

Melksham and District Timeline

(A list of historical events that occurred in Melksham and the surrounding area.)

Edited by John Holness

Commenced 21 June 2012

Last updated 24th January 2023

Any additional information/corrections/and or amendments would be gratefully received.

Melksham and District Historical Association.

Year	Event
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Melksham and District Historical Association.

Other publications.

MADHA 01	Melksham and District Timeline
MADHA 02	Maggs of Melksham
MADHA 03	A Brief History of R.A.F. Melksham
MADHA 04	A History of Melksham Hospital
MADHA 05	An Evacuee from London
MADHA 06	Feathers by the Ton
MADHA 07	Growing up in Melksham
MADHA 08	History of the Baptist Church Melksham
MADHA 09	Local Government at Parish Level
MADHA 10	Memories of a Melksham Man, George Davis 1854-1940
MADHA 11	Memories of Melksham and the Wilts & Berks Canal
MADHA 12	News sheet 1 - 50
MADHA 13	News sheet 51 - 100
MADHA 14	St. Michael's in War and Peace
MADHA 15	1939-45 War and Melksham Comforts for the Troops
MADHA 16	The Feather Factory
MADHA 17	The Feather Factory - An Interview
MADHA 18	The Use of Pill Boxes during WWII
MADHA 19	A History of Melksham Through the 19th Century
MADHA 20	AVON VILLA particulars of sale
MADHA 21	Boyhood Reminiscences of Melksham
MADHA 22	GEC-Spencer's talk
MADHA 23A	Melksham 1881 Census (Alpha)
MADHA 23B	Melksham 1881 Census Forward
MADHA 23C	Melksham 1881 Census Geographical
MADHA 24	A Home at Last
MADHA 25	The Parish Church of Melksham
MADHA 26	Tombstone Trail
MADHA 27	Melksham's War dead
MADHA 28	Newssheet 101 – 150
MADHA 29	Newssheet 151 - 213
MADHA 30	Making Slumber Sweeter
MADHA 31	The Iron Works
MADHA 32	Diary of Thomas Smith transcription
MADHA 33	History of Melksham by Wm. Cooper
MADHA 34	King's Arms Hotel
MADHA 35	Place House
MADHA 36	Reflections of Childhood
MADHA 37	William Bolwell's Book A5 - Illustrated
MADHA 38	Moules and Fowlers
MADHA 39	Bromham's War memorial (Issue 2)
MADHA 40	Bulkington's War memorial (Issue 2)
MADHA 41	Holt's War memorial Issue 2
MADHA 42	Seend's War memorial issue 4 addendum
MADHA 43	Seend's War memorial issue 4
MADHA 44	Steeple Ashton's War memorial Issue 2
MADHA 45	West Ashton's War memorial (Issue 2)
MADHA 46	Melksham Miscellanea Vol. 1
MADHA 47	Melksham and St. Michael's in war and peace
MADHA 48	Listed Buildings in Melksham
MADHA 49	Melksham People
MADHA 50	
MADHA 51	Manors, Mills and Clothiers in Melksham
MADHA 52	The 1892 Murder of Henry Richards in Spa Road.
MADHA 53	West country Cloth Workers
MADHA 54	Devizes Prison
MADHA 55	Caring for the elderly and infirm people - Workhouse Timeline

Some terms used in the listing:

Advowsonis	The right to recommend a member of the Anglican clergy for a vacant benefice, or to make such an appointment.
Capellano Parochiali	Parish chaplain.
Carucate	The carucate was a medieval unit of land area approximating the land a plough team of eight oxen could till in a single annual season.
Communa	Common usage.
Disseisin	The seizure of land belonging to someone else.
Dower	A widow's share for life of her husband's estate.
Estreated	A true copy or duplicate of some original writing or record.
Eyre	Name of a circuit travelled by an itinerant justice in medieval England.
Feoffee	A trustee invested with a freehold estate to hold in possession for a purpose, typically a charitable one.
Feoffees	A trustee invested with a freehold estate to hold in possession for a purpose, typically a charitable one.
Flèche	Name given to spires in Gothic architecture.
Frankpledge	A system of joint suretyship common in England and was compulsory the sharing of responsibility among persons connected in tithings.
Hayward	Officer of a township in charge of fences and enclosures.
hedgebote	An allowance of wood to a tenant for repairing hedges.
housebote	A wood allowance to a tenant for repairing the house and for fuel.
Jointure	An estate settled on a wife for the period during which she survives her husband, in lieu of a dower.
Knights fee	In feudal Anglo-Norman England a knight's fee was a unit of measure of land deemed sufficient to support a knight
Leet	The court leet was a historical court baron of England that exercised the "view of Frankpledge" and its attendant police jurisdiction, which was normally restricted to the hundred courts.
Librates	Someone who had been set free from imprisonment, slavery or oppression.
Messuage	A dwelling house with outbuildings and land assigned to its use.
Monstraverunt	A writ which lies for the tenants of ancient demesne who hold by free charter, and not for those tenants who hold by copy of court roll.
Nonage	The period of a person's immaturity or youth.
Parvise	The open space in front of a cathedral or church. It is thus a church-specific type of forecourt, front yard or apron. It can also be used to define a room over the porch of a church – quite often found in Norman churches in England.
Rectorial	An Anglican parish priest in a parish where historically the priest was entitled to the tithes.
Replevy	To recover possession of goods.
seised	Be in legal possession of something.
Serjeanty	A form of feudal tenure conditional on rendering some specified personal service to the monarch.
Tallage	A form of arbitrary taxation levied by kings on the towns and lands of the Crown. Abolished in the 14 th century.
Tithes	One tenth of annual produce or earnings, formerly taken as a tax for the support of the church and clergy.
Tympanum	A tympanum is the semi-circular or triangular decorative wall surface over an entrance door or window.
Witan	An assembly of higher ecclesiastice and important laymen including king's thegns tah met to counsel the king on matters such as judicial problems.

Year	Event
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My biggest regret is that when I started to compile this timeline I never recorded the source of this information as I gathered it, it was never intended to be a scholarly study, it was just a list of interesting events associated with Melksham's past for my own information. Many of the events listed did not occur in or near Melksham but none the less they probably had an effect on the lives of the people living in Melksham. I have recently started to 'source' the information as it is gathered. It is very much an on-going project. (E&OE)

	1. A polished stone axe found in 1916 suggests that possibly an early Neolithic or Bronze age settlement existed in the Melksham area.
	1. There was a settlement around the site of the present parish church during the Saxon period
700BC	1. Excavations carried out by the Cotswold Archaeology Society on the site of the new campus in the grounds of Melksham House revealed a multi-period site. There was evidence of field boundary ditches indicating a settlement together with large rubbish pits and postholes dating to the Iron Age and Romano-British periods 700BC to AD410. Locally made early Iron Age pottery fragments were found dating from the 7 th to 4 th centuries BC. Four oxshoes, probably dating to the medieval period were found with nails still in place suggesting that they were lost whilst in use. Oxshoes are less common than horseshoes and were used for certain agricultural tasks such as ploughing. These excavations took place in an area formally used as tennis courts and also where an Air-raid shelter had been sited during World War Two.
787	1. The first year that Viking raids on England were recorded.
827	1. Egbert was the first monarch to establish rule over all of Anglo-Saxon England. After returning from exile he regained his kingdom of Wessex. He died in 839 and is buried in Winchester.
836	1. King Egbert was defeated by the Danes at Carhampton near Dunster in Somerset.
855	1. King Aethelwulf granted the right in 855 for English churches to receive tithes. The legal validity of the Tithe system was affirmed under the Statute of Westminster of 1285
878	1. The Danish army of Guthrum invaded Wessex and King Alfred took refuge on the Isle of Athelney before defeating them at the battle of Eddington.
946	1. In 946 King Edmund was stabbed by a robber in his royal hall at Pucklechurch near Bath and he was buried in Glastonbury Abbey.
973	1. When King Eadwig died in 973, Edgar, the youngest son of Edmund I, became King of England and was crowned in Bath Abbey.
1066	1. When Edward the Confessor died, Harold II was crowned King of England. Despite having no royal bloodline, Harold Godwin was elected king by the Witan (a council of high ranking nobles and religious leaders). However, on 14 th October 1066 the English forces were defeated by the Norman invaders at the Battle of Hastings which became known as The Norman Conquest. The death of Harold in this battle meant the end of the English Anglo-Saxon kings and the beginning of the Normans. William the Conqueror was crowned William I, King of England.
1085	1. In 1085 the Domesday Survey was begun and all of England was recorded so the William knew exactly what his new kingdom contained and how much tax he could raise to fund his armies
1086	1. A hundred and a royal manor of Melksham was in existence at the time of the Domesday Book. It was a large and valuable estate held by the Crown which eventually passed down through many families, including the Brounckers and Danvers. According to the Domesday Book it was valued at £111 11s and comprised 84 hides (approx 10,000 acres), including 130 acres of meadow, 8 leagues of pasture and 4 leagues of woodland. There were eight Mills. (<i>British History on line</i>) 2. The Domesday Survey credited Melksham manor with 8 mills. All later references, with one doubtful exception, are to water-mills. Two existed in Beanacre in 1539–40; they were perhaps the same as those held with Melksham Lovells manor in 1621. Two were annexed to Seend manor in 1542–3, and 4 to Seend and Seend Row manors in 1599. In 1952 there were 2 corn mills at Seend Head: one was close to Baldham Bridge and is no longer in use and the other, at Seend Head itself, was operated by Messrs. J. & J. Noad. One of these may be close to the site of the mill at Seend Head conveyed to Roger le Gras in 1249 and which is again mentioned in 1555. 'Mr. Jeffery's great cornmill' on the island by Melksham Bridge, was in operation in about 1815. In 1903 the mill was owned by John Taylor and in 1952 was operated by Messrs. Joseph Rank Ltd., on lease from Pound Taylor & Collen Ltd. Challymead mill on the Bradford Road is now disused.

Year	Event
	<p>Fulling mills are mentioned in the 16th century and Henry Coulthurst owned two in 1718. <i>(British History on line)</i></p> <p>3. The Domesday Survey contained a brief statement that Rumoldus the priest held the church with one hide of land worth 40s. This hide of land, roughly 100 acres, formed the basis of the estate later to become Canonhold or the Rectory manor. The exact location of the hide which Rumold held is not known. However, the Saxon church probably stood on the site of the present church, which dates from the twelfth century. There may have been a barn belonging to the church on ground where the later tithe barn was built. <i>(From Domesday to Jubilee, Isabel Ide & Megan Watts)</i></p> <p>4. Liseman (or Liesman), a king's thane, held in King Edward's time, and still held in 1086, 3 hides in Melksham. This estate is entered in the Geld Roll as of 2 hides. It was worth 30s. The subsequent descent of the land is doubtful; Canon Jones identified it conjecturally with Poulshot. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1100	<p>1. St Mary's Church at Whaddon was built by the 12th century and still contains a blocked 12th century north doorway and a reconstructed 12th century south doorway with a decorated tympanum. <i>(Wikipedia)</i></p>
1130	<p>1. The chancel of St. Michael's and All Angels parish church dates from this time although it is not known when the earliest church on this site was built. The parish church of St. Michael And All Angels consists of chancel, nave, north and south aisles, north transept, north and south chapels, north porch and west tower. The present building was probably begun in the 12th century, when it may have comprised chancel, nave, north aisle, and transept. In the early 14th century the church was widened on the north side, the south aisle was added and the north rebuilt, and the transept was lengthened. About the mid-15th century the walls of the aisles were rebuilt and a chapel on the south side of the chancel, a clerestory and north and south porches were added. The Lady chapel at the east end of the south aisle was built later in the 15th century, and the rectangular central tower in the 16th century. It was probably in the early 16th century that the aisles were raised and large four-light square-headed windows inserted. The roof and the galleries were repaired in 1810. The Lady Chapel was subject to rights vested in the Prioress of Amesbury, and passed at the Dissolution, with Melksham capital manor to the Brounckers; it is said to have been accessible from the church by a single priest's door, and it was connected with the manor house by a path crossing the churchyard. There are traces of a destroyed piscina in the south wall of the chancel, and of a late 13th century tomb recess on the north wall at the east end. The tower rises in three stages to a battlemented parapet. The nave roof, covered with modern Welsh slates, has an embattled parapet. The porch is vaulted, and has a parvise above. Two scratch dials were found in 1932: one with numerals on the south-east buttress of the nave, and one under the south window. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1144	<p>1. Empress Maud (who was the second child of King Henry I) and her son Henry gave the manor of Melksham with its appurtenances to Humphrey de Bohun III (bef 1144 – December 1181) of Trowbridge Castle. It remained in his possession until 1157–8 when it was reclaimed by the Crown. Humphrey de Bohun III, 5th feudal baron of Trowbridge, was an Anglo-Norman nobleman and general who served King Henry II as Lord High Constable of England. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1157	<p>1 For one quarter of 1157–8 the capital manor of Melksham was let to farm at £9. In 1158–9 the sheriff was allowed £23. 4s. 2d. for restocking it; between 1199 and 1209 several other sums were allowed to him for the same purpose. Thomas de Sandford was directed in 1216 to take possession of the manor and use the revenues for the maintenance of Devizes castle, of which he was the keeper. In May 1217 the forests of Chippenham and Melksham and, in the following October, the manors of Devizes and Rowde and other lands were assigned to the support of the castle. Ela, Countess of Salisbury, who had the custody of Wiltshire from 1231 to 1237 also administered the manor. She was immediately succeeded in the administration by Walter de Burgh who accounted for the issues from 1236 to 1238. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1180	<p>1. In 1180–1 Richard Crassus held an estate in Melksham, worth 14s, which the Crown had quitclaimed to him; in 1181–2 he held another estate there worth £1 12s, similarly quitclaimed, which had once belonged to Richard Walerand, and which was revalued at £1 16s in 1182–3. A Richard Walerand was living in Melksham in 1167–8. These two estates continue to appear on the Pipe Roll among the <i>terre date</i> until at least 1208–9. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1186	<p>1. The Capital Manor of Melksham and Hundred was held by King William I.</p>
1183	<p>1. King Henry II was at Melksham on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.</p>
1190	<p>1. The Domesday Book of 1086 does not mention a manor of Seend. In the 11th century Seend may have been part of the royal manor of Melksham. The earliest known record of the tenancy of the manor of Seend dates from 1190 when it was held by Wigan of Cherburgh. Wigan died before</p>

Year	Event
	<p>1194 leaving as his heir his son John, a minor, and the manor passed into the custody of Wigan's brother Thomas. Wigan's descendants held the manor until 1297 when John of Cherburgh granted it to Hugh le Despenser. Hugh le Despenser was hanged and beheaded in Bristol on 27th October 1326. After his death Seend manor was granted to Queen Isabella as part of her dower. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1200	<p>1. At the time of the Domesday Survey the advowson of the church at Melksham was probably held by the king as lord of the capital manor. On 4th June 1200 King John granted the Rectory Manor of Melksham or Canonhold to the <i>communa</i> of the canons of Salisbury cathedral. It is recorded that Rumold the priest held a hide of land appurtenant to the church. Thus since that date the dean and chapter have been patrons of the living. However, between 1555 and 1601 they waived their right of presentation in favour of various members of the Brouncker family who were farming the rectory manor of Canonhold. The dean and chapter have retained the right to presentation since that time. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1203	<p>1. A small estate comprising 14 acres of wood in Seend was annexed Seend manor between 1203 and 1267. This wood had been granted by Henry II to Richard Rufus as appurtenant to a manor in Imber which he held by serjeanty and was probably alienated by his nephew and heir Thomas. The wood or grove is last mentioned in 1283 when it was said to be within the demesne. In 1305 another area of woodland was annexed to the manor by a grant of Edward I to Hugh Despenser, the elder. The land which was taken out of the forest of Melksham and enclosed by Hugh comprised 182 acres 'under the town' of Seend, 70 acres at 'Berehille', and 220 acres in a place called Cowfold. By 1341 some or all of this land was referred to as 'a park called Cowfold'. It is possible that this inclosure may be identified with the estate known as Seend Park. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1204	<p>1. In 1204 the Manor of Seend passed to Felise, relict of Andrew of the Exchequer. John, Wigan of Cherburgh's heir, came of age about 1206, and died in 1269, when his son Wigan (II) succeeded him; the holding was then ¼ knight's fee of 15 librates.</p>
1216	<p>1. Thomas de Sandford was directed in 1216 to take possession of Melksham manor and use the revenues for the maintenance of Devizes castle, of which he was the keeper.</p>
1219	<p>1 On the 18th of June 1219 Melksham was granted a Charter by King Henry III to hold a Friday market and a fair on Michaelmas day.</p>
1220	<p>1 The building of Salisbury Cathedral begins. 2 In or about 1220 Bishop Richard Poore appropriated the church at Melksham to the commune of the canons of Salisbury cathedral. The appropriation included the appurtenances of the church saving the vicarage, and the chapel at Erlestoke.</p>
1227	<p>1. Henry III issued a charter confirming the wish of his Father, King John, regarding the endowment of the church at Melksham and its appurtenances, Rectory Manor and the great tithes of Melksham Hundred to the <i>communa</i> of the Canons of Salisbury Cathedral.</p>
1231	<p>1 In 1231 the Melksham Manor was being administered by John de Monemue who as sheriff accounted to the Exchequer in 1228, 1229 1231 was allowed to buy the corn with which he had sown it while he was in office. Ela, Countess of Salisbury, who had the custody of Wiltshire from 1231 to 1237 also administered the manor. She was succeeded by Walter de Burgh who accounted for the issues from 1236 to 1238.</p>
1232	<p>1. The manor of Melksham Lovells does not appear under that name until the 16th century, but the family that gave its name to the estate held land in or near Melksham as early as the 13th century. In 1232 a grant by Silvester Lovel of messuages and land to Bradenstoke priory was confirmed.</p>
1236	<p>1. 20 oak trees from Melksham Forest were used to make the stalls in Salisbury Cathedral. 2. The state of agriculture in Melksham capital manor in the 13th century is well documented. In the early years of King John's reign there were introduced into the manor several hundred sheep, and small numbers of she-goats, sows, and cows. When Walter de Burgh began his custody in 1236, 32 oxen were delivered to him. In the ensuing year he bought 69 oxen, 1 bullock, 8 cows, 67 pigs, and 820 muttons, and sold 67 oxen, 7 cows, 154 pigs, and 820 mutton fleeces. In 1237–8 he bought 18 oxen, 38 cows, 23 heifers, 3 bullocks, 125 pigs, 60 goats, and 20 kids, and sold 14 oxen, 8 cows, 23 heifers, 3 bullocks, 128 pigs, and 46 muttons. He also sold 158 cheeses, the fleeces of 774 muttons, and the hides of 2 oxen, 2 cows, and 1 heifer. When he handed the manor over to Barbeflet he left 3 heifers and 38 oxen. When extended in 1240 the manor was stocked besides other beasts, with 1 horse, 29 oxen, 1 bull, 19 cows with 17 calves, 16 two-year old bullocks, 20 one-year-old bullocks, 534 sheep, 159 ewes, 25 pigs, 20 goats, 1 bell wether (bucc'), and 6 kids. It was declared that it could have carried inter alia 40 oxen, 70 cows, 35 without calf, 1</p>

Year	Event
	<p>bull, and 50 goats. In the same year the farmer had sold 40 muttons, 60 oxen, 7 ewes, and 4½ weys (pondera) of cheese. There remained in store 5 weys of wool, 30 great fleeces of muttons and sheep, 64 lambs' fleeces, 64 goat skins, and 62 kid skins. In the first year of Hugh Gargat's custody (1250–1) 2 avers, 44 oxen, 8 cows, 8 calves, 106 pigs, and 201 muttons were bought, and 5 oxen, 1 calf skin and 4 mutton fleeces sold. In the second (1251–2), 6 oxen, 20 cows with calf, 2 heifers, 170 muttons, and 30 pigs were bought and 2 avers, 28 oxen, 6 calves, 138 pigs, 203 muttons, 1 aver hide, 1 cow hide, 1 calfskin, and 45 mutton fleeces sold. Fromund received from Gargat 1 aver, 1 female foal, 29 oxen, 20 cows, 1 bull, 23 two-year-old bullocks, 17 calves, and 6 piglets. Three of the oxen and the piglets were sold and 2 cows died. In addition 31 pigs were bought and sold in the period of account (July 1257– February 1258). The stock position in the later Middle Ages is unfortunately not known, but a very defective bailiff's account of 1356–7 shows that horses, cattle, pigs and above all sheep were still being reared. Cattle and poultry were carried away to Amesbury together with loads of fleeces, wool, and cheese. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1238	<p>1. The capital manor of Melksham was committed, in or before 1238, to Nicholas de Barbeflet. It was extended, with the hundred, in August 1240, and it was found understocked; Barbeflet was charged with irregularities, and was possibly dismissed for inefficiency. The foreign hundred was committed to the sheriff in December 1240. In 1240–1 the men of Melksham were farming the manor themselves. In 1245 they were directed to till and sow the land even though their term had expired. In 1251 they lost the farm when they were required to deliver to Hugh Gargat, appointed as keeper in September 1250, the value (£41. 15s.) of the stock received when the manor was leased to them, and to pay a fine of 40 marks for failure to repair the buildings. Perhaps they lost the farm through waste. Gargat was in office until 1255; his successor was Stephen Fromund, a king's clerk; next year Fromund delivered the manor to John de Langford and Peter de Bulkington to farm. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1240	<p>1. As was not uncommon with manors that were ancient demesne, a hundred was annexed to Melksham capital manor. By 1240, it was divided into a home and a foreign hundred, the former no doubt representing the leet jurisdiction within the demesnes. There is no evidence that in the Middle Ages a court existed in Melksham town apart from the home hundred. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1242	<p>1. A small emparkment belonging to Lacock Abbey is mentioned in several medieval documents but does not seem to have been given a name. In 1242 Henry III granted to the abbey a cartload of firewood once a week out of Melksham Forest. In 1260 he gave, instead, 40 acres of the forest (bounded, <i>inter alia</i>, by Wansdyke), with liberty to inclose with a hedge and ditch; and in 1388 the abbey had leave to substitute a paling. No further record of the property has been found. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1244	<p>1. About 1244 the Chancellor of Salisbury granted to Isabel, Hugh Lovel's daughter, a croft in Melksham at £18 a year.</p>
1250	<p>1. A Melksham vicarage was instituted in 1250. Under the appropriation of 1220 the chapelry of Erlestoke, 7 miles from Melksham church with four parishes intervening was included and remained a dependent chapelry until 1877. A chapelry at Seend was probably always dependent to Melksham. The chapel is first mentioned in the 13th century when Wigan of Cherburgh, who held the manor of Seend from 1269 to 1283, granted to the parish chaplain, Hugh of Trowbridge, a curtilage in Seend of the land which Ingram the chaplain had formerly held. Seend remained a dependent chapelry until 1873, when a new parish was formed. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p> <p>2. In 1250 the Friday Market was transferred to a Tuesday..</p> <p>3. The Medieval settlement is likely to have been concentrated in Church Street, Church Walk, High Street and Market Place.</p>
1252	<p>1. Lands which subsequently became the manor of Woodrow are first mentioned in 1252 when property in 'La Woderewe' was in the hands of Elias de Rabayn (later keeper of Devizes castle and of Chippenham and Melksham forests) and his wife Maud. The lands were of the inheritance of Maud, daughter of Julia of Bayeux, relict of a Lincolnshire landowner. In 1272 Elias and Maud granted the manor to John and Margaret Besil. The Besils still held the property in 1275 but in 1280 granted it to the King Edward I and Queen Eleanor. By 1286 it was held by the queen to whom it had presumably been assigned as part of her jointure. Then in 1290–1 the Abbess of Lacock farmed it at a rent of £16 a year. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1256	<p>1. The manor of Melksham Lovells does not appear under that name until the 16th century, but the family that gave its name to the estate held land in or near Melksham as early as the 13th century. In 1232 a grant by Silvester Lovel of messuages and land to Bradenstoke priory was confirmed. About 1244 the Chancellor of Salisbury granted to Isabel, Hugh Lovel's daughter, a croft in</p>

Year	Event
	<p>Melksham at £18 a year. In 1256 Terry le Draper and his wife Margery quitclaimed to Hugh Lovel, for £1 a year during Margery's life, ½ knight's fee in Melksham and Shaw. In 1268 John and Goda Lovel and Walter and Alice 'de Rude' released to Sibyl, daughter of Roger, a messuage and land in Melksham. A John Lovel is known to have been living in Melksham in 1381 but no further reference to Lovel property has been found until 1558 when William 'Danyear' (<i>recte</i> Daniell) made a conveyance of the manor (then so called) possibly for purposes of mortgage. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1257	<p>1. In 1257 Henry III gave the capital manor of Melksham and the hundred to Amice, Countess of Devon for life, at a fee farm of £48 a year; in 1268 he granted this rent, with the reversion of the manor, to Amesbury priory, providing that any surplus value over £50 a year should be rendered at the Exchequer. In 1274 Edward I persuaded the countess to lease the manor to the convent at once in consideration of their undertaking to answer first to her for its value over £48 and after her death to the Crown for its value over £50. In 1276 the king fixed the surplus revenue due at the Exchequer at £30, and in 1285 (Amice having recently died), for the love of his daughter Mary, a nun of Amesbury, he remitted £27. 8s. of the £30 due for the manor and hundred. The prioress and nuns held the manor until the Dissolution. They rendered £2. 12s. a year for it in 1315 and 1317–18 and in 1379, £3. 10s. in 1450, £2. 13s. in 1485–6, and £13. 13s. 7¾d. in 1535. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1268	<p>1. In 1268 John and Goda Lovel and Walter and Alice 'de Rude' released to Sibyl, daughter of Roger, a messuage and land in Melksham.</p> <p>2. A charter of 1286 confirmed the Prioress of Amesbury in an extensive range of liberties in Melksham, and free warren was granted separately in the same year. These privileges, with the annexed hundred, must have made this a valuable manor to hold. From 1155 to 1158 it was value £48 blanchéd. In 1240 the manor, as stocked, was valued at £60, and it was declared that if it were more fully stocked it would be worth £70. Unstocked it would have been worth £52. These figures are not easy to interpret, for in 1241–2 the nominal value was still £48 blanchéd, though the men of Melksham, as farmers, were paying £80 for it. In 1255 the manor with the hundred was valued at £80, though Gargat, while bailiff, accounted for £100. When extended in 1275–6, the manor with the home and foreign hundreds was worth £82. 1s. 8d. In 1291, presumably without the hundreds, it was worth £55. In 1535 the gross value was £96. 7s. 8½d., the net £80. 16s. 4¾d. In 1540–1 the gross value was £94. 6s. 8½d., of which £20. 2s. 0¼d. arose from Melksham and its appurtenances and £50. 5s. from Seend Row. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1274	<p>1. The first recorded tenant of Shaw manor is Richard de Highway who in 1274 held of Parnel de Dunstanville ¼ knight's fee there belonging to the barony. In 1282 Richard brought an action of disseisin against the Prioress of Amesbury in respect of 400 acres of wood and 200 of moor in Melksham, wherein he claimed common in respect of his tenement in Shaw. The prioress's bailiff, however, pleaded that Richard's manor, held of Castle Combe, did not entitle him to common in Melksham manor. The issue was remitted to the justices at their next eyre. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1275	<p>1. Beanacre is the most ancient part of the Parish of Melksham Without and is first mentioned in estate records of 1275. The Old Manor House was built in the fifteenth century. One of its most famous residents was John Whittokesmead who sat as a Justice of the Peace in at least four Quarter Sessions and was made a Knight of the Shire in 1450.</p> <p>2. William and Isabel de Barache (or Barage) granted to William of Beanacre for life, at 21s. rent, a messuage and a carucate of land in Beanacre. Their land in Beanacre and Melksham was taken into the king's hand for defaults in the Prioress of Amesbury's court, and they failed to replevin it; it was sold in 1309</p>
1280	<p>1. In 1280 the Prioress of Amesbury obtained timber from Melksham for certain works that were being undertaken at the Priory. (<i>From Domesday to Jubilee, Isabel Ide & Megan Watts</i>)</p>
1281	<p>1. In 1281 thirteen men of the capital manor of Melksham sued the Prioress of Amesbury by <i>monstraverunt</i>. This is the first express claim that the manor was ancient demesne of the Crown. The claim was upheld in a charter of 1285, when the Crown granted <i>inter alia</i> that the convent should plead and be impleaded by the little writ of right. In 1316 the prioress claimed the right to tallage Melksham on the ground that it was ancient demesne. The Crown granted the request, provided that evidence supported the claim; evidently it did, for in this year the prioress paid 1s. 6d. into the Exchequer for a writ <i>de impetrando</i>. In 1377 and 1404 the Melksham entry in Domesday Book was estreated into Chancery, which suggests that the status of the manor as ancient demesne was then again being examined. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1283	<p>1. Wigan (II) of Cherburgh died in 1283, leaving two sons by different mothers. Both were named John, and since both were of age each was in turn thought to be the heir to the manor of Seend. The manor was taken into the king's hand until it was decided in 1284 that the younger John was</p>

Year	Event
	<p>the true heir. The relict, apparently not the mother of either John, had her dower, and later married Sir Nicholas de la Huse. In 1297, while Wigan (II)'s relict still held her dower, John, the son of a Roger of Cherburgh, granted the manor to Sir Hugh le Despenser the elder; in 1302 Peter de la Huse, grandson of Nicholas, released his right to the dower lands. No explanation has been found of how the manor came into the hands of Roger and his son John. After Despenser's execution in October 1326 the manor was granted to Queen Isabel as part of her dower. Gilbert of Berwick was appointed in 1330 to the custody of Seend and the queen's other Wiltshire manors. The manor was granted in 1331 to Edward de Bohun in fee and in 1332 Bohun had licence to settle it on his wife, himself and his heirs. He died in or before 1337 without issue, and in that year the king granted the manor, subject to the relict's life interest, to Hugh, son and heir of Hugh le Despenser the younger. The relict, Margaret, died in 1341, and in that year livery of seisin was granted to Edward de Bohun's brother and heir, Humphrey, 10th Earl of Hereford. In 1347 the king released to the earl all his own reversionary right. Hugh le Despenser, the grantee of 1337, died without issue in 1349; no record has been found to suggest whether or not he enjoyed the reversion of the manor after the death of Margaret de Bohun. <i>(British History on line)</i></p> <p>2. The manor of Seend was twice extended in 1283, when its value was first found to be £20 9s 10½d and later a few shillings less. When added to the queen's dower in 1327 the manor and park were worth £50. In 1419 its estimated value with park and wood was £75 2s 9¼d gross and £63 8s 11¾d net. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1285	<p>1. Since the 10th century everyone paid a tenth of what they produced to support the church. This was called the Tithe. Originally this was in the form of actual goods – wheat, barley, oats etc. The legal validity of the Tithe system was affirmed under the Statute of Westminster of 1285.</p>
1286	<p>1. The origin of the manor of Woolmore is possibly to be found in a demesne holding of Amesbury Priory: the priory had a grant of free warren in their holding there in 1286. The manor is not, however, mentioned until 1502 when Walter Dauntsey died seised of it. The property was then worth £10, and was held of the prioress by fealty and 35s. rent. Dauntsey was succeeded by his son John. The manor or lordship of Woolmore was among the properties late of Amesbury Priory which Sir Thomas Seymour had licence in 1541 to alienate to Henry Brouncker. There seems to be no later reference to the manor, but the devolution of the estate to the Hulberts and the Awdrys was traced by Colonel R. W. Awdry. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1290	<p>1. In 1290 the Prioress of Amesbury, as lady of Melksham, requested payment of £1 19s 8d annual rent which she claimed that John de Besil used to pay to her out of Woodrow manor as a member of Melksham. Whether she substantiated her claim has not been ascertained. Queen Eleanor died in 1290 and Woodrow manor was granted in 1299 to Margaret, sister of Philip of France, on her marriage to Edward I, and confirmed to her in 1310. It was granted in 1318, on Margaret's death, to Isabel, wife of Edward II, as jointure worth £14 10s a year, and re-granted to her in 1331, and (with further liberties) in 1345. Isabel died in 1358, and the manor reverted to the Crown. In 1359 it was granted to Queen Philippa (as worth £13 6s 8d a year), and in 1361 she let it to farm to John Roches the younger for ten years on a repairing lease, reserving fees and advisories. Roches paid a rent equivalent to the yearly value of 1359 but had an annual allowance of 13s 4d. On Philippa's death in 1369 it reverted again to the Crown. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1291	<p>1. The value of Canonhold was considerable. The priest's Domesday holding was worth 40s in 1291 the figure given was £46 13s 4d, in 1428 (in the assessment for the tax of 1/10th) £56 13s 4d and in 1535 £42 15s 11d less 8s due to the Prioress of Amesbury and £2 15s 8d in alms on the anniversaries of Henry II and Henry III. The rent charged by the dean and chapter during the period 1338 to 1459 was £80, and the accounts show that small amounts were remitted from time to time, but they never amount to more than £2 in the quarter. From 1459 to 1540 the rent varied from £43 3s 4d to £46 6s 2d; this last figure remained fixed as the rent until 1641, but after the Restoration, although the rent was nominally the same, the actual amount paid seems to have been £43 8s 2d. In 1694 the rent was the same and the 8s, previously due to the Prioress of Amesbury, was now paid to her successors in the capital manor £6 1s 8d was due to the vicar. The fine upon entry at this period was large. In 1739 upon a request for entry of new lives the 'parsonage' was valued at £560 2s 6d a year, subject only to a quit-rent of £49 8s 2d. The chapter normally took one and a half year's clear value for putting in a new life if the remaining lives were good, and three-quarters for exchange of a 'common and equal life', but more for both if the surviving lives were old or infirm. On the former basis the two operations would have meant a fine of £1,149 2s 3d but the chapter took 1,000 guineas. When the lease was bought by the Awdry family, Jeremiah Awdry bid £3,600. In 1834 the fine for entering a new life aged 5 to two lives of 72 and 23 was £4,550 calculated on a net annual value of £1,676 19s 8d. The rent due to the capital manor was dropped in 1859 as obsolete. In 1814 the vicar exchanged his rent (together</p>

