

EARLIEST TIMES – BC (Before Christ)

Mesolithic

8000

Flint tools from this hunter gatherer era found in West Woods.

4500

Domesticated animals and crops arrive, pottery made.

Earthwork enclosures constructed.

Neolithic

3000

Long barrows in West Woods, and above Lockeridge Dene.

Skeletal remains on North Farm from late Neolithic era, site in use to early Bronze Age.

Ridgeway in use (possibly earlier).

Bronze Age

2400

Beaker Folk arrive at Avebury.

Skeleton buried with bronze dagger and beaker pottery in Rookery Meadow, Lockeridge.

Round barrows used for burials – Overton Hill

Iron Age

1000

Field systems on Downs created to prevent soil erosion due to forest clearance (discovered through aerial archaeology).

AD – Anno Domini (the Year of our Lord)

THE ROMANS ARRIVE

43 – 410

Roman road built along the valley.

Roman villa built in Fyfield with mosaic floor.

Romano – British settlements on the Downs.

ROMANO-BRITISH AND SAXONS

500-600?

The WANDSDYKE (Wotan's Dyke) is begun, but never finished.

Saxon Charter of 939 refers to Over-ton (Upper Farmstead) as "*already of ancient use*", implying it was part of older Romano-British estate.

Matched by a Nether-ton? at Fyfield?

10th Century

CHARTERS show East Overton centred round Church and Manor House (now Rings Close), owned by **Wulfswyth**, a Nun of Winchester. **West Overton** gifted to **Lady Aelflaed**, of Wilton Abbey. **Fyfield** belonged to a Sacrist of Winchester Abbey.

1006/7

Battle of East Kennet – The Vikings led by Svein Forkbeard came down the Ridgeway and beat the Saxons at the river. He continued his march to the sea.

1066

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

1086

The Domesday Book – Shaw, Lockeridge, Fyfield (5 hides), East Overton (15 hides) and West Overton (10 hides) are all mentioned.

THE MIDDLE AGES

- 1140 - 1308** **Knights Templar** (Temple Farm, nr Rockley) occupy Lockeridge. **Mediaeval Farmstead** occupied on the Downs (nr Wroughton Copse) for over 100 years, outline still visible.
- 1324** **First recorded vicar for St Nicholas Church, Fyfield.**
- 1385** **Shaw village** thought to be abandoned.
Roman road depicted in Kennet Valley on map by Gough.

THE TUDORS, STUARTS and CIVIL WAR

- 1540** **Dissolution of Monasteries** – the land goes to the Crown.
- 1544** **Overton and Fyfield granted to the Earl of Pembroke**, Henry VIII's favourite.
- 1567** **The 'Pembroke Survey'** gives details of the Parishes, including an extended Fyfield.
Building of Sarsen and thatched dwellings expanded.
Water Meadow management, by 'drowning', may have started.
- 1600s** **Marlborough to Avebury Downland Way** across Overton and Fyfield Down (Green Street, Herepath etc) still in use:
- 1644** **In Symonds Diary of the Marches of the Royal Army** it is recorded that "*stones lie so thick as you may go upon them all the way.*"
- 1668** **On the 15th June**, en route from Bath to Marlborough, Samuel Pepys, after admiring Avebury Circle, took this way "*with some trouble for being out of our way over the downes where the life of the shepherds is in fair weather pretty*". "*About a mile on it was prodigious to see how full the downes are of great stones and all along the valleys stones of considerable bigness most of them growing certainly out of the ground so thick as to cover the ground*". "*Which makes me think the less of the wonder of Stonage for hence they might undoubtedly supply themselves with stones as well as those at Abebery.*"
- Until recently folklore had it that sarsens 'grow', and Pepys had an ear for a story.

