister.

During their visit to Australia and New Zealand, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh initiate a new practice - the 'walkabout' - to allow them to meet as many people as possible.

Ralph Page leaves Middle Yeo farm and starts an engineering business in Diddy Field. He builds and moves into Meadowbank. He begins making tubular fittings for cow cubicles and bale sledges and then moves on to steel frame buildings. Harry Tonkins, in his 70s, does painting work for him.

Martin Petherick comes to live in Down St Mary and acquires the old blacksmith's shop at the cross roads the following year.

In the 1970s Alf Howard's building business flourishes. He has employed Brian Glover (who later establishes his own business), Eric Keenor, Bill Bird, France Andrews, Edwin Passmore, Richard Tapp, Dave Edwards and Reg Cann. He will build the new abattoir in Coppleshill (since demolished); new buildings and office at Davey's Mill (now Parnell Lang); several houses and bungalows.

### **1971**

After Dick Richards ceases to be landlord at the Sturt Arms, Bill Smyth runs the pub for five years and will continue to live in one of the cottages at the back of the pub.

### **1972**

**30 January** 'Bloody Sunday' in Belfast: bombs kill 11 and wound 120.

### **1973**

Robert Chancellor becomes rector of the church for just two years.

Britain joins what is then known as the Common Market. Power cuts lead to a 3-day week.

### **1974**

The miners vote to strike. Edward Heath calls a General Election and Harold Wilson returns to lead a minority Labour Government. At a second election in the same year, Wilson is returned with a majority of 3.

Colin and Tessa Pluck arrive in the village and buy the Old Rectory with its two and a half acre grounds at auction from the Diocese of Exeter for £21000. Colin will renovate and convert the Coach House and build Orchard End (Treggheda and now Flight of Fancy). Colin and Tessa will buy what used to be called Diddy Field from Ralph Page, who has been running an engineering business there, and has built the bungalow Meadowbank. Colin and Tessa will buy the church field at an auction in the village hall from the Diocese of Exeter. The field was previously used by the Old Rectory with a tennis court. Planning permission is given to build eight houses – now Beech Drive.

### **1975**

After 25 years as Down St Mary church warden, Ernie Gunn hands over to Henry Shapland who does the job until 1998.

In a referendum 60 per cent of those voting vote to stay in the European Economic Community (EEC).

### **1976**

Harold Wilson retires and James Callaghan becomes Prime Minister.

Father Michael Reynolds takes over the care of Down St Mary parish. He has been Team Vicar of Morchard Bishop and volunteers to care for Down St Mary and Clannaborough as these parishes are without a priest.

### **1977**

The country celebrates the Queen's first 25 years as Sovereign. Her Majesty makes a nationwide tour and there are street parties around the country. The Queen and The Duke travel 56,000 miles in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth. In Down St Mary, Frank Howard carves a memorial seat from best Devon oak. It takes him three years to complete the seat with elaborate carving. Hilda Snelling, from 2 The Green, presents mugs to the children. The Express and Echo publishes a picture of maypole dancing outside the village hall. Martin Petherick makes the seat at the top of the green which is given to the village by Gerald and Margaret Moorhouse. Alf and Betty Howard give the concrete base with labour provided by Cedric Yarwood.

### **1978**

Strip lighting and new electric sockets are installed in the village hall.

Ralph Page moves his engineering business from Diddy Field to Lord's Meadow, Crediton, and will build a new factory there in 1990.

Martin Petherick erects a purpose-built workshop at the bottom of the hill in Wales Road (the road to Merrifield and Oak Tree Farm).

John Paul II is elected the first non-Italian Pope since 1522. Two years later, the Queen will visit him in the Vatican and four years later the Pope visits Britain and is received in Buckingham Palace.

### **1979**

The Conservatives win a General Election and Margaret Thatcher becomes Britain's first woman Prime Minister.

### **1980**

Alf Howard retires from building but keeps his sawmill with Fred Saffin as employee.

**28 May** Frank Howard presents his memorial seat to the Queen's representative, Colonel E Ware, at a ceremony outside his home in Morchard Road. Colonel Ware is piped in by Pipe Major Leslie de Laspée, who has retired to Zeal Monachorum after serving as personal piper to the Queen Mother. The seat will go to Windsor Castle.