Year	Event
	<p>with an allotment on Blackmore Common) for a small part of Can Meadow which adjoined his garden. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p> <p>2. The vicarage of Melksham was valued at £10 in 1291 and at £38 9s 4d in 1535 when the vicar asked for the allocation of £6 13s 4d for a chaplain to celebrate at Melksham and £6 for another to celebrate at either Seend or Erlestoke. The vicarial tithes and oblations were valued in 1341 at £5. The glebe lands were surveyed in 1608, 1629, 1704, and 1783; the survey of 1783 mentions the vicar's right of common for 7 cows, or 3 horses and 1 cow. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1296	<p>1. The manor of Beanacre is first mentioned as a manor in 1296. It was owned by Amesbury Abbey and was held by various families including Bluet, Baynard and Daniell. The manor house (Beanacre Old Manor) has a late 14th century open hall and solar, which was remodelled in the early 16th century, while the chapel to the rear is of c1500.</p>
1297	<p>1. In 1297, while Wigan of Cherburgh (II)'s relict still held her dower, John, the son of a Roger of Cherburgh, granted the manor to Sir Hugh le Despenser the elder. In 1302 Peter de la Huse, grandson of Nicholas, released his right to the dower lands. No explanation has been found of how the manor came into the hands of Roger and his son John.</p>
1300s	<p>1. During the 1300s St. Michael's church was enlarged, remodelled and many additions were made. The old Norman nave was rebuilt in about the year 1300, probably because more room was required. The pillars on the north side of the nave are not quite the same as those on the south side although they are of about the same date. Both the north and south aisles were erected. (<i>the Parish Church of St. Michael Melksham, an historic guide by B Watkins Ph. D.</i>)</p>
1309	<p>1. Seend Park is first expressly mentioned in 1309 when it was invaded by rioters. It appears generally to have descended with the manor but in 1373 the custody was granted to Thomas Spigurnel during the nonage of the daughters of Humphrey le Despenser. In 1421 it again passed with the manor. In the survey of Melksham Forest made in 1612 it was stated that Seend Park and 'Chaugrove' were enjoyed by Ambrose Dautsey as parcel of Melksham manor. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1315-17	<p>1. The Great famine hit Europe between 1315 and 1317. It was caused by a whole spring and summer of relentless heavy rain that caused widespread crop failures forcing grain prices to unprecedented levels. This vastly depleted the availability of grain for humans and hay or straw for animals so that disease claimed many victims weakened by the famine, and led to a period of mass starvation.</p> <p>2. A chapel at Great Chalfield Manor was first mentioned in 1316 and to a church in 1349.</p>
1325	<p>1. In 1325 William of Highway settled Shaw manor, now so styled, on Stephen and Constance de la More for Stephen's life; it was then held in dower by Isabel, relict of Ralph le Gras, and probably a daughter of William. Ralph le Gras is perhaps to be identified as the father of John, bailiff of the capital manor. In 1341 William atte More, possibly Stephen's son, held the manor as ½ knight's fee. On William's death, the date of which is not known, a life interest in the manor passed to his relict's second husband, Sir Simon Basset. In 1364 Cecily, daughter of William atte More, was granted the reversion of the manor by her mother and Sir Simon Basset. Cecily did not die until 1393 but in 1379 the reversion was granted by Philippa, daughter of Richard Highway (possibly a younger brother of William of Highway), to Sir John Roches. It is not clear what prompted the family to make this arrangement. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1326	<p>1 After Roger Despenser's execution in October 1326 Shaw Manor was granted to Queen Isabel as part of her dower. Gilbert of Berwick was appointed in 1330 to the custody of Seend and the queen's other Wiltshire manors. The manor was granted in 1331 to Edward de Bohun in fee and in 1332 Bohun had licence to settle it on his wife, himself and his heirs.</p>
1331	<p>1. In 1331 Seend manor was granted to Edward de Bohun, twin brother of William de Bohun, 1st Earl of Northampton. William and Edward were two of the younger sons of Humphrey de Barun, 4th Earl of Hereford. Edward had died by 1337, when the Crown granted Seend manor to Hugh Le Despencer, Baron Le Despencer, subject to the life interest of Edward's widow Margaret. In 1341 Margaret died and livery of seisin was granted to Humphrey de Bohun, 6th Earl of Hereford. After Humphrey's death in 1361, Seend was held successively by Humphrey de Bohun, 7th Earl of Hereford until his death in 1373 and the 7th earl's widow until her death in 1419.</p>
1332	<p>1. Parliament was divided into two houses, the Lords and the Commons and English became the court language replacing Norman French.</p> <p>2. In the Wiltshire Tax List of 1332 Rowde, Melksham, Broom, in Swindon, and the barton of Marlborough were assessed as ancient demesne of the Crown. The first and last were the estates attached to the royal castles of, respectively, Devizes and Marlborough, and Melksham was a royal manor until the later 13th century when it was proved to be ancient demesne. Broom presumably</p>

Year	Event
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	made good a claim to be ancient demesne on the grounds that Henry I gave it to the priory of Marcigny, and it may have been considered such in 1305.				
	Melksham (<i>Melkesham</i>)				
	TENTH				
	John Flour	5s		John Sanddrigge	9s
	William Sex	2s		Roger Synard	7s
	William atte Wyke	3s		Thomas Puche	5s
	William Pallynges	2s		Adam in the Hole	5s
	John Alysaundre	3s	4d	Thomas Flour	3s
	Roger Mauclerke	2s		Thomas le Whyte	4s
	John Harpere	5s		Roger in the Hurne	5s
	John Seldeke	6s		Reynold Chasche	5s
	Roger Thurstayn	6s		John Scanne	3s
	John Vaus	9s		John Umfray	2s
	Ralph le Cras	10s		Adam Casche	2s
	Richard Stondham	3s		William Tailour	3s
	Richard ate Hacche	6s		Roger Langynoghe	
	Stephen Harpere	10s		William Hore	4s
	William Harpere	10s		Philip Charlynge	3s
	Rainer Barage	8s		Alice Hore	6s
	John Leyshelle	4s		William le Fisshere	4s
	Roger ate Inne	2s		Robert Brunelcrofte	3s
	William Godefray	4s		John Elyofe	3s
	Robert ate Lupeyate	8s		Gilbert le Newe	2s
	William Sanddrigge	10s		Adam Mody	2s
				Total of the tenth £10 10s. Proved.	
	Under-assessors				
	John le Crus		18d		
	John Coufold		12d		
	William Grore		10d		
	Total 3s 4d				
	3.	Total for the whole hundred of Melksham with the tax of the under-assessors £43 4s 4d. Proved.			
	4.	In the borough of Marlborough (<i>Marleberge</i>) a Roger de Melksham paid 12d.			
1335	1.	The chapel of St. Leonard at Shaw existed before 1335, and the dean and chapter were bound to provide a priest to say Mass for the deceased lords of Castle Combe; in 1454 and in 1460 the steward of the manor was ordered to see that this duty which had been neglected was performed. No further record of the chapel has been found. Shaw, with Whitley, was formed as a district chapelry in 1843 and declared a vicarage in 1866. The present patron is the Vicar of Melksham. (<i>British History on line</i>)			
1338	1.	The first recorded lessee of the Rectory Manor in Melksham is John de 'Byncrot', a canon, who in 1338 'on exchange with Robert of Worth' took the farm of the manor at £80. The manor was let to another canon, Robert of Baldock, for the same rent in 1348. In 1351 the manor, or a part of it, was leased at a rent of £24 to a lay farmer, William Whaf, who was hayward of the capital manor. Whaf was already a sub-lessee of the manor and held 40 acres of land with appurtenances in 1348. Another sub-lessee, John Stonyng, is recorded at the same time with a similar holding. In 1360 another canon, William of Bothwell, took the farm at £80. Before 1388 the farm was in the hands of John Chitterne, a canon residentiary of Salisbury, who in that year resigned the lease. The manor was then taken in hand by the dean and chapter and the manorial property repaired. No further lease seems to have been made until 1393 when Canon Richard Clifford (later Bishop			

Year	Event
	<p>of London), in default of his seniors, accepted the 'long vacant' farm. The chapter agreed to pay him 20 marks for repairs. Clifford did not perhaps retain the farm long nor interest himself in the estate to any great extent, for in 1406 the manor 'long since in lay hands and suffering from great defects' was granted to John Chitterne, almost certainly the canon who had managed the estate earlier. It is not clear whether Chitterne actually took the farm of the manor or only managed it, for in the following year a note occurs that the farm is still in hand and that he is to continue managing the estate. <i>(British History on line)</i></p> <p>2. The value of Canonhold manor lay very largely in the tithes. In 1388 when the manor was kept in hand they amounted to about £75 and included payments from all the tithings of Melksham together with Erlestone. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1339	<p>1. The manor of Shaw was held in the 13th century as part of the barony of Castle Combe. The barony, held before 1339 by Giles de Badlesmere, was partitioned in 1341, subject to his relict's dower. Shaw was assigned to his sister Elizabeth, relict of Edmund de Mortimer, Earl of March. She had married secondly William de Bohun, Earl of Northampton. In 1398 the overlordship of Shaw was said to be in the hands of Roger de Mortimer; in 1410 the heir of Stephen le Scrope held it and in 1425 Edmund, Earl of March. From 1428, however, it remained with the Scrope family, overlords of the Barony of Castle Combe. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1345	<p>1. A year of unusual drought, the rain being very sparse in the spring and sheep scab which the shepherds treated with a compound of sulphur oil and tar was widespread.</p>
1346	<p>1. From 1346 to 1353 an outbreak of the Plague ravaged Europe, Africa, and Asia, with an estimated death toll between 75 and 200 million people. Thought to have originated in Asia, the Plague most likely jumped continents via the fleas living on the rats that so frequently lived aboard merchant ships. Ports being major urban centres at the time, were the perfect breeding ground for the rats and fleas, and thus the insidious bacterium flourished, devastating three continents in its wake <i>(Google)</i></p>
1347	<p>1. There was again a very poor harvest and the weather was so inclement that few lambs survived.</p>
1348	<p>1. In 1348 the bubonic plague, known as the black death, arrived in England. The first known case was a seaman who arrived at Weymouth, Dorset from Gascony in June 1348. By the autumn the plague had reached London and by summer 1349 it covered the entire country before dying down by December. The reported number of casualties as a result of the Black Death varies but now the figure of 40 – 60 percent of the population is widely accepted.</p>
1349	<p>1 Melksham weavers are mentioned as early as 1349, but the first specific reference to mills that has been found occurs in 1555 when there were two fulling mills in the town. No exact quantitative analysis is possible but it seems likely that the Melksham industry followed the fortunes, on a smaller scale, of those at Bradford and Trowbridge. In its most prosperous days in the 16th and early 17th centuries. <i>(British History on line)</i></p> <p>2 No fewer than forty-six people in Melksham were charged before the deputies on the Feast of St. Barnabas for offending against the Statute of Labourers. Due to the shortage of labour after the Black Plague, labourers tried to demand higher pay. The Statute of Labourers, introduced by Parliament, attempted to fix prices and wages at the level they were at in 1344.</p>
1351	<p>1. Stocks had become common in England by the mid-14th century. In 1351 a law (the Statute of Labourers) was introduced requiring every town to provide and maintain a set of stocks. This had been implemented as a reaction to the Black Death, which had halved the population. The consequent scarcity of labour had enabled agricultural labourers to demand increased pay. The Statute attempted to discourage this trend by providing that anyone demanding (or offering) higher wages should be set in the stocks for up to 3 days. <i>(Google)</i></p> <p>2. The Canonhold was let jointly to John Stonying and William Whaf, the Hayward of the capital manor. John Stonying and his wife Alice paid a rent of 50s. 3d. annually to the Canon John de Ryvers of the Church of St Mary, Salisbury and an additional fee of 9s. 8d. to the hanaper (a department of the Treasury). In return they acquired 40 acres of rough pasture, one rood of ploughland and one acre of spring pasture. On this they were allowed to graze four oxen, five cows and four bullocks for fattening. William Whaf and his wife Agnes acquired a similar holding. His position as Hayward made him overseer for the crops, pasture and beasts of the capital manor and he could arrest any trespassers. In return for these responsibilities he was allotted a chamber in the manor and over a ton of barley per year. This is the first mention of a house on the manor farm. <i>(From Domesday to Jubilee, Isabel Ide & Megan Watts)</i></p>
1360	<p>1. Canonhold changed tenants when William of Bothwell took over from William Whaf and John Stonying.</p>

Year	Event
1361	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 In 1361-2 the Black Death plague returned to England , this time causing the death of around 20 percent of the population. After this the plague continued to return intermittently throughout the 14th and 15th centuries in local or national outbreaks with less severe effects. 2 Humphrey the 10th earl of Hereford died in 1361 and was succeeded by his nephew and namesake who died in 1373; the manor of Seend was held as part of the dower of his relict until her death in 1419. The property was then kept in hand until 1421. In this year the earldoms of Hereford, Essex, and Northampton were rearranged, and the manor of Seend was assigned <i>inter alia</i> to the pourparty of Anne, Countess of Stafford, daughter of Eleanor de Bohun co-heiress of the eleventh earl, and cousin of Henry V. In 1431 the countess put the manor in trust for Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, son of the other Bohun co-heiress, Mary, who had married Henry Earl of Derby, later Henry IV. Gloucester died in 1447 without issue; in or before 1461 the manor had passed to John Bouchier, Lord Berners, fourth son of the Countess of Stafford and her second husband Sir William Bouchier. Berners died in 1474 and was succeeded by his son of the same name, the translator of Froissart. (<i>British History on line</i>)
1370	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1370 the manor of Woodrow was let to farm to John Bluet for seven years at 20 marks a year; withdrawn in view of the lease to Roches; let to farm to Roches again in 1371 for ten years, in 1377 for four years, on a repairing lease in 1381 for seven years, and in 1382 for ten years. In 1390 it was granted to Robert Feryby for life, and on his death in 1392 to John Ellingham for life, free of rent; but in the same year it was granted for life to Thomas Trewyn, and Ellingham was compensated. Trewyn, after exceptional vicissitudes, died holding the manor twenty-five years later. It was taken into the king's hand in 1397, and in the same year granted for life to the king's esquires William Alyngton and Robert Cary. In 1399 it was granted for life to William Alyngton alone, with housebote and hedgebote in Blackmore forest. It was then valued at 25 marks. In 1401, however, Trewyn had confirmation of the grant of 1392. The ensuing events are remarkable. About this time Peter Besil, great—great-grandson of John and Margaret, claimed the manor as their heir under the grant of 1272; Trewyn pleaded that Besil had released his claim in 1403; Besil replied (and a Southwark jury confirmed) that Trewyn and others had imprisoned him at Southwark and extorted the release; and the manor was adjudged to Besil. Besil is said to have granted the manor by a charter dated at Melksham in 1408 to feoffees that included Trewyn amongst their number; a fine concerned with the transaction does not mention Trewyn but records a payment of 100 marks to Besil by the co-feoffees of the Melksham charter as a consideration for the conveyance. Trewyn is said to have regained sole right in the manor by 1412. On his death in 1417, leaving bequests for Melksham church and the repair of local roads, he bequeathed the manor for life to his relict Elizabeth (who subsequently married Sir John Hamelyn) with remainder to Sir Walter and Elizabeth Beauchamp and Robert Salman. Beauchamp, Salman, and Elizabeth Hamelyn died, and Elizabeth Beauchamp entered the manor which was confirmed to her. Thereafter she granted it to Sir William Beauchamp, afterwards styled Lord St. Amand. St. Amand settled it in 1447–8 on himself and his wife in fee tail, and died in 1457. His wife survived him with a son Richard, and obtained the custody of the manor. She married Sir Roger Tocotes and the king, in 1464, confirmed to Tocotes and his wife their estate in the manor and released his own right to them and Sir William Beauchamp's heirs. In 1466–7 William Besil, another descendant of John and Margaret, unsuccessfully revived the family's claim. (<i>British History on line</i>)
1380	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Poll Tax was levied amounting to a shilling a head for the entire male population.
1381	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A peasant's revolt against the Poll Tax also called 'Watt Tyler's Rebellion' was a major uprising across large parts of England. 2. A John Lovell is known to have been living in Melksham in 1381 but no further reference to Lovell property has been found until 1558
1388	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Statute of Cambridge was a piece of English legislation that placed restrictions on the movement of labourers and beggars. It prohibited any labourer from leaving the hundred, rape, wapentake, city or borough where he was living, without a testimonial showing reasonable cause for his departure. Any labourer found wandering without such letter was to be put in the stocks until he found surety to return to the town from which he came. The 1388 Act is often regarded as the first English Poor Law; however, lack of enforcement limited its impact and effect.
1400s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once again, during the 1400s St. Michael's church was remodelled and many additions were made.
1401	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the death of Sir John Roches in 1401 his property was divided between co-heiresses but Shaw manor was held in dower by his relict until her death in 1410. From this time until 1428 the manor was held by Elizabeth, elder daughter of Roches, and her husband Sir Walter Beauchamp. In or before that year John Baynton, son of the other Roches heiress came of age and took possession

Year	Event
	<p>of the manor. From that time until the middle of the 16th century Shaw followed the descent of Horton in Bishop's Cannings. Sir Edward Baynton died holding Shaw in 1545 and the manor followed the descent of Bromham Battle until c1557 when Andrew Baynton sold it to John Gerrish, who had held a life interest in the manor in 1545. The manor remained in the Gerrish family until 1637, passing from John to William (d. 1604), to John (d. 1635), and to another William grandson of the second John, who sold the mansion and Shaw Farm in 1637 to John Ashe of Freshford (Som.). Shaw House and farm were sold in 1701 by Ash or a descendant of the same name to Thomas Smith. Smith rebuilt the mansion and for the next fifty years Shaw House seems to have been one of the centres of country life in north-west Wiltshire. Smith's diary for 1721–2 has been preserved and printed and records the life of the neighbourhood in considerable detail. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1415	<p>1. Some form of crossing the river Avon has no doubt always existed in Melksham though the earliest crossing may have been made by a ford using the island which splits the river in two north of the modern bridge. The bridge is first mentioned in records in 1415 when William Honeston bequeathed a sum of money towards its maintenance. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1417	<p>1. Lowbourne Bridge which crosses Clackers Brook is mentioned in 1417 as 'Ludborn' when Thomas Trewin bequeathed a sum towards its maintenance.</p>
1419	<p>1. John Chitterne died in 1419 and no record of any further lessees of the Rectory Manor of Melksham, or Canonhold, has been found for the 15th century.</p> <p>2. In 1419 the 'site' of the manor of Seen Park covered 2 acres, on which stood a tiled hall and chamber and a thatched stable and dovecote. Licence to crenelated was granted in 1347. In 1612 'Seend manor' lay inside the park. The house now called the Manor House, immediately east of Church Lane, was rebuilt by Ambrose (IV) Awdry, (d. 1789), and altered and enlarged in the 19th century. It is a rectangular stone house with two stories and attic. The south front has five dormers and five windows on each floor. There is a modillioned cornice, with a plain parapet, and a modern one-story addition on the east side. The north or entrance front is 19th-century work, stucco-fronted, with a small moulded cornice and plain parapet, a central round-headed doorway, and a porch of Ionic columns, frieze, and moulded cornice. The ground floor of the house is rusticated. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1421	<p>1. In 1421 Seend Manor was granted to Anne of Gloucester*, Countess of Stafford. In 1431 the countess placed the manor in trust for her nephew Humphrey of Lancaster, 1st Duke of Gloucester. The Duke died heirless in 1447 and by 1461 Seend Manor had passed to John Bouchier, 1st Baron Berners, a son of Anne of Gloucester's remarriage to William Bouchier, 1st Count of Eu. John Bouchier's grandson John Bouchier, 2nd Baron Berners inherited Seend in 1447 and mortgaged it in 1506. The second Baron died in 1533 and his executors sold Seend manor to William Sharnington of Lacock in 1539. William left Seend to his brother Henry in 1553, who left it to his daughter Grace and son-in-law Sir Anthony Mildmay in 1581. Mildmay died in 1617 and Grace in 1620, leaving Seend to their daughter Mary and son-in-law Francis Fane, who was created 1st Earl of Westmorland in 1624. Seend remained in the family until Charles Fane, 3rd Earl of Westmorland sold it to Sir Richard Blake in 1668. Sir Richard died in 1683 and his widow Elizabeth married Edward Hearst. They mortgaged Seend in 1690. After their deaths, Seend passed to Elizabeth and Sir Richard's daughter Mary, who was married to a Robert Dormer. Robert and Mary left Seend to their daughter Elizabeth and her husband John Fortescue Aland, who in 1746 was created Baron Fortescue of Cretan in the Peerage of Ireland. The last known record of the manor dates from 1723.</p> <p>2. *Anne of Gloucester, Countess of Stafford (30-4-1383 – 16-10-1438) was the eldest daughter and eventually sole heiress of Thomas of Woodstock, 1st Duke of Gloucester (the fifth surviving son and youngest child of King Edward III), by his wife Eleanor de Bohun, one of the two daughters and co-heiresses of Humphrey de Bohun, 7th Earl of a Hereford, 6th Earl of Essex (1341–1373) of Pleshey Castle in Essex.</p>
1450	<p>1. The Prioress of Amesbury added the Lady Chapel to Melksham's church of St. Michael and all Angels</p>
1460	<p>1. Inquisition of same date and place before the same jury of 16. On Monday before All Saints 39 Henry VI [1460] the said John Wolanton sold 20 cartloads or wagon-loads of trees or timber lately growing in the forest of Melksham, worth 6d. a wagon-load, To Phillip Collebrond of Lacock, collier, and divers other men, [<i>Endorsed</i>] Jury of Lacock Borough. (<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, Chancery.</i>)</p>
1461	<p>1. Inquisition of same date and place before with a jury partly the same. On 4 January 39 Henry VI [1461] Henry Adam and John Wolanton of Melksham, yeoman, sold to John Bowes and John Benett 20 wagon-loads or cartloads of great timber and trees worth 12d. a cartload. On the same</p>

Year	Event
	<p>day the same John Wolanton sold to John Panther of Melksham, husbandman, the hedges and fences of a park called pinfold in 'Le Fryth' in the forest of Melksham for 7s. whereas it was worth 13s. 4d. and to John Avery the hedges and fences of another park called pinfold in Blackmore in the same forest for 5s. whereas it was worth 10s. These parks ought to exist in the forest for 3 full years, whereas they had only been one and half years.</p> <p>2. There are in the forest of Melksham 30 bucks and 110 immature deer (<i>rascallia</i>) and no more according to the juror's estimation. [<i>Endorsed</i>] Jury of Melksham hundred. [<i>Faded</i>] (<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, Chancery.</i>)</p>
1465	<p>1. Robert Brouncker was born. Robert and Henry together rented the manor of Earlestone from the Countess of Salisbury. Robert was a protégée of Sir Edward Baynton of Bromham, one of the greatest Wiltshire landowners. In his will Robert left £20 for building a tower for Melksham church; £10 for the church at Whaddon; money for repairing the bridge and to mending the highways "where they do most require it"; £6 13s 4d to a priest to pray for his soul. He married (unknown) Golding.</p> <p>2. The moated Manor House of Great Chalfield was built around 1465-1480 for Thomas Tropenell who made a fortune as a clothier.</p>
1491	<p>1. In 1491 the Prioress of Amesbury, Alice Fisher, then holder of the manor, obtained a 2 day fair for Melksham on the 15th and 16th July, thus providing more commercial opportunities. On the second day a fun fair was held and this continued until 1910.</p> <p>2. Elizabeth Tocotes died in 1491 (the manor of Woodrow being then valued at £20), and her son Richard, Lord St. Amand, succeeded. He died in 1508 without legitimate issue, and in 1532 his natural son Sir Anthony St. Amand sold the manor to Sir Richard Lyster, who in 1541 ceded it to Richard Blount for £166 13s 4d. The grant of 1541 was confirmed by fine in 1547, and in 1548 Richard and Elizabeth Blount sold the manor to Sir William Sharington and his heirs. It passed with Seend to the Earls of Westmorland, and it is not mentioned after 1683. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1494	<p>1. Stocks were later used to control the unemployed. The Vagabonds and Beggars Act 1494 provided that "Vagabonds, idle and suspected persons shall be set in the stocks for three days and three nights and have none other sustenance but bread and water and then shall be put out of Town." (<i>Google</i>)</p>
1500s-1600	<p>1. The clothing industry was at its peak in Melksham during this period producing white un-dyed broadcloth.</p>
1500	<p>1. The church of Holy Cross, Seend, consists of chancel, nave, north and south aisles and porches, western tower, and vestry. It was rebuilt about the end of the 15th century, and only part of the tower and the east end of the south aisle remain from the earlier church. The present north aisle was built by John Stokes, a clothier; two brasses dated 1494 mark the burial place of Stokes and his wife. The chancel was rebuilt in 1876, and a little later the west end of the south aisle was rebuilt and a south porch added. At the east end of the south aisle is a staircase leading to a doorway which gave access to the rood; remains of colour round the door reveal the profile of the loft, and a central figure may still be traced on the wall above the chancel arch, but most of the painting was removed in 1880. There were three bells at Seend in 1553; there is now a peal of six: (1) 1880, Mears & Stainbank; (2) 1636 recast 1880, Mears & Stainbank; (3) and (4) 1636; (5) 1793, R. & J. Wells, Aldbourne; (6) 1636 recast by Taylor 1912. Edward VI's Commissioners left 15½ oz. silver for the church, and took 2½ oz. for the king's use. The church plate now comprises a chalice with paten cover of 1712 and a chalice, paten and flagon bought by subscription in 1875. The registers begin in 1612, and are complete except for a few years between 1717 and 1723. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p> <p>2. The 'Stoks' of Seend Church are a detailed record, compiled about 1500 to 1520, of 31 endowments of lights, obits, and other commemorations, varying from 7s to 15s, and forming a total of £15 18s. They refer to three altars of Our Lady situated in the porch, in St. Nicholas aisle, and in the south aisle; and to altars of Our Lady of Pity, St. Christopher, St. Katherine, St. Nicholas, and St. 'Sythe' (probably St. Osith). The lamp before the High Cross and Our Lady's light in the chancel are mentioned. Edward Powell, prebendary of Salisbury and Lincoln, incumbent of two other benefices besides Melksham, spoke against Henry VIII's marriage. He was deprived in 1534 and executed in 1540. Bohun Fox, Vicar of Melksham (1697–1750), established a charity school, and persecuted the Quakers with unflagging animosity. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1506	<p>1. The manor of Seend was mortgaged in 1506; Berners died without issue in 1533. His executors sold the reversion in 1539 to William Sharington of Lacock who already held some land in the manor. The manor was again mortgaged in 1543. Sharington was attainted in 1549, pardoned</p>

Year	Event
	<p>and restored in blood within twelve months, and allowed to buy back his property-including the manors of Seend, Seend Row, and Woodrow. He died without issue in 1553, and his brother Henry succeeded. Henry died in 1581, having settled the three manors in 1573 on his daughter Grace and her husband Sir Anthony Mildmay. Their daughter Mary and her husband Francis Fane obtained the manors of Seend and Seend Row by marriage settlement in 1599. Grace died in 1620, and Fane was created Earl of Westmorland in 1624. In 1626 the three manors were put in trust for his son Mildmay who succeeded to the estate on the death of his mother in 1640. They were sold in 1668 by Charles, the next earl, to Sir Richard Blake. Sir Richard died in 1683 and his relict Elizabeth married secondly Edward Hearst. No further record occurs of the manor of Woodrow. Seend and Seend Row were mortgaged in 1690 by the Hearsts and some time after that, presumably at the death of Elizabeth, the two manors passed to her daughter by her first marriage, Mary, who had married a Robert Dormer. The manors passed to their daughter Elizabeth who had married Sir John Fortescue Aland and are last mentioned in 1723. The manor of Seend may have passed into the Ludlow-Bruges estate. It has repeatedly been credited to the Awdry family, perhaps through occupation of the manor house, or by confusion with Seend Row. It was said in 1904 that courts leet were held within the memory of persons then living, or recently dead. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1531	<p>1. The Poor Law Act of 1531 directed “how aged, poor, and impotent Persons, compelled to live by Alms, shall be ordered, and how Vagabonds and Beggars shall be punished. The former were to be licensed to beg, the latter if found begging were to be whipped or put in the stocks for three days and nights with bread and water only and then to return to their birth-place and put to labour.” <i>(Google)</i></p>
1533	<p>1. Henry VIII severed ties with the Catholic Church and declared himself head of the Church of England.</p>
1536	<p>1. Thomas Cromwell began the dissolution of the monasteries under the ‘Reformation’ in 1536 and the money gained from this helped Henry VIII to bring about an effective Navy.</p> <p>2. Henry Brouncker (1) was born before 1536. Henry and Robert together rented the manor of Earlestoke from the Countess of Salisbury. Henry acquired the Capital Manor of Melksham in 1541. Henry leased the Rectory manor and parsonage for 99 years. He was Sheriff of Wiltshire in 1558 and in the mid-1500s he built Place House.</p> <p>3. Robert Brouncker died in 1536.</p>
1539	<p>1. In the year 1539, a Richard Erle left by will the sum of £16 13s. 4d. for building the tower at Melksham Church, to be added to 40shillings already given. From the architecture of the Church, however, it would seem certain that there must have been a tower before this – probably a Norman one.</p>
1540	<p>1. The tithing of Seend Row was amongst the Wiltshire property of the abbey of Lacock bought by Sir William Sharington in 1540. In 1542 Sharington was concerned in a settlement of his lands which then included property of Amesbury priory in the tithing. Seend Row is first referred to as a manor in 1550 after Sharington's attainder and restoration and from that time until 1723 devolved with the manor of Seend. The manor is next recorded in 1761 when it was in the hands of Ambrose Awdry the younger and it is last recorded in 1789. The ascription of the manor of Seend to the Awdry family in a gamekeepers deputation of 1821 probably refers to Seend Row. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1541	<p>1. The Manor of Melksham was granted in 1541 to Sir Thomas Seymour, who apparently sold it at once to Henry Brouncker of Melksham. Brouncker let or mortgaged the capital messuage and other property in 1562, for eight years, to Laurence Hyde and John Smyth. Henry Brouncker died in 1569 and was succeeded by his son and heir Sir William: some of his property in Melksham he bequeathed to another son Henry. Sir William died in 1596 and his son and heir Henry only two years later. Henry's son William was then aged two and the manor was conveyed to Sir John Dauntsey in trust. Henry's relict, Gertrude, later married Dauntsey's eldest son Ambrose. In 1634 William was in possession of his inheritance and conveyed the manor to Sir John Danvers who had married Elizabeth, daughter of Gertrude Brouncker's second marriage. Sir John died in 1655 and the manor passed to his kinsman of the same name. This John Danvers finally sold the manor to Walter Long the younger of Whaddon in 1671 and thereafter the manor followed the same descent as that of Whaddon (q.v.). While in the hands of the Brounckers and the Danverses the manor was on several occasions mortgaged. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1546	<p>2. Whitley, on the north-west outskirts of Melksham, appears as a manor in 1546, in documents relating to Andrew Baynton's exchange with Lord Seymour of Sudeley. It seems unlikely that the estate was, properly speaking, a manor at this time. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>

Year	Event
1548	<p>1. John Chitterne who managed the Rectory Manor died in 1419 and no record of any further lessees has been found for the 15th century. In 1548 Henry Brouncker took the manor and parsonage on a ninety-nine year lease. From this time until the 20th century Canonhold was in the hands of a succession of lay farmers. The lease descended to Brouncker's son William in 1570 and to his grandson, another William, in 1624. No further lessees are recorded before the Interregnum: in 1650 the manor was sold to John Ashe and four years later the parsonage barn and a courtyard belonging to it were leased or subleased to Thomas Badcocke. Two years after the restoration of dean and chapter property in 1660, the manor and parsonage were leased to Sir Francis Fane. Before 1688 the lease passed to William Brownwick and in that year to Arthur Brownwick. The parsonage was leased or subleased to William Blagden in 1685 and the rent mentioned suggests that this was a lease of the whole manor. In 1692 John Ash was holding the manor jointly with nominees of the Dean and Chapter, possibly as a trustee. In 1693 Richard Coxeter of Bampton (Oxon.) leased the manor and parsonage and probably retained the lease until 1733 when he or another of the same name conveyed the manor to Benjamin Haskins Stiles. Stiles died in 1739 and the lease passed to his nephew Sir Francis Haskins Eyles Stiles, the third baronet. Sir Francis left England for Naples probably in the early 1750's and his estates including Melksham and Bishop's Cannings (q.v.) were 'sold in Chancery'. Melksham was bought (or at least a bid was made for it) by Jeremiah Awdry on whose death in 1754 during the course of the sale, the lease passed to his nephew John Awdry of Notton. At the death of his uncle in 1754 John Awdry was almost certainly a minor; a long period of litigation followed since his title was apparently disputed but possibly by 1760 and certainly by 1762 an agreement was reached. Under a lease of that year, 1762, Canonhold passed to Thomas Goddard in trust for John Awdry. Thomas Goddard was possibly a brother of Ambrose Goddard of Swindon whose daughter Priscilla married John Awdry in 1765. The trust was confirmed in 1768; in 1777 the manor was sub-leased to Ambrose Goddard, possibly John Awdry's brother-in-law; ten years later John Awdry asked Goddard to mortgage the manor to James Sutton. From this time until the 19th century the lease remained with the main branch of the Awdry family, passing to John's son of the same name (d. 1844), to his grandson John Wither who in 1876 bought the reversionary interest of the landed estate of the manor for £4,000. In 1802 Goddard had presumably redeemed the mortgage since a lease of that year shows him holding the manor with remainders to John Awdry and John's half-brother Jeremiah. In 1834 the manor was subleased to John Awdry's cousin William Henry, third son of John's paternal uncle, Ambrose; the lease contained a remainder for William Henry's son, West. The manor passed finally to his great grandson Charles (d. 1912). Sir John died in 1878 and his estates were placed in the hands of trustees until the death of his relict in 1900. In 1901 the property passed to Charles, fourth son of Sir John's second marriage; all the copyhold had been extinguished by this time. At the same time the leasehold interest in rectorial tithes was purchased from the trustees by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for £950. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1549	<p>1. The Statute of Legal Settlement provided for the branding or enslavement of sturdy beggars. The impotent poor were to receive relief and have cottages erected for their use.</p> <p>2. There were armed rebellions in the West Country against religious reforms.</p>
1550	<p>1. Around this time Place House was built between the church and the market place by Henry Brouncker.</p> <p>2. Monkton House was built.</p>
1553	<p>1. From <i>Nightingale's History of the Church Plate of Wilts.</i> we learn that in 1553 the Commissioners of Henry VIII left for the church a chalice, and took 13 oz. in plate for the king. The church plate was stolen in 1803, and replaced with pewter; new plate was bought about 1881; three vessels were stolen in 1893, and identified twenty years later in British Guiana. The church now possesses two patens, one hall-marked Exeter 1729 (presented in 1876) and another silver-gilt; one chalice of 1571 and another, probably Italian, of early-16th-century date.</p> <p>2. There were four bells in St. Michael's Church in 1553.</p>
1555	<p>1. Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester was burnt at the stake on 9th February 1555.</p> <p>2. Henry Long (1) bought the manor and fulling mill from the Bayntons of Bromham. There were two Fulling Mills in Melksham at this time.</p> <p>3. The manor of Seend Head does not occur under that title until the 16th century but small estates of land and property at 'Sendheved' and 'Shendeheved' were the subject of conveyances in the 13th century. In 1555 Christopher Dauntsey, a London merchant, conveyed the manor to Henry Viner another London merchant, possibly for purposes of mortgage. By 1559 Dauntsey was dead and his relict was dealing in the estate jointly with Viner. In 1568 Thomasine Dauntsey, the relict, brought an action in the Court of Requests against William Brouncker, owner of the capital manor</p>

Year	Event
	for unlawful disseisin of part of her manor of Seend Head. Brouncker was stated to have 'possession of divers deeds concerning the premises'. Evidently her action did not succeed, for in 1579 Brouncker was concerned in the conveyance of property that included the manor. No further record of the property has been found. (<i>British History on line</i>)
1557	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It seems probable that in Melksham, as in other Wiltshire clothing towns, the families of clothiers were founded by more humble workers in the industry. It is significant perhaps of this movement and of the early pre-eminence of Trowbridge that Walloons, settled by Henry VII in Seend, left the houses they had built there and moved to the larger town in 1575. Robert Marshman a weaver, who in 1570 had three looms in his house, was possibly an ancestor of him of the same name whose house was large enough to accommodate 80 Quakers at one of their earliest meetings in 1669. The fortune of the Brouncker family was probably founded in the same manner. The name occurs at least as early as 1378 at Chippenham; by 1541 Henry Brouncker had amassed sufficient resources to be able to purchase Melksham capital manor though there is no certain evidence that his fortune was founded on wool. One member of the family, Robert Brouncker of Broughton Gifford, was a master weaver in 1579. The Gerrish family who bought Shaw manor in 1557 are found as Seend clothiers in 1608. Many of the other great clothing families appear from the 16th century onwards to have merged in a very few generations in the local landed gentry. John Stokes of Seend, a wealthy clothier of the late 15th century, founded a family still wealthy in and after 1611. The Sumners of Seend, a Quaker family, were considerable landowners in the 17th century. The Selfes of Melksham and Seend had become local landowners by the late 17th century, and were connected by marriage with the Methuens of Bradford and the Awdrys of Melksham. The Awdrys, descended from an early 17th century vicar of Melksham, were comfortably settled in Melksham, Seend, and Lacock, and retained an interest in the clothing industry until the early 19th century. The workers in the industry in the 17th century seem less often to have founded clothing families. The names of Robert Flower, John Emeat, Abraham Little, Richard Mathew, all weavers of Melksham (and, incidentally, members of Quaker families) are not found amongst the later clothiers; and the same may be said of Thomas Smyth and William Curtis of Seend, John Cox (a fuller), John Parfect, Simon Shory, Thomas Singer, John Smith, and Samuel Unckles of Melksham. Quakers, such as the Newman family, the Beavens, Samuel Chivers, and John Beazer were prominent amongst the 18th Century cloth workers and a few were clothiers. (<i>British History on line</i>)
1558	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Henry Brouncker was Sheriff of Wiltshire. 2. From 1558 the history of Melksham Lovells is linked with that of <i>MELKSHAM BEANACRE</i>. This estate is first mentioned as a manor in a claim by the Prioress of Amesbury in 1296, but it possibly had its origins at least as early as 1275 when William and Isabel de Barache (or Barage) granted to William of Beanacre for life, at 21s. rent, a messuage and a carucate of land in Beanacre. Their land in Beanacre and Melksham was taken into the king's hand for defaults in the Prioress of Amesbury's court, and they failed to replevy it; it was sold in 1309 to John and Margery Bluet. In 1312 Ralph Bluet conveyed it to John and Eleanor Bluet. Sir John (II) Bluet died before 1349, and his relict in that year, and the king assigned to Edmund Baynard and his wife Eleanor (a daughter of Sir John) ½ messuage and other property in Beanacre. No specific record of the manor of Beanacre has been found from this time until it is mentioned jointly with Lovells in the 17th century, but there are some indications of the way in which both properties descended. Henry Whitoxmede of Beanacre, sometime bailiff of Trowbridge, died in 1526, seised of property in Melksham worth £13 6s 8d a year, held of the Prioress of Amesbury at a rent of £3 6s 6d. In 1522 this land had been the subject of a conveyance, possibly a settlement, of which Roger Baynard was one of the assignees and may thus be connected with the 14th-century holding of the Baynards in Beanacre. William, son and heir of Henry Whitoxmede, died in 1539 leaving two daughters, the elder of whom, Elizabeth, later married William Daniell, who, as has been shown above, was holding Lovells in 1558. There is, however, no way of certainly determining whether Daniell was holding by his own right or that of his wife. He died in 1604, seised in Elizabeth's right of 'the manor of Melksham Lovells and Beanacre', held of William Brouncker, successor to the Prioress of Amesbury in the capital manor. William (II) Daniell, who succeeded his father, settled Lovells on his son William and Beanacre on his wife Cecily. On his father's death in 1621 William (III) succeeded to the property and had livery of the conjoined manors in 1622. (<i>British History on line</i>)
1568	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The registers of baptisms and burials begin in 1568; those for marriages begin in 1569, and are defective for five years after 1657. Transcripts have been made of the complete set. There are two early drawings of the church in the parvise. Two Buckler water-colours of the church before restoration are in the W.A.S. library at Devizes. (<i>British History on line</i>)
1569	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Henry Brouncker died in 1569 and was succeeded by his son and heir Sir William: some of his property in Melksham he bequeathed to another son Henry.

