

Memorable moments in our Diamond Queen's life



As seen from Down St Mary

Roger Steer June 2012



Down St Mary from Howard's Spinney

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 Towt, 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 granddaughter) 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 1927 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 Coplestone 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 Coplestone slaughterhouse. A meat train every evening takes lamb to Smithfield Market in London from many parts of Devon – Barnstaple, Lapford, Morchard Road and Coplestone.

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 1936 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 Lammacott 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 Lammacott 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 Copplestone. 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 Copplestone Ladies' Cricket team, playing in the field on the site of the present Copplestone 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 1938 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 Copplestone 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 1st Army and fights his way to Tunis to link with the 8th Army. He fights with the 8th 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 Coplestone Methodist Church for half a century and, on her death in 1998, will become a generous benefactor to Coplestone 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 Coplestone. The headmaster of Coplestone 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 95th birthday.

20 November 1947 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 1951 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, Copplesstone, 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 Coplestone for many years, dies. The mill is inherited by his son Anthony with Jack Smith of Coplestone 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 1980 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 1st 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 Coppleshill 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 50th 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 1997 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 45th 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, Coplestone, 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 Coplestone 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 Coplestone.

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 Coplestone 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.

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 2012 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.

© Roger Steer June 2012 *Please tell Roger (01363 84429 rs@rogersteer.com) about any inaccuracies to be corrected in future editions.*



Evening sunlight on Down St Mary Church, 16 May 2012