**Summer** Alf Howard builds the cob bus shelter in Down St Mary at a cost of nearly £2000. Nicholas Pevsner describes it as 'a rare example of new building in cob'. The cob is made from subsoil dug out near Martin Petherick's home mixed with water and winter-grown wheat straw provided by Mark Bullock. The stone for the base of the walls comes from the old chimneys of the village hall. The oak lintel is from Alf's timber yard. The carved inscription reads *Quid Nobis Ardu* (Nothing is too hard for us), the motto of the 1<sup>st</sup> Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment, to which Alf was attached for a while in the war. Richard Tapp is one of the builders. Mark Bullock provides cider for the builders.

Tom Mortimer of Bartonbury sells 6 The Terrace, previously a tied cottage, to Brian Ashelford who has worked at Bartonbury since 1964.

### **1981**

**May** Alf and Betty Howard officially present the new bus shelter to the village. The event is celebrated with maypole dancing.

Alf Howard, who owns land where a spring is located across the field to the west of the church, decides to plant trees there – Oak, Ash, Larch, Beech, Elder, Maple, Holly, Elm, Alder, Hazel and Whitethorn. In July 2005 he will donate the land as a Spinney to be enjoyed by the village.

Brian Shillingford becomes Team Vicar with responsibility for Down St Mary. He also holds monthly services in Copplestone Village hall.

Copplestone Methodists build a new Sunday School room adjoining Ebenezer Chapel and vacate the first Ebenezer Chapel (till then used for the Sunday School) which has since become two cottages.

John Stevens sells Copplestone slaughterhouse. After a few years, and a couple of owners, the slaughterhouse will be closed and pulled down.

A party is held at Jasmine House, Morchard Road, to celebrate the wedding of the Prince of Wales to Lady Diana Spencer.

## **1982**

Argentina seizes the Falkland Islands. Margaret Thatcher sends a task force which recaptures the islands in 10 weeks. The Queen's son, Prince Andrew, pilots a Sea King helicopter during the conflict.

Alf Howard sells Davidsland.

The Women's Institute organises a competition to grow the biggest pumpkin. It is won by Joyce Pike with a 78 lb pumpkin with Joyce Wright taking second and third prizes. The judging is covered on local television. Pat Dockings tells the story of the competition in a poem.

A photograph is taken of the Youth Club at Lamacott. The club runs for about ten years after pressure from Sandra Yarwood to get it started. Tom Wright is chairman and Henry Dockings does much work for the club. Ruby Walters provides the supper in 1982 when the annual rounders match is played in the field. Others in the photograph are: Elizabeth Knowles, Kate Moorhouse, Lucy Pluck, Judith Walters, Tom Wright, Sharon Rodd, Jaqueline Brealey, Christopher Pearson, Kathryn Webber, Andrea Stansfield, Caroline Appleyard, Annabel Pluck, Cedric Yarwood, Barry Jones, Rodney Hole, Sarah Yarwood, Richard Walters, Barry Leach, Graham Saffin, Bob Walters, Richard Appleyard, Pat Dockings, Henry Dockings, Paul Knowles, Edward Moorhouse and Russell Pearson.

In her teens, Caroline Appleyard is a top gymnast, in the British team at under-16s and the South West champion.

## **1983**

Henry Cheriton dies, aged 93, and leaves Lamacott to Ruby and Bob Walters.

## **1984**

Down St Mary WI skittles team wins the Rose Bowl group competition. The winning team is Margaret Moorhouse, Joyce Pike, Pat Dockings, Rita Western, Rita Shapland, Joyce E Wright, Joyce Wright and Lorna Dawe.

An IRA bomb at Brighton's Grand Hotel, aimed at Conservative leaders, kills six people and injures 31.

## **1985**

Tom Wright is awarded the British Empire Medal which he receives at Buckingham Palace saying afterwards 'I don't know why the likes of me should be there, but it was a proper day'.

## **1986**

**May** Michael Ridley becomes Team Vicar and moves into a new vicarage which has been built and designed by Colin Pluck.