Year	Event
1570	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 181 1517 210">1. The lease of the Manor of Melksham, Canonhold, descended to Henry Brouncker's son William. <li data-bbox="256 219 1517 248">2. In 1570 Robert Marshman a weaver, had three looms in his house.
1574	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 262 1517 784">1. The earliest churchwardens' book is dated 1574 and two more are extant for the periods 1740 to 1795 and 1799 to 1906. For the most part the accounts refer to church affairs, but payments to the parish constable and for poor relief are recorded. The earliest mention of the vestry occurs in 1721 when Thomas Smith, the diarist, records his attendance at several of its meetings. The only business he mentions was concerned with poor relief and the highway rates. The only surviving vestry minute book is for 1834 to 1855 and deals only with church affairs. The first book recording the administration of the poor law dates from 1687. The greater part of the extant evidence for parish government is concerned with poor relief, but the history of the local administration is illustrated in a fragmentary fashion in the public services it controlled. The first reference to communal activity that has been found refers to the digging of two wells. The money for the work was raised by public subscription: one shaft was sunk in the 'Beast Market', i.e. in the present market square: the town pump, which is presumably to be identified with this well, was demolished in 1945 to make room for the traffic island. The other well was 'on the right hand going from the Bath road in Cannon holding ... 45 feet from the Corner house in the Row from the Court or Place house'. The site of this second well is difficult to establish but it was possibly close to the northern corner of the present Church Street. In the early 20th Century there was a filling point here for the water bowsers that sprayed the streets to limit the dust.
1576	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 797 1517 891">1. An Act for Setting the Poor on Work, and for the avoiding of idleness stipulated that every town is to set up stocks of materials for the poor to work on and every county to set up a House of Correction for anyone refusing to work.
1579	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 904 1517 934">1. Robert Brouncker of Broughton Gifford, was a master weaver in 1579.
1589	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 949 1517 1008">1. John Harrington invented the first flushing water closet at his house at Kelston, Bath. Queen Elizabeth I orders a Harrington WC to be installed at Richmond Palace.
1594	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 1021 1517 1052">1. Henry Brouncker died.
1595	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 1066 1517 1097">1. Beanacre Manor built.
1596	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 1111 1517 1205">1. Sir William Brouncker died in 1596 and his son and heir Henry died only two years later. Henry's son William was then aged two and the manor was therefore conveyed to Sir John Dautsey in trust.
1597-8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 1218 1517 1312">1. An Acte for the Reliefe of the Poore required Churchwardens and four overseers in each parish to set children and poor to work, relieve the impotent, bind out pauper children as apprentices and tax every inhabitant and occupier of lands in the parish for these purposes.
1601	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 1326 1517 1473">1. An Act for the Relief of the Poor consolidated and replaced a variety of previous legislation and aimed at: establishment of Parochial responsibility with churchwardens or overseers (from two to four in number depending on the size of the parish) allocating relief; suppression of begging; provision of work; use of county Houses of Correction for vagrants and setting to work and apprenticeship of children.
1605	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 1487 1517 1668">1. A Statute of 1605 required that anyone convicted of drunkenness should receive six hours in the stocks, and those convicted of being a drunkard (as opposed to be caught drunk) should suffer 4 hours in the stocks or pay a substantial fine (of 3 shillings and 6 pence). A slightly later Statute made it legal to set those caught swearing in the stocks for 1 hour, if they could or would not pay a one shilling fine. In practice the authorities preferred offenders to pay fines as the monies were used to fund poor relief.
1608	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 1684 1517 1749">1. Henry Long (2) died leaving over 500 acres of land in Whaddon, Hilperton and other places. He was married to Mary May. <li data-bbox="256 1758 1517 1823">2. First documented reference to Melksham House (originally named The Grove) west of the Church was made at this time. <li data-bbox="256 1832 1517 1861">3. The Gerrish family who bought Shaw manor in 1557 are found as Seend clothiers in 1608.
1609	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 1872 1517 2076">1. No records have been found that illustrate the medieval government of Melksham. The town was tallaged as part of the royal demesne but never seems to have compounded for its dues as an independent borough. Control such as there was no doubt fell largely into the hands of the manorial officers of the king, the Dean and Chapter of Salisbury, and Amesbury priory. No court rolls or accounts have been found that will show more than the administration of the agricultural economy. Perhaps there is little more to be known, for despite the urbanization of the northern part of the town that probably followed the rise of the cloth industry, the greater part of the parish has

Year	Event
	remained rural in character. Even in 1609, shortly before the final deforestation of Melksham Forest, there were prosecutions for 'stealing the deer which ran wild in the town'.
1612	1. In the survey of Melksham Forest made in 1612 it was stated that Seend Park and 'Chaugrove' were enjoyed by Ambrose Dauntsey as parcel of Melksham manor. The park was a great field enclosed by a paling and containing a fishpond.
1614	<p>1. The parish constable of Melksham is first mentioned in 1614 When two Sums of 5s. were paid by the churchwardens towards his expenses. No records of the constable's activities are extant. After the general Act of 1842 and until 1867 the vestry continued to nominate the constables: their expenses were paid by the overseers at least until 1847. The site of the early police station is not certainly known but it is probable that a house adjoining the site now occupied by the Town Hall was rented by a police officer in 1847. At about the same date a lock-up was built in the market square: it stood approximately in the position of the present traffic island. Another lock-up was converted to a club and is now used as a doctor's surgery. The stocks are said to have stood in an archway on the site of the present Surveyor's office in the Market Square. The police station remained adjacent to the Town Hall until 1929 when a new station was built in Semington Road. There is no police station at Seend but a house there which is occupied by a police constable is the property of the Police Authority.</p> <p>2. A poor-house is mentioned as early as 1614 when a payment was made by the churchwardens for having it cleaned. There is no indication of the whereabouts of this house. In 1729 it was proposed to take a long lease of 'Mr. Selfes house' and grounds for a workhouse: no doubt this refers to some other property than Place House but no further record has been found of the proposal. In 1771 a poor-house with brew house and bake-house was built in King Street at the end of the yard now called Union Place. It was enlarged in 1797 by the addition of workshops. The Melksham Union was formed in 1835 and the workhouse at Semington built within the next few years. The old workhouse was sold in 1839 for £725. The only two public assistance institutions within the ancient parish are both maintained by the County Council. Shaw House is a home for the aged, and Sampford House at Shurnhold, a children's home. The normal system of poor relief was supplemented informally. A 'Society of Cloth Workers and Others' for the support of sick and infirm workmen, largely financed by the employers, met at the 'King's Arms' from 1762 to 1790 and perhaps longer. The Provident District Society, with similar objects, existed in 1830 and in 1868; and for a short time in the second quarter of the 19th century it received, for clothing, half the income of Bohun Fox's charity. A clothing club and a coal charity organized, like the Provident District Society, by the church, were in existence in 1868.</p> <p>3. The Clothing industry in Melksham suffered from the general decline before the middle of the 17th century due at least in part to the interruption of the export trade by the Thirty Years War. There are some indications, however, that trade was declining before that time: the export of white broadcloth was prohibited between 1614 and 1617, and two prominent clothiers, John Sumner and Henry Curtis of Seend, are found in debt at that time. By 1647 the weavers of Melksham and Seend were complaining of want of work and of poverty even when their hands were full. A scarcity of corn occurred at the same time and the impoverished cloth workers were driven to the pitch of rioting. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1616	1. The 'Parish Lands' of Seend were conveyed in 1616 by Edward Perrett and others to Thomas Sheppard and other feoffees upon trusts. They now comprise the Parish Ground (3 acres, 2 rods and 24 perch) at Seend Row, 2 acres called Cogbell, aftergrass on lands in Keevil and Poulshot and on Lammass Plats and Bulkington Acre in Seend, and £916 6s 5d stock resulting from a sale of land in 1872. The income, about £18, is now divided between two charities under separate bodies of trustees, and administered under orders and schemes of 1879, 1896, and 1918; half is applied to church expenses, and half to a clothing or coal or sick club or a benefit society, with permission to give not more than £6 to persons under 21 for their advancement in life. The trustees of the latter charity are appointed by Order of the Charity Commissioners.
1620	1. It is unlikely that the landed estate of the Beanacre manors was very great in extent after the breaking up of the Brouncker property in the 16th century. Two houses, however, have been appurtenant to the manor since the 16th century. One, known as the Old Manor House was probably built by the predecessors of the Daniells in the 15th century. It followed the descent of the manors until 1914 when it was sold by Lord Methuen to Harold (later Sir Harold) Brakspear. Sir Harold sold the house to Lady Methuen in 1918 and in 1937 it was on lease to the Nestle Company as a residence for the managers of their local factories. The other house known as Beanacre Manor and standing close to the Old Manor House was probably built by Simon Noble on land purchased in the early part of the 17th century from his brother-in-law, Henry Brouncker and Sir John Jenynges. Noble evidently sold the house later to Jenynges for it was Jenynges's

Year	Event
	<p>son, John, who in 1620 leased the property to Isaac Selfe the clothier. In 1647 Jacob, Isaac's son, purchased the property from the Jenynges family: he died in 1702 and was succeeded by his son Isaac. Isaac (II) died in 1773, and his daughter Anne, wife of Thomas Methuen of Bradford, became his sole heir. From Anne the property passed to her son Paul Methuen of Corsham, who already owned the Old Manor House. By the beginning of the 19th century Beanacre Manor had become a farm and remained so until 1919 when Lord Methuen took possession and had the property restored by Sir Harold Brakspear. Since that time the house has been leased and in January 1952 was put up for sale by private treaty or auction at a later date. <i>(British History on line)</i></p>
1622	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On his father's death in 1621 William (III) Daniell succeeded to the property of 'the manor of Melksham Lovells and Beanacre' and had livery of the conjoined manors in 1622. A William Daniell almost certainly the son of William (III) died without male issue in 1681. His heir was his sister Rachel, wife of Thomas Fettiplace of Fernham (Berks.). From Thomas the manors descended to his son Charles who in 1719 sold them to Sir Edward Des Bouverie. Sir Edward was succeeded by his younger brother Jacob, created Viscount Folkestone in 1747, who in turn was succeeded by his son William, created Earl Radnor in 1765. In 1772 when the last reference to the manors by their joint name occurs, Lord Radnor sold them to Paul Methuen and from that time until the 20th century they descended in the Methuen family. <i>(British History on line)</i>
1624	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All of the Royal Forest had now been sold off following an authorisation to disforest in 1618. 2. In 1624 Sir Francis Fane, Lord of the manor of Seend, allowed his tenants to inclose this last remaining part of the forest. 3. The lease of the Manor of Melksham, Canonhold, descended to Henry Brouncker's grandson, another William, in 1624.
1631	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Woolmore House, on the Devizes road at Bowerhill, was erected in 1631 by George Hulbert, citizen and vintner of London, who had bought the property in 1629. It was built of red brick, reputedly to a plan of Inigo Jones. His relict died in 1677; his son Thomas had broken up the property about 1669, and in the early 20th century Woolmore was a farmhouse belonging to Charles Awdry. <i>(British History on line)</i>
1637	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 'Great Bridge' was out of repair in April 1637, and the inhabitants of Melksham asked that other places should contribute to its repair; the Justices ordered them, under a penalty of £40, to repair it themselves by Michaelmas. 2. According to the Parish Registers, in 1637 several payments are made to persons who had loss by fire. Perhaps there was some great fire in the town at that time.
1640	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The manor of Seend is not separately mentioned in the Domesday survey and was probably included in the royal manor of Melksham. The overlordship remained with the Crown and is last mentioned in 1640 when Seend was held of the king as of the manor of East Greenwich. The first record of a tenant of the manor appears to date from 1190, when it was held by Wigan of Cherburgh. Wigan died before 1194 leaving as his heir his son John, a minor, and the manor passed into the custody of Wigan's brother Thomas. Thomas retained the wardship of the heir and the custody of the manor until 1198; for six months of 1199 the custody was in the hands of the sheriff Stephen de Turnham and in 1204 it passed to Felise, relict of Andrew of the Exchequer. John, Wigan's heir, came of age about 1206, and died in 1269, when his son Wigan (II) succeeded him; the holding was then ¼ knight's fee of 15 librates. <i>(British History on line)</i> 2. Shurnhold House, built about 1640, and Shurnhold Farm, of the 17th century, are of stone rubble with ashlar quoins. The modern projecting wing of the house contains a large stone open fireplace, probably 16th century.
1643	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On 13th July 1643 the Parliamentary Troops under the command of Sir William Waller were defeated by the Royalists who were commanded by Lord Hopton at the Battle of Roundway Down about a mile north of Devizes. According to legend, Oliver Cromwell stayed at a nearby farm (thought to be Woolmoor Farm in Melksham). Cromwell's Oak can be found in the corner of a field adjacent to this farm. This oak is thought to have played a gruesome part in the aftermath of the battle when, on the orders of Cromwell, some of his unruly soldiers were hanged from its boughs. The tree has a girth of 7.1m and is thought to be around 700 years old and its hollow trunk bears the scars of historic fire damage. <i>(Ancient Tree Forum)</i>
1644	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans enforce an Act of Parliament banning Christmas Day celebrations. 2. Chalfield Manor was occupied for two days by Parliamentarians in 1644 during the Civil War.

Year	Event
1647	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 185 1453 304">1. In June 1647 parliament had ordained that Christmas festivities were illegal, and no church services were to be held on 25 December, that there must be no festivities, no making of 'plum pottage or nativity pies', no hanging of holly, rosemary or bay at the street door, and that shops must open. <li data-bbox="261 315 1501 376">2. In 1647 Jacob Selfe, Isaac's son, purchased Beanacre Manor from the Jenynges family: he died in 1702 and was succeeded by his son Isaac. <li data-bbox="261 387 1461 472">3. By 1647 the weavers of Melksham and Seend were complaining of want of work and of poverty even when their hands were full. A scarcity of corn occurred at the same time and the impoverished cloth workers were driven to the pitch of rioting.
1648	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 495 1493 674">1. The earliest references to Protestant Nonconformity in Melksham occur in the later 17th century, and from that period the Society of Friends and other dissenting bodies were strongly represented among the clothiers. Something of the fervour of the early dissenters in the district is illustrated by the action of William Somner, a member of a Seend family prominent in the clothing trade and, later, in the Society of Friends, who 'brot down' much of the painted glass in Seend church about 1648.
1649	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 692 1501 835">1. Two 'Ministers' of Seend, Thomas Tomkins in 1649 and Thomas Symes or Syms in 1659, received 'augmentations' from the dean and chapter's lands or from Tenths. An entry in the chapelwardens' book for 1663 records an agreement between Syms, as 'curate', and certain inhabitants that each of them will pay him a certain sum, to a total of £10, so long as he performs his duties, including the preaching of two sermons every Lord's Day. (<i>British History on line</i>)
1650	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 857 1485 916">1. The Wiltshire clothiers turned, in about 1650, from white to medly broadcloth, and in the later 17th and the 18th centuries there was some revival of their trade <li data-bbox="261 927 1461 985">2. In 1650 the Manor of Melksham, Canonhold, was sold to John Ashe and four years later the parsonage barn and a courtyard belonging to it were leased or subleased to Thomas Badcocke.
1651	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1001 1493 1122">1. William Tipper, by will proved 1651, left £50 to the churchwardens and overseers for the purchase of coats or waistcoats for poor men of Seend. The bequest was apparently used to buy the 5-acre pasture close in Westfield called the Poor's or Tipper's Ground, in 1951 let at £9 a year. The trustees are the vicar and churchwardens and two appointees of the parish council.
1652	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1144 1485 1225">1. Quakerism was born in the turbulent aftermath of the English Civil War. In December of this year the elements of organisation emerged when regular meetings were established in the East Riding of Yorkshire.
1655	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1245 1369 1267">1. Sir John Danvers died in 1655 and the manor passed to his kinsman of the same name.
1657	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1290 1501 1680">1. The manor house, later Place House, and sometimes The Court House, faced the market place on the site now occupied by Place Road. Its orchards and gardens stretched back to the churchyard. It was probably built by Henry (I) Brouncker in the mid-16th century on the site of an earlier house. It was sold in 1657, for £310, to Isaac Selfe, a younger son of Isaac Selfe of Beanacre, and he rebuilt the entrance. It remained in the hands of the Selfes until 1757; it passed by marriage to Richard Jenkyns, and in 1806 to the Heathcotes of Shaw Hill. In 1864 the house and its orchards and gardens were bought by a syndicate of Melksham people, the house demolished, and the land split up into small plots which were sold by public auction. A private road was cut through the centre of the estate and villas were built on either side. A gate at the end of the road opens on the churchyard and was the subject of much dispute when the estate was broken up, since in the last fifty years of its existence the house had been occupied by dissenters who, not unnaturally, had allowed the right of way to fall into desuetude. Charles Maggs used the house for a short period in about 1835 and built a rope-walk at the back of the house. (<i>British History on line</i>)
1662	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1700 1469 1814">1. An Act for the better Relief of the Poor of this Kingdom (The Settlement Act) stipulated that newcomers to a parish who were deemed "likely to become chargeable" could be removed upon the orders of two Justices of the Peace if a complaint was made against them within 40 days of arrival, provided they had not rented a house worth at least £10 a year.
1665	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1834 1445 1919">1. The Great Plague of London killed an estimated 100,000 people – almost a quarter of Lodon's population – in 18 months. The plague was caused by the Yersinia pestis bacterium, which is usually transmitted through the bite of an infected rat flea and spread throughout the country.
1666	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1939 1477 2054">1. The Burial in Woollen Acts of 1666-80 were Acts introduced by the Parliament of England which required that the dead, except plague victims and the destitute, be buried in pure English woollen shrouds to the exclusion of any foreign textiles. It was also a requirement that an affidavit be sworn in front of a Justice of the Peace (usually by a relative of the deceased), confirming burial

Year	Event
	<p>had taken place in wool, with a punishment of £5 for noncompliance.</p> <p>2. An iron-ore field in Seend was described in 1666 by Aubrey as the richest he had ever seen. It was not, however, until the middle of the 19th century that any attempt was made to exploit the field commercially. None of the companies formed managed to survive for more than a few years. The Geological Survey stated in 1920 that 77,984 tons of brown hematite were raised between 1855 and 1861, and 86,443 quarried from 1871 to 1874; the field underlay 179 acres of land of which the village of Seend occupied 64. Exploitation was renewed between 1939 and 1945.</p>
1668	<p>1. Monthly meetings for the management of Quaker church affairs in Wiltshire were set up.</p> <p>2. In 1668 the parsonage tithes of Canonhold manor were valued at £423 18s 5d though whether or not this included the whole of the rectorial tithes is not clear. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1669	<p>1. A Baptist congregation is said to have met in Melksham as early as 1669 and to have held its services in 'John Webb's shearing shop'. In that year and in 1694 the congregation was recognized as a member of the Western Association, and in 1689 and 1691 it was represented at the General Assembly in London. In 1701 James Webb's house and John Webb's barn adjoining it were licensed as a meeting-house. No further record of the group has been found until 1715 when the congregation was said to number 300. A James Earle was at that time the minister and was probably succeeded in 1731 by Zebulon Marshman. By the end of the 18th century membership was 50: it rose to 130 by the middle of the next century and by 1885 had reached 151. In 1950 there were 115 members. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i></p> <p>2. Melksham has been an important centre for the activities of the Society of Friends from the 17th century until the present day. The first recorded Meeting is in 1669 when 80 Quakers were said to have attended service at the house of Robert and Hester Marchmant or Marshman at Shaw Hill, two miles out of the town itself. Before the Toleration Act removed the risks of such unlawful activities, the Marshmans' home was far enough out of town not to attract unwelcome attention from the authorities. Meetings continued here and in 1690 the Marshman home was registered as a place of worship in the name of Hester. She was to live to be 102, dying in 1702.</p>
1670	<p>1. In the seventeenth century there was frequent mention in the Church Registers of the traffic in seats. People apparently sold their seats to one another, and this exchange was registered by the churchwardens. For instance in 1670: "Memorandum that Robert Jennings the (elder) of Woodrow hath sold unto Daniel Webb of Beanacre in the Parish of Melksham one seate for a man to sit in where Edward Flower doth now sit which doth adjoin unto Mr. Jacob Selfes seat in the body of the Church which said seat is to remayne unto the said Daniel Webb and his heirs for ever and hath paid for recording hereof 4d."</p> <p>2. A church house existed about 1670. It was on the south side of Church Street; by 1835 it had been converted into two dwelling-houses. These are probably represented by two houses half-way along the east side of Church Walk. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p>
1671	<p>1. Melksham manor (excluding Place House) was sold by John Danvers to Sir Walter Long of Whaddon and thereafter the manor followed the same descent as that of Whaddon.</p>
1672	<p>1. In 1672 the house of Abraham Little in 'Whitby'—almost certainly Whitley—was licensed for Anabaptist worship and in 1672 Benjamin Rutty, a Presbyterian and possibly a member of the same family as Thomas Rutty (which was later active amongst both the Friends and the Methodists), obtained licence to act as a Presbyterian teacher and to use for the purpose his house at Seend. He died in the following year, but his meeting apparently prospered for some time after.</p>
1676	<p>1. The strength of early non-conformity in the town is not perhaps truly reflected in Bishop Compton's census in 1676: a return was made of only 100 dissenters as against 1,865 church people. An early 19th-century return states on the other hand that of a population of about 5,000 'much the largest portion are dissenters' although it records only 293 'actual members' of congregations.</p>
1678	<p>1. The earliest known minutes for a Quaker Quarterly meeting held in Devizes were dated 1st April 1678. It is from these minutes that it is known that there was a monthly meeting for the management of church affairs held in the Melksham area.</p>
1679	<p>1. The Habeas corpus Act was passed which forbade imprisonment without trial.</p>
1685	<p>1. Records of poor relief in Melksham are almost complete for the period 1685 to 1836. Pay books showing the sums paid weekly to the poor are extant for the whole period, except for short gaps, and comprise 17 volumes. The poor-rate assessment books in 10 volumes cover the same period and there are overseers' accounts for 1769 to 1777, 1802 to 1827, and for 1827. The records refer entirely to out-relief and record payments ranging from £12 13s 6d for May 1686 to £15 15s in</p>

Year	Event
	<p>June 1719. Payments at this time were generally made on Fridays. Thomas Smith of Shaw House recorded in his diary such a relief day on 21 December 1722 and added the following comment. 'The poor people were with us for the small Dole we usually give on this Day, they are indeed very Numerous in this Parish and much increas'd in Numbers since my time, and much Misery I fear is among them.' Earlier in the year he recorded that he thought some who applied 'pretty hardly dealt with'. Payments to the poor remained steady, at about £30 - £40 a month, during the second and third quarters of the 18th century. The existence of separate poor rate books for Seend suggests that the chapelry maintained its own poor from 1734. In 1780 payments to the Melksham poor were about £50 a month and in 1794-5 about £30 a month. Poor rates to cover these payments and other expenses were collected from all the tithings of the parish and in 1801-2 amounted to about £520.</p>
1686	<p>1. The Poor Rate assessment books for 1686 show that payments of £12 13s 6d were distributed during the month of May. Payments were generally made on Fridays.</p>
1690	<p>1. In this year the Marshman home in Shaw Hill was registered as a place of religious worship, Robert Marshman having died in 1679, the registration was made in the name of his widow Hester. After 1690 it was possible to meet anywhere without risk if disturbance and from then on Melksham town would have been a more convenient rendezvous.</p> <p>2. The Chirurgions* Arms public house was in existence (it no longer exists). * n. <i>archaic</i> a surgeon.</p>
1692	<p>1. The Salem Witch trials when more than 200 people were accused of witchcraft 20 of whom were executed (19 by hanging, 1 being pressed to death) Many of the accused died in jail awaiting trial.</p>
1695	<p>1. A Quaker boarding school was established in Melksham in c1695, children were to be boarded at the school for £7 a year and the master's salary was to be £30. The first schoolmaster appointed in 1696 was John Jeffry from Hampton in Gloucestershire: he was succeeded in 1705 by John Padley 'from the north'. The school was closed some time before 1721 and there is no record that it was ever reopened.</p>
1697	<p>1. An Act for supplying some Defects in the Laws for the Relief of the Poor stipulated that newcomers with certificates to be removed only when chargeable; those receiving relief to wear identifying badges and fines for those who refuse to take pauper apprentices.</p> <p>2. The Reverend Bohun Fox was vicar of Melksham from 1697 to his death in 1750. A newcomer to the district, just down from Oxford with a degree in law. He persecuted the Quakers with unflagging animosity.</p> <p>3. The Rev. Bohun Fox started a school for the education of poor boys and left an endowment to pay a schoolmaster. It is not known that he built a schoolroom, or where the boys were educated. In 1818 it was the only day school in the town but only six children attended it. The last schoolmaster died in 1829.</p>
1698	<p>1. When John Hancock died, Simon Shewring proved the will as sole executor and in the course of winding up the estate sold to Melksham Friends for £10 "a piece and parcel of ground ... together with one messuage or tenement lately erected and built ..." (conveyance dated 20th December 1698). From this it seems likely that shortly before his death John Hancock had built a meeting-house for Friends' use on his land in King Street and that Simon Shewring, his executor, used his discretion to sell it to them for a sum low even by the prices of the day. There was a burial ground to the rear of this building.</p>
1699	<p>1. Richard Coxeter sold Melksham House to Sir Walter Long after which various replacements and extensions were added over the years, whilst ownership continued with the Long family..</p>
1701	<p>1. In 1701 James Webb's house and John Webb's barn adjoining it were licensed as a meeting-house for Baptists.</p> <p>2. Shaw House and farm were sold in 1701 by Ash or a descendant of the same name to Thomas Smith. Smith rebuilt the mansion and for the next fifty years Shaw House seems to have been one of the centres of country life in north-west Wiltshire. Smith's diary for 1721–2 has been preserved and printed and records the life of the neighbourhood in considerable detail.</p> <p>3. Shaw House is rebuilt by Thomas Smith.</p>
1702	<p>1. Ann became queen upon the death of her brother in law William III in March 1702. It was during Anne's reign that the United Kingdom of Great Britain was created by the Union of England and Scotland.</p>
1703	<p>1. On 26th November the Eddystone Lighthouse was destroyed, over 8,000 people die in the Great Storm.</p>

Year	Event
	2. The six bells in the Parish Church of St. Michael's were cast by Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester.
1705	1. The Friends Meeting House was extended in 1705. 2. John Padley 'from the north' succeeded John Jeffry as schoolmaster at the Quaker school.
1707	1. On 1 st May 1707 the Act of Union between England & Scotland took effect. The Acts joined the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland, previously separate states with separate legislatures, but with the same monarch, into a single, united kingdom named "Great Britain" transferring the seat of Scottish government to London.
1714	1. The first chapel of the Melksham Baptist congregation was begun in 1714 and finished shortly after and was referred to in a licence dated 1714. Zebulan Marshman, a native of Broughton Gifford and a maltster by trade, was one of the signatories to this licence and is believed to be the first pastor of the church. The present stone-built church in Old Broughton Road was erected on the same piece of ground in 1776, provided with galleries in 1795, enlarged in 1806, and reopened after renovation in 1879; new heating was installed in 1899. The Sunday school is first mentioned in 1840: shortly before that date a new schoolroom had been built. At that time there were 332 pupils and 53 teachers. The present schoolroom was opened in 1909: there are now (1950) 141 pupils and 18 teachers. A manse was bought about 1887, and sold in 1905, when the new manse in Beanacre Road was built. The Rev. Richard Haynes, by his will proved in 1768, left £150 in trust for the chapel and its ministers. This endowment is now (1950) invested in stock; the deacons of the chapel were appointed trustees by a scheme of 1916. Registers of births were kept between 1794 and 1837 and of burials between 1794 and 1836. Many of the early members were in the cloth trade including Samuel Cook of Lacock, John Webb, James Hiscocks, John Browne and Thomas Chapman of Bradford on Avon. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i>
1716	1. The Septennial Act was passed which allows for General Elections to be held.
1719	1. The Poor Rate assessment books for 1719 show that payments of £15. 15s.. were distributed during the month of June. Payments were generally made on Fridays.
1720	1. The George Inn was in existence at this time on the corner of Lowbourne and Bank Street (it no longer exists). 2. John Ruddy, son of Adam Ruddy and Mary Marter, was born in Melksham on 15 th January 1720 and had a son George in 1755.
1721	1. The Quaker school closed sometime before 1721. 2. The collection of rates for the maintenance of the highways is mentioned in 1721 and records of parish responsibility for the roads are preserved from 1768 to 1837. In 1819 the rate amounted to £187 of which sum the Town tithing paid almost half.
1722	1. Thomas Smith of Shaw House recorded in his diary a poor relief day on 21 December 1722 and added the following comment. 'The poor people were with us for the small Dole we usually give on this Day, they are indeed very Numerous in this Parish and much increas'd in Numbers since my time, and much Misery I fear is among them.' Earlier in the year he recorded that he thought some who applied 'pretty hardly dealt with'.
1723	1. Parliament passed the Black Act making poaching a capital offence. 2. The Workhouse Test Act was poor relief legislation passed by the British government in 1723. The "workhouse test" was that a person who wanted to receive poor relief had to enter a workhouse and undertake a set amount of work. The test was intended to prevent irresponsible claims on a parish's poor rate. Between 1723 and 1750, six hundred parish workhouses were built in England and Wales as a direct result of this act. 3. Thomas Smith was succeeded by his son John in 1723. John's relict Mary died in 1758, and next year, after litigation, his brother-in-law Robert Neale, M.P., a wealthy clothier of Corsham, became owner of Shaw House. Neale died in 1776; his elder granddaughter and heiress had married Sir Harry Burrard, who took the additional name of Neale. He let the house as a private school. In 1844 Lady Neale held the estate for life; William Stancomb of Trowbridge had bought the property, covering almost 130 acres. J. F. Stancomb died at Shaw House in 1920, and it is now a County Council home for the aged. Shaw Hill House, built before 1825 by Samuel Heathcote and sold in 1887 on the death of Thomas Jenkyns Heathcote, was the home of Charles Awdry from about 1890 to 1908. <i>(British History on line)</i>
1724	1. The first school in Seend in 1724 was a Charity School and had 24 pupils. There was a Sunday school by 1797, but the day school had gone by 1818. Thomas Burgess paid for the erection of a building in the corner of the churchyard in 1832. In 1848 it was a 'neat school house for instruction

Year	Event
	<p>of poor children', a Sunday school and a day school. In 1863 the school was moved from the churchyard to a site in School Road, the land having been bought by the vicar of Melksham and the Seend churchwardens. Wadham Locke (warden and the owner of Cleeve House) paid for the majority of the move. By 1867 it became the National School. The Seend Pelch School was opened in 1870 in Seend Cleeve for Methodist and other 'dissenter' children. In 1877 Wadham Locke gave the school the use of a hall in Pelch Lane which he funded himself. He had originally built the hall as a reading room for the employees of the Iron Works. The school received a state grant in 1885 but the National School took it over to provide a domestic science centre for older girls. The building was situated at Pelch Farm. There was a large 'dissenter' population in the village, mainly made up of Methodists. John Wesley himself preached at Seend on 12th March 1749 and Wesleyan's preached at Wesley Cottage in the High Street before the building of the Seend Methodist Chapel opposite at the end of Factory Row, opened by John Wesley on the 4th March 1775. Seend Cleeve had a Primitive Methodist Chapel, rebuilt in 1849 and now disused.</p>
1726	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 589 1501 651">1. In 1726 the piece rate paid for the cloth was so low that it was impossible for the weavers to earn a living. <li data-bbox="256 656 1501 719">2. In 1726 the Government sent a commissioner to inquire into disturbances among the weavers of Trowbridge, Bradford, and Melksham.
1728	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 736 1501 770">1. The Red Lion building in the 'City' was rebuilt by the son of James Webb.
1729	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 781 1501 869">1. In 1729 it was proposed to take a long lease of 'Mr. Selfes house' and grounds for a workhouse: no doubt this refers to some other property than Place House but no further record has been found of the proposal.
1733	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 887 1501 949">1. Prior to 1733 all legal documents were to be written in Latin. By a Commonwealth ordinance all legal records were to be written in English (they reverted to Latin at the restoration)
1734	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 960 1501 994">1. Jethro Tull publishes essays on improving farming including the use of the seed drill. <li data-bbox="256 999 1501 1218">2. The Friends Meeting House in King Street was built in 1734(?): it is endowed with £95. 13s. 7d. invested in stock. There is a burial ground behind the Meeting House and one at 'Show', possibly Shaw, is mentioned in 1786: there is a tradition that there was another at Seend Cleeve. Registers of births, deaths, and marriages dating from the 17th century until 1837 have been preserved. There was a Quaker school at Melksham between 1695 and 1721. Prominent amongst Melksham Quakers in the early 18th century was Thomas Beaven who conducted by pamphlet a controversy with Bohun Fox, vicar of the parish. <li data-bbox="256 1223 1501 1373">3. A map of 1734 shows a small road leading into the High Street opposite Church Street. The road no longer exists but its line may be traced by the footpath running from Seend church via Ruskin Lane and Redstocks to Church Street, Melksham, where the line of the offices forming No. 20 High Street follow the ancient line of the path. The connexion between church and church suggests that the track may have been a burying road.
1738	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 1395 1501 1872">1. The Cloth Mill owned by Henry Colthurst destroyed during riots. During the period of unrest amongst the weavers of Melksham during the early part of the 18th century, two hundred weavers, had assembled in Melksham, and had ransacked the house of a clothier, Henry Colthurst, broken it open, and thrown great quantities of wool and yarn out of the window and then into the river. Also they broke most of the household furniture and divers books. Finally Edward Stratton, a millman, and Mr. Colthurst's servants were brave enough to attempt to guard the house from further mischief and about 7 o'clock they apprehended John Crabbe (the leader of the dissident weavers) upon the stairs of the house. In reply to a letter from the Chippenham magistrates the Earl of Harrington requested that the magistrates should make an example of John Crabbe and ten or twelve rioters and have them committed to prison. He also wrote to the War Office asking that orders should be sent to the officer commanding troops in that neighbourhood to march with sufficient number of men under his command to such places as shall be desired by the civil magistrates and to aid them in support of the rioters and preserving public peace. The weavers must have caused considerable damage as they not only ransacked Mr. Colthurst's house but they also destroyed nine of his cottages and his grist and fulling mills. The justice of the time was savage and eventually three men were hanged for their part in this riot.
1741	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 1895 1501 1928">1. In 1741 it was ordered that the poor should be employed on public works.
1747	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="256 1939 1501 2054">1. There were further riots of weavers in 1747, and in 1750 dragoons were sent to Trowbridge, Bradford, and Melksham to 'curb' the artisans. Thomas Beaven the elder, a Quaker clothier, whose son was an ardent Quaker apologist went bankrupt in 1748. Apparently, however, he was able to recover for he secretly recruited workmen for a factory in Spain, where he later set up business.