THE “MARLBOROUGH” PERIOD

- 1720** **The Marlborough Trustees bought Overton** for Sarah, the Duchess. Lockeridge House and West Overton House were built and the estate continued to extend.
- 1742/3** **The Bath Road was turnpiked** (but our villagers allowed to use Green Street with their vehicles).
- 1813** **James Wyatt the Architect** died in an overturned coach on Overton Hill.
- 1820** **Fyfield House** built, Roman mosaics exposed.
Bath Road - heyday with well over 100 stage and mail coaches passing along each week.
- 1821** **Final parliamentary ENCLOSURES took place in the Parish leading to poverty in the countryside**, while the absentee landlords benefited.
- 1836** **The Duke of Wellington** en route from Marlborough to Badminton was stopped by the snow on the main road, helped on his way by a Mr Merriman through our fields.
- 1843** **Great Western Railway** line opened from London to Bristol and the west. Stage and Mail Coach traffic died on the Bath Road.
- 1848** **Thoroughbred horse training** by Alec Taylor (Sr.) started at Fyfield for Sir Joseph Hawley, later moved to Manton.
- 1850** **Development of the Sarsen Stone industry** with arrival of the Free and Cartwright families from High Wycombe with new cutting methods.

THE ‘MEUX’ ERA

- 1870** **SIR HENRY MEUX bought the estate that included West Overton, Lockeridge and Fyfield** as we know them today.
CHARLES PONTING was appointed as Land Agent and changed the face of the Parishes with the building of **a school, new homes for villagers and combined shop, bakery and ale house** (now the Who d’a Thought It). Campaign for new church started.
- 1877-8** **The new church in West Overton was completed.**
- 1887** **The Giffard family** come to Lockeridge House, the first well-to-do people in the Parish’s history to live and involve themselves in the local community. Rycroft Giffard was Chairman of the Parish Council for 40 years and a Church warden. He established a cricket team and his daughter ran a scout troupe.
- 1890** **Cyclists appear on the roads.**

TWENTIETH CENTURY

- 1900** Sarsen stone industry at height, making tram setts and curb stones.
- 1906** Sale of the Meux Estate (sale notice in exhibition)
- 1907** National Trust bought Piggledene and the Dene in Lockeridge.
- 1908** Motorised traffic appears along the Bath Road.
- 1910** Prof AN Whitehead, philosopher, mathematician and mentor to Bertrand Russell at Cambridge, lived at Pipers Plot, Lockeridge. They collaborated here on the famous 'Principia Mathematica'. Members of the Bloomsbury Group were also entertained, including Gertrude Stein just before World War I.
- 1912** Lytton Strachey wrote 'Eminent Victorians' while staying at the Lacket, other members of the Bloomsbury group including Virginia and Leonard Wolf visited to enjoy the splendid walking.
- 1914** THE GREAT WAR – many villagers served and perished in the war, see the war memorial in West Overton churchyard.
- 1918** Olympia Agricultural Company purchased farm and down land. Frank Swanton came to North Farm, as their farm manager.
- 1925** North, South and Fyfield farms bought by Frank Swanton.
- 1920s** Stone crushing in West Woods established - concrete base still there.
1930s West Woods felled and sold to the Forestry Commission.
Longmead built in Lower Fyfield for the Misses Giffard.
First Council housing was built on Rhyles Lane, Lockeridge.
Village Hall built opposite Holly Lodge in Overton.
New vicarage built at top of Church Hill.
- 1936** The A4 (Bath Road) was widened, requiring the demolition of the centre of Fyfield including the Police Station, the Pub and many houses. Residents were rehoused in Priest Acre.
- 1939** Sarsen Stone industry supplies Windsor Castle, but ends soon after due to unprofitability.

THE POST WAR WORLD

1939-45	WORLD WAR II – Home Guard unit organised by Masters from City of London School billeted at Marlborough College. Villagers served and died in the war (see West Overton church yard). School children see the Royal Family visit Lockeridge House.
1940's	Post war council housing built in all 3 villages.
1948	Electricity came to Lockeridge
1960s	A4 no longer a main arterial road when M4 was completed, taking traffic to the West. Housing expansion in all 3 villages and Main Drains arrive.
1976	New Kennet Valley Hall completed.
1977	Silver Jubilee celebrations at Kennet Valley Hall
1995	East Kennet and Lockeridge Schools federated.
2000	Millennium Time Capsule placed in West Overton Church.
2002	Golden Jubilee celebrated in all 3 Villages.