A vineyard established on a south facing slope on five and half acres of land belonging to The Old Mill will grow seven varieties of white grape producing three wines – dry, medium and sparkling. The Old Mill and vineyard will later be bought and developed by Bernard and Penny Doe.

Annabel Pluck wins the SW England Pony Club Horse Trials.

## **1987**

**New Year's Day** Bert Gunn's son John, who has gone to live at Dawlish, is found drowned. His sister Ann Cann will plant some trees in John's memory by Knighty Brook where he used to fish for minnows with his sister Pat. She calls it John's Wood.

Ella Williams retires after 50 years as organist at Copplestone Methodist Church.

## **1988**

**12-14 November** Copplestone Methodists celebrate the centenary of Ebenezer Chapel with a visit from the Plymouth Praisemaker choir and addresses from Revds. Jeffrey Sharpe and Amos Cresswell.

Ernie Heard leaves the mill in Copplestone (founded by William Davey) after 48 years service. The mill has seven lorries and a staff of 25.

(Late 1980s) Alf Howard's cob-building team, including Fred Saffin and George Morris, build a cob extension to the row of three cottages once lived in by woodworkers Zachariah and William Henry Bushell. It is now made into two houses and extended at both ends, the westerly end called Woodcarvers. Alf designs the extension and includes a new bread oven made in the traditional style.

## **1989**

Solicitor John Pope, descended from a family which has lived in Chaffcombe since the eighteenth century, moves to Down St Mary with his wife Anne. Anne (in 2012) lives at Hillbrow, Crediton.

## **1990**

After failing to win a clear vote from Tory MPs to continue as Conservative leader, Margaret Thatcher steps down and is succeeded by John Major as Prime Minister.

The village hall clock, dedicated to Sid and Frances Howard, is installed. The frame and surround for the clock are made by their sons Alf and Frank Howard.

Simon Beveridge becomes vicar of Down St Mary. He introduces the 'Live Crib' service and has an Aumbry installed in the lady chapel for the reservation of the sacrament. The dispute over bellringing, which will be played out on national TV, begins.

## **1991**

Annabel Pluck wins the SW England Pony Club Dressage. Lucy Pluck wins the Area Riding Club competition for Horse Trials.

## **1992**

Under John Major, the Conservatives achieve their fourth General Election victory in succession but with a reduced majority. At a subsequent sterling crisis the Government withdraws the pound from the Exchange Rate Mechanism.

Copplestone civil parish is formed after a long campaign by Mick May of Beers and opposition from Down St Mary Parish Council. A civic service is held at the Methodist Church with lessons read by Margaret Squires and Mick May. Brian Glover, chairman of the new parish council, responds to civic greetings from the three parishes of Down St Mary, Colebrooke and Crediton hamlets.

The south wall of Down St Mary village hall is repointed after an appeal in the parish has raised £1055.

After four years in the making, Martin Petherick opens a nine-hole golf course at Waterbridge and will work there full time for some years. His brother takes on the engineering business.

**20 November** Fire breaks out at Windsor Castle in The Queen's Private Chapel, causing damage to apartments. In order to raise money for the restoration, in the following year, the Queen allows the State Rooms of Buckingham Palace to be opened for the first time to the public during the summer, a practice which will continue in future years.

### **1993**

Down St Mary village hall kitchen is raised to EC standards with the help of a Community Council for Devon grant. Colin Pluck does the work for material cost only.

### **1994**

Tony Gardiner, a New Zealand priest, takes over as Team Vicar. He is responsible not only for the parishes of Clannaborough and Stockleigh Pomeroy but also for Knowle which has recently been transferred to the same team of churches. The parish continues to receive unsought national publicity over bellringing. The altar in the church is moved forward from the east wall.

Colin Pluck builds Middle Down.

### **1995**

Ralph Wright, builder, undertaker and bell-ringer, dies.

**8 May** John Morrison organises an event to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. A photograph is taken of Verity Morrison and Sandra Yarwood serving food, together with Nicola and Diane Pamphilon, Nancy Gardiner (wife of Revd Tony Gardiner), Christine Petherick and Gerald Moorhouse. There is a church service, parade of war veterans, a marquee with food and a bar on the green, maypole dancing, Punch and Judy, jugglers, a barbershop quartet and wartime songs round a bonfire at Middle Down.