Year	Event
	Two other Melksham employers went bankrupt in 1756–7.
1749	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 226 1501 315">1. The Wiltshire Regiment was first embodied in 1749 with 10 companies assembled at Bedwyn, Bradford, Chippenham, Devizes, Hindon, Marlborough, Salisbury, Swindon, Warminster and Wilton drawing on men from the neighbouring parishes. (<i>Google</i>) <li data-bbox="261 327 1501 389">2. Wesleyan Methodist teaching began early in Seend, inspired no doubt by Wesley himself who preached there on the evening of 8 November 1749.
1750	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 400 1501 434">1. Introduction of Turnpike Roads. <li data-bbox="261 445 1501 725">2. The King's Arms Hotel in the centre of Melksham was built in about 1750 when the toll road route from London was altered, resulting in stagecoaches from London passing through Melksham on their way to Bath, Bristol, Exeter and Devonport. Before this time the old Bath road had passed to the north-east of Melksham, descending Bowden Hill into Lacock but after turnpiking the route moved south through Melksham thus avoiding the steep hill. By 1830 there were six coaches each day carrying passengers to London. The Royal Mail and the Emerald stopped at the King's Arms, the Royal Blue and the Regulator at The Bear, opposite what is now Union Street, and the Olde Company's coach and the White Harte coach called at both. The four coach horses were changed every eight to ten miles so there was probably stabling for about 50 horses behind these hostleries <li data-bbox="261 736 1501 882">3. Until the early years of the 19th century Methodism had not taken a strong hold in Melksham itself but John Wesley came to Melksham and preached to a large gathering there on 23rd October 1750 with considerable success: 'the number of people obliged me to preach abroad, notwithstanding the keen north wind. And the steady attention of the hearers made amends for the rigour of the season.' <li data-bbox="261 893 1501 1084">4. The Revd. Bohun Fox (1697–1750), vicar of Melksham, established a charity school in the town. He is said to have personally superintended the school during his lifetime. At his death in 1750 he bequeathed £135 for educating and clothing poor children in the parish and the interest on this sum was paid to a schoolmaster. Fox had built no schoolroom and it is not known where he conducted the school. In 1818, when Fox's charity school was said to be the only day school in the town, only 6 children were attending it. (<i>British History on line</i>) <li data-bbox="261 1095 1501 1151">5. In 1750 it was recorded that Robert Marshman had 3 looms in his house, but whether he was locally accounted a clothier or weaver we do not know.
1751	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1162 1501 1191">
1752	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1202 1501 1482">1. Britain and the British Empire (including the eastern part of what is now the United States) adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1752, by which time it was necessary to correct by 11 days. Wednesday, 2nd September 1752, was followed by Thursday, 14th September 1752. Claims that rioters demanded "Give us our eleven days" grew out of a misinterpretation of a painting by William Hogarth. After 1753 the British tax year continued to operate on the Julian calendar and began on 5th April, which was the "Old Style" new tax year of 25th March. A twelfth day was skipped during the Julian leap year in 1800 and changed the start date to 6th April. It was not changed when a thirteenth Julian leap day was skipped in 1900, so the tax year in the United Kingdom still begins on 6th April.
1754	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1494 1501 1588">1. Jeremiah Awdry died. He was in the process of buying the lease of the Manor of Melksham, Canonhold, when he died. Dying without children he left his property to his nephew John Awdry of Notton, son of Ambrose and Jane
1756	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1599 1501 1628">1. A new clock was provided for St. Michael's Church in 1756.
1757	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1639 1501 2065">1. In 1757 with France set to invade England, Parliament passed the Militia Act. The Secretary at War ordered the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire and other counties to raise a regiment of men to prepare to defend the country. In Wiltshire the regiment was to be created with 800 men from all over the county. Each parish was required to provide a certain number of recruits. This was conscription. Men between the ages of 18 and 45 were all subject to this conscription, although there were exemptions. Married men with 2 or more children born in wedlock and under the age of ten were automatically exempt. The remainder of eligible men were drawn by ballot, if chosen to serve they could serve willingly, provide a substitute to take their place or they could pay the parish officials a fine of 10 sovereigns who would find a substitute to serve in their place. The men were required to serve for 3 years which was later increased to 5 years. They were required to undertake 28 days training during each year served between March and December. The men could be required to serve continuously anywhere in England if the War Office decided. Militia Officers were usually local business men who held or were heirs to estates in the area and had an income of £400 per annum for a Colonel down to £50 per annum for an ensign. (<i>Google</i>)

Year	Event
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Place House passed by marriage to Richard Jenkyns. 3. Jacob Selfe, in 1757, bequeathed the interest on £100 for bread and meat at Christmas to 24 poor householders, of whom a third should be resident in Beanacre tithing. In 1904 Lord Methuen, holding Beanacre manor, gave £4 a year to the vicar for distribution in meat and grocery tickets to 24 poor persons of Beanacre. The vicar and churchwardens are now the trustees and the income is a charge on Beanacre Manor Farm.
1758	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Between 1697 and 1820, 13% of crimes in Wiltshire were for swearing. In 1758 John Clutterbuck of Melksham was fined 3s for swearing. C
1759	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1759, after litigation, John Smith's brother-in-law Robert Neale, M.P., a wealthy clothier of Corsham, became owner of Shaw House.
1762-1790	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A 'Society of Cloth Workers and Others' for the support of sick and infirm workmen, largely financed by the employers, met at the 'King's Arms' from 1762 to 1790 and perhaps longer.
1766	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although the Baptist Church in Broughton Road was strong to begin with but suffered decline and when Miss Mary Ledyard came to Melksham from Trowbridge in 1766 there were only ten members (8 women and 2 men). Under the leadership of the Ledyard family the church began to thrive again and by 1766 there were 53 members when Mr Thomas Ward became minister. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i>
1768	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The fourth bell in the Parish Church of St. Michael's was re-cast by Thomas Rudhall of Gloucester. 2. 1768-9 saw a toll gate, built at the junction with Inmarsh Lane, which still stands. Turnpikes were dissolved in the 1870s. 3. Few records have been found that give any detailed information about Melksham agriculture in later periods. It is thus difficult to suggest when the change from mixed to predominantly dairy-farming took place. Arthur Young, in 1768, found that both grass and arable in the neighbourhood of Melksham were let at the high average rent of £1 an acre; he noted (with apparent regret) the substitution of horses for ox teams.
1769	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blackmore Farm and Manor Farm, just outside the Melksham Urban District, on the Calne road, probably represent all that remains of the liberty and manor of <i>BUCKMORE</i>. Blackmore (or Melksham) Forest was formally disafforested under a commission granted in 1622, and forest and lands were granted in 1623–4 to the 1st Earl of Anglesey. No mention of the property has been found from that time until the 18th century, but it presumably passed in the Anglesey family. In 1769, James, 7th Earl of Castlehaven, grandson of the 5th earl who had married Anne Pelson, granddaughter of the 1st Earl of Anglesey, died in possession of the manor. Six years earlier he had quarrelled with the people of Melksham about their ancient rights of common in the forest. The property, recited as his 'freeholds in the disforested liberty and manor of Blackmore', passed to his brother John, the 8th earl. <i>(British History on line)</i>
1771	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1771 a poor-house with brew house and bake-house was built in King Street at the end of the yard now called Union Place. It was enlarged in 1797 by the addition of workshops.
1772	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduced around the year 1406, the punishment of 'Peine Forte et Dure' was not abolished until 1772. The procedure is best described by the judge's sentence: "That the prisoner shall be remanded to the place from whence he came, and be put in some low, dark room, and there laid on his back, without any covering except a cloth round his middle; and that as many weights shall be laid upon him as he can bear, and more; and that he shall have no sustenance but the worst of bread and water, and that he shall not eat on the same day on which he drinks; nor drink on the same day on which he eats; and he shall continue so till he die." The last known use of the practice was in 1741. <i>(The murder Club Guide to London. Ed. By Brian Lane.)</i> 2. In 1772 and 1776 Robert Neale acquired two fourths of 'Whitley Farm', in Melksham, Bradford, and Corsham. The Whitley estate was sold in 1846, and Whitley House, with 60 acres, in 1913 on the death of Henry George White. <i>(British History on line)</i>
1773	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Independent Congregation Church at Melksham was probably founded about 1773 and seems to have owed its inception to the influence of Methodist preaching by John Honywell (d. 1836) who was ordained as the first pastor in 1778.
1774	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1774 Robert Neale acquired from one Parsons of Beanacre a small estate called Princes, with the pew in Melksham church belonging to it; in the same year he obtained about half a tenement with the Hamms in Beanacre. A meadow called the Ham 'by the Avon' is mentioned in 1620. No other record of these estates has been found. Small holdings of land in Sandridge are mentioned in the 13th and 15th centuries. Lord Audley had a house at Sandridge Park in 1825. The present

Year	Event
	house was built by Henry Lopes before 1862. R. H. Ludlow Bruges is stated to have been lord of the 'manor' of Sandridge in 1907, but it seems unlikely that this referred to more than the park surrounding the house named Sandridge Park. (<i>British History on line</i>)
1775	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New chimes for St. Michael's Church clock were provided in 1775. 2. When the Wiltshire Quaker records began in 1678 the Shaw Hill and Melksham Particular Meeting were sending members to the Quarterly Meeting. In 1775 at least half those attending the Quarterly Meeting came from the town and from this time, although Melksham shared in the general decline, it never, like many other centres, ceased altogether. 3. The brick chapel at Factory Row in Seend (by the cross-road, at the west end of the village) was built, on a leasehold site, in 1774, and opened by John Wesley in March 1775. 4. A ball of lightning was witnessed in a thunderstorm at Steeple Ashton on 20th June 1775. (<i>Little Book of Wiltshire by Dee La Vardera</i>)
1776	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Friends Meeting House was completely rebuilt on the same site as the existing building. It is a single storey building. Many of the Melksham Quakers were prosperous and influential and included well-known local families such as the Beavens, Ruttys and Fowlers. Some refused to pay tithes to the Anglican church and were sent to prison. 2. The Baptist church in Old Broughton Road was erected in 1776, galleries were added in 1795, it was enlarged in 1806, renovated in 1879 and new heating was installed in 1897. (<i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i>)
1780	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Independent congregation was founded in the town c.1771. They were influenced by the Methodist preacher John Honywell, who was ordained as the first pastor in 1778. In 1780 the site of the chapel in the Market Place was obtained on a long lease and a meeting house and vestry built. A register of births and baptisms was kept for 1776 to 1836 and the church was part of the Wiltshire and East Somerset Congregational Union. 1809 four small tenements on the west side of Semington Lane and the north side of the old poor house were put in trust for the chapel and used as a burial ground. This was closed in 1876. 2. Devizes-Bath turnpike, which passed along the High Street, was improved under Acts of 1780 and 1823. The course of this road passed south of the present Bath road through the City and the Acre. The site of the turnpike gates on the Semington road is said to have been near Taylor-Warren's School. Another gate is mentioned on Lowbourne Bridge but nothing is known of a turnpike on this road. Three un-metalled tracks in the area between the Calne and Devizes roads known as Brown's Lane, Prater's Lane, and Broad Lane are said to owe their origin to the circumventions of traders who wished to avoid the tolls. They do not, however, approach the town sufficiently close to achieve such a purpose and their considerable width (in some places more than 100 ft.) suggests that they are greenways made during the inclosure of the forest with the purpose of leaving the inclosed fields accessible.
1782	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Relief of the Poor Act 1782, also known as Gilbert's Act, was a British poor relief law proposed by Thomas Gilbert which aimed to organise poor relief on a county basis, counties being organised into parishes which could set up workhouses between them. However, these workhouses were intended to help only the elderly, sick and orphaned, not the able-bodied poor. The sick, elderly and infirm were cared for in poorhouses whereas the able-bodied poor were provided with poor relief in their own homes. Gilbert's Act aimed to be more humane than the previous modification to the Poor Law, the Workhouse Test Act. During the 1780s, there was an increase in unemployment and underemployment due to high food prices, low wages and the effects of enclosing land. This caused poor rates to increase rapidly, which wealthy landowners found unacceptable. The Act was repealed by the Statute Law Revision Act 1871. 2. A man named Southernwood was committed to the guard house at the junction of King Street and the Market Place having been named by a Melksham woman as the father of the child she was expecting. Dragoon Guards had stored some ammunition in the building but the constables insisted on locking the man up. Southernwood blew the guard house up by striking his knife against some flint and setting light to the ammunition. The building was completely demolished but the man survived albeit with horrible burns and one leg so crushed that it had to be amputated. 3. A post office was in existence in Melksham in 1782. About 1880 the office was in Bank Street near Church Walk. The later Post Office in the High Street was used also for a private business until 1909; it was then reconstructed, and again practically rebuilt in 1931. The Post Office telegraph service was introduced in 1870. The telephone service was provided by the National Telephone Co. in 1898.
1783	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The north or Daniell's aisle in St. Michael's Church has been associated with Beanacre manor. It

Year	Event
	<p>was stated in the Terrier of 1783 that the north aisle was repairable by Paul Methuen (then lord of Beanacre), the south-east aisle by Richard Jenkins and two others, and the southwest aisle by Mrs. Mary Thresher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 282 1493 398">2. The Terrier of 1783 describes in detail the vicarage house of that date. It was a stone-walled building with tiled roof, and attached to it were outbuildings, an orchard, and a garden. In 1877 the house was rebuilt after designs by G. E. Street, in a 17th-century style. It stands on the west side of Canon Square. <i>(British History on line)</i> <li data-bbox="261 416 1493 472">3. There are no early records of Roman Catholics in the town and a report of 1783 stated that there were none at that time.
1784	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 488 783 521">1. The first Mail Coach started operating.
1787	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 533 1493 651">1. Early Methodist meetings were held 'in a small cottage, which was provided with a few rough benches for seats. There were only 4 or 5 members, . . . all old people'. Between 1787 and 1790 the hall of a house in the town that had formerly belonged to a local justice of the peace was used for meetings.
1788	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 667 970 701">1. The Congregational Church in Market Place was built.
1789	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 712 1235 745">1. A Town water pump was installed in the Market Place by public subscription.
1790s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 757 1485 790">1. The Ark cloth factory was built in the 1790s but closed in 1850 and was pulled down before 1865.
1790	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 801 1075 835">1. It was reported that there were fourteen Clothiers in Melksham.
1791	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 846 1501 902">1. The Rev. Robert Price was appointed Vicar of Melksham. He was chaplain to King George IV and a Canon of Salisbury Cathedral. <li data-bbox="261 913 868 947">2. John Awdry became High Sheriff of Wiltshire. <li data-bbox="261 958 1417 992">3. There were daily coach services through Melksham travelling to and from London and Bath. <li data-bbox="261 1003 1509 1417">4. There were two banks in Melksham in 1791. One, called 'Fowlers' had disappeared by c1815 but the other known as 'Phillips' had probably survived as Messrs. Freeman, Moule & Co. drawing on Sir Charles Price & Co. of London. The bank premises were said to be 'on the west side of the [High] street near the George'. By 1826 the name had changed to Moule, Son & Co. and the bank was under the management of local solicitors. In 1838 it was known as the North Wilts Banking Co. drawing on Dimsdale Fowler & Co. Sometime after 1864 the bank amalgamated with the Hampshire Banking Co. under the title The Hants & Northwest Wilts Banking Co. This later became the Capital & Counties Bank and occupied the premises on the east side of Bank Street. Prior to 1914 there was a branch of the Wilts & Dorset Bank on the site now occupied by Lloyds Bank. By 1918 both this and the Capital & Counties had amalgamated with Lloyds. For a short time both premises were occupied, but in 1922 the present building in Market Square was erected and the Capital & Counties premises abandoned. A branch of the Midland bank on the corner of Lowbourn was opened in the same year. There was a savings bank in Lowbourn in 1855 known in 1863 as the Penny Bank. The bank was still there c. 1890. <i>(British History on line)</i>
1792	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1440 1417 1496">1. An announcement was made in the Bath Chronicle in June 1792 of the establishment of the Melksham Bank by the firm of Awdry, Long & Bruges.
1793	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1507 807 1541">1. The first uniformed Postman introduced. <li data-bbox="261 1552 1070 1585">2. The large fulling mill in Melksham was converted to a corn mill, <li data-bbox="261 1597 1501 1843">3. The parish fire-engine, owned and managed by the vestry, is mentioned in 1793 and in 1838. It was agreed in 1871 that £1 a year should be paid to the Market Company as rent of the engine house, and £15 a year for payment of the fire brigade and maintenance of the engine, and that the old engine should be sold. The Urban District Council, taking over the vestry's functions, bought a motor fire-engine, and the expense was shared by the Melksham Without Parish Council; in 1939 (following the Fire Brigades Act, 1938) the Bradford and Melksham Rural District Council agreed to pay two fifths of the net cost on behalf of Melksham Without and three other parishes in the rural district; and in 1948, under the Fire Services Act, 1947, the County Council became responsible.
1794	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1854 1501 1944">1. The Particular Baptist congregation in Melksham is first mentioned in 1794. At that time the community had no pastor and their needs were supplied by students from Bristol. In 1798 a pastor, Thomas Ward from Diss (Norf.), was appointed. No record has been found of an early chapel <li data-bbox="261 1955 1501 2072">2. In 1794 Lord Bath's steward, reporting to the Board of Agriculture, observed that the land about Melksham could 'graze the largest oxen', and he predicted a rise in farm wages when machine-spinning of wool became established; but three years later Seend was devoted almost entirely to dairy-farming, and the poor had begun to migrate to 'the corn parishes'. In 1801 the acreage under

Year	Event
	wheat, barley, oats, rye, potatoes, peas, and beans, in the whole parish, was 354 out of more than 11,000. In 1811, 231 families out of 794 were engaged in agriculture -presumably inclusive of dairy-farming.
1795	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Wilts. and Berks. Canal from Abingdon, Swindon, and Chippenham passed through Melksham south-east of the Market Place. The canal was authorized by an Act of 1795 and during the 19th century carried considerable traffic. The portion lying within the parish has now been completely filled in and the line of its course is rapidly disappearing. It ran south from Lacock through Forest and Woodrow, and passed east of the town by three bridges under the Calne road, over Clackers Brook, and under the Devizes road. Thence the course ran due south to join the Kennet and Avon Canal. The canal wharf lay close to the Devizes road opposite Maggs factory. The site is still known as 'The Wharf. Even in the last two decades of the 19th century large quantities of grain for Taylor's mill and coal are said to have arrived at the wharf. Towards the end of the century, barges, steered by the canal superintendent and decorated with flowers and green branches, were used for Sunday school outings to Lacock. 2. The highways were the responsibility of the parish at an early date but it was not until 1795 that money was subscribed for paving the footway in the town. It was begun in September of that year by the house opposite the second well and thus perhaps outside the shop of Messrs. W. H. Smith. The private venture was followed by an Act in 1816 for paving and improving the footways and for cleaning, lighting, and watching the streets. This Act set up a body of thirty-two commissioners. The Act was repealed in 1876 and in 1878 a local government board was formed. 3. Private subscriptions enabled the footways in Melksham to be paved. 4. Galleries were built in the Baptist church to accommodate the increasing number of worshippers. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA)</i>
1797	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The poor-house was enlarged in 1797 by the addition of workshops.
1798	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Income Tax is introduced. 2. The first Minute book of the Baptist Church in Broughton Road dates from 1798. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA)</i>
1799	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The junction of the Wilts & Berks canal with the Kennet & Avon canal was completed with regulating lock. (Semington to Abingdon 52 miles)
1801	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1801 the first General Census was held. Thereafter a census was held every ten years (except 1941). The returns for 1801, 1811, 1821 and 1831 are not available). The total population was given as 7,754,875. 2. Henry Moule, born in Melksham in 1801, was ordained to the curacy of the parish church in 1823: he turned his attention to sanitary science and wrote several works on sewage disposal. He was a pioneer of the earth closet. 3. Another cloth factory near the bridge was built in 1801, and consisted of a stone-built range of 4 storeys to which a 5-storey block and a weaving shed had been added by 1861. This closed in 1871 bringing an end to the cloth industry in the town.
1802	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Rev. Joseph Smith was appointed vicar of Melksham. He was a Canon of Salisbury Cathedral. 2. In the summer of 1802 the Trowbridge woollen industry's Shear-men went on strike. During the stoppage, Littleton Mill, near the town of Semington, was burned down with the cost put at £8,000. This incident led the mill owners to back off from the threatened impending pay cuts. The employers, however, were determined to break the power of the workers. James Read, a Bow Street magistrate, was sent to Wiltshire by the Secretary of State seeking evidence against the union and he arrested Thomas Bailey, a Trowbridge Shear-man. In gaol and under interrogation, Bailey cracked and told of the union committee and secret oaths. James May, Secretary of the union, George Marks, John Helliker, (elder brother of Thomas) Samuel Ferris and Philip Edwards were arrested and charged with administering an illegal oath. They were held for seven months. The men claimed that they had been in the New Cross Keys pub, discussing the system of 'truck' payments – where employers pay in goods instead of wages. Thomas Bailey had accepted 'truck' but promised on a bible not to do so again. The explanation led to their release but Thomas Helliker was not so lucky. Thomas Helliker was in the middle of his apprenticeship at Littleton Mill when new machines arrived in Trowbridge that led to the strike. The wealthy magistrate and mill-owner, John Jones demanded revenge for the arson attack on the night of 22 July on his Littleton Mill, Semington. Thomas Helliker was arrested on suspicion of threatening a night-watchman with a pistol during the attack. The evidence against Helliker was contradictory and a witness to Helliker's alleged presence at the scene was given a financial incentive to testify against him by the person who rented the Mill. A key alibi in Thomas Helliker's defence, a fellow apprentice Joseph Warren,

Year	Event
	<p>went to a magistrate to say that he had found Helliker very drunk outside a friend's cottage on the night of the fire. He had put Helliker in the kitchen of the friend's cottage overnight, the front door had been locked and the key had been placed under the cottage owner's bedroom door. Helliker had slept here until 5am and therefore could not have been involved in the attack. Unfortunately by the time of the trial the witness had been paid to disappear. Although protesting his innocence, Helliker refused to betray a fellow member of the Shear-men's union. Helliker was found guilty and hanged on his 19th birthday in 1803 at Fisherton Jail, Salisbury. His fellow Shear-men carried his body over Salisbury Plain to be buried in honour in St James Church, Trowbridge. Girls in white dresses led thousands of mourners.</p> <p>3. Semington Toll Collector's House complete.</p>
1803	<p>1. The firm of C. W. Maggs & Company, manufacturers of mats, rope, and twine, was founded in 1803 by Charles Maggs (1769–1854), a Methodist, and moved from Radstock to Melksham where he bought a former cloth mill adjoining Spa Road. For a short time in the early 19th century the firm occupied Place House. He found the cause of Methodism in Melksham 'at very low ebb' and was later to play an important part in the spread of Methodism in Melksham and the surrounding areas. Early records of the firm's activities are extant. Charles Maggs, a grandson of the founder of the rope factory, himself founded a large Melksham industrial company, the Wilts United Dairies. The company is said to have begun its activities in West End Farm on the east of Spa Road. An office for the firm was built in the grounds of the rope factory. The condensory on the north side of the Avon Bridge was opened in 1900. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p> <p>2. On the 22nd of March 1803 Tomas Helliker was hanged at Salisbury for his alleged part in the Swing Riots for setting fire to Littleton Mill in Semington. (<i>Little Book of Wiltshire by Dee La Vardera</i>)</p>
1804	
1805	<p>1. In 1805 this entry is found in the Parish Registers:- "Expenses on account of the Church being broken into and robbed £18 5s. 10d." This was when the Church Plate was stolen in 1801, and below is a copy of the advertisement that was issued in London.</p> <div data-bbox="373 1070 1394 1659" data-label="Image"> <p style="text-align: center;">Public Office, Bow Street. June 7, 1803. Silversmiths, Pawnbrokers, and Others. FORTY POUNDS REWARD.</p> <p>WHEREAS the Parish Church of <i>Melksham</i>, in the County of <i>Wilts</i>, was <i>Sacrilegiously</i> BROKE OPEN, on Tuesday Night, the 31st. of May last, and the following <i>Communion Plate</i> taken and carried away, viz.— ONE LARGE SILVER FLAGGON, Inscribed “the Gift of ELLEN LONG to the Parish Church of Melksham, dated 1734.” ONE LARGE SILVER SALVER, ONE SMALL SILVER SALVER, and ONE SILVER CUP.</p> <p>For the Purpose of Detecting and Convicting the Persons concerned in this Robbery a Reward of FORTY POUNDS, is hereby offered by the CHURCHWARDENS of the said Parish of <i>Melksham</i>, to any Person or Persons who shall be the means of Discovering and Convicting any One or more of the Offenders.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Downes Printer, Strand, London.</p> </div> <p>2. In 1805 Job Coleman's house in the High Street was the Methodist meeting-place, where two rooms thrown into one, fitted with forms and a pulpit, held about 300 worshippers.</p> <p>3. Henry Moule, Evangelical Minister of Fordington for 51 years and Inventor of the Dry Earth Closet was born in Melksham. (<i>Little Book of Wiltshire by Dee La Vardera</i>)</p> <p>4. William Cox a thirty four year old native of Atworth, had been engaged for some time in passing bad notes, which he accomplished by attending fairs and markets as a horse dealer. He sold a pony at Tinhead for which a £10 note was given to him in payment. He then passed a £5 forged note in exchange. He was executed for his crimes. (<i>Little Book of Wiltshire by Dee La Vardera</i>)</p>
1806	<p>1. Place House passed to the Heathcoat family of Shaw Hill.</p> <p>2. Anne Yearsley, a verse writer, spent the last years of her life in the town where she died in 1806</p>
1807	<p>1. William Wilberforce was successful in his campaign to abolish the slave trade in the British Empire.</p>

Year	Event
	The British Parliament passed a law abolishing slavery.
1808	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The fifth bell in the Parish Church of St. Michael's was re-cast by James Wells of Aldbourne. 2. In 1808 George Gay was paid £2 10s. "for a new sundial and placing it against the Church." Was this because the clock would not go? This is probably the sundial now over the door of the Chapel. 3. Charles Maggs purchased the lease of the house in the High street where Methodist meetings were being held and, with the help of a charity of £50 bequeathed for this purpose, built the first chapel there. This meeting was always known as 'Mr Magg's'. Until 1811 Melksham had been part of the Bradford circuit but after that it became head of its own circuit. In 1821 the chapel was enlarged and membership continued to grow. There was an active Sunday school here by 1857. The chapel was licensed for marriages in 1865. In 1872 a new chapel was built on the site of the original one.
1809	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Town Bridge was swept away by a flood in 1809, and the present stone bridge of four arches took its place. 2. In 1809 four tenements on the western side of Semington Road were put in trust for the chapel and the land was used as a burial ground for the Methodist Chapel. This was closed in 1876.
1810	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1810 the Wilts and Berks canal was fully open. Raw materials such as coal and slate for Melksham were offloaded at the wharf in Spa Road, and finished products collected for distribution around the country. 2. The Three Magpies Inn at Sells Green was built in about 1810, of red brick. It was called the New Inn until 1938.
1811	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Until 1811 Melksham had been included in the Bradford Methodist circuit but in that year a new circuit was formed with Melksham at its head: the first Superintendent minister was a Mr. Pearson. At that time there were 41 members at the chapel: a revival in Melksham and in the circuit as a whole brought membership to 69 in 1817. In 1821 the chapel was enlarged and a new long term lease obtained: by 1827 membership had risen to 93. It remained at that level until 1857 when there was another remarkable revival, which, besides adding to the membership inspired members to further efforts for the liquidation of the chapel debt. During the remainder of the 19th century membership remained at about 100: in 1951 there were 86 members of the Melksham chapel.
1813	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1813 mineral waters were first noticed at Bowerhill and chalybeate and saline springs were used to promote Melksham as a spa. Several local gentry who had prospered from the woollen industry, the Awdrys, the Longs, the Methuens and the Phillips formed the Melksham Spa Company with a capital of 7,000 guineas to exploit the chalybeate spring 2. In November 1813 the misquoting of part of an advertisement in two London newspapers caused panic amongst the bank customers, many of whom quickly withdrew their money, reportedly causing "some bustle" among the bank partners.
1814	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Burial in Woollen Acts of 1666 – 1680 finally repealed. 2. In 1814 George John (Thicknesse) Touchet, Lord Audley, held Blackmore manor, with five dove-houses under the will of his great-uncle the 8th Earl and by the terms of a marriage settlement. He sold it in 1817–18 to Thomas Bruges and Edward Phillips. No further record of the manor has been found. (<i>British History on line</i>) 3. The present Town Bridge was built and completed by about 1814 but not exactly as we know it today because it was originally a single width. 4. The 19th century saw the final extinction of the woollen industry. John Britton, in 1814, noted a declining but still extensive trade in fine broadcloths and kerseymeres. Cloth-weaving slumped next year, in the north as well as in Wiltshire; the fate of the mills is indicated by that of a Mr. Yerbury which became a school before 1833. By 1838 there were two mills left in Melksham, both operated by steam power and together employing 162 hands. The Matravers mill alone survived in 1875; it was put up to auction in 1888, and the site passed to the Avon India Rubber Company Ltd. The dye house, on the opposite side of the Bath road, was used late in the 19th century by the Wilts United Dairies. A relic of the industry in the shape of a spinning jenny was still to be seen in a house in the City at the end of the century. 5. Sometime around 1814 an abandoned baby was found on the steps of the Workhouse in King Street and it was named George Melksham. He later married Jane Parsons and they had thirteen children. George died on the 16th April 1876 aged 61 and he was buried in the Baptist burial ground adjacent to the Western Way where the memorial to him and his wife who died on thye 14th February 1885 aged 70 can be seen.

Year	Event
1815	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. N. U. Grudgings, Dispensing Chemist was founded. A succession of Chemists occupied No. 1 Bank Street the latest being Gompels. 2. Several local gentry who had prospered from the woollen industry, the Awdrys, the Longs, the Methuens and the Phillips, formed the Melksham Spa Company with a capital of 7,000 guineas to exploit the chalybeate spring. A Spa, comprising a pump room and houses for visitors, was opened. 3. A reading-room and circulating library had been opened by about 1815 at 'Mr. Ward's printing Office'. This was perhaps for the benefit of intending visitors to the Spa and it is not known how long it survived. 4. The formal inclosure of Melksham did not take place until 1815 but it seems probable that most of the parish had been inclosed piecemeal from the 16th century onwards. There are several references to 'old enclosure' in the award—such, no doubt, as that of Rhotteridge about 1611, and the inclosure of 'the Clears' carried out by Sir Francis Fane before 1624. The 1815 award concerned only 520 acres of over 7,000 in the old parish of which the only compact area was that of Blackmore Common: the other awards affected small strips along roads. No single allottee received more than 20 acres and most allotments were very small.
1817	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Wiltshire Society, as its name implies, was a society of Wiltshiremen. Established at least as early as the first year of Cromwell's Protectorate, it was formally named the Wiltshire Society, but was more frequently referred to as the Wiltshire Feast, arising from the practice of holding an annual fund-raising dinner in London. Gentlemen who were natives of Wiltshire, living in London, Wiltshire and elsewhere, first attended a sermon (the Feast) preached by a Wiltshireman, and then a banquet. After their dinner they subscribed their quota towards the apprenticing of some poor Wiltshire child or another charitable cause directed at the native poor of Wiltshire. The little that is known of the history of this early society has been dealt with elsewhere. It appears that it had ceased to function by the start of the nineteenth century. The modern Wiltshire Society, with whose records this volume is concerned. Was formed in May 1817 and is still carrying out its charitable work today. (©Wiltshire Record Society ISBN 0 901333 28 X) 2. John Ledyard Phillips built 'Avon House' adjoining the earlier woollen mill that had been built by Henry Coulthurst. 3. Freemasonry first came to Melksham in 1817 when a former Lodge of Westbury was transferred, and the first meeting was held in Melksham at The King's Arms on 9 September that year.
1818	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1818 there was said to be only Fox's school in Melksham. By 1833 there were, besides the British school, two day schools attended by 50 boys at their parents' expense and an infants' school for 50 children, maintained by fees of 2d. a week and subscriptions. In 1859 there was said to be, besides the National and British schools, a dame school 'in which about 20 scholars, mixed, are taught, under the auspices of the parochial clergy, by a native of the place, untrained'. There were two other dame schools in the town attended by 20 children, and several 'commercial' schools kept by members of various dissenting bodies. Ten children were taught by a dame in a cottage at Shaw where there was also a National school.
1819	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Wilts and Berks canal linking the Kennet and Avon canal with the Thames finally opened in 1819
1820	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tilk & Smith was founded.
1821	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1821 the Methodist chapel in the High Street was enlarged and membership continued to grow. There was an active Sunday school here by 1857. The chapel was licensed for marriages in 1865. In 1872 a new chapel was built on the site of the original one.
1822	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Melksham Spa closes, as it could not compete with the one in Bath. 2. The reading rooms and circulating library in Ward's printing works closed after the Melksham Spa declined due to the proximity of Bath's Spa.
1823	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Henry Moule (1801-1880) was ordained to the curacy of Melksham in 1823. He was later made vicar of St. George's at Fordingbridge in 1829 and remained there for the rest of his life.
1824	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rev. Henry Moule married Mary Mullett Evans in Melksham on 1st July 1824. 2. Trouble was caused when the bank was listed on a Parliamentary Paper of the House of Commons under the title "Country Banks Becoming Bankrupt".
1825	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Rev. George Hume was appointed Vicar of Melksham. He is buried in Melksham. 2. On 27 February 1825 Henry Moule was ordained a priest by the bishop of Lincoln and initially

Year	Event
	<p>made curate of Melksham but 4 months later on 15th June, he was made a stipendiary Curate, and placed in sole charge of the church of <i>St Mary the Virgin</i> in the village of Gillingham in Dorset.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. George Martin aged 16 sentenced to death for stealing 2 flutes at Melksham. 4. Shaw Hill House, built before 1825 by Samuel Heathcote and sold in 1887 on the death of Thomas Jenkyns Heathcote, was the home of Charles Awdry from about 1890 to 1908. 5. Lord Audley had a house at Sandridge Park in 1825. The present house was built by Henry Lopes before 1862. R. H. Ludlow Bruges is stated to have been lord of the 'manor' of Sandridge in 1907, but it seems unlikely that this referred to more than the park surrounding the house named Sandridge Park. (<i>British History on line</i>) 6. In 1825 the livestock market was held on alternate Mondays.
1826	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John Fowler, agricultural engineer and inventor of the steam plough, was born on 11 July 1826 in Melksham.
1827	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Following the decline in Quakerism, there were only three remaining of the original nineteen Quaker places of worship registered under the Toleration Act of 1689; these were in Calne, Melksham and Salisbury. 2. The organ in St. Michael's Church was first mentioned in 1827.
1828	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An 'Establishment' called the 'Melksham General School for the Education of Poor Children' was formed before 1828. At a meeting of subscribers held in that year the vicar and others were nominated as trustees and a cottage and land at Lowbourn were bought for £120. It was provided in the conveyance that the schools to be erected on this site should be managed by a committee of 8 Churchmen and 7 Nonconformists, on the principles of the British and Foreign Schools Society, and that a Church of England Sunday school might be held in them. In 1833 attendance at the school was said to be 130 boys and 90 girls and in 1839 160 boys and 125 girls. By 1849 the school had received a total of £50 in State grants: potential accommodation was then reckoned at 503 and 145 children attended the school. The fall in the attendance figures was no doubt due to the opening of the National school. The British school, however, continued to flourish. By 1852 it had received in grants from the State £3. 10s. for books, £85 towards the salaries of certificated teachers, and £188 for pupil teachers. In 1856 it obtained a building grant of £64. 6s. 8d., probably towards additional accommodation: the promoters found another £33. The special report of 1859 was not entirely favourable. It was said that there were in the school 69 boys under a master named Neal and 2 pupil teachers, and 63 girls under a mistress. The teaching and general condition of the boys' part of the school met with approval; the girls' part was considered to be in an unsatisfactory state; it was admitted, however, that the inspection, which had taken place in 1857, had been 'hurried'. State grants for all purposes had, by 1860, amounted to more than £800, of which £638 was for pupil teachers and £88 a capitation grant; and by 1862 the total grant had risen to £1,123. These grants were made under the old code; under the code of 1864 the school received an annual grant of £36. 18s. 7d. This figure is smaller than the average received between 1833 and 1860. Attendance in 1864 was said to be 88. The attendance figures and with them the amount of the annual grant fluctuated around the 1860 figures until the early years of the next decade. After 1871 the school ceased to be known officially as the British school and was called simply Lowbourn school. There is some evidence that about this time the management passed into the hands of a Nonconformist committee. By 1881 accommodation was reckoned as 220 and attendance had risen to 139; the annual State grant was then £107. 5s. 11d. The attendance figures rose steadily throughout the remainder of the century and by 1907 were reckoned as: mixed 215, infants 60. The school was then attended almost to the capacity of its accommodation which was said to be mixed 226, infants 67. An additional classroom had been rented in 1902. The school was taken over by the County Council in 1909 and a new school of red brick built on a site adjacent to the old British school. In 1950 there were 12 teachers in the senior school and 8 in the infant school; attendances were: mixed 331, infants 251. Accommodation was assessed at: mixed 260, infants 146. Additions were in 1952 being made to the building. 2. Stratton Sons & Mead Ltd., Wholesale Grocers & Provision Merchants was founded.
1829	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Duke of Wellington came to Melksham by Steam Coach. 2. In 1829 a British School was opened as 'The Melksham General School for the Education of Poor Children'. Unusually it was run jointly by Anglicans and non-conformists. Known as Lowbourn School from 1871 it was taken over by Wiltshire County Council in 1909 and a new school in red brick was built adjacent to the old school. 3. The Provident District Society, for the support of sick and infirm workmen, existed in 1830 and in 1868; and for a short time in the second quarter of the 19th century it received, for clothing, half the

Year	Event
	<p>income of Bohun Fox's charity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The 48 members recorded for Melksham Society of Friends in 1829 no doubt included members of neighbouring defunct societies. 5. A Particular Baptist congregation was mentioned here in 1794 and in 1829 they were referred to as the Zion Meeting with the implication that there was a meeting house here. 6. In 1829 the Primitive Methodist Mission, known at first as the Castle Combe Mission, was launched and established preaching places in both Melksham itself and the area to the east of the town known as Forest. Primitive Methodism appealed particularly to farm labourers and the Forest area would have supported a good number of these. At first membership was small but later the numbers expanded. In 1852 two houses were bought in Lower Forest and adapted into the first chapel which was opened in 1856. A Sunday school was in existence by 1875. The congregation increased in the 1890s and in 1905 the present stone chapel in Forest Road was opened. In 1938 a stone school building in the chapel grounds was opened. However, the Town Mission declined and at the end of 1863 the Mission Room was closed and sold. 7. In 1829 lands were leased for the poor to cultivate. Land for this purpose had probably been owned by the parish before, and probably long before, this date, for the overseers received a small allotment under the 1814 inclosure award.
1830	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first threshing machine was destroyed on Saturday night, 28th August 1830 and by the third week of October more than 100 threshing machines had been destroyed in East Kent. These riots spread rapidly throughout the country. In all, sixty per cent of the disturbances were concentrated in the south (Berkshire 165 incidents, Hampshire 208, Kent 154, Sussex 145 and Wiltshire 208). 2. The first Mail Train was introduced. 3. Population of Melksham Parish – 5776. 4. By 1830 there were six coaches each day providing services to London, Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Devizes, and Reading.
1831	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Population of Melksham Parish – 5866
1832	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The private gas company, Melksham Gas Light & Coke Co. formed in 1832 for the manufacture of gas in Melksham became a public company in 1885, and its undertaking was acquired by the Bath Gas Company in 1936. Gas is no longer made in Melksham and the holder on the east bank of the Avon has now been demolished. 2. Inquest held May 3rd 1832 at Sandy Lane on the body of Mr King, surgeon of Melksham. Mr King had been attending the Fete at the Marquis of Lansdown's on Thursday and had returned to the George Public House at Sandy Lane, where he left his horse, when he fell suddenly backwards and instantly expired. A short time previous to his death Mr King observed to a friend that he apprehended that he should not live many years as he conceived he was affected with a disease of the heart; and this, there can be no doubt, was the cause of his death. He had not taken the slightest refreshment either at Bowood or at the Public House. A wife and nine children will have to mourn his irreparable loss. Verdict: Visitation of God. (<i>Newspaper report</i>)
1833	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Factory Act was passed prohibiting children aged less than nine from working in factories and reducing the working hours of women and older children. 2. The Swing Riots commenced in Kent and spread throughout southern England. The Tolpuddle Martyrs, a group of labourers from the village of Tolpuddle in Dorset who attempted to form a trade union, were sentenced to seven years transportation. 3. The Poor Law Act was passed creating workhouses for the poor. 4. The London to Bristol Railway opened which led to the decline of the Wilts and berks canal. 5. In 1833 tithes from Canonhold manor Melksham were valued at £891 7s 11d, from Seend £325 0s 7d and from Erlestoke £332 6s 3d. The tithes were sub-leased in part from time to time: those of Erlestoke (q.v.) were leased to the WatsonTaylor family in 1847 and 1865. The tithes were redeemed in 1935. (<i>British History on line</i>) 6. A survey of 1833 shows that out of 7,120 acres of agricultural land in Melksham itself, 1,217 were arable, and out of 2,342 in the chapelry of Seend only 236; almost all the rest were 'meadows and pasture'. Cheese-making was sufficiently important in 1847 to justify the opening of the 'New Cheese Market' at Melksham. 7. By 1833 in Melksham there were, besides the British school, two day schools attended by 50 boys at their parents' expense and an infants' school for 50 children, maintained by fees of 2d. a week

Year	Event
	<p>and subscriptions.</p> <p>8. In 1833 Isaac Spencer, who believed that selling a wife publicly in the market place with a halter round her neck would have the full force of a divorce legally obtained, took his wife (equally willing to try a change of circumstances) to the public market place in Melksham and there disposed of her for the sum of 2s 6d to a man named William Watts. Both were committed to prison for the offence but Watts was acquitted. (<i>Little Book of Wiltshire by Dee La Vardera</i>)</p> <p>9. Seend Church school was founded in 1833 by Thomas Bruges who in the previous year had erected a schoolhouse in the churchyard at his own expense.</p>
1834	<p>1. The Poor Law Amendment Act 1834, known widely as the New Poor Law, was an Act of the passed by government. It completely replaced earlier legislation based on the Poor Law of 1601 and attempted to fundamentally change the poverty relief system in England and Wales. It resulted from the 1832 Royal Commission into the Operation of the Poor Laws. The New Poor Law is considered to be one of the most "far-reaching pieces of legislation of the entire Nineteenth Century". Despite being labelled an "amendment act" it completely overhauled the existing system and established a Poor Law Commission to oversee the national operation of the system. This included the organising of small parishes into Poor Law Unions and the building of workhouses in each union for giving poor relief. The Act was intended to curb the cost of poor relief, and address abuses of the old system, prevalent in southern agricultural counties, by enabling a new system to be brought in under which relief would only be given in workhouses, and conditions in workhouses would be such as to deter any but the truly destitute from applying for relief.</p> <p>2. Bank House in Bank Street was built. (Demolished 1963)</p>
1835	<p>1. The Municipal Reform Act was passed requiring members of town councils to be elected by ratepayers and councils to publish their financial accounts.</p> <p>2. A Bill was passed requiring Boroughs to set up their own Police forces.</p> <p>3. Melksham Union formed in 1835 and the workhouse at Semington was built within the next couple of years.</p> <p>4. The Strict Baptists Chapel was built in Union Street and called the Ebenezer Chapel.</p> <p>5. Thomas Bruges, by will proved 1835, provided for the distribution of £10 a year in blankets at Christmas among the poor of Melksham and Seend. The endowment for each place is now £333. 6s. 8d. stock and held by the Official Trustees of Charitable Funds. The vicar and churchwardens are the trustees for the Melksham fund and the vicar and two appointees of the Parish Council for Seend. The incomes are distributed in clothing.</p> <p>6. The Particular Baptist congregation in Melksham is first mentioned in 1794. At that time the community had no pastor and their needs were supplied by students from Bristol. In 1798 a pastor, Thomas Ward from Diss (Norf.), was appointed. No record has been found of an early chapel: in 1829 this congregation was referred to as the Zion Meeting in circumstances that make it clear that there was then some kind of meeting-house for Particular Baptists. The present Ebenezer Chapel close to Union Street was built in 1835 on a site then called 'Stalkers Close' which had been obtained on a long-term lease. Some additional land surrounding the chapel was leased in 1869. A trust formed in 1860 for managing property of the Ogbourne St. Andrew Particular Baptist Chapel was applied to the benefit of the Melksham chapel in 1903 when the Ogbourne St. Andrew Chapel closed. The assets of the trust are now invested in stock and administered under a scheme drawn up by the Charity Commissioners in 1917.</p> <p>7. Charles Maggs used Place House for a short period from about 1835 and built a rope-walk at the back of the house.</p> <p>8. William Henry Fox Talbot discovered the negative/positive photographic process at Lacock Abbey. (<i>Little Book of Wiltshire by Dee La Vardera</i>)</p>
1836	<p>1. A law was introduced requiring all Births, Marriages and Deaths to be recorded.</p> <p>2. Tax at four pence per copy on newspapers was reduced to one penny.</p> <p>3. The Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 allowed payment of Tithes in kind to be substituted by money payments.</p> <p>Melksham.</p> <p>Agreement 9th December 1836, supplementary agreement 28th February 1838, confirmed 22nd September 1838.</p> <p>Tithe rent-charge £1,278 8s. 10d. (Melksham £978 8s. 10d., Seend £300) to the dean and chapter of Salisbury for great tithes, including 2s. 6d. for tithes on rectorial glebe; £1,215 to the vicar (George Hume) for small tithes, including 4s. for tithes on glebe. Tithes on Erlestoke extinguished under</p>

Year	Event
	<p>Inclosure Award, 1782.</p> <p>Melksham (8078 a.)</p> <p>Arable 1,368 a. Meadow 6,452 a Wood 116 a Gardens 142 a.</p> <p>Owners 103 John Awdry 315 a; Rev. Jeremiah Awdry 55 a.; Ambrose Awdry, the younger, 117 a.; Georgina Arnold 107 a.; William Heald Ludlow-Bruges 1,557 a.; Christopher Beaven 89 a.; Ann Crook 51 a.; John Brownjohn 149 a; Sarah Fox 96 a.; John Tucker and William Pollard 61 a; Peak Garland 679 a; Rev. Thomas Gaisford 54 a.; Rev. Thomas Heathcots 569 a.; Thomas Jefferys 74 a.; Walter Long 831 a.; Rev. Samuel Johnson 73 a.; Henry Gaisford Gibbs Ludlow 140 a.; James Maton 168 a.; Wadham Locke 65 a.; Paul Methuen 884 a.; Edward Seymour, duke of Somerset, 77 a.; Sir. Harry Burrard Neale 244 a.; James Tilby 54 a.; Rev. b. W. Wrey 360 a.; Jane Tayler 75 a.; dean and chapter of Salisbury 8 a. (glebe).</p> <p>Occupiers Elizabeth Harris 130 a.; James Beaven 167 a.; James Breach 109 a.; Robert Curnick 232 a.; Thomas Wiltshire 215 a.; W. H. Ludlow-Bruges 61 a.; Thomas Rawlings 255 a.; Timothy Webb 161 a.; Robert Laws 117 a.; Christopher Beaven 61 a.; John Brownjohn 118 a.; Isaac Pocock 51 a.; Thomas James 277 a.; Jeremiah Harris 148 a.; Robert Pritchard 168 a.; James Coleman 50 a.; Abraham Pocock 163 a.; Joseph Ghey 54 a.; Sarah Breach 72 a.; William James 73 a.; William Milsom 73 a.; Thomas Milsom 288 a.; Henry Flower 219 a.; James Cottle 126 a.; John Knott 51 a.; Ann Sparks 140 a.; Harry Pocock 136 a.; William Redman 188 a.; Martha Bodmin 128 a.; William Dancey 125 a.; William Butler 166 a.; Thomas Lawes, the elder, 168 a.; Edward Hulbert 129 a.; James Pocock 66 a.; William Cottle 153 a.; James Watson 101 a.</p> <p>Seend (2585 a.)</p> <p>Arable 297 a. Meadow 2,288 a.</p> <p>Owners 40. Ambrose Awdry 536 a.; W. H. Ludlow-Bruges 113 a.; Richard Hayward 74 a.; Wadham Locke 671 a.; duke of Somerset 565 a.; George Watson-Taylor 54 a.</p> <p>Occupiers Richard Pritchard 361 a.; Daniel Tucker 113 a.; John Whatley 65 a.; William Cox 74 a.; John Barnes 74 a.; James Harris 80 a.; John Harris 133 a.; William Harris 124 a.; William Whale 102 a.; Edward Gough 194 a.; William Gaisford 127 a.; Robert Hart 109 a.; Robert White 63 a.; George Newman 54 a.</p> <p>Maps 3. Town of Melksham [c. 1/1901]; Melksham parish except Seend 1/4752; Seend 1/4752. <i>Abstracts of Wiltshire Tithe Apportionments Edited by R. E. Sandell Devizes 1975. WRS 30</i></p> <p>4. In 1836 work began on the Box railway tunnel and was completed by 1841. At 1.75 miles long it was, at that time, the longest railway tunnel in existence.</p>
1837	<p>1. The wedding of John Cleaver and Esther Little was the first to take place in the Baptist Church in Broughton Road on 2nd August 1837 with Rev. Joshua Russell officiating. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i></p> <p>2. Melksham Union Workhouse built at Semington.</p>
1838	<p>1. Some fishermen using a net in a deep pool in the Avon just below the Vicarage drew up the Horns of prehistoric Ox (<i>Bos Primigenius</i>) in May of this year, which is still preserved mounted above the door in the council chamber in the Town Hall. This is remarkable from its immense size, which is said to exceed all other fossils to be found in any of the museums of Europe of this long extinct species.</p> <p>2. Christ Church, Shaw, was built in 1838 at a cost of £1,750 and made a separate Ecclesiastical Parish, the first vicar being the Rev. G. Nutt, but it is still in the Civil Parish of Melksham. It was rebuilt in 1905 by C. E. Ponting at the expense of Charles Awdry. The new church retains the north and south walls of the former nave; aisles are formed by oak pillars and arches, carried up to a half-timbered clerestory. The chancel is apsidal, and where it joins the nave there is an ornate oak <i>flèche</i>, covered with oak shingles. The tower rises in four stages; the lowest forms a porch and baptistery; the buttresses of the belfry stage terminate in life-sized statues of saints; the parapet is embattled, and the slender spire is covered with oak shingles. The brass candelabrum was brought from Melksham church in 1846. The registers begin in 1838. The plate comprises a flagon, chalice, and patens of about 1838, and a modern silver chalice and paten given as memorials about 1896. The original organ was enlarged in 1925. Gas heating was introduced in 1846. Electric light was installed in 1937. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p> <p>3. Gas was introduced into St. Michael's Church for lighting and heating in 1838–9.</p> <p>4. By 1838 there were two mills left in Melksham, both operated by steam power and together employing 162 hands.</p>

Year	Event
1839	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1839 several groups of labourers rioted in many parts of the country over the price of food and the introduction of new farm equipment that was taking their jobs. In response the residents of Wiltshire called for the formation of a police force similar to Robert Peel's Metropolitan Police which was formed on 13th November 1839 at the Bear Hotel in Devizes. The first Chief Constable of Wiltshire, Captain Samuel Meredith RN, was appointed. The force started operating from January 1840 2. A Baptist Chapel was built at Forest. 3. Radical political activity came to the town when in early March 1839 a Chartist meeting was held under the chairmanship of S. Chapman, a Holt working-man. In March 1840 'the Radicals' of Melksham Forest were amongst the few groups of Wiltshire men to subscribe to a defence fund for the benefit of Frost, the Monmouth Chartist. This is the first evidence of Chartist activity in Melksham and a Chartist group was in the town between June 1841 and January 1843. 4. The old workhouse in King Street was sold in 1839 for £725.
1840	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On 10th January 1840, the Uniform Penny Post was established throughout the UK, facilitating the safe, speedy and cheap conveyance of letters and from 6th May they could be prepaid with introduction of the first postage stamp, known as the Penny Black. As Britain was the first country to issue prepaid postage stamps, British stamps are the only ones in the world that do not bear the name of the country of issue on them. By the end of the century, there were between six and twelve mail deliveries per day in London, permitting correspondents to exchange multiple letters within a single day. 2. Miss Maria Nalder was Postmistress in Melksham in 1840. 3. The National school at Melksham (later to be known as St. Michael's Church of England School) was founded in 1840. In that year the vicar applied to the National Society for help in erecting a two-roomed school for 150 boys and 150 girls. The school building was to cost £530 and a teacher's house an additional £150. The Society contributed £75 towards the cost and the State £154. The site for the building near the church-yard, was given by John Awdry as lessee and by the Dean and Chapter as reversionary owners of the land. The infants department of the school occupied a nearby cottage that was rented for that purpose. The numbers enrolled during the first year were: 45 boys, 56 girls, and 30 infants. In 1849 the average attendance was said to be 118 for all groups: accommodation, assessed at 6 sq. ft. for each child, was reckoned at 306. The projected teacher's house, for which money had not been provided when the school was founded, was erected in 1850 with the aid of a grant from the National Society. The school buildings were enlarged in 1852 with the aid of a State grant of £27. 4s. 4d. During the following ten years the National school, like the British school, took advantage of the large maintenance grants offered by the State. By 1852 it had received £8 for books and £47.10s. for pupil teachers; by 1860 £13 for books, £157 to augment the salaries of certificated teachers, £410 for pupil teachers and £69 capitation grant. By 1862 the total grant was £840. Under the revised code the school received in 1865 £77. 10s. 2d. annual grant for all purposes; average attendance was then 151. Attendance figures, and with them the annual grants, increased steadily during the next ten years. In 1872 average attendance was 257 and the grant £141. 12d. 9d. In 1870, a scheme for the management of the girls and infants part of the school was established by the Charity Commissioners. In the previous year the school received a State building grant of £86. 6s. which was probably used for an addition to the south-west corner of the building. In 1877 the nearby tithe barn and its site were bought for the boys' school from Sir John Wither Awdry for £73. On the completion of the alterations total accommodation for the whole school rose to 500. 4. Baptist Chapel, Forest was opened in 1840 but did not flourish and the building was sold in 1906. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA)</i>
1841	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Census year.- Population of Melksham Parish – 6236.
1842	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thomas James of Melksham Forest advertised as a Teasel Grower & Dealer. Teasels were used for raising the nap of cloth.
1844	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Letter sent to Trustees of Melksham Roads on the 1st December 1844 informing them of the intention of building a railway which would affect the Main turnpike Road.
1845	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There was a great restoration of the Church in 1845 at a cost of £1,895. Unfortunately, the vicar and churchwardens of that day fell into the hands of an architect, Thomas Wyatt, who on account of the mischief he did to so many Churches has been called "the destroyer." He seems to have had no veneration for antiquity, no perception of historical traditions, no sense of the beauty of Christian art, and no idea of the requirements of Christian worship. Here in Melksham, from an architectural point of view, he did irretrievable mischief, though it must allow that in some respects

Year	Event
	<p>he made it more convenient for the congregational use; but this result no doubt could have been obtained in a different way by a more competent architect. To begin with, he took down the tower, which for centuries had stood in the centre of the Church, and re-built it at the west end, using the same materials and preserving, to a very limited extent, some of its features, but not re-building it stone by stone in its original form. (In the muniment room of the Church there is a letter of protest written by a clergyman in the neighbourhood). To do this he must have destroyed some of the Norman work at the west end. The curious arches inside at the corners show how the buttresses are supported. Then to make room for more seats he built a wall across from the north transept to the porch, cutting arches through to the nave and transept, thus destroying important architectural features. He added that portion of the Church where the organ and vestries are now, cutting through the arch to the chancel to correspond with the arch on the other side (which, at some period it has not been able to discover, was cut between the chapel and the chancel), also cutting another arch through the east wall of the transept. In the chapel he opened out the arch between it and the nave which before was solid masonry, and built across a false arch, supported by two angels, in line with the chancel arch. What could have been the object for this is impossible to discover. Galleries were removed and new seats placed in the Church, but these were so badly constructed and so uncomfortable that they could not long be retained; the stone floor likewise soon worn away and became uneven; the little chapel on the south by the south door was also tampered with and partly re-built, but we are able in the foundation to trace much of the original work. There was also a porch at the south door which he took away. There were left, as visible remains of the Norman church, the lower part of the chancel with slight traces of its original arcading and a string-course at the west end of the nave. A carved capital and an unusually large stone coffin are both preserved in the porch. All that can be said with regard to Wyatt's restoration is that we must be thankful he did not do more mischief.</p>
1846	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 925 1501 1048">1. George Davis, as an 11 year old boy, was watching proceedings of the election riot in Melksham in 1865 from the bottom of Blind Lane (Church Walk). He recalled a remark made to him by his father that in the Chartist Riots of about 1846 a squadron of cavalry was drafted into the town to keep the peace. <li data-bbox="261 1059 1501 1227">2. A congregation of Baptists built a chapel at Upper Green in 1846. In the 1920s there was one evening service a week and a Sunday School, and during the 20th century the chapel was regarded as a mission station of Melksham Baptist Church. In the early 1960s the congregation dwindled until there were only three remaining. It was decided to close the chapel on 1st January 1967 and the building was sold. It has now been converted into a house and extended. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i>
1847	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1249 1501 1429">1. The Melksham Market Company, formed in 1847, acquired from the owners of Place House an orchard fronting on the Market Place, and erected there 'the new Cheese Market' at a cost of £3,000. The building was used by the Local Board, and from 1889 by the County Court. The cheese store was let as a Drill Hall in 1907, and is now the Assembly Hall. The Company had been wound up in 1898, and the property sold to Charles Awdry for £2,500; in 1914 it was bought by the Urban District Council for £1,600. The Market Hall is now the Town Hall. <li data-bbox="261 1440 1501 1473">2. The original Police Station was built next door to the Cheese Hall. <li data-bbox="261 1485 1501 1541">3. Also in 1847, a lock up was built in the Market Place which doubtless housed over-enthusiastic revellers from the market as well as people awaiting trial. <li data-bbox="261 1552 1501 1798">4. On the 13th April 1889 Frederick Kemster was born in Bayswater in London. In later life he became known as the Seend Giant. He was 7ft. 9.3ins. tall, had an arm span of 8ft. 4½ins. And weighed 375 pounds. Some time around 1918 military recruiters found Frederick working at the Barge Inn in Seend Cleeve where his sister Ruth Rayner and her husband Jim ran the Pub. He was known locally as "The Seend Giant". He died aged 29, in the Queen's Park Hospital Blackburn on the 15th April 1918 and was buried in a 10ft. grave in Blackburn. His grave stone also calls him 'The British Giant'. At the beginning of WW1 he was in Germany and was placed under house arrest and was released after a month and returned to Britain.
1848	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="261 1809 1501 1843">1. A two-year outbreak of cholera began in England and Wales in 1848 claiming about 52,000 lives. <li data-bbox="261 1854 1501 1977">2. A railway line from Thingley Junction (just outside Chippenham) to Westbury, which passes from north to south through the parish with a station north of the Avon Bridge, was opened by the Wilts. Somerset & Weymouth Railway Co., in 1848. This line was handed over to the G.W.R. in 1850. A halt at Beanacre was brought into use in 1905. <li data-bbox="261 1989 1501 2072">3. Shaw Church School, later known incorrectly as the National school, was probably founded in 1848. The National Society's returns of 1846–7 reported that there was no day school in the chapelry, but in 1849 a day-school in the village received a small grant from the State for books

Year	Event
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	and equipment.
1850	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the copyhold land of the estate of Canonhold was sold in 1849 to the Wilts. Somerset and Weymouth Railway Company for £816. 8s. The churchyard of St Michael and All Angels church was extended in 1850, on land bought from the Awdry family for £200, and again in 1886, on land given by Colonel Phipps. It was further enlarged in 1907, when the new ground was given by Charles Awdry and walled by public subscription. When the hospital was moved from Bank Street (see below—Local Govt. and Public Services) the transfer of Henry George White's charity to the maintenance of the churchyard took effect. The former hospital premises, with £465 received for damage during requisition, were the subject of a scheme of the Charity Commissioners dated 1949. The Diocesan Board of Finance is custodian trustee, the Parochial Church Council are the managing trustees. (<i>British History on line</i>) In 1850 Benjamin Sawtell founded a business in Challymead, on the Bradford on Avon road, filling palliasses with straw for the army. Lowbourne House was built in 1850 (demolished 1963). The line from Thingley Junction to Westbury was handed over to the G.W.R.. Brunel visited Melksham in 1850 and had lunch in Place House. A Reredos was erected in the Parish Church by Sir John Awdry in memory of his father John Awdry. The Ark cloth factory was closed. A chapel for Wesleyan worship was built at 'Berryl's Lane' (Berhills on the Sells Green-Bromham Road) in about 1850. In 1857 no society had been formed there and no further trace has been found of any Wesleyan community there. The highest recorded membership of the Baptist Church in Broughton Road was in 1850 – with 165 members with 50 teachers for 340 children in the Sunday School. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i> John Fowler Jnr (1826-1964) had become prominent in the development of land cultivation machinery since he introduced his 'mole plough' at the Royal Agricultural Society of England meeting held in Exeter in 1850. After years of experimenting he competed at the RASE trials at Chester in 1858 where the judges announced that he was the winner. They said that his machine could turn over the soil in an efficient manner at a saving compared with horse labour.
1851	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Census year.
1852	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Generally considered the most deadly of the seven cholera pandemics, the third major outbreak of Cholera in the 19th century lasted from 1852 to 1860. Like the first and second pandemics, the Third Cholera Pandemic originated in India, spreading from the Ganges River Delta before tearing through Asia, Europe, North America and Africa and ending the lives of over a million people. British physician John Snow, while working in a poor area of London, tracked cases of cholera and eventually succeeded in identifying contaminated water as the means of transmission for the disease. Unfortunately the same year as his discovery (1854) went down as the worst year of the pandemic, in which 23,000 people died in Great Britain. (<i>Google</i>) The first reading room having closed after the spa succumbed to the nearby presence of Bath, the Melksham Mutual Improvement Society opened another on the east side of Bank Street (Prospect House) in 1852 to provide the middle classes with reading matter. The reading-room still survives and is now provides private residences. In 1852 two houses were bought in Lower Forest Lane and adapted into the first Primitive Methodist Society chapel which was opened in 1856. A Sunday school was in existence by 1875.
1853	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccination against smallpox was made compulsory. The first post-boxes appear.
1854	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> James Hurn established a timber mill by the railway station and began manufacturing wooden products in Melksham. E Scott & Sons, General Drapers & Gents outfitters founded. In 1925 they were in Nottingham House. Sandridge Park built for R L Lopes to replace earlier House, home of Earl of Castlehaven.
1855	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Bell Inn is 18th century built with red brick and had a brewhouse at the back in about 1855. The Inn was said to have breakfasted Oliver Cromwell as he was advancing his troops from Trowbridge to attack Devizes Castle on 18 September 1645. Mrs Betty Brown ran the pub in 1794-1828 and it

Year	Event
	is reputed that a London sign board in the 1820s told of 'Betty Brown's best beer sold here!'
1856	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Iron ore was quarried and smelted in Seend from the 1850s with three blast furnaces fifty feet high, and employed 300 men. Aubrey wrote that he discovered iron ore as early as 1666 when it rained so much that it washed away the sand from the ore and the later bright sun reflected on it. Due to the high level of deforestation in the 17th century there was not enough wood to smelt it. The arrival of coal in the 19th century made this possible and mining rights were leased just below the Bell Inn in 1856 where 10,000 tons of ore were mined. The site also housed blast furnaces and smelting facilities. By 1876 the iron works seem to be out of use. In 1889 Kelly's Directory stated 'Iron ore is found here in abundance and until recently was largely worked'. The late 19th to early 20th centuries saw intermittent smelting. An influx of men and boys from the outlying area and Ireland and the Black Country occurred. In 1873 'Adam Drewe crawled into a flue pipe to clear a blockage and was pulled out unconscious'. He was revived by the "Staffordshire" mode of resuscitation by putting his head face down in a hole in the ground and burying it in the earth, except for one small hole! In 1884 complaints were received that Pelch Lane was being badly cut up by the constant haulage of iron ore down the narrow lane. During the First World War an overhead cable took ore down in large iron buckets to Seend Station. Boys got free rides up the hill in the empty buckets! After a lull, the Second World War created demand and the stone was used to provide iron oxide for paint and coal gas. The site closed in 1946.
1857	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By 1857 and probably much earlier there was an active Methodist Sunday school attached to the Melksham chapel; at that time 35 teachers and 150 children were attending the school. A freehold site for a Sunday school in Watson's 'Barton' (now Watson's Court) was acquired in 1861: the schoolroom was rebuilt between 1900 and 1906 on another site in Watson's Court at a cost of £1,800. In 1952 the old school was leased to the local branch of the British Legion.
1858	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Fowler Alms-houses were founded and endowed by Rachel Fowler by deeds of 1858 and 1864. They consist of a row of five houses, built on the site of Caroline Buildings in 'The City' and now endowed with £911 1s 11d stock. Each inmate receives 5s a week. Rachel Fowler, a charitable Quaker, lived at 1 Bank Street, now Gompels, the Chemist. 2. The branch line of the G.W.R. from Devizes to Holt passed through Seend parish and Berryfields. The station at Seend was opened in 1858.
1859	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The rent due to the capital manor was dropped in 1859 as obsolete. In 1814 the vicar exchanged his rent (together with an allotment on Blackmore Common) for a small part of Can Meadow which adjoined his garden. 2. The Cheese Market opened in Melksham in the space under the Town Hall. 3. A Volunteer force was raised in 1859 and was known in 1875 as the Melksham Rifle Corps (12th Wilts.). It was absorbed in 1889 by the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment, later the 4th Battalion (T.A.). Arms and ammunition for the Volunteers were at one time stored in the 'round house' which still exists about half-way along the south side of Church Street. The cheese store of the Market Hall was once used as a drill hall (now the Assembly Hall) and there were rifle butts in a field at the end of Scotland Road. (<i>British History on line</i>) 4. In 1859 there was said to be, besides the National and British schools, a dame school 'in which about 20 scholars, mixed, are taught, under the auspices of the parochial clergy, by a native of the place, untrained'. There were two other dame schools in the town attended by 20 children, and several 'commercial' schools kept by members of various dissenting bodies. Ten children were taught by a dame in a cottage at Shaw where there was also a National school. 5. Magistrates' Office, Monday, October 31st, (Before R. Lopes, Esq.) Punitive Revival. - Thomas Stevens, blacksmith, Bath Ford, was charged with being drunk and disorderly on Saturday night, for which he was then and there locked up, and was now sentenced to sit in the stocks for five hours. The delinquent was duly placed <i>in extremis</i>, but stress of weather induced his merciful release, after he had been a spectacle for two hours. [It is more than time, that the unmitigated barbarism of this punishment, should be matter of history, with a doubly suggestive memorial similar to that which stands rotting near Trowbridge river side. If a man gets drunk, and becomes uproarious, punish him like a man, make him pay in purse by fine, or in person by hard labour, but don't make his "feet fast in the stocks" and degrade God's deformed, but uneffaced image by cruelty, which it is not possible to inflict on a brute. Debated, degraded, insensate as any man may be, the stocks are torture, and their use is repugnant to the spirit of the age, as would be the resuscitation of the pillory, or the revival of the rack. This tipsy fellow may not be the last to sit publicly with locked heels at Melksham, but there will probably not be more than another. The last straw will break the camel's back. Ed.T. A.] (<i>From The Wiltshire Times 5th November 1859</i>)

Year	Event
1860	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Curiously enough, the stocks were never formally abolished. They continued to be used, albeit less regularly, until the 1870s. One of the more recent cases on record was reported in the Leeds Mercury (14 April 1860). At Pudsey, the appropriately named John Gambles sat in the stocks for six hours for gambling on a Sunday. (<i>Google</i>) 2. Miss Araminta Bullock was Postmistress in Melksham. 3. Inspired by the 'Great Stink', an event in central London in July and August 1858 during which the hot weather exacerbated the smell of the untreated human waste and industrial effluent that was present on the banks of the River Thames, the Rev. Henry Moule (who was born in Melksham on 27th January 1801) designed and patented his 'Earth Closet' design in 1860 together with James Bannehr. The earth closet proved successful, especially in hospitals, military camps, and in India and he was credited with helping to improve the health of millions of people around the world.
1861	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A great Storm ravaged England on 20th February 1861. 2. Census year - Population of Melksham Parish – 5337. Population of Melksham Town – 2452. 3. J. Tayler & Son (Millers) founded – later known as Pound, Tayler & Collen. 4. Shaul & Coombe Ltd. founded in Melksham and began to bottle mineral waters at the Ark where Hurns were later established (Later became A Coombes & Son). 5. In 1861 John Pritchard conveyed to the Revd. G. S. Hume and his successors a close of arable (Whitecroft or Two Acres) at Beanacre for the clothing of poor persons regularly attending the parish church. The field was let until 1939, when it was sold. The endowment is now £141 12s 4d stock, and the Vicar of Melksham is <i>ex officio</i> the trustee.
1863	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 1666 Burial in woollen Act was repealed by the Statute Law Revision Act 1863. 2. In 1863 the Baptist Church joined the newly formed Wilts & East Somerset Association. (<i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i>) 3. In 1863 there were only 6 members belonging to the Primitive Methodist at the Town Mission, and at the end of the year the Mission Room was closed and the furniture sold 'to help pay the rent, £4, which is due'. The furniture fetched only £2 and the balance was raised by subscription.
1864	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1864 Place House and its orchards and gardens were bought by a syndicate of Melksham people. The house was demolished, and the land split up into small plots which were sold by public auction. A private road was cut through the centre of the estate and villas were built on either side. A gate at the end of the road opens on the churchyard and was the subject of much dispute when the estate was broken up, since in the last fifty years of its existence the house had been occupied by dissenters who, not unnaturally, had allowed the right of way to fall into disuse. Charles Maggs used the house for a short period about 1835 and built a rope-walk at the back of the house. 2. Alms-houses (The Retreat) built and presented to the town by Rachel Fowler.
1865	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Justly William Awdry read the Riot Act at The Bear Inn following an election. George Davis, as an 11 year old boy, was watching proceedings of the riot from the bottom of Blind Lane (Church Walk) recalled a remark made to him by his father that in the Chartist Riots of about 1846 a squadron of cavalry was drafted into the town to keep the peace. 2. C. Crook & Son, Public Works Contractor was founded. 3. Spencer (Melksham) Ltd. founded as Spencer & Gillett. Became Spencers in 1884 (Closed 1988)
1867	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Reform Act of 1867 significantly widened the suffrage and disenfranchised smaller (Pocket) boroughs which were finally abolished by the Act considerably extending the borough franchise and establishing the principle that each parliamentary constituency should hold roughly the same number of electors. A Boundary Commission was set up by subsequent Acts of Parliament to maintain this principle as population movements continued.
1868	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 1868-9 Parliamentary Elections were the last to be held under the open hustings system. 2. A Cottage Hospital was established in 1868 on a site on the south side of Lowbourne. In 1895 it was rebuilt on a site in Bank Street at the cost of Henry George White. An endowment for the hospital given by White was dependent upon the premises being used for that purpose. The hospital was rebuilt on a site in Spa Road in 1938, the entire cost being met from a bequest of Mrs. Ludlow Bruges. White's endowment was then transferred to the upkeep of the churchyard. The Melksham hospital, with the subsidiary charities of Mrs. Ludlow Bruges and James Henry Stephens, is now regulated by schemes of 1936 and 1940. A Red Cross hospital was opened in the town in 1916. 3. Two housing estates to meet the growing industrial population were built late in the 19th century.