### **1997**

**2 May** Following a General Election victory for Labour, Tony Blair becomes Prime Minister. At 43 he is the youngest person to become PM since Lord Liverpool in 1812, at the age of 42. With victories in 1997, 2001, and 2005, Blair will become Labour Party's longest-serving PM, the only person to lead the party to three consecutive general election victories.

Kitty Webber and Alf Howard reopen the village hall after refurbishment which has been carried out by volunteers led by John Phillips, with carpentry by Gilbert Leach. Kitty and Alf are daughter and son respectively of Bill Browning and Frances Howard who opened the hall in 1960. From this date the annual autumn plant show and sale begins.

**31 August** Diana, Princess of Wales, is killed in a car crash in Paris. The Queen broadcasts to the nation on the eve of the Princess's funeral, paying tribute to her life and work.

**20 November** The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh reach their Golden Wedding. In July they have held a special garden party for couples celebrating their Golden Wedding at Buckingham Palace.

**11 December** The Royal Yacht Britannia is decommissioned at Portsmouth Naval Base in the presence of the Queen (who is seen to shed a tear), the Duke of Edinburgh and 14 senior members of the Royal Family.

## **1998**

Ella Williams, who was organist at Copplestone Methodist Church for 50 years, dies, aged 91. In her will she is a generous benefactor to the Methodist Church and Down St Mary church where she is buried.

**June** Roger, Sheila, Timothy and Joseph Steer move into Marylea Cottage (originally 1 and 2 The Green).

John Phillips replaces Henry Shapland as church warden.

**October** The Women's Institute celebrates its 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a pumpkin party at which founders Dockings, Howard, Pike, Webber and M Wright are joined by 30 members and their husbands for an evening of songs spanning the years.

## **1999**

Colin and Julie Rowe sell Bradiford and move to Crediton.

Cyril Latimer dies at Mardale.

## **2000**

**1 January** The millennium is celebrated with a church service conducted by Revd Tony Gardiner. James Fidock, Nancy Gardiner, Maureen and Peter Knight, Rod Baggot, Jan Phillips, Sylvia Miller and Dorothy Baskerville form the choir. Margaret Dockings plays the organ. A millennium party is held in the village hall. A photograph is taken of Down St Mary bellringers in action: John Enderson, John Phillips, Pam McKewon, Leigh West and John Rodd. A party in the village hall follows.

A new small gate, to the right of the coffin gate, is installed at the entrance to the church in memory of Douglas Withers.

**June** Tony Gardiner leaves on retirement. In order to meet the Diocese of Exeter's requirements for a reduction in the number of stipendiary clergy, the next vicar will look after Down St Mary and Knowle from Lapford. For the first time for at least 150 years, and possibly much longer, the parish will no longer have a resident member of the clergy. The vicarage becomes a rented property and is eventually sold.

## **2001**

Foot and mouth disease devastates the farming community. Gordon and Margaret Docking's farm, Southcott, is one of those infected. Margaret is an organist at Down St Mary church.

Copplestone village hall closes due to dwindling interest and structural problems.

**11 September** 19 terrorists from the Islamist militant group al-Qaeda hijack four passenger jets and intentionally crash two planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York City. Both towers collapse within two hours. Hijackers crash another flight into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The fourth jet crashes into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Nearly 3,000 people, including some British, die. Three days later, the Queen leads national mourning at St Paul's Cathedral, London. The Queen gives permission for the American National Anthem to be played during the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace.

**December 2001** Canon Michael Hall, from South Africa and living in Lapford, takes over responsibility as Team Vicar for Down St Mary church.

## **2002**

**9 February** The Queen's sister, Princess Margaret, dies at the age of 71 following a stroke.

**30 March** The Queen Mother, aged 101, dies at Royal Lodge, Windsor. Despite the Queen's bereavement, celebrations of the Queen's Golden Jubilee include visits to Jamaica, New Zealand, Australia and Canada and a tour throughout the UK to 70 cities and towns beginning in Falmouth and including a visit to Exeter and a national weekend of celebrations featuring two enormous concerts in the gardens of Buckingham Palace.