Year	Event
	<p>The earliest group on the west side of King Street opposite Conigre Farm was built by the West Wilts. Land & Building Co. Kimber Street celebrates the name of the company's surveyor, Oliver Kimber, who was also the proprietor of the Seend iron-works. Stone in the nearby school and in the houses is said to have come from the iron-works. Another of Kimber's houses bearing the date 1889 is to be seen opposite the Barge Inn at Seend Cleeve.</p> <p>4. A clothing club and a coal charity organized, like the Provident District Society, by the church, were in existence in 1868.</p>
1869	<p>1. A meeting was held in Melksham Town Hall on 6th November 1869 to consider establishing a Cottage Hospital in the town.</p> <p>2. First patient admitted to Cottage Hospital.</p> <p>3. The Ebenezer Chapel was built in 1835 and additional land around the chapel was leased in 1869.</p>
1870	<p>1. Elementary Education Act passed introducing a National system of elementary education providing a place for every child.</p> <p>2. In 1870 the Post Office Telegraph Service was introduced to Melksham.</p> <p>3. Melksham Ladies High School was run Mrs Emma and Miss Sturge at The Lawn, Spa Road. It seems to have been open from the early 1870s to the early 1890s.</p> <p>3. Copy of Resolutions unanimously adopted with reference to the admission of Pauper Patients into either of the Cottage Hospitals at Trowbridge and Melksham. (a) That no Pauper Patient be sent to the Hospital (cases of emergency excepted) unless the consent of the Board of Management be first obtained. (b) That on the admission of a Pauper Patient into the Hospital, the Medical Officer do give notice thereof to the Relieving Officer of the District, who will report such admission to the Board of Guardians, at their next meeting. (c) That when, in cases of emergency, a Pauper Patient is received into the Hospital, the Board of Management shall be at liberty to remove the patient to the Union Workhouse, at the expence of thid Board, if considered desirable and safe to do so by two medical Gentlemen. (d) That the sum of five shillings weekly be allowed by the Board towards the support of each Pauper Patient received at the Hospital, under the foregoing rules. (Board Room, Semington Workhouse, 26th October 1870.)</p>
1871	<p>1. Census year - Population of Melksham Parish – 5318. Population of Melksham Town – 2464.</p> <p>2. From this time the Melksham General School for the Education of Poor Children was known as the Lowbourn School.</p> <p>3. John Gillett Engineer and Founder was living in Union Street (aged 44) employing 10 men and 3 boys.</p>
1872	<p>1. The 'secret' vote was introduced for Parliamentary elections.</p> <p>2. The present Methodist chapel of stone and stock brick was built in 1872 on the site of the 1808 building in the High Street near the Market Place. The old chapel had been licensed for marriages in 1865 and a licence was issued in the year of its erection for the new one. Registers of birth and baptisms were kept between 1811 and 1837. The income from two lots of property, acquired in 1897 and 1901, was applied in 1903 to the maintenance of the chapel. The property, bought by the chapel and put in trust, comprised 2 plots of land and four cottages in Watson's Court, Melksham.</p>
1873	<p>1. The Rev. George Hume was Vicar of St Michael's for 47 years until his death in 1873. He had been appointed vicar of Melksham in 1825 and is buried in the extension of St Michael's churchyard.</p> <p>2. The Rev. Matthew Wilkinson D.D was appointed vicar of Melksham. He was a Canon of Salisbury Cathedral and is buried in Melksham.</p> <p>3. The Mill of J Tayler & Son was burned down. The Mill was gutted. Horsemen were despatched to Devizes, Bradford and Trowbridge for fire engines to assist the Melksham brigade. With no possibility of saving the mill, efforts were directed to saving Matravers' cloth mill which was adjacent. The roof and floors of the mill fell in as did the wall facing the mill stream, causing wheat to tumble into the stream. This attracted hundreds of eels, which were caught and given to the voluntary helpers as a reward for their services. The mill was rebuilt but closed in 1939 when the premises were acquired by the Avon Rubber Company. The building still stands although reduced to two storeys.</p> <p>4. Mathew Wilkinson Vicar of Melksham.</p> <p>5. The chapelry of Seend was made a separate ecclesiastical parish by Order in Council. From the point of view of administration the Order can have done little more than confirm existing conditions: Seend had separate churchwardens at least from 1663 and levied its own poor rate at least from</p>

Year	Event
	<p>1734.</p> <p>6. Crown Inn, Market Place rebuilt (it eventually closed 1967)</p>
1874	<p>1. The educational services provided by the schools in Melksham and Shaw were supplemented in 1874 when a Church school was opened at Forest. The site, on the Calne road, was given in 1873 by R. L. Lopes and the school, with a house for a master, was built with the aid of £760. 5s. contributed by subscribers and a grant of £179. 15s. given by the State. Accommodation was provided for 115 pupils. Attendance throughout the 19th century and until recent years remained at about 60 and the annual grant at an average of £40. There was in 1950 accommodation for 58 boys and girls and 35 infants; average attendance was 40.</p> <p>2. Joseph Herbert Maggs died on 5th January 1874.</p> <p>3. Leaze Cottage in Watson's Court had been owned continuously by Melksham Quaker Meeting members from the seventeenth century until it was bought by Joseph Stratton, a Melksham grocer and leading Methodist, in 1874.</p> <p>4. Miss Rachel Fowler, by deed of 1874, gave £26613s 4d the income to be applied in blankets and flannels for the poor, irrespective of religious belief. The trustees are appointed by deed.</p> <p>5. It is proposed to raise by public subscription a sum sufficient to provide the members of the Melksham Fire Brigade with helmets and other articles necessary to be worn at fires. The amount required is estimated to be from £40 to £60. The captain, Mr. Jones, will shortly bring the list before the notice of each householder, and we hope the appeal will receive that liberal support which it deserves. (<i>Wiltshire Independent 19 July 1874</i>)</p>
1875	<p>1. Act of Parliament setting up Local Government Boards.</p> <p>2. The Matravers cloth mill alone survived in 1875; it was put up to auction in 1888, and the site passed to the Avon India Rubber Company Ltd. In 1886 Messrs. Browne and Margetson took over the mill and plant though Willie Holbrow remained as manager.</p> <p>3. The company that was to become the Avon Rubber Company was started by Giles and Willie Holbrow in a disused mill at Limpley Stoke in 1875.</p> <p>4. In 1875 the Monday market was held for cattle, sheep, and pigs, and the fair for cattle, sheep, and horses.</p> <p>5. St. Andrew's Church built.</p> <p>6. The Natural History Museum in London acquired a heavily damaged fossil of a prehistoric crocodile which had been found in the Melksham area and thought to have originated in the late Jurassic period.</p>
1876	<p>1. The Rev. Francis Warre was appointed vicar of Melksham. He was a Canon of Salisbury Cathedral.</p> <p>2. The landed estate of Canonhold was never great in extent. At the time of the 1876 sale to Sir J. W. Awdry he was said to have about 4½ acres in his possession; there were 20 acres of leasehold and 184 acres of copyhold. The acreage shown in a survey of 1790 was very similar. Part of the copyhold land was sold in 1849 to the Wilts. Somerset and Weymouth Railway Company for £816 8s. About the same time an acre was sold for £30 to enlarge Melksham churchyard. The lands reached out in scattered holdings on all sides of the Church and Canon Square. In 1772 boundary stones were set up at Shurnhold Farm inscribed 'JA/C/Hould'. The map attached to the 1836 terrier of Melksham shows Canonhold as a district lying between the church and the river. A map drawn by Charles E. Norman in 1879 gives the name Canonhold to houses midway in Church Walk. The Walk was called Canhold Lane in 1833 and 1875. Canonhold or Church Street is mentioned in 1871; Canonhold Mead (or Ark House) lay between the vicarage house and the river in 1893. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p> <p>3. The Elementary Education Act made it compulsory for all children to receive elementary education. The Tithe Barn was 'obtained' from Sir John Wither Awdry to provide extra space in St. Michael's school.</p> <p>4. The church of St. Andrew, Forest, in Melksham Within was built in 1876, the site being given by Mr. Heathcote and it was licensed for worship. It consists of small chancel, nave, vestry, organ chamber, and south porch. It is built of ashlar in a 13th-century gothic style, with a bell-cote at the west end for one bell. It has a carved marble and alabaster reredos, with gold mosaic panels, presented in 1898 by Mrs. Ludlow Lopes. it was designed by G. E. Street and erected at the cost, (£3,700) of the Revd. E. L. Barnwell. It possesses an old Italian parcel gilt chalice bought in Rome in 1876, a paten of about 1500 bought in 1876, and a silver parcel gilt flagon given by Barnwell.</p>

Year	Event
	<p>The endowments, raised by public subscription between 1876 and 1886 and supplemented by gifts from Mr. and Mrs. Barnwell and others, are held by the Diocesan Board of Finance. An additional burial ground was given by Thomas Heathcote in 1887.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Dr. Wilkinson vicar of Melksham died. He was the first headmaster of Marlborough College which opened 26th August 1843. 6. Melksham Football Club was established as in 1876 and in 1894 they were one of the founder members of the Wiltshire League. They then spent the next 80 years in the Wilts League. The club were Division One champions in 1903–04 and won the Wiltshire Senior Cup the following season. When it was first formed in 1876 the club played at Challymead Common, before moving to The Old Bear Field (now the site of Sainsbury's) in 1883 where it stayed until the move to The Conigre in 1920. In that year the club was renamed Melksham & Avon United as a result of their new ground being owned by the Avon Rubber Company, before reverting to their original name in the 1926–27 season. They were runners-up in the league in 1924–25, 1929–30 and 1936–37. In 1951 the club adopted their current name and went on to finish as runners-up in Division One in 1959–60 and 1971–72, also winning the Wiltshire Senior Cup again in 1969–70. The Conigre was the third home to Melksham Town F.C.
1877	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1877 Rachel Fowler gave the New Hall in the market-place to trustees as a reading room and accommodation for religious and philanthropic meetings. The hall, built of Bath stone, was requisitioned between 1939 and 1945. 2. In 1877 the vicarage of St. Michael's Church was rebuilt after designs by G. E. Street, in a 17th-century style. 3. The Old Crown Inn was built in Market Place.
1878	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First meeting of the Melksham Local Government Board was held on 6th December 1878. 2. The turnpike from Seend to Melksham closed this year. 3. A small engineering business began on the corner of Bank Street and Union Street and was joined by C.J. Spencer, in 1878, and later by the brilliant engineer, W. Littlejohn Philip. 4. Beechfield House was built for a local gentleman farmer named Richard Keevil, whose initials are carved in the pediment over the bay window on the left of the building. It remained a family home for ninety years until it was converted into a hotel in the late 1960s with the word "House" added to its name.
1879	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School conversion completed by G.E. Street. 2. Lowbourn Infant and Nursery School was separated from Lowbourn Junior School
1880	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1880 the legal time for Great Britain was made Greenwich Mean Time by Act of Parliament. 2. The Elementary Education Act 1880 was passed, making primary schooling compulsory and extending it to girls. 3. In 1880 a faculty was obtained for the removal of the organ in St. Michael's Church, and the present organ was built by Connacher, under the specifications of Sir Herbert Oakley, and placed on the north side of the chancel, at a cost of £700. 4. Melksham High School for Boys was at 2 Semington Road and was probably built as a school by Oliver Kimber, surveyor of the West Wilts Land & Building Co. It was kept from the 1880s by Roland Taylor Warren, the headmaster of whom a contemporary commentator said 'he meant to do big things but they never materialized'. In 1898 the school was divided into lower, upper and middle houses and offered instruction in Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Euclid, Algebra, Applied Sciences, Rhetoric, Elocution, Civil Law, French, German and English Literature. By 1903 the headmaster was Arthur William Gosnall. The building was used by photographic processors and is now residential. 5. Bowerhill Lodge off Spa Road, once the residence of Charles Maggs was at about this time a 'Gentleman's High School' kept by a Mr. Perkins. North of the canal bridge in Spa Road Mrs. and Miss Sturge kept a 'Ladies High School'. 6. The first public water-supply was brought from Trowbridge by the Trowbridge Water Company. An Act for extending the pipe line to Melksham was passed in 1878. The supply was brought to Melksham about 1880 when for the celebrations of the opening of the line the Company set up a fountain in the market square. 7. A piped water supply was provided by the Trowbridge Water Company and a fountain was built in the market square in celebration.

Year	Event
	8. The Post Office was now in Bank Street.
1881	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Census year - Population of Melksham 4478. 2. In 1881 the chancel was restored and a new altar installed; the brass eagle lectern was added in 1891; the reredos was restored and the chancel screen erected in 1894: the figure of St. Michael was placed over the porch in 1901; the South African War Memorial window was unveiled in 1903; the alabaster font and the carved oak pulpit were added in 1906, and new stained glass in 1910. The organ, mentioned first in 1827, was replaced in 1880 by a new instrument, which was re-sited in 1902. Gas was introduced for lighting and heating in 1838–9; the heating was renovated in 1904 and 1949, and electric light installed in 1904. A new clock was provided in 1756, and new chimes in 1775; a new sundial (now on the wall of the south-east chapel) was fixed in 1808. The brass of Ambrose Dauntsey (d. 1612), formerly in the south aisle, is now on the north side of the chancel. Other 17th-century memorials are those of John Awdry (d. 1639) and Isaac Selfe (d. 1656). The north or Daniell's aisle has been associated with Beanacre manor. It was stated in the Terrier of 1783 that the north aisle was repairable by Paul Methuen (then lord of Beanacre), the south-east aisle by Richard Jenkins and two others, and the southwest aisle by Mrs. Mary Thresher. <i>(British History on line)</i> 3. The church plate was stolen in 1803, and replaced with pewter; new plate was bought about 1881. 4. Snow piled 10 ft. high in the streets of Melksham but footways mostly cleared by the public. 5. Willow Temperance Hotel and Café opened as Coffee Tavern. 6. John Gillett Engineer and Founder (aged 54) of the Firm Spencer and Gillett was living in Union Street employing 70 men.
1882	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Melksham District Highway Board established (Closed in 1894). 2. Edward Jordan was fined £1 by T.J. Heathcote and Major Clark for permitting a load of pig manure to stand in Canhold. 3. A school at Seend Cleeve, situated at the end of Pelch Lane, received an annual State grant in 1882. There was said to be accommodation for 160 pupils and the average attendance was 51. The school ceased to receive an annual grant in 1885 and is not listed as a State-aided school after 1886. It probably closed shortly after 1885, for between that year and 1888 average attendance at Seend Church school, only a few hundred yards away, rose from 71 to 133; the increase accounts exactly for the average attendance at Seend Cleeve in 1885. The buildings are probably represented by two long, low brick and stone cottages on the north side of the lane just before it reaches Seend Cleeve. Local tradition declares these to have been a school.
1884	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Representation of the People Act 1884 extended the borough franchise of 1867 to the counties giving all adult males the vote, increasing the electorate to about 5,500,000 men. 2. Greenwich Meridian and Mean time were adopted. 3. The partnership of Spencer and Gillett was dissolved when John Gillett retired.
1885	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Methuen family gives land at Beanacre for a Church. 2. T. Scott & Son, Paperhangers, Glaziers & Plumbers were founded. In 1925 they were in Union Street. 3. The private gas company formed in 1832 became a public company in 1885. 4. Spencer and Co. installed an engine at John Taylor's mill.
1886	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1886 Messrs. Browne and Margetson took over the mill and plant started by Giles and Willie Holbrow in Limpley Stoke though Willie Holbrow remained as manager. By 1889 the business had grown and the present Avon Rubber Company was formed: in the same year the factory moved to the new premises in the disused cloth mill at Melksham. 2. The church of St. Barnabas, Beanacre, in Melksham Without, consists of chancel, nave, and north porch. It is built of coursed rubble in a 13th century gothic style, with a gabled bell-cote at the west end; the roofs are tiled. The font, of late 14th century work, came from the parish church. A church room, with square-headed mullioned windows, has been added on the south side. The site, in Hedge Lease, was given by Lord Methuen and the Hon. Paul Sandford Methuen in 1885 and the church was built in 1886. <i>(British History on line)</i> 3. The church of St. Andrew, Forest, in Melksham Within, consists of small chancel, nave, vestry, organ chamber, and south porch. It is built of ashlar in a 13th-century gothic style, with a bell-cote at the west end for one bell. It has a carved marble and alabaster reredos, with gold mosaic panels, presented in 1898 by Mrs. Ludlow Lopes. It was licensed for worship in 1876 and

Year	Event
	<p>consecrated in 1886; it was designed by G. E. Street and erected at the cost of the Revd. E. L. Barnwell. It possesses an old Italian parcel gilt chalice bought in Rome in 1876, a paten of about 1500 bought in 1876, and a silver parcel gilt flagon given by Barnwell. The endowments, raised by public subscription between 1876 and 1886 and supplemented by gifts from Mr. and Mrs. Barnwell and others, are held by the Diocesan Board of Finance. An additional burial ground was given by Thomas Heathcote in 1887. <i>(British History on line)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The Melksham churchyard was again extended on land given by Colonel Phipps. 5. No information has been found about the early history of the Primitive Methodist society at Redstocks in the south-east part of Melksham Without. The chapel there was acquired by the Wesleyan Methodists in 1886. Membership at the time was 20 but it declined throughout the remainder of the century and the Society was apparently never a strong one. The chapel was sold in 1950. 6. Admiral Sir Charles Shadwell died in retirement in Melksham in 1886.
1887	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Until 1887 several farmers from the Melksham area supplied their milk to Anglo-Swiss milk company in Chippenham until at short notice their contracts were not renewed. Charles Maggs was approached to buy a separator and establish a collecting depot and butter making factory. <i>(Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.)</i> 2. Rev. Edward Lowrey Barnwell, Vicar of Melksham, died on 9th August 1887. 3. A procession to celebrate the golden anniversary of Queen Victoria was held on Wednesday 29th June 1887. The route taken by the procession was Market Place, High Street, Lowbourn, Union Street, Old Broughton Road, New Broughton Road, Bank Street, Church Street, through Vicarage grounds into the Vicarage and Bear Fields where a sports meeting and entertainments took place. A large bonfire in the Market Place in the evening brought the celebrations to a close. 4. Shaw Hill House, built before 1825 by Samuel Heathcote and sold in 1887 on the death of Thomas Jenkyns Heathcote was the home of Charles Awdry from about 1890 to 1908.
1888	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1888 the fairs had lapsed, and the market was held on alternate Tuesdays with Trowbridge. Before the final extinction of the fair it had been the custom to hold it on two days the first of which was devoted to business and the second to merry-making. Travelling showmen exhibited models such as that of the Niagara Falls, constructed, it was said, of 8 cwt. of coloured glass, and the fair was attended by 'Baker's Show', a barnstorming company. 2. Wilts United Dairies which had been founded by Charles Maggs at West End Farm moved to an old dye works in Broughton Road. 3. Matravers Mill, the last cloth mill by the Town Bridge, was put up for auction and the site passed to Avon India Rubber Company Ltd following a century of decline in the clothing industry. 4. The sale of the last cloth mill to a rubber company illustrates the change in Melksham industrial economy in the later 19th century: indeed, the survival of the town as an industrial centre is based on the manufacture of rubber and rubber products. The company that was to become the Avon Rubber Company was started by Giles and Willie Holbrow in a disused mill at Limpley Stoke in 1875: in 1886 Messrs. Browne and Margetson took over the mill and plant though Willie Holbrow remained as manager. By 1889 the business had grown and the present company was formed: in the same year the factory moved to the new premises in the disused cloth mill at Melksham. In the early years of its existence the company concentrated on the manufacture of mechanical parts for railway rolling stock; since the last decade of the 19th century the manufacture of pneumatic tyres has been its primary concern. Throughout the 20th century the business has expanded with the increased demand for rubber products and the factory buildings have been extended to keep pace with the increased production and now cover about 12 acres north of the Avon.
1889	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Originally the "Asiatic Flu" or "Russian Flu" as it was called, this strain was thought to be an outbreak of the Influenza A virus subtype H2N2, though recent discoveries have instead found the cause to be the Influenza A virus subtype H3N8. The first cases were observed in May 1889 in three separate and distant locations, Bukhara in Central Asia (Turkestan), Athabasca in north-western Canada, and Greenland. Rapid population growth of the 19th century, specifically in urban areas, only helped the flu spread, and before long the outbreak had spread across the globe. Though it was the first true epidemic in the era of bacteriology and much was learned from it. In the end, the 1889-1890 Flu Pandemic claimed the lives of over a million individuals. <i>(Google)</i> 2. Avon India Rubber came to Melksham (as Brown & Margetson). They took over the last cloth mill in Melksham, the Matravers Mill alongside the river Avon and changed its name to the Avon India Rubber Company. The factory buildings now cover more than 28 acres. It was taken over by the

Year	Event
	<p>American tyre company Cooper at the turn of the 21st century.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. By 1889, and possibly even a little earlier, the Melksham chapel was strong enough to form a separate meeting in Semington Lane half a mile from the centre of the town to cover the outlying area to the south of the town. In that year a site was acquired and by 1896 a chapel had been erected. Membership between 1890 and 1898 remained at 9: in 1951 there were 5 members. The chapel only ever had a small membership but continued in use until after the Second World War. It is now (2002) empty. 4. Melksham Rifle Corps was integrated into the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment. 5. Wilts United Dairies, founded by Charles Maggs at West End Farm, moved to an old dye-works in New Broughton Road. (<i>Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.</i>)
1890	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Rev. Edwin George Wyld was appointed vicar of Melksham. He was a Canon of Salisbury Cathedral. 2. About 1890 there were two forges in Melksham: one stood in the Bath road almost opposite Old Broughton Road and the other in Semington Lane (King Street) south of Union Place. Only this last one survived and is was operated by descendants of the 19th-century owners. (<i>British History on line</i>) 3. There was a savings bank in Lowbourn in 1855 known in 1863 as the Penny Bank. The bank was still there c. 1890. 4. Avon India Rubber Co. Ltd. began business in Melksham with twenty men and four women, achieving a profit of £496 18s 4d in the first year. (<i>Little Book of Wiltshire by Dee La Vardera</i>)
1891	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Free schooling was introduced and eleven years later school attendance became compulsory for all children. 2. Census year - Population of Melksham Parish – 4284. Population of Melksham Town – 2073. 3. The large stone coffin inside the porch of St. Michael's was found just below the floor in the north transept when the new floor was put in 1891, but it had been disturbed before and the lid broken in. 4. In St. Michael's in 1891 the block floor, oak in the aisles, and deal under the seats were laid down, new oak seats provided, the plaster ceiling removed and other minor things done, the whole cost being £800. A beautifully designed eagle lectern by Singer, of Frome, was given by Dr. Rumboll. While the Church was closed, services were held in the churchyard on the evenings that were fine and Matins in the school. (For further details see Parish Magazine, September, 1891). 5. By his will, proved in 1891, John Ball left £100 to the trustees of the Methodist chapel for the provision of flannel and blankets at Christmas for poor persons attending the chapel. The money is now (1951) invested in stock.
1892	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1892 Benjamin Sawtell and Sons Ltd. established a straw dealing business in Old Broughton Road in Melksham but turned their large factory over to purifying feathers for pillows and eiderdowns in 1902. 2. In 1892 the screen which forms so important a feature in St. Michael's Church was given by Dr. Rumboll and dedicated on the eve of St. Peter's day. This was designed by Mr. Ponting and executed by Hems, of Exeter, and is much admired. 3. John Gurd, alias Louis Hamilton, 29, asylum attendant, was indicted for the wilful murder of Henry Richards, at Melksham, on the 9th April, and also for the wilful murder of Enos Molden, police- sergeant of the Wilts County Constabulary at Corsley, on the 12th April. Mr. Radcliffe, with Mr. H. L. Lopes, prosecuted, and Mr. Hussey Walsh, at the request of the Judge, defended the prisoner. The charge of killing Henry Richards was first taken, the evidence being to the effect that prisoner was formerly engaged to Richards's niece, Florence Adams, but through his interference she broke it off. On the day in question the prisoner Gurd believing that Henry Richards her uncle had influenced her decision and seeking revenge. He met Richards at an inn in Melksham, and they left together. Shortly afterwards shots were heard, and Richards fell and died almost immediately. After a protracted hearing the jury found the prisoner guilty, and Mr. Justice Charles passed sentence of death. Gurd was executed in Devizes on 26th July 1892. (<i>Reading Mercury, Saturday, 16 July 1892</i>) 4. In 1892 the school logbook of St. Mary's Primary School in Broughton Gifford reported that the attendance was poor and one child was absent due to 'taking gloves to the factory in Holt'. Glove making was one of the cottage industries at that time. (<i>Little Book of Wiltshire by Dee La Vardera</i>)
1893	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Population of Melksham is 2073 (Ref. Murray's) 2. Three of St. Michael's Church vessels were stolen in 1893, and identified twenty years later in

Year	Event
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	<p>British Guiana.</p> <p>3. Canonhold Mead (or Ark House) lay between the vicarage house and the river in 1893</p>
1894	<p>1. 1894 brought into being the Municipal Boroughs of Calne, Malmesbury etc., the Urban Districts of Melksham, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge etc. and Rural Districts of Melksham Without, Pewsey, Devizes etc. and these administered Local Government until 1 April 1974.</p> <p>2. The Mission (or Church) Room, an old stone building adjoining the entrance to the Avon Works was conveyed by John Howard Matravers in 1894 to the Diocesan Board of Finance for use as a Sunday school and for kindred purposes. John Webb, by his will proved 1908, gave to the vicar and churchwardens £100 to be invested as the William and Sarah Webb Trust. The income is distributed at Christmas for the benefit of poor members of the Church of England resident in the parish. The endowment, £114 5s 8d invested in stock, is now (1951) held by the Official Trustees of Charitable Funds. (<i>British History on line</i>)</p> <p>3. In the year 1894 the reredos in St. Michael's Church was restored, of which a complete account from the Parish Magazine of October 1894 is given:- "About the year 1850, the late Sir John W. Awdry, wishing to commemorate his father and mother, John and Jane Awdry, and also to beautify the sanctuary of the Church, with which his ancestors had been so long connected, erected the reredos which is familiar with us all. The work, which was designed by Mr. Lukis, was at the time regarded as of considerable merit – as good as was then to be procured; but art (especially Christian art) was at a low ebb, and has since that date made such progress, that in several respects and compared with the other work that has since been carried out in our Church, this hardly seemed worthy of its place in the Church as restored. Moreover, the design had not been executed with the intelligence and thoroughness which would now have been brought to bear upon it, and the work of time (somewhat assisted, we fear, by the nails of Church decorators at Harvest and Church Festivals) had rendered some restoration imperative. The Trustees of the late Sir John W. Awdry, therefore determined to make the reredos altogether worthy of the important position in which it stands and of the memory of those it commemorates and whose piety first caused it to be erected. So much new work has been added that we are entitled to speak of it as now complete. The designs are by C. E. Ponting, Esq., F.S.A., who has grasped the idea that what was desired was the completion and amplification of an existing work, not the substitution of a new for old memorial. The old reredos consisted of nine canopied panels, all similar in design and height, surmounted by a cornice with vine pattern and scrolls bearing an inscription. The five central panels behind the altar have been replaced by three tablets in the upper portion. This part of the work was entrusted to the well-known artists, Harry Hems and Sons, of Exeter, who executed the beautiful chancel screen. The main fabric is composed of stone from the famed Painswick Quarries, the same material as that of the large statues in the reredos of Gloucester Cathedral. This part, which forms the reredos proper, is flanked by delicately traceried, buttressed and pinnacled shafts, surmounted by the sculptured angels in attitudes of devotion. A massive carved re-table of polished variegated English alabaster, wherein cunningly carved cherubim have been introduced, supports the whole. Rising from this are the traceried supports of the canopies, which take an ogee line, and are crocketed, whilst from the mouldings spring terminals of carved cusps. The three niches contain sculptured panels representing the Nativity of our Lord, the Adoration of the Shepherds on the right, and the Magi on the left, carved in white alabaster. These show a large amount of careful thought and study, and are calculated to promote devotional thoughts, which is the object of religious art. Above the canopies is a forest of pierced and intricate cresting, the lines everywhere beautifully harmonising, terminating in a mass of wonderfully manipulated foliage. Above this are gracefully carved pinnacles. The remaining panels on either side have been filled with Mosaic work, the design of which had its origin in the paintings placed there temporarily by Miss E. Warre, to whose artistic skill we owe a debt of gratitude. This part of the work has been carried out by Mr. Edward Frampton, one of the leading artists in London. The Mosaic work consists of four angels standing upon clouds with their wings extended. Two of the figures have scrolls with the words Holy, Holy, Holy, upon them; the other two hold discs, with the Alpha and Omega in gold upon blue. The outer robes of the figures are richly coloured respectively, purple-brown, ruby, blue, and green, the tunics being white. The backgrounds are worked in rich gold Mosaic. The figures stand upon conventional Gothic clouds. The small pieces of tracery which occur behind the crockets and the finials of the stone canopy work contain a foliated treatment of ornament, Perpendicular in character, upon gold background. The cornice is retained and remains as originally placed except where cut through to admit the shafts. The whole is a beautiful work of art, and will be a great improvement to our already beautiful Church."</p>
1895	<p>1. The great frost lasting six weeks.</p> <p>2. Charles Maggs was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1895-1898.</p>

Year	Event
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The cottage hospital that had been founded in Lowbourn in 1868 but was rebuilt in Bank Street in 1895 as the result of a generous endowment from Mr. George White of Whitley and was opened by Mr. Charles Awdry. 4. A district rate of 10d in the pound was made for the half-year commenced on 1st October 1895. 5. In 1895 it was found that it was not safe to ring the bells in St Michael's Church. An appeal was made for subscriptions. The money was rather slow in coming in, only £100 being promised by Christmas; but, when the parishioners found that the bells were silent at Christmas, they became more keen about the matter and there were soon sufficient funds to set about the work. It was determined to make a thoroughly good job of it. The second bell was cracked and had to be re-cast, and to complete the peal it was decided to add two new bells; also to put in a new iron frame, and further to improve the west end by removing the ringers floor, and bring the ropes down to the ground floor; also to add chimes and provide a chiming apparatus. The work was carried out by Mr. Blackburn, of Salisbury, and the two bells were cast and the second bell re-cast by Mears and Steinbank, of London. The dedication of the new bells took place on Ascension Day, 1896. The total cost was £350, of which £87 was the result of a bazaar at Melksham House. (For further particulars, see Parish Magazine, June, 1896).
1896	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Wesleyan Chapel was built in Semington Road. 2. White Hart Hotel closed. 3. Chaloner Lodge of Freemasons was founded. 4. The Inspector of Canal Boats reported that he had inspected 38 boats in the year some of them twice. He had found them generally clean the men civil and he had not seen anyone of them intoxicated during the whole year. 5. Messrs Tayler, Sawtell and Maggs voted in favour of cleaning the streets on Sunday mornings – all other members present voted against. (The streets remained dirty on Sundays!). 6. Licenses for the sale of petroleum were issued to Mr. Edwin Waight (King Street), Mr. L.J. Bigwood (High Street), Mr. H.J. White and Mrs. C. Knee. 7. Annual estimates involving a rate of 1s 6d in the £ for the ensuing year were submitted amongst which were estimated expenditure on: - Main Roads £490; District Roads £110; Watering Streets £12; Lighting Streets £155; Public Clock £3; Salaries £140. 8. The Clerk directed to write to the Inspector of Police at complaints received of locomotives being driven through the town at speeds in excess of the rate permitted by the Highways & Locomotive Acts. 9. Attention was drawn to the fact that certain traders were obstructing the streets and footways with their wares and the Clerk was instructed to print and circulate handbills containing an extract from the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, with reference thereto. 10. Inspector of nuisances reported insufficient water supply to flush closets in Coburg Square efficiently - Owners given seven days to remedy. 11. Resolved nem con on the proposition of Mr. Maggs seconded by Mr. Sawtell that it would be for the convenience and advantage of the Public to abolish the fair held annually in Melksham on July 27th. The first step was to obtain the permission of the Rt. Hon. W.H. Long M.P. the owner of the fair, then to apply to the Home Secretary. 12. Concern was expressed at the unsatisfactory lighting of the Town Hall Clock. (? Someone forgot to clean the oil lamp chimney). 13. The Gas Company to place an incandescent in the Clock and make such alterations as necessary to cause the same to be effectively lighted. 14. The bells in the Parish Church of St. Michael's were re-hung and quarter-turned, when the second bell was re-cast and two new ones were added 15. In 1896 Charles Maggs amalgamated with the North Wilts Dairy Company founded by Reginald Butler to form the Wilts United Dairies Limited. (<i>Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.</i>)
1897	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The shafts of the Council's Tumbler Cart had been broken by Messrs Crook & Sons and the Clerk was to ask Crook & Sons to pay half the cost of repairs. 2. Spencer & Co (then at Wiltshire Farmers, Bath Road) asked for a right of way through the Council's yard (then the site of shops 18-28 Bath Road) to Corn Close i.e. the rear of their premises. They eventually bought a piece of land to gain this entrance which is now the Bath

Year	Event
	<p>Road entrance to King George's Field.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Dr W.A. Keir (father of Dr Ivan Keir of Beanacre) was reappointed District Medical Officer of Health from 25th March 1897 at a salary of £25 per annum. 4. Plans for new workshops for Messrs Spencer & Co., were passed. 5. The Chairman (Mr Chas Maggs) reported that he had sold his Steam Dairy Factory to the Wilts United Dairies Limited who desired the removal of the public urinal which stood within the property next to the River Bridge. (In fact the urinal was not removed until some years later when the new one was built next to the entrance to the Mill). 6. A congratulatory address to the Queen on her Diamond Jubilee was prepared and sealed. 7. The cost of lighting the Gas Street lights in the Town was agreed at £1-10-0 per lamp per season. 8. Plans approved for the erection of <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Masonic Lodge was consecrated on 27 February 1897, with the first meeting scheduled for 4:00pm March 19th at the Town Hall. By November of that year a new masonic lodge had been built in Melksham at Church Street. (ii) New offices in Spa Road for Wilts United Dairies. (Now the derelict bungalow at the entrance of Maggs' rope work). (iii) New offices by Spencer and Company near the River Bridge (in fact it is understood these were not proceeded with). 9. Reported that Mr Joshua Pocock and the Rev Taylor Warren "would not pay their rates" and the Clerk was authorised to issue a summons if they were not paid in due course. 10. It was decided to offer £7 10s 0d per annum for five years lease of the Market Tolls etc. 11. At the same meeting a letter from the Cyclist's Touring Club referring to the damage to cycles caused by thorns left in the road was referred to the Surveyor for attention. 12. Plans submitted by the Rev E. Wyld for extension to the Parish Room were approved. 13. Oakwood House built.
1898	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alfred Stratton was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1898-1913. 2. In 1898 the National Telephone Co. brought a telephone service to Melksham. 3. Spencer & Co. Engineering Works established at the corner of Bath Road and Union Street. 4. Charles Maggs died in 1898. (<i>Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.</i>)
1899	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. International Stores built in Market Place. 2. In 1899 the Melksham Dairy was the largest in the group and was handling approximately 800 gallons of milk a day in the winter and 1500 gallons in the summer with only four employees and its first manager Mr. MacDonald. (<i>Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.</i>)
1900	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John Taylor, founder of the Milling firm died in 1900. 2. Charles Maggs, a grandson of the founder of the rope factory, himself founded a large Melksham industrial company, the Wilts United Dairies. The company is said to have begun its activities in West End Farm on the east of Spa Road. An office for the firm was built in the grounds of the rope factory. The condensory on the north side of the Avon Bridge was opened in 1900 and by that time there were 6 or 7 employees each earning about seven shillings for a seven day working week with no set hours or overtime pay and holidays were never dreamt of. The following are an example of the hours of a man's typical working week: <p>Monday. 3am. To 3am. Tuesday Tuesday. 7pm. To. 12 midnight Wednesday. 7pm. To 11pm Thursday. 3am. To 3am. Friday Friday. 7pm. To. 12 midnight Saturday. 7am. To. 12 midnight Sunday. 8am. To. 5pm</p> <p>A total of 88 hours in one week!</p> <p>(<i>Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.</i>)</p>
1901	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Census year - Population of Melksham Parish – 3964. Population of Melksham Town – 2450.

Year	Event
	<p>Population of Melksham Without – 2238.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Spencers (Melksham) Ltd. Beanacre Factory built. 3. The niche outside the porch of St. Michael's Church, which at some time or other had been deprived of the figure originally placed there, is now again filled with the figure of St. Michael. On the 1st January, 1901, the offertory, amounting to £12 15s. 8d., was given for a new figure of St. Michael to commemorate the new century. The figure was designed by Mr. Ponting and executed by Mr. Hems, and was soon after erected. 4. Wilts and Berks canal ceased full use due to a partial bank collapse.
1902	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organ, mentioned first in 1827, was replaced in 1880 by a new instrument, which was re-sited in 1902. 2. B. Sawtell & Sons commence a business cleaning feathers used for bedding at their factory in Old Broughton Road.
1903	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The driving licence was introduced by the Motor Car Act in 1903. Holders of this document that were not required to pass a test were entitled to "drive a motor car or motor cycle". The wording changed in 1930 to "drive or steer a motor car or to drive a motor cycle. The Road Traffic Act of 1934 required new motorists to pass a practical test before receiving a licence. 2. Spencer & Co. Engineering Works moved from the corner of Union Street to the new up-to-date works in Beanacre Road in 1903 and became experts in mechanical handling. 3. There was a large and business like attendance at the King's Arms on Tuesday when Messrs. Parry and Son offered by public auction property at Beanacre, Challymead and Shaw recently belonging to the late Mr. James Watson . . . The sale took place under a bankruptcy order. The UDC have a sewerage scheme under consideration and the idea seems to have occurred to some of the members that this might be the opportunity to purchase a sewerage farm . . . Lot 2, the residential estate at Challymead, known as Southbrook Farm, with 13 acres of pasture land , was purchased by the UDC for £1,750 . . . The pasture land consists of the fields known as Great and Little Wallbridge, Homestead, Yea Mead and The Tythingham (the last named being in the parish of Broughton Gifford). The adjoining landowners are Mr. Charles Awdry and Mr. J. F. Stancomb . . . Messrs. Wood and Avery were the solicitors acting for the vendors. (February 28, 1903, Melksham) 4. Henry H. Ludlow Bruges, by will proved 1903, left £1,000 upon trust to apply the income in the distribution of coal or fuel among poor persons of Seend chosen by the vicar, churchwardens, and overseers. The trustees are now the vicar and churchwardens and three persons appointed by the parish council, and the endowment of £9361s 7d stock. 5. The South African War Memorial window in St. Michael's Church was unveiled in 1903. 6. The organ in St. Michael's Church was rebuilt. 7. In 1903, 18 members and 10 non-members attended at the Quaker Meeting. 8. By 1903 Melksham Dairy's butter production had moved to the factory in Devizes and the manufacture of sweetened condensed milk began. (<i>Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.</i>)
1904	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forest Methodist Chapel built. 2. The heating system in St. Michael's Church was renovated and electric light installed in 1904. 3. Lord Methuen, holding Beanacre Manor, gave £4 per year to the vicar for the distribution in meat and grocery tickets to 24 poor persons of Beanacre. 4. In 1904 Melksham's Dairy chimney was completed to a height of 150 feet. Mr Helps (senior) went to the top followed by the town band, known as the Dry Eleven but unfortunately the bass drum was too big to fit inside the lift so the drummer had to watch from the ground. (<i>Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.</i>)
1905	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christ Church, Shaw, was built in 1838, and rebuilt in 1905 by C. E. Ponting at the expense of Charles Awdry. The new church retains the north and south walls of the former nave; aisles are formed by oak pillars and arches, carried up to a half-timbered clerestory. The chancel is apsidal, and where it joins the nave there is an ornate oak flèche, covered with oak shingles. The tower rises in four stages; the lowest forms a porch and baptistry; the buttresses of the belfry stage terminate in life-sized statues of saints; the parapet is embattled, and the slender spire is covered with oak shingles. The brass candelabrum was brought from Melksham church in 1846. 2. A railway halt at Beanacre was brought into use in 1905

Year	Event
	3. Lacock Halt was opened on 16 th October 1905 (<i>Postcard of Opening</i>)
1906	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1906 the font in St. Michael's Church, which was in great part subscribed for by those who had been baptised in the old font (which is now in Beanacre Church) was consecrated by the Bishop on December 2nd. It was made by Mr. Hems, of Exeter, and is a beautiful piece of Derbyshire alabaster. The carved oak pulpit was also added in 1906. 2. A Baptist chapel at Forest was opened in 1840 but the meeting did not apparently flourish and the chapel was sold in 1906. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i>) 3. Car tyres produced by Avon Rubber Co. Ltd. in Melksham were advertised for the first time in <i>Autocar</i> magazine in 1906.
1907	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Melksham churchyard was further enlarged in 1907, when the new ground was given by Charles Awdry and walled by public subscription. 2. By 1907 the average attendance at St. Michael's School had increased to: 130 boys, 135 girls, and 93 infants. 3. By this time the Post Office had moved to High Street. 4. Factories started ½d (less than ½p today) per week subscription to the Cottage Hospital. Contributions from the Avon Rubber Company brought in £8 2s 1½d and from Stratton Son & Mead Ltd. 5s 2d. (Melksham Cottage Hospital publication 1991)
1908	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The beginning of the modern state pension was the Old Age Pensions Act 1908, that provided 5 shillings (£0.25) a week for those over 70 whose annual means do not exceed £31.50. 2. John Webb, by his will proved 1908, gave to the vicar and churchwardens £100 to be invested as the William and Sarah Webb Trust. The income is distributed at Christmas for the benefit of poor members of the Church of England resident in the parish. The endowment, £114. 5s.8d. invested in stock, is now (1951) held by the Official Trustees of Charitable Funds. 3. The Trilithon (Stonehenge) trademark of Avon India Rubber Co. (Melksham) was registered, along with the phrase 'Symbols of Endurance'. (<i>Little Book of Wiltshire by Dee La Vardera</i>)
1909	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Labour Exchanges were introduced. 2. Foundation stone laid for the new Lowbourne School adjacent to the old school. 3. The Baptist Church Sunday School building which fronts onto Broughton Road was built between October 1908 and January 1909 and was opened for its first use on 28th February 1909. It was paid off by 20th June 1916 having cost just over £1822. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i>) 4. In 1909 the beautiful oak pulpit in St. Michael's, designed by Canon Bouverie, of Pewsey, and carved by Mr. Hems, of Exeter, was given to the Church by a generous benefactor who did not wish his name to be known. It was dedicated on August 1st. (See Parish Magazine, Sept. 1909). In this year also the lady chapel was restored and beautified and fitted up for the week-day services. The cost was £500. It was chiefly owing to the interest of Mr. George Lopes that it was possible to carry a much more perfect restoration than initially intended. He not only gave generously towards it, but by his energy persuaded the Parochial Church Council to preserve with the elaborate scheme suggested by the architect, Mr. Ponting. The screens are by Hems, the painting by Fouracre, of Plymouth. The altar and its surroundings are after the plan of our Saxon ancestors, the idea being to have dignity, simplicity and solidity, without too much decoration. 5. By 1909 the Melksham Quaker Meeting was left as the only centre of the Friends in north-west Wiltshire and remained so until 1936: its status, however, was that of a meeting for worship for it ceased to be a Preparative Meeting in 1915. 6. The market rights devolved, with the manor of Melksham, to W. H. Long, who let them in 1909 to the Urban District Council for twenty-one years, and sold them to the Council in 1912 for £250. The fortnightly market, mainly for calves, has not been held at Melksham since 1939. The July fair was formally abolished by order of the Home Secretary in 1910.
1910	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Like its five previous incarnations, the Sixth Cholera Pandemic originated in India where it killed over 800,000, before spreading to the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Russia. The Sixth Cholera Pandemic was also the source of the last American outbreak of Cholera (1910–1911). American health authorities, having learned from the past, quickly sought to isolate the infected, and in the end only 11 deaths occurred in the U.S. By 1923 Cholera cases had been cut down dramatically, although it was still a constant in India. (<i>Google</i>) 2. Martigny House was built.

Year	Event
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Melksham was hit by floods which covered large areas around the City and extending up Bath Road beyond Union Street. 4. Melksham Fair, held in the Market Place on 27 and 28 July each year, was closed by an Act of Parliament because it encouraged undesirables to the town Melksham. 5. A disastrous fire occurred at Melksham, on Monday evening, when the feather and flock factory, belonging to Messrs. B. Sawtell & Sons Ltd, was completely gutted, with the damage being estimated at £20,000. This has resulted in some 60 hands being out of employment. The factory, an extensive building, is situated on the Broughton Road. At about quarter past six the first signs appeared that the premises were on fire. Smoke was seen issuing from a rear window; the outbreak was discovered by the foreman, who was just about to leave the premises after his day's work. Fanned by a strong breeze, the fire spread with extraordinary rapidity & for a considerable period a quantity of cottage property in the vicinity of the factory was in danger of becoming ignited. Within the space of twenty minutes the whole factory was a mass of flames, which presented a brilliant scene as tongues of flame leapt high into the air, shedding light for many miles around. The Trowbridge Fire Brigade were summoned and with the assistance of the Melksham Brigade and a host of willing helpers, the flames became subdued. Fortunately a plentiful supply of water was obtainable. By good, persistent work the cottages close to the factory were saved, though at one time they were gravely threatened and the occupants of several deemed it advisable to remove their belongings. Two floors bearing machinery fell in and the crash was tremendous. In endeavouring to avert further disaster, by the explosion of the boiler-room, one man displayed remarkable courage by climbing onto the corrugated iron roof enveloped in a mass of flames. With assistance and the aid of hammers, he succeeded in making a way through the roof, and by releasing the steam from the boiler he avoided an explosion. Gallant, and fortunately successful efforts, were made in the direction of saving the cottage property and the fire was contained to the factory. The main chimney still stands and presents a somewhat unique appearance standing as it does in the centre of the gutted building. The heavy damage, it is understood to be covered by insurance. (<i>The Bath Chronicle, Thursday, June 2, 1910.</i>) 6. The first Hospital Carnival was held raising £131 9s 7d. 7. In 1910 the beautiful marble floor in the chancel and sanctuary was given by the Honourable Mrs. Lopes as a memorial to her husband, George Lopes, Esq., of Sandridge Park, and the marble altar rails to the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Flocks by members of their family. For full descriptions, see Parish Magazine, December 1910). 8. In this year another splendid gift was made to the Church by Mr. George White, of Whitley, whose love of the old Parish Church where he was brought up as a boy was so great, and had been manifested on several occasions. The Vicar had for many years been anxious to have stained glass in the clerestory windows, and that they should not be merely isolated subjects, but present some connected teaching. This of course made it difficult, as a large sum was required to fill the six windows; but Mr. White, hearing of the scheme, undertook to provide the whole cost. After much thought and consultation with the artist from Messrs. Powell, eighteen figures were selected to represent the progress of the Church in Britain from the earliest ages, and specially tracing the history of our own diocese. The figures on the north side, commencing at the west end, represent the ancient British Church, the conversion of the Heptarchy and its consolidation into one body. On the south side the conversion of Wessex and its sub-division into dioceses. A marked feature is the explanation beneath the lights on filling up the old spaces where the roofs of the aisles prevented the insertion of glass. Besides the important historical teaching, these windows add greatly to the beauty of the Church. The windows were dedicated by the Archdeacon of Wilts at Matins on Sunday, December 18th.
1911	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Census year - Population of Melksham Parish – 4949. Population of Melksham Town – 3104. Population of Melksham Without – 7745. 2. National Insurance Act introduced compulsory State Insurance against sickness and unemployment introducing sickness and unemployment benefits. 3. The Wiltshire News, Friday June 16th 1911. Coronation Festivities – Owing to there only being festivities for juveniles, a committee has been formed and collections made for the purpose of roasting an Ox. The appeal met with a ready response, and sufficient funds have been raised for the purpose. The Ox will be roasted in the Market Place, and will be apportioned to the poor and deserving people in the town.
1912	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Telephone service introduced. 2. The Picture Hall (later named Maxime Cinema) in the High Street opened on 7th November 1912.

Year	Event
1913	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Charles W Maggs was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1913-1914. Whitley House, with 60 acres of land, was sold in 1913 on the death of Henry George White. Gallows Bridge on the Wilts & Berks canal demolished as it was unsafe.
1914	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Britain's entry into WW1 was announced at 23:00 on 4 August 1914. Prior to 1914 there was a branch of the Wilts & Dorset Bank on the site now occupied by Lloyds Bank. By 1918 both this and the Capital & Counties had amalgamated with Lloyds. For a short time both premises were occupied, but in 1922 the present building in Market Square was erected and the Capital & Counties premises abandoned. Herbert W Taylor was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1914-1915. The offices of the local board seem to have been first in the Town Hall (then the Market Hall) and later in Lowbourne. The Urban District Council did not become owners of the Town Hall until 1914. The centre for early local government and poor relief is not known but it seems likely that it was the present parish room. This small stone building of unknown date adjoining the vicarage wall in Canon Square is now used for parish meetings and as an annex to the Church School. Wilts & Berks Canal Abandonment Act was passed. The Liberal Club like the Conservative Club across the road became part of Melksham No. 1 Red Cross Hospital and agreed to accept up to 50 wounded soldiers.
1915	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> George Stratton was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1915-1916. In 1915 Wilts United Dairies, The Dairy Supply Company, London Wholesale Dairies and the Great Western and Metropolitan Dairies Ltd. became the founder companies of United Dairies Limited. <i>(Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.)</i>
1916	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advancing the clock by one hour during the Summer months (Summer Time) in order to promote greater efficiency in the use of daylight hours and of artificial lighting was introduced as a wartime measure in 1916. This has been continued through peacetime. Frederick Raines was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1916-1917. Polished stone axe of the Neolithic or Bronze Age was found under the roots of a fallen tree before 1916. Bristol Museum acquired the axe but it was destroyed as a result of enemy action in 1940. In a matter of months Spencers Engineering erected a new complex on their Beanacre Road site for the manufacture of Shells. Melksham House was given over to the British Red Cross and became the Melksham Hospital No.2. It housed 32 soldiers in 6 wards. The population of Melksham continued to expand and in 1916 an estate of 48 houses was built by C. S. Awdry at Roundponds north of the Avon. In March 1916 the New Hall became the location of the regular Military Tribunals which examined the cases of those men who were objecting to being conscripted. In 1916 the village of Atworth, the Atworth and District Agricultural Society was founded. They later moved to Melksham and became the Wiltshire Agricultural Co-operative Society and, in 1942, they became Wiltshire Farmers. After expansion and several changes of name they are now part of Countrywide Farmers. Seend Green House belonged to the Sumners in the 17th century, passed to the Seymours and the Webbs, and was bought by Thomas Bruges; it belonged in 1916 to Mrs. Ludlow-Bruges, and in recent years to Thomas Charles Usher and his daughter. The present three-story square house, of ashlar, bears a tablet on a side wall inscribed 'Built by the Duchess of Somerset 1760'; it was re-fronted and enlarged in the 19th century. Hill Farm House, Seend, is a small timber framed 15th-century house, remodelled and enlarged, but retaining an original cruck. <i>(British History on line)</i>
1917	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Frederick H Knee was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1917-1918. King George V and Queen Mary visited Melksham to support the war effort.
1918	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Representation of the People Act 1918 gave suffrage to most of the adult population (men over 21, women over 30). Between 1918 and 1920 a disturbingly deadly outbreak of influenza known as Spanish flu tore across the globe, infecting over a third of the world's population and ending the lives of 20 – 50 million people making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in human history. Of the 500 million people infected in the 1918 pandemic, the mortality rate was estimated at 10% to 20%, with up to 25 million deaths in the first 25 weeks alone. What separated the 1918 flu pandemic from other

Year	Event
	<p>influenza outbreaks was the victims; where influenza had always previously only killed juveniles and the elderly or already weakened patients, it had begun striking down hardy and completely healthy young adults, while leaving children and those with weaker immune systems still alive. <i>(Google)</i></p> <p>3. Henry Davis was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1918-1919.</p>
1919	<p>1. The Melksham War Memorial was erected. The vicar of Melksham, Canon Wyld, who had lost his only son in the war, approached the relatives of the fallen, who agreed between them to donate £200 towards the cost of building a stone cross in Cannon Square. Canon Wyld offered to donate the balance of £150 required. The memorial therefore has the distinction of having been secured by the relatives of those named on the Roll of Honour rather than by the town as a whole.</p> <p>2. On the 23rd August 1919 a large crowd gathered in Cannon Square attending the unveiling and dedication of the memorial to the 105 men from Melksham who gave their lives in the World War. The memorial was designed by Lawrence A Turner FSA and built by Messrs. H Davis & Son of Melksham. The memorial was dedicated by the Archdeacon of Wiltshire, and unveiled by Field Marshal Lord Methuen GCB, GCMG, GCVO, GCB, CB, CMG, on 23rd August 1919. <i>(Ministry of Defence/The British Legion)</i></p> <p>3. William H House was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1919-1920.</p> <p>4. Bransons Motor Works Ltd., Car Sales & Repairs was founded in Market Place.</p> <p>5. J. and J. Usher's Blanket Fund for Melksham Within and Without, originally endowed with a sum of £1,553 5s 8d, is governed by trustees under a scheme of 1919. The endowment is now £1,419 19s 5d stock.</p> <p>6. By the beginning of the 19th century Beanacre Manor had become a farm and remained so until 1919 when Lord Methuen took possession and had the property restored by Sir Harold Brakspear.</p>
1920	<p>1. Frederick H Knee was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1920-1923.</p> <p>2. On 5th November 1920 the Co-operative Wholesale Society established a large creamery opposite the railway station.</p> <p>3. The Board of Trade requested the Council to constitute a local committee in accordance with the Regulations against profiteering. The local Trades and Labour Council were asked to nominate 2 ladies and 2 men and the Chamber of Commerce 3 men to serve on such a committee.</p> <p>4. Melksham House was opened as a Sports and Social Club for the employees of the Avon Rubber Company.</p> <p>5. Fire at Melksham. A large portion of Melksham House was destroyed by a fire, which happened in the early hours of Wednesday morning, the damage running into thousands of pounds. The fine old-fashioned residence had been acquired by Major Robert Fuller, chairman of the Avon Rubber Company for recreative purposes for their employees, and was only recently opened. During the Great War it was used as a Red Cross Hospital. <i>(Western Daily Press, Friday, 17 December, 1920)</i></p> <p>6. J. F. Stancomb died at Shaw House in 1920, and it is now a County Council home for the aged.</p> <p>7. Soon after the end of World War 1 (1918) The British Government of the day decided that it would be of benefit to the workers of the country if better class housing was available to rent for manual and skilled workers. To this end two pilot schemes were started for a small number of houses to be built. For some unknown reason both these schemes were to be in Wiltshire, one in Melksham and the other in Warminster. The Melksham scheme was to be adjacent to an estate known as Roundponds, where a local factory owner in the early 1900's had built a number of houses around a pond. These houses were for skilled members of his factory to live and yet close enough to the factory so they could either walk or cycle to the factory. This had proved very successful during World War 1. The new government scheme was started in the early 1920's. The houses were all large three bed semi-detached houses with large gardens so that there was an opportunity for the family to grow their own food and to keep poultry. An unusual feature was that the main door was not at the front of the house but at the side! There are many theories as to why this was done! It was decided to name the road Addison Road after the Lord Allison who had implemented the scheme. Many of the houses are still under the control of the Local Authority as 'Council Houses', others and have been sold to tenants and generally they command a good price and do not come onto the market very often. <i>(Tony Seager)</i></p>
1921	<p>1. Census year - Population of Melksham Parish – 5305. Population of Melksham Town – 3596. Population of Melksham Without – 7809.</p> <p>2. The fresco over the chancel in the Parish Church was painted.</p> <p>3. The German gun from Market Place was dumped in river Avon.</p>

Year	Event										
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Trowbridge and District Employment Committee asked the Council to give serious consideration to the considerable amount of unemployment in Melksham and as a result the Council sought Ministry sanction to proceed with the laying of sewers and a footpath at Forest. 5. (Special meeting of the Council) Resolved unanimously that the local Branch of the Comrades of the Great War be invited to get the gun out of the river and that it be afterwards placed in the Market Yard for the time being. 6. Wages - able-bodied workmen shall receive 1s 3d per hour for 47 hour week - The foreman to receive 1s 4½d per hour. 7. The Coal Strike and the Coal (Emergency) Directions Order 1921 caused the Council to join with the Rural District Council to carry out any orders in force in connection with the coal crisis. 8. The Surveyor was authorised to take such steps as may be necessary to remove the captured German gun from the river. 9. The thanks of the Council were extended to Mr. R.P. Pearce and his band of voluntary helpers for getting the German Gun out of the river. 10. Agreement reached with the owners to erect mirrors on Mr. Collett's house at Lowbourn for the benefit of traffic emerging from Union Street. 11. Schemes suggested to relieve the distress of the unemployed included works on the footpath and sewer at Woodrow and the removal of silt at the river bridge. 12. A letter was received from Mr. Collett approving the design of the bridge to be erected across the brook at Normead. (This is the brook bridge as opposed to the river bridge at Murray Walk). 13. The Chairman extended an invitation to members to attend the United Services which was being held at 11 am on Friday 11th November (The Royal British Legion celebrates their 50th Anniversary this year). 										
1922	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forest Housing – (i.e. Church Lane, Leaze Road, Crescent Road) resolved that the rent of these houses be 7 shillings per week. <u>Note</u> – Current rent is approximately £2 per week (1972). 2. On taking a vote as to who should be appointed Toll Collector out of Ernest Arthur, George Fry, Frederick Lane and Walter Mears the last named obtained the highest number and was appointed from 1st April 1922. 3. The following were recommended to the Wiltshire County Council for appointment as managers of the schools shown:- <table border="0" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td>Lowbourn Schools</td> <td>Church Schools</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Miss Caroline Stratton (Leaze Cottage)</td> <td>Mrs A. Ferrobe</td> </tr> <tr> <td>esuoh .H.W rM (tforcyarC)</td> <td>" " "</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Messrs E.J. Lee, F.H. Knee,</td> <td>Mr C. Hayter,</td> </tr> <tr> <td>H.J. Fisher, L.J. Bigwood</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> 4. Letter from Trowbridge UDC asking the Council to join with them in the purchase of a new fire engine. Alternatively, Trowbridge asked if Melksham would consider buying their present "Steamer". It was decided to seek the views of the Parish Council. 5. Resolved to dispose of the Council depot in Bath Road as a building site. (The site is now occupied by the row of shops which includes Mr Cole Chemist and Mr Mitchell Greengrocer). 6. Authority from ministry of Health to sell Council Houses at Forest for £420 each (In fact one only was sold). 7. Reported by the Clerk that the Parish Council had resolved to purchase the steam fire engine from Chippenham at a cost of £150. 8. Messrs J. Crook & Sons of Broughton Road were granted their first licence to keep petrol on the premises. 9. The Town Properties Committee were directed to look into the question of erecting a building between the Town Hall and the Police Station to house the fire engine. 	Lowbourn Schools	Church Schools	Miss Caroline Stratton (Leaze Cottage)	Mrs A. Ferrobe	esuoh .H.W rM (tforcyarC)	" " "	Messrs E.J. Lee, F.H. Knee,	Mr C. Hayter,	H.J. Fisher, L.J. Bigwood	
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1923	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. William Roy was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1923-1929. 										
1924	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There were four bells in 1553. The present peal of eight bells in St. Michael's Church was recast in 1924 by Messrs. Taylors. It comprises the following bells: (1) and (2) 1896, Mears & Stainbank; (3) 1703, A. Rudhall; (4) 1703, A. Rudhall, recast 1896; (5) 1703, A. Rudhall; (6) 1768, 'T. R.'; (7) 1808, Jas. Wells, Aldbourne; (8) 1703 [Rudhall]. 										

Year	Event
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The Trowbridge and Melksham Union established two children's homes. A girls' home was located at Honeywell House 39 King Street. In 1924 it could accommodate 15 girls with Miss Harding as Superintendent. A home for boys was at Fern Cottage, 98 Ashton Street Trowbridge. In 1924 it could house up to 15 boys with Miss Place in charge 3. The supply of electric light and power was first brought to the town in 1924–5 by the Western Electricity Distributing Corporation. 4. The Melksham Hospital Carnival was held on 23rd August 1924.
1925	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The pension age was reduced to 65. 2. By 1925 there was a workforce of about 120 full and part time men and women at the Melksham Dairy. (<i>Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.</i>)
1926	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 1926 general strike in the United Kingdom lasted 10 days, from 3rd May to 13th May 1926. It was called by the general council of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in an unsuccessful attempt to force the British government to take action to prevent wage reduction and worsening conditions for 800,000 locked-out coal miners. Some 1.7 million workers went out on strike, especially in transport and heavy industry. The government was prepared and enlisted middle class volunteers to maintain essential services. There was little violence and the TUC gave up in defeat. In the long run, there was little impact on trade-union activity or industrial relations. 2. At the age of eleven Evie Fouracres travelled daily to the Girls High School in Trowbridge by train. She recalled that during the 1926 outbreak of Foot and Mouth she saw from the train window a large pyre of cattle at Frying Pan Farm along the Holt Road. 3. The ground at Melksham House became the home ground for Melksham Town Football Club. 4. Melksham Hospital Carnival took place on August 28th. 5. Up to this time the King's Arms had its own bus to collect visitors from Melksham Station.
1927	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ken Gill (1927-2009), trade union leader and caricaturist was born in Melksham.
1928	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Representation of the People Act 1928 gave universal suffrage to the adult population including women over 21. 2. River Avon bridge in Melksham widened to give a footpath on the north side. 3. S. V. Chandler, Hairdresser of 26, Bath Road was founded. 4. W. C. Crook Jnr., Road Works and Garage at Whitestone Garage was founded.
1929	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frederick G Hurne was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1929-1932. 2. The Salvation Army had a red brick Citadel, off Church Street, and other premises in Union Street. The Citadel was at one time a malt house and later a men's club: it was held for some years on a lease and was acquired by the Army in 1929. 3. A new police station was built in Semington Road.
1931	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Census year - Population of Melksham Town – 3881.
1932	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Herbert J Fisher was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1932-1936. 2. In 1932 two scratch dials were found on St Michael and All Angels church: one with numerals on the south-east buttress of the nave, and one under the south window. 3. Kennet & Avon canal closed.
1935	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A downpour of rain lasting about 45 minutes caused the worst floods in memory. The Melksham to Holt bus was stranded all night at Broughton Gifford. Floodwater isolated the City and extended far up Bath Road beyond the junction of Union Street.
1936	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Tithe Commutation Act of 1936 abolished all tithe rent charges. 2. Percy Hughes was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1936-1941. 3. The private gas company formed in 1832 became a public company in 1885, and its undertaking was acquired by the Bath Gas Company in 1936.
1937	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. King George's Field on the north of Clacker's Brook was purchased in 1937 by public subscription and is used for recreation purposes.
1938	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The foundation stone for St. Anthony's Roman Catholic Church was laid on 2nd April 1938. 2. The Melksham Hospital in Spa Road, which replaced the Cottage Hospital in Bank Street, was a purpose built 43 bed community hospital was opened by Marquis of Bath on 27th July 1938.

Year	Event
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	<p>(Melksham Cottage Hospital publication 1991)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Under the wartime powers granted to the Wiltshire County Council the Cottage Hospital in Bank Street was reopened as a maternity hospital and many women came from London to have their children because it was safer there. Henry White's endowment for the hospital in Bank Street was dependent upon the premises being used for that purpose. When the hospital was rebuilt on a site in Spa Road in 1938, White's endowment was transferred to the upkeep of the churchyard. In 1938/9 an epidemic of foot and mouth hit the farmers of Wiltshire. Hundreds of cattle were slaughtered each day and Melksham Dairy's intake of milk dropped rapidly. This severely handicapped production and caused a great deal of financial loss both to the company and to the farmers. Foot and mouth returned again in 1942 with the same effect. <i>(Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.)</i> 																																												
1939	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Population of Melksham Town – 5000 (estimate). The Roman Catholic Church of St. Anthony's of Padua was built in pale brick in West Street and opened in 1939. The original font in Holy Cross, Seend, which had been broken, was buried in the churchyard in the late 19th century, but was restored to use in 1939; the modern font is still in the church. The Forge in King Street closed. The market was closed. 																																												
1940	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> On the 8th January 1940 bacon, butter and sugar were rationed. Meat, tea jam, biscuits, breakfast cereals, cheese, eggs, lard, milk, tinned and dried fruit were rationed subsequently, though not all at once. <table border="1" data-bbox="402 943 1362 1491"> <thead> <tr> <th>Item</th> <th>Max level</th> <th>Min level</th> <th>April 1945</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bacon & Ham</td> <td>8 oz</td> <td>4 oz</td> <td>4 oz</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sugar</td> <td>16 oz</td> <td>8 oz</td> <td>8 oz</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Loose tea</td> <td>4 oz</td> <td>2 oz</td> <td>2oz</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Meat*</td> <td>1s. 2d.</td> <td>1s.</td> <td>1s. 2d.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cheese</td> <td>8 oz</td> <td>1 oz</td> <td>2 oz</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Preserves</td> <td>1 lb per month 2 lb marmalade</td> <td>8 oz per month</td> <td>2lb per month marmalade or 1 lb preserve or 1lb sugar</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Butter</td> <td>8 oz</td> <td>2 oz</td> <td>2 oz</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Margarine</td> <td>12 oz</td> <td>4 oz</td> <td>4 oz</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lard</td> <td>3 oz</td> <td>2 oz</td> <td>2 oz</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sweets</td> <td>16 oz per month</td> <td>8 oz per month</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1s. d. bought about 1lb 3 oz of meat On the 18th June 1940 a Royal Air Force station, No.12 School of Technical Training, was built at Bowerhill. 	Item	Max level	Min level	April 1945	Bacon & Ham	8 oz	4 oz	4 oz	Sugar	16 oz	8 oz	8 oz	Loose tea	4 oz	2 oz	2oz	Meat*	1s. 2d.	1s.	1s. 2d.	Cheese	8 oz	1 oz	2 oz	Preserves	1 lb per month 2 lb marmalade	8 oz per month	2lb per month marmalade or 1 lb preserve or 1lb sugar	Butter	8 oz	2 oz	2 oz	Margarine	12 oz	4 oz	4 oz	Lard	3 oz	2 oz	2 oz	Sweets	16 oz per month	8 oz per month	
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1941	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> During the Second World War years 1941 to 1945 double Summer Time was introduced to assist with the harvest. Percy Crook was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1941-1946. 																																												
1942	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The large silos which used to stand adjoining the roundabout on the Bradford on Avon road were built in 1942 for storing grain and the original milling machinery was made by Messrs. Spencer. (They were demolished starting December 1993) Avon Rubber Works Canteen opened. The Urban District Council's cemetery extends from the west side of St. Michael's churchyard to the west side of Conigre, off King Street. A right of way through the churchyard was acquired in 1942. The first interment took place in 1945. 																																												
1944	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> On the 5th June 1944, 46 Stirling Heavy bombers, each laden with 20 paratroopers of the British 6th Airborne Division, lined up on Keevil airfield in preparation for 'Operation Tonga', part of the operation Overlord; their destination was Normandy and the start of 'D Day' landings. 																																												

Year	Event
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> On the occasion of the Harvest Festival in 1944 the Church Choir was broadcast on the BBC's West of England Home Service. A Bakelite record was also made.
1945	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiations for the purchase of the British Restaurant and Day nursery on King George's Field were authorised on 12th November 1945. Melksham Urban District Council commenced building over 1000 new houses to the east of the town. As a result of the proximity of the RAF Camp at Bowerhill, at the end of the war 16 Jamaican servicemen were baptised in the Broughton Road Baptist Church on 3rd June 1945. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i> At the end of the war the old cottage hospital in Bank Street was used as an educational centre until it was taken over by the Labour Club in 1964.
1946	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> George Ward was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1946-1948. A Citizen's Advice Bureau was opened with an initial grant of £10 for setting it up and the offer of voluntary staffing by Mrs. K. Hannaford and Mr. R.S. Mills accepted. The Meat Inspector reported that he had condemned as unfit for human consumption 52 tins of corned beef, 38 tins of corned mutton and one forequarter of imported beef – a total of 178½ lbs. Mrs. A. Swanborough resigned from the Council after 21 years' service. Councillor F.B. Day (founder member of the Historical Society) attended his first meeting of the Urban District Council having been fourth in the poll of eight elected candidates. As a large proportion of children were apparently playing on the roads on Sundays it was resolved not to lock the swings etc., on King George's Field as had been the custom in the past. Resolved that as a token of appreciation for services rendered to the town by Cannon F.H. Sangster who would be retiring shortly his consent be sought to the naming of one of the new streets on Lambourne site as "Sangster Avenue". Melksham Trades Council urged the removal of the Weigh house and Pump from the Market Place as both were now considered obsolete and serving no useful purpose under modern conditions. Mr. A.G. Hurn called attention to the need for one way traffic in Union Street but was informed that the suggestion did not meet with the necessary approval of the Police and the Wilts County Council. The Drill Hall shall be known in future as Melksham Assembly Hall and the Council will Sponsor the formation of an Entertainments Committee. Resolved that the Water Pump be removed from the Market Place to give a better approach for busses to the bus shelters.
1947	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Town Pump and Weighbridge were demolished. Resolved to requisition Lowbourne House and the Old Cottage Hospital, Bank Street. Bookings for the Assembly Hall were suspended forthwith on account of the current fuel crisis. It was decided that the need to open the offices for payment of rates on Friday evenings from 5.30 pm to 8 pm no longer existed and that the facilities for doing so should therefore be withdrawn. Decision to purchase Lowbourne House and grounds from the Trustees of Melksham Hospital at an overall cost, including conversion to flats of £4,000. Mr L.J. Hill was appointed Sanitary Inspector and assistant Surveyor. (Mr Hill is at present Clerk, Chief Financial Officer, Surveyor and Public Health Inspector to Kingsbridge Urban District Council, Devon). Mr G. Adams was appointed Chief Technical Assistant in the Surveyor's Department (Mr Adams is at present Surveyor to the Bradford on Avon Urban District Council). Wiltshire Regiment County Memorial. The Chairman (Mr F. Chivers) assured the Lord Lieutenant that the response from Melksham would be generous in the appeal in the County for £10,000. (In fact it was NIL as the East Coast Flood Disaster Appeal superseded the County Regiment Appeal). The remaining house on the Beanacre Road estate was offered to Mr R.W. Salisbury of Holt. (Members will know that Mr and Mrs R.W. Salisbury who now live in Chalfield Crescent have taken and are still taking an active part in Town affairs both being members of the Urban District Council at this time). Draft order received increasing the number of Councillors for the District from twelve to fifteen.