**April** A plaque is erected at Lee Mount, Copplestone, which reads: 'Devon Historic Society Ernest Bevin 1881-1951 Farm Labourer Founder – Transport and General Workers Union 1922 M.P. 1940 Minister of Labour 1940 Foreign Secretary 1945 Lived Here 1889-1894'.

**3 June** In Down St Mary the church bells are rung to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee, followed by a short service of thanksgiving led by Revd Michael Hall. The congregation processes to Higher Living farmhouse for dancing, a barbecue, beacon bonfire and firework display.

The price of milk falls by 3p a litre in difficult times for dairy farmers. Roger Pennington, of Copplestone House, farms 8-900 acres in the area of which he owns about half. He has between 300 and 350 cows at Down St Mary and Copplestone.

Julie Giles-Bullock turns 15 of the 75 acres at Thorne Farm into growing potatoes and vegetables which she sells direct to the public, together with lamb and pork, at shops in Copplestone and Lapford.

## **2003**

Tom Wright dies

## **2005**

Alf Howard donates the spinney, across the church field, to the village. He has been planting thirty species of trees there since 1981.

**30 July** On a showery day, Michael Hall leads prayers at the inauguration of a seat at the bottom of the village green in memory of Tom Wright 'agriculturalist, danceband leader, churchman, bell ringer and district councillor.'

## **2006**

**14 August** Margaret Moorhouse (of Ellicombe) dies, aged 88.

Betty Howard dies.

## **2007**

**17 June** Gerald Moorhouse (of Ellicombe) dies, aged 88.

**27 June** Gordon Brown succeeds Tony Blair as Prime Minister.

## **2010**

**11 May** Following a General Election at which the Conservatives win the largest number of seats (306) but 20 seats short of an overall majority, and after some days of negotiations between the

parties, Gordon Brown resigns and the Queen invites David Cameron to form a government. At age 43, Cameron becomes the youngest British Prime Minister since Lord Liverpool, who was appointed in 1812. He announces his intention to form a coalition government, the first since the Second World War, with the Liberal Democrats.

**12 December** Alf Howard dies.

## **2011**

**13 February** Revd Michael Hall conducts his last service at Down St Mary church and retires the following day. He is succeeded by Revd Lindsey Starrs.

**29 April** Prince William marries Catherine Middleton at Westminster Abbey.

**6 May** Maurice Wright dies.

**16-20 May** The Queen visits Ireland, the first visit by a British monarch since Ireland gained independence.

**23 July** Revd Lindsey Starrs conducts a Memorial Service for Alf and Betty Howard in Down St Mary church.

Doris Howard dies.

Frank Howard dies.

Work begins converting barns at Middle Down.

## **2012**

**20 March** The Queen, accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, receives Addresses from both Houses of Parliament at Westminster Hall. The Lord Speaker reads an Address from the House of Lords and The Speaker reads an Address from the House of Commons; both Addresses are presented to The Queen. A Diamond Jubilee Window – a gift from the members of both Houses – is unveiled to mark Her Majesty's anniversary.

**2 May** The Queen and Duke arrive in Exeter by helicopter and visit Princesshay and the City Centre. The Royal party take a 'walkabout' and view an exhibition of Youth and Performing Arts. The Queen and Duke travel by car to the University where they attend the Opening Ceremony for a new Forum Centre, take lunch and meet charity workers.

**19 May** Nena Yendell from Charis, Down St Mary, carries the Olympic Torch through Helston on Day 1 of its 70-day journey from Land's End to London.

**2-4 June** In Down St Mary, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee is celebrated with a Grand Summer Fete on the Saturday in the church field followed by a barn dance and disco in a marquee. The church hosts a Flower Festival and holds a Jubilee Songs of Praise followed by cake, wine, tea and coffee.

**10 June** Anne Pope dies, aged 89.

## **2013**

Diane Pamphilon dies

**8 June** Summer fête is held on village green on gloriously sunny day. Morchard Bishop ukele band entertain.

**10 October** Peter Knight dies. A thanksgiving service is held at Down St Mary church on 28 October followed by refreshments at The Waie Inn, Zeal Monachorum.

**2014**

**January** Major renovation and upgrading of village hall begins.

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