Year	Event
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Land at West End Farm (Now Waverley Gardens) was authorised to be purchased for housing. 12. The Council extended congratulations to the Melksham and District Gardeners Society on the success of their first annual show held on 16th August 1947. 13. The residue of the Council's market equipment was sold to the Borough of Chippenham for £40. 14. A lengthy appeal by the Vicar and Churchwardens against the Council's proposal to requisition the Old Cottage Hospital was deferred until 11th November 1947 at which meeting the Council decided to go ahead with the negotiations to purchase and convert the flats. (In fact the Council agreed subsequently to the purchase of the Lowbourne house property only and the County Council pursued negotiations for the Old Cottage Hospital).
1948	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frank Chivers was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1948-1950. 2. On the 28th February 1948 the Council decided to take over Halfpenny Bridge. 3. Work commenced on the removal of Static Water Tanks at Coronation Road, Church Street, Bradford Road and Church Lane on 12th July 1948. 4. The heating system in St. Michael's Church was renovated in 1949,
1950	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Albert G Hurn was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1950-1952. 2. Archway to Assembly Hall moved back to 're-gate' Melksham House. 3. The Melksham Meeting of Quakers in King Street was discontinued in 1950.
1951	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Census year.
1952	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Francis B Day was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1952-1954. 2. In 1952 the old Methodist school in Watson's Court was leased to the local branch of the British Legion.
1953	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shurnhold Secondary Modern later known as the George Ward School was opened at Shurnhold. It was the first post-war school to open in Wiltshire.
1954	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wartime rationing ended on 3rd July 1954. 2. Leonard J Noad was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1954-1956.
1955	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Population of Melksham Town – 6970. 2. In 1955 a railway strike brought Melksham Dairy extra work when large quantities of liquid milk were delivered to the factory. Some 51,000 gallons of milk were being condensed each day, meaning a very long working day for most employees starting as early as 3am. <i>(Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.)</i>
1956	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asian Flu was a pandemic outbreak of Influenza A of the H2N2 subtype, that originated in China in 1956 and lasted until 1958. In its two-year spree, Asian Flu travelled from the Chinese province of Guizhou to Singapore, Hong Kong, and the United States. Estimates for the death toll of the Asian Flu vary depending on the source, but the World Health Organization places the final tally at approximately 2 million deaths, 69,800 of those in the US alone. <i>(Google)</i> 2. A John Mortimer was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1956-1958. 3. Heavy workloads in 1956 led to the modernisation and extension of both the head office and works at Spencer's in Beanacre Road. 4. In 1956 Avon Rubber Company acquired the rival company of George Spencer Moulton (founded in 1848) bringing with it the Abbey Mills and Kingston Mills in Bradford-on-Avon.
1958	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reginald F Bush was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1958-1960. 2. The Friend's meeting house in King Street was sold in was1958 it was then home to the National Spiritualist Church.
1959	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Blue Pool opened in June 1959. 2. On the 16th January 1959 the Boards of Directors of United Dairies Limited and Cow and Gate Limited announced proposals for the merger of the two companies by forming a new company called Unigate Limited. John Maggs brother Leonard-Maggs continued the family connection by becoming the first chairman of the new company but regrettably he died on the 23rd August of that same year. <i>(Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.)</i> 3. In April 1959 the B.B.C. television cameras came to the Melksham Dairy factory. The building department put in a lot of hard work to improve the canteen's appearance for staging the "Any Questions " programme which drew an audience of 270. <i>(Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham</i>

Year	Event
	<i>Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.)</i>
1960	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the end of 1960 the farthing (¼ of an old penny) ceased to be legal tender. 2. Mary E Salisbury was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1960-1962. 3. Lowbourne House demolished. 4. Duke of Edinburgh visits Avon Rubber Co. 5. During the 1960s wooden fencing was installed around the Melksham Town Football Club ground and a wooden stand was erected on one side of the pitch but this was demolished and replaced by a modern metal stand in 1994. Melksham won the Wiltshire Senior Cup in 2012–13 and 2013–14, before winning the Western League Premier Division title in 2014–15 earning promotion to Division One West of the Southern League. However, they could not be promoted due to not being able to meet the required ground rules for that league in time for the beginning of the next season. In 2017, in preparation for redevelopment at the Melksham House site the club moved to Oakfields, a new £7.3 million sports facility shared with Melksham Rugby Club on the eastern edge of the town. The first match at the new ground was played on 14 January 2017 against Bristol Manor Farm in the FA Vase, with the visitors winning 5–3 in front of a crowd of 1,215.
1961	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Census year - Population of Melksham Town – 7460.
1962	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. W Allan Catte was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1962-1964. 2. Melksham & District Historical Association founded. 3. Spencer & Co. was bought out by Elliot-Automation Group of Companies, later called GEC. 4. The Melksham Mercury reported that the foot and mouth epidemic has eased, and the local market at Chippenham has opened again – but the meeting of hounds are still held in abeyance.
1963	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bank House was demolished. 2. Butchers of Warminster started demolition of Lowbourne House on 5th April 1963. 3. Initial Electrics, Electrical Contractor (Prop. Ivor Ponting) of 35, Bank Street was founded.
1964	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Population of Melksham Town – 9000. 2. Leslie F Cleverly was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1964-1965. 3. In January Wiltshire County Council's first purpose-built library was opened in Melksham. 4. Southbrook Farm was completely demolished on 12th March 1964. 5. In September 1964 the Maxime cinema in High Street demolished and replaced by Avon shopping precinct 6. Clinic opened in Lowbourne. 7. The Melksham Labour Club was established in the old premises of the Cottage Hospital in Bank Street.
1965	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kenneth J Elmes was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1965-1967. 2. Poor House/Workhouse was demolished. 3. Avon shopping precinct topping out in February 1965. 4. Church House in Church Street was demolished in February 1965. 5. On 27th February 1965, RAF Melksham closed. 6. Cecil John Hawes Harrison, known as the 'Hermit of Melksham' was found dead on the 9th September 1965. 7. Henry Whites closed on 30th October 1965.
1966	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Melksham's Railway station was closed in 1966. 2. The Baptist chapel at Beanacre closed at the end of December 1966. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA)</i> 3. Owing to steadily increasing numbers at Sandridge School, the children and teachers have had to contend with the difficulties caused through two classes sharing a room divided by only a curtain. The parents, becoming dissatisfied with such conditions, decided that this must be remedied by their own efforts. Through Rummage Sales and other efforts sufficient money was raised to cover the cost of erecting a solid partition wall. This work was carried out during the summer holidays by the volunteer labour of some of the parents, and the finished article represents a major improvement to the school. Great credit is due to the Parent-Teacher Association for their keenness to improve the accommodation, which had been very inadequate. <i>(Melksham Mercury Oct.</i>

Year	Event
	<p>1966)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Friday 15th August 1966. A fire at the Avon Rubber Company's Finished Goods Store raged for more than five hours and goods valued at more than £1 million pounds had been destroyed and two houses in Scotland Road were damaged. (<i>Melksham Mercury Oct. 1966</i>) 5. Chestnuts House in Bath Road was demolished 6. A PAPER IS BORN. First newspaper to mention the "Melksham Mercury" was the "Bristol Evening Post" which on 21st September (missing the proprietor's birthday by one day) ran the following paragraphs under the headline - A PAPER IS BORN. Melksham (Wilts.) will soon have its own newspaper. The Melksham Mercury will be run by Mr Colin Venton, proprietor of the Uffington Press. He will print the paper at his works in High Street. The first edition is already well under way. The paper will be on the streets by the first of every month beginning in October. Mr Venton has a staff including part-time workers, of seven reporters and photographers. (This should have been staff of seven, including production workers - Ed.) (<i>Melksham Mercury Oct. 1966</i>). 7. Of the 1,000 balloons sold during Melksham Carnival week 76 cards have now been returned. Of these three landed in Germany and the cards attached have been returned by the German finders to claim the longest distance prizes. The ballon that went furthest landed in Leipzig 607 miles from Melksham. (<i>Melksham Mercury Oct. 1966</i>).
1967	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capital punishment was abolished for murder in the United Kingdom and one year later for all crimes. 2. In October 1967 a farmer from Bryn Farm in Shropshire sought veterinary advice on the health of one of their cows and the animal was found to have contracted foot-and-mouth disease. In the following months over 2,364 outbreaks were detected in the United Kingdom. 94% of the cases occurred in the North-West Midlands and North Wales. Over the course of six months, 430,000 animals over 2,300 farms were slaughtered. 3. Leslie F Cleverly was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1967-1968. 4. Mrs Ada Cole called time for the last time at the Ushers "Crown Hotel" in the Market Place on Saturday 7th January. Mr V Dowty on behalf of her regulars presented her with a gold bangle. Her husband had been licensee from 1921 and Ada was granted the licence when she became a widow six years ago. Ushers Brewery's own building department have made a splendid job of converting the old farm house along the Semington Road at West End and it will be called appropriately enough the West End Inn. The new manager will be Mr A T Harris from Letchworth, he has been a relief manager for Ushers and opened in February 1967. (<i>Melksham Mercury Feb. 1967</i>) 5. The alterations at the Semington crossroads are proceeding well but much inconvenience has been caused by the bursting of the water mains - and they were determined to make a good job of the breakage! Rumour had it that the main was broken eight times and there were long periods of water shortage for local residents. (<i>Melksham Mercury February 1967</i>) 6. The Queensway Chapel started in 1924 originally meeting in rented premises until the Chapel was opened officially on 8th April 1967. 7. July 13th 1967 will long be remembered as the most terrifying evening by many of our Melksham readers and by the damage caused in the area by hailstones as large as tennis balls. The thunderstorm was very local, and at Calne and Devizes there was only a slight trace of rain. (<i>Melksham Mercury Feb. 1967</i>) 8. Fire Station opened in Semington Road. 9. LOCAL HISTORY RECORDER APPOINTED Lack of archaeological evidence in and around Melksham has caused the Melksham and District Local History Society to appoint an archaeological recorder, Mr J K Wayman, who will be responsible for tracing and recording these all important facts. It must be stressed that the Society does not expect to be given the finds which have been, and are found when digging the garden, working on a building site or, walking a ploughed field but would be much appreciate being allowed to examine and identify, then record approximate age and area object found in. By means of these records a better picture of what Melksham was like from perhaps the Roman times to Victorian can be built up. The type of materials which the Society wish to identify and record are coins, pottery, glass, metal objects, in fact anything even old foundations discovered while digging. With the owner's permission the Society would like occasionally to put on a display of finds in the glass showcase at the Public Library. Each find would be catalogued with - age, transcription where found, and by whom it was loaned.

Year	Event
	<p>Although the fossilised skull of an ox, found in 1838 and now in Melksham Town Hall is probably Palaeolithic (35,000 to 60,000. B.C.) there was probably no human settlement at Melksham until the Iron Age perhaps as late as 600 B.C. This is because although the land on either side of the river would have been very fertile, there would have been thickets right to the river's edge, also the surface strata in the Melksham area is Oxford clay. The wooden and stone implements of the Neolithic and Bronze Age people would have been unable to contend with these. Another pointer to this reasoning is that there are no traces of ancient trackways or ridgeways which were used extensive from the Bronze Age (3,000 to 1,650 B.C.) when the trade routes were first opened up by traders and pedlars. Most settlements were on or near these routes, the nearest to Melksham are the West Wilts Ridgeway, Bradford on Avon to above Chippenham, the Clyde Pypard Ridgeway and Wandsdyke Devizes through Cherhill and the Great Ridgeway, Warminster through Marlborough with its lesser offshoots on the Westbury White horse and Littleton Down. Roman finds in Melksham are limited to six Roman coins found after bulldozer clearance of a building site in 1964. The exact site of this find is not known as the coins were dispersed among the labourers and lost. The one coin of Constantine 306-337, was not identified by Devizes Museum, but the finder would give no further details. There are of course villas known at Attworth and Sandy Lane, and the Roman Road to Bath runs through Semington. The name Melksham seems to derive from the Saxon word MEELC-HAM, meaning hamlet of farm producing milk. This means of course that there should be Saxon pottery recorded but the only find that could be Saxon I S a skeleton with skull type not unlike West Saxon 5th to 8th cent. This skeleton was found in what was an orchard belonging to Place House, it could have been a murder victim as there were no traces of wood, nails or grave goods found with the body, as is the custom in most Saxon burials. There must be more archaeological evidence of these past residents of Melksham, as no community lives without leaving some traces of its way of life and its rubbish pits if nothing else. The Melksham and District Local History Society would like to remedy this by inviting all Melksham people who have found or do find anything unusual to let it be examined and recorded for the benefit of future historians. Mr J K Wayman, 6 Chalfield Crescent, Melksham will be pleased to hear from anybody, evenings or weekends. (<i>Melksham Mercury Feb. 1967</i>)</p> <p>10. The closure of Melksham Signal Box on 24th February marked not only another stage in the town's history but also a step in the reorganisation and streamlining of British Railways. (<i>Melksham Mercury Mid Apr. 1967</i>)</p>
1968	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The two-class postal system was introduced in 1968, using first class and second class services. The Post Office also opened the National Giro Bank. 2. H Leslie Hamling was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1968-1969. 3. Population of Melksham Town – 9330. 4. Floods once more affected the town. 5. Kingsbury Sq. Flats for the elderly opened. 6. Corsham man retires after 49 years with Avon. When Jack Booy started work in 1918 at the Avon Rubber Company's Melksham factory he walked every day from his home at Corsham, leaving at 4.30 am in order to reach Melksham by 6 am. He wasn't lonely on that long walk though for his elder sisters also worked for the company. (<i>Report in the Melksham Mercury, April 1968</i>)
1969	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Representation of the People Act 1969 gave suffrage to the adult population over 18. 2. Jeremiah J Collins was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1969-1971. 3. C.W. Maggs & Co. closed. 4. GWR Railway Bridge on Semington Road removed. 5. The Shurnhold Secondary Modern School became the George Ward Comprehensive School.
1970	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In early 1970 the RAF Station was decommissioned. 2. The Western Way By-Pass ring road was built around the town. 3. The Salvation Army Citadel remained in use until around 1970
1971	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Census year - Population of Melksham Town – 9650. 2. New decimalised currency was introduced in U.K. 3. Francis B Day was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council between 1971-1973. 4. Item in the Association's News sheet: FOUND! - In the bed of the Avon during excavations for the

Year	Event
	new bridge two Bronze spear heads, the first of which has been provisionally dated by Devizes Museum as 1100-1300 BC and is of a pattern of which only four are known in Wiltshire. The second was only found in the last few days and details are not yet known. They become the property of the Wilts County Council but efforts are being made to obtain photographs for our Melksham records in due course.
1972	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Aloeric School was built in St Michael's Road and was named after the Norman Knight of that name who was granted the villages of Melksham and Poulshot by William the Conqueror. <i>(From the Aloeric School website)</i> 2. The Western Way was opened.
1973	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The United Kingdom joined the European Economic Community (EEC). 2. Decimal currency was introduced in the UK. 3. Manus O'Gorman was Chairman of Melksham Parish Council and Melksham Town Council (successor to Parish Council) between 1973-1974. 4. St. Michael's Church of England Primary School moved from its site by the Church to a purpose built school at Queensway. This has since closed for housing development and only a nursery is on the site.
1974	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Local Government Act of 1972 became effective from 1 April 1974 and created District Councils (Kennet, West Wiltshire, North Wiltshire etc.) and various powers became vested in those Districts but more particularly powers enjoyed by the former Urban and Rural Districts became vested in the new Districts, in the case of Melksham, The West Wiltshire District. 2. Robert W Salisbury was Chairman of Melksham Town Council between 1974-1976.
1976	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maureen R Weston was Chairman of Melksham Town Council between 1976-1978.
1977	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the 1st September 1977 the Melksham Creamery became the first dairy in this country to use flow meters to measure the farmers' milk supplies. <i>(Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.)</i>
1978	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Richard G Wiltshire was Chairman of Melksham Town Council between 1978-1980. 2. Melksham Rugby Club was formed in 1978 as the factory side for Avon Tyres. <i>(Wiltshire Times)</i>
1979	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the 31st March 1979, Unigate and the Milk Marketing Board decided that the Melksham Creamery should accept its last collection of churned milk and that any farmers still not using bulk milk tanks should have their milk transported to the depot at Wootton Bassett. On the day employees past and present gathered around the unloading platform as the last 10 gallon churn was unloaded, tested, emptied and cleaned before it was taken to a place of honour in the factory reception area. <i>(Information gleaned from "The History of Melksham Creamery" by Jackie A Crossman, 1979.)</i>
1980	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Barbara M Gloinson was Chairman of Melksham Town Council between 1980-1982. 2. The Melksham & District French Twinning Association was officially launched in May 1980. It was twinned with the town of Avon, 45 kilometres from Paris, with Fontainebleau being its neighbouring town. 3. In the early 1980's the Baptist Church received a substantial legacy from the Pocock family who had emigrated to Canada. This enabled a complete renovation of the building in which worship is held (referred to as the sanctuary or chapel). Pews were removed and replaced with chairs, the woodwork of the pulpit and gallery had varnish removed to highlight the natural wood and the whole area was redecorated and carpeted. During this work it became clear that parts of the flooring had to be renovated and the electrical wiring replaced. Every effort was made to retain the original architecture. Many members supported the work by giving time and gifts towards this major project, the total cost of which was approximately £40,000. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA)</i>
1981	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Census year.
1982	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harry Johnson was Chairman of Melksham Town Council between 1982-1984.
1983	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.
1984	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manus H O'Gorman was Chairman of Melksham Town Council between 1984-1985. 2. Sawtells Feather Factory ceased trading and the factory was demolished. 3. Ventons cycle shop, later Walkers, demolished
1985	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manus H O'Gorman was Mayor of Melksham between 1985-1986.

Year	Event
	2. On May 11 1985 the Melksham Railway Station reopened with one or two trains a day initially along with special excursions.
1986	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kenneth Williams was Mayor of Melksham between 1986-1987. 2. Hurn's Ark Works demolished. 3. A new multi-million pound grain mill at West of England Farmers was opened in November. The 90 foot high mill was built on a 2½ acre site in Bradford Road formerly occupied by Glessons. It replaced the mill in Bath Road which made way for the new Gateway Supermarket.
1987	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A great storm sweeps across southern England. 2. Mavis Elcock was Mayor of Melksham between 1987-1989. 3. Her Majesty the Queen approved the closure of the churchyard of St. Michael and All Angels. Once the formalities were complete, no more bodies would be allowed to be buried there although it was still possible to scatter or inter cremated remains.
1988	1. GEC formerly Spencers (Melksham) Ltd. closed.
1989	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poll Tax was introduced which caused widespread protest. 2. Richard J Wood was Mayor of Melksham between 1989-1991.
1990	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kennet & Avon canal reopened largely by the efforts of the Kennet & Avon Preservation Trust. 2. GEC Mechanical Engineering (ex Spencers) closed.
1991	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Census year. 2. Sarah Cardy was Mayor of Melksham between 1991-1992.
1992	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Davina Griffin was Mayor of Melksham between 1992-1995. 2. Leekes opened its department store on the outskirts of Melksham
1993	1. Grain Silos at Chalymead demolished
1994	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Church of England ordains its first female priests. 2. The Channel Tunnel opened on 6th May 1994. 3. Gowens in the High Street closed.
1995	1. Sheila Wilkinson was Mayor of Melksham between 1995-1997.
1996	1. Opened in 1996 the West Wiltshire Crematorium on the outskirts of Semington was designed in sympathy with traditional Wiltshire architecture and overlooked the pastures bordering the Kennet and Avon Canal.
1997	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adrienne Westbrook was Mayor of Melksham between 1997-1998. 2. Cooper Tire & Rubber Company of America bought Avon Tyres Limited and became known as Cooper-Avon Tires.
1998	1. Davina Griffin was Mayor of Melksham between 1998-1999.
1999	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Euro currency introduced (but not in U.K.) 2. Adrienne Westbrook was Mayor of Melksham between 1999-2000. 3. On 31st December 1999, while the many across the world were marking the new Millennium with fireworks and street parties, the members of the Baptist Church held a party in the church hall followed at midnight by a New Year's Eve worship service which was broadcast on radio by BBC Wiltshire Sound. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA)</i>
2000	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vic Oakman was Mayor of Melksham between 2000-2003. 2. Avon Rubber plc moved to a large purpose-built facility on the Bowerhill Industrial Estate. 3. A local businessman and entrepreneur, William Spiers, purchased the title Lordship of Melksham at auction, on May 30th 2000. 4. In January 2002, as part of the restructuring of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Melksham church became associated with the new West of England Baptist Association in place of WESBA. On this date, 57 individuals were in membership and average attendance at worship was 48 (morning) and 22 (evening) <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA)</i>
2001	1. Census year.

Year	Event
2003	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terri Welch was Mayor of Melksham between 2003-2005. 2. Snowberry Lane Clinic was founded at Ridgeway House, 49 Shurnhold.
2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The population of England reached fifty million.
2005	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Margaret White was Mayor of Melksham between 2005-2007. 2. Spencer's old Beanacre site demolished.
2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On 10th February 2006 the Cinema returns to Melksham. 'Wiltshire Moviola' starts a sequence of film shows in the Assembly Hall. 2. Historical Association publish a 'Tombstone Trail' describing some of the better known former residents of Melksham. 3. In 2006 it became evident that much work was needed on the Grade 2 listed Baptist Church building and fund raising towards this end started immediately. With the help of some grants (including from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme and the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust) and from assets held by the church, the work was able to go ahead. New windows, a new floor, repair to plasterwork, necessary work on the roof including insulation and a complete re-decoration of the whole was undertaken - result: a beautiful and safe place of worship. <i>Short History of Melksham Baptist Church by FW Cooper of M&DHA</i>
2007	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Richard Wiltshire was Mayor of Melksham between 2007-2010. 2. A one year lease of the Roundhouse was granted to the Historical Association by the Town Council so that the Association could open a 'Local History Centre'. Initially the centre was open on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. 3. Ivor Newman, founder of I D Newman and Son family butchers in Church Street died aged 81. He was born in Beanacre in 1926, one of four children. His father had been a Special Policeman who was once a champion boxer. Mr Newman went to Lowbourn School before starting work at the age of 13 in Hurn Brothers, the trellis makers, which is now the site of Sainsbury's supermarket. In 1943 at the age of 17 he joined the Navy serving on the Cruiser HMS Royalist. After the war he worked as manager of O R John butchers in Calne where he met his wife Mary Naile and they were married in 1951 at St. Mary's in Calne. He eventually came back to Melksham to build up his business at 1 Church Street and spent 21 years serving the people of Melksham.
2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building work started on the new Royal Oak Secondary School on the ground behind Woolmore Farm. 2. The Historical Association produced an interactive computer CD of Melksham's History. One hundred copies were available for free distribution. These were produced with the help of a grant from the Awards for All Heritage Lottery Fund.
2009	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wiltshire Council is the unitary authority for most of the county of Wiltshire, in the West of England, the successor authority to Wiltshire County Council (1889-2009) and to four districts (Kennet, North Wiltshire, Salisbury, and West Wiltshire) all of which had been created in 1973 and were abolished in 2009. 2. On the 1st April 2009 the fire crew of Cooper Tires (sic) factory attended their last "shout" as the company ended its historic links with Wiltshire's Fire Brigade. The current team of 12 retained fire-fighters and one full-time fire-fighter had their last official photograph taken next to their two fire engines and water rescue boat, their last together as a team. The service had been running for over 100 years. Cooper Avon's fire appliances which were on loan from the Wiltshire fire service were handed back.
2010	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rod Eaton was Mayor of Melksham between 2010-2012. 2. Melksham Oak School built on the Devizes Road was opened replacing George Ward School. The latter buildings were used by the Wiltshire County Council as offices whilst the County Hall in Trowbridge was being renovated. 3. Road and pavement improvements in Bank Street, High Street and Church Street caused serious traffic congestion. 4. Melksham Heritage weekend. 5. Town Council held an 'Organisations Day' in the Assembly Hall 6. Local History Centre in the Roundhouse closed after the Remembrance Sunday parade on 11th November. 7. On 6th May 2010 Duncan Hames was elected MP.

Year	Event
2011	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Melksham House and grounds were sold by Cooper Tyres to Wiltshire County Council on 3rd October 2011 to be incorporated into the new Town Campus. 2. Asda superstore opens on former Wiltshire Farmers site.
2012	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chris Petty was Mayor of Melksham between 2012-2014. 2. Melksham and District Historical Association celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. 3. 'The Bear' in Bath Road was refurbished by J D Wetherspoon. 4. On the 19th November eleven Blue Plaques were placed on buildings in Melksham to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Association. (The Roundhouse, Red Lion, Alms Houses, River Bridge, Reading Rooms, 2nd Cottage Hospital, No.1 Bank Street, 1st Cottage Hospital, The New Hall, The Old Police Station and the Town Hall.) 5. The Spiritualist Church, formerly the Friend's Meeting House, was put up for auction for development into accommodation. (Purchased by Procol.) 6. At the end of the 2011-12 season Melksham Football Club gained promotion back into the Premier Division when they finished as runners-up in Division 1.
2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An archaeological dig took place in the grounds of Melksham House (on the site of the old tennis courts by Place Road) between the 5th and the 8th August 2013. There have been no reports of any discoveries.
2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terry Welch was Mayor of Melksham between 2014-2017. 2. Peter Brown, President and Founder Member of the Melksham and District Historical Association died on 27th May 2014. 3. At the vigil for peace and reconciliation which was held in St. Michael's Church on 4th August 2014 a Peace Cairn was started as part of the commemoration of the commencement of World War One. Each stone represented a prayer for peace. The Cairn was small to start with but would grow until 11th November 2018 remembering the end of the War. The stones came from people's gardens, favourite spots and holiday locations. The stones were then to be used as the foundation of a Path for Peace in the churchyard. The vigil started at 11.45am and continued through to 11.15pm; at the start 12 candles were lit and at each hour one was extinguished as a reminder of the remarks made by Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary on the eve of the war when he said "The lamps are going out all over Europe."
2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the 7th May 2015 Michelle Donelan was elected as MP for Chippenham and Melksham. 2. In 2015 archaeological monitoring during the construction of an electricity supply for Great Western Railway uncovered a large and previously unknown Romano-British settlement to the north of Beanacre. The settlement straddled the main Roman road between the towns of Aquae Sulis (Bath), Verlucio (Sandy Lane) and Cunetio (near Mildenhall) all of which existed by the second half of the 1st century AD. At its maximum extent the roadside settlement probably continued for at least 0.9 kilometres, just over half a mile, and encompassed 12 to 20 hectares, just under 40 acres. (<i>Wiltshire Archaeology</i>) 3. In the 2014-15 season Melksham Town Football Club won the Western Football League Premier Division but could not be promoted to the Southern League due to not being able to meet ground rules on time. The development of their new ground at Royal Oak had been delayed by obfuscation.
2016	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In a referendum held on 23rd June 2016 the UK electorate voted in favour of leaving the European Union. 2. In January 2016 work commenced on extensive modifications to the area in front of Melksham Town Hall. During excavations the original site of the water pump was discovered together with an arched tunnel. The original use of the tunnel has yet to be discovered.
2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adrienne Westbrook was elected Town Mayor in 2017. 2. The heavily damaged fossil of a prehistoric crocodile which had been found in the Melksham area and had been held by the Natural History Museum in London since 1875 was re-examined by researchers from Edinburgh University and found to have evolved millions of years earlier than had previously been thought. The ancient reptile has been nicknamed the 'Melksham Monster'; the ten foot long reptile is an ancient relative of the modern crocodile. 3. The Aloeric School converted to academy status being a founding member of the Pickwick Academy Trust. (<i>From the Aloeric School website</i>) 4. On 3rd October 2017 the £7 million new sports facility hosted Melksham Rugby club and

Year	Event
	<p>Melksham Town Football Club. Both clubs were relocated to Oakfields as part of Wiltshire Council's Melksham Campus programme. (<i>Wiltshire Times</i>)</p> <p>5. On the 3rd March 2017 the branch of the HSBC Bank in Melksham closed.</p>
2018	<p>1. Two engraved paving stones were placed over the holes that were discovered whilst renovating the area in front of the Town Hall. That furthest from the Town Hall reads "The site of Melksham's town pump installed by public subscription in 1789". The one nearest the Town Hall reads "This well shaft was discovered during market place improvements in 2017". The word 'improvements' was not a word agreed with by all Melksham residents. In 1946 the council had resolved that the Water Pump be removed from the Market Place to give a better approach for busses to the bus shelters.</p> <p>2. On the 10th October this year Cooper Tire and Rubber Company in Melksham announced that it intended to cut 300 jobs over the next ten months from its workforce of 732. Depending on discussions it was intended to scrap its light-vehicle tyre production in Melksham. A spokesman said they were considering transferring production to Serbia, the US or China. (In December 2003 Cooper agreed to a joint venture with Kenda Rubber Industrial Company to construct a tire-manufacturing plant near Shanghai). The site in Melksham has been home to a tyre factory since 1890 and is the town's largest employer.</p> <p>3. On 20th May 2018 the Countrywide stores on the corner of the Western Way and Bradford Road closed it's doors to customers for the last time.</p> <p>4. The Christie Miller Sports Centre closed on Friday October 19th 2018.and has remained derelict ever since.</p> <p>5. The branch of the NatWest Bank in Melksham closed on 21st May.</p> <p>6. The branch of the Barclays Bank in Melksham also closed in 2018.</p>
2019	<p>1. It was announced that part of the A3102 Bath Road in Melksham was to be closed for three months. The closure from February 10th to May 5th would only affect the southbound carriageway from its junction with the A3102 New Broughton Road for a distance of about 110 metres in a southerly direction. It will enable Wiltshire Council's contractor Ringway to carry out footway kerbing and install pedestrian barriers across Melksham Town Bridge.</p> <p>2. On September 28-29 the Duke of Gloucester visited Melksham for a weekend to mark the 800th anniversary of the award of a Royal Market Charter to Melksham by King Henry III in 1219. The Charter allowed the town to hold a Tuesday market - which exists to this day - and a Michaelmas Fayre at the end of September. The Duke unveiled a commemorative plaque on the Town Hall in the Market Place. During his visit, the Duke also viewed work produced by local schoolchildren. Other events featured a Town Criers competition in the Market Square and a medieval banquet in Melksham Assembly Hall. On the Sunday there was a Fayre and the Plantagenet Medieval Re-enactment Society held a tournament on the King George V playing field.</p>
2020	<p>1. On the 31st January 2020 the United Kingdom finally left the European Union and entered a period of transition until 31st December 2020.</p> <p>2. The SARS-Cov-02 coronavirus that emerged in the city of Wuhan caused a large scale COVID19 pandemic which spread to 70 other countries. The virus is spread mainly through close contact and in respiratory droplets produced when people cough or sneeze. A UK lockdown was introduced to try to stop the spread of coronavirus by reducing the amount people came into contact with others. People were only to leave their homes for four specific reasons 1. When they need to shop for food and other essential necessities, 2. To exercise once a day, 3. For any medical needs and 4. Travel to and from work if it was essential.</p> <p>3. Shortly after the closure of the Town Bridge for improvements it was decided to reverse the flow of traffic as there had been lengthy hold-ups on the Beanacre Road.</p>
2021	<p>1. Ten years after Melksham House and grounds were sold by Cooper Tyres to Wiltshire County Council on 3rd October 2011 to be incorporated into the new Town Campus work commenced on the 1st March 2021. Melksham House itself has been boarded up for several years and is now looking rather dilapidated.</p> <p>2. The 'Lockdown' measures Introduced on 23rd March 2020 have continued during the COVID19 and are still in place twelve months later! However these restrictions were eventually lifted on the 19th July 2021.</p> <p>3. On the 3rd August 2021 it was announced that the Wiltshire Council had applied for planning permission to demolish the Christie Miller Sports Centre.</p>

Year	Event
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. On Friday 27th August the Melksham and District Historical Association held their first committee meeting since the 8th January 2020. The main item on the agenda was arranging for the 2021 Annual General Meeting in November and alterations to the MADHA Constitution to cater for unforeseen occasions whereby the AGM cannot be held because of restrictions on people not being able to gather together.. 5. On Thursday 16th September the Melksham and District Historical Association held their first monthly meeting since the beginning of the Covid19 pandemic and there was an exceptional attendance, somewhere in the region of 80. 6. According to reports, since the beginning of the Covid19 pandemic there have been 32,350 cases in Wiltshire resulting in 856 deaths. In the country as a whole there have been 6,862,904 cases resulting in 132,920 deaths. (3rd September 2021)
2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Today Lloyds, the last Bank in Melksham, closed. The public are now reliant on the Post Office to withdraw cash from their accounts although why they should need cash is debatable as we seem to be becoming a cashless society. 2. The Melksham Coimmunity Centre is due to open on Monday 1st August 2022 after Melksham House and grounds were sold by Cooper Tyres to Wiltshire County Council on 3rd October 2011 to be incorporated into the new Town Campus. Melksham House itself is still in a dilapidated state although approval was recently (21st July 2022) granted to transform it into a flexible workspace and a multipurpose area for the community with work due to start in the next couple of months. (?) 3. During the afternoon of Thursday 8th September 2022 Queen Elizabeth II died whilst staying at Balmoral castle having reigned for 70 years, 7 months and 2 days, the longest serving monarch ever. King Charles III, at the age of 73, succeeded her.

Postscript.

If you would like to 'experience' the history of Melksham you could do no worse than to go and sit in the Church of Saint Michael and All Angels, just off the top of Canon Square; the chancel dates from 1130 but it is not known when the earliest church on this site was built ("Time out of mind" as they used to say in the past when nobody could remember how long). The present building was probably begun in the 12th century when it may have comprised the chancel, nave, north aisle, and transept. Sitting there you will be surrounded by the history of Melksham. There are many memorials to past inhabitants of Melksham including one to Anna Maria Jenkyns which is high up in the Chapel on the north side; she was the daughter of Rev. Richard Jenkyns and his wife Anne, and she died aged fourteen on 6th December 1778 as a result of being inoculated as part of Edward Jenner's pioneering research into smallpox vaccinations.

If you can gain access to the Church registers which date from 1568 (christenings and burials) and 1569 (marriages) you could find information for the majority, but not all, of Melksham's past inhabitants since that time. The earliest churchwardens' book is dated 1574 and two more are extant for the periods 1740 to 1795 and 1799 to 1906. For the most part the accounts refer to church affairs, but payments to the parish constable and for poor relief are recorded. The first recording of the administration of the poor law dates from 1687.

If anyone should ask which is the oldest building in Melksham, it is without doubt, the Church!

Last updated 27- Nov - 2021

Melksham & District Historical Association/MADHA Papers/ MADHA 01 Melksham Timeline