



This small manor house is of grey stone. Here Newton was born and here he carried out his great work when sent away from Cambridge during the Plague. The house is in Woolsthorpe, a hamlet about 7 miles south

of Grantham and half a mile to the west of the village of Colsterworth in Lincolnshire. The house is now under the care of the National Trust, who will supply details of visiting times on request.

from A. R. Hall, 1999

THREE

Life records of Isaac Newton

The following chronological table lists the principal events in or affecting the life of Isaac Newton. All dates are given in Old Style, but the year is reckoned to begin on 1 January.

1642	April	Marriage of Isaac Newton <i>sen.</i> (b.1606) and Hannah Ayscough.
	c.1 October	Death of Isaac Newton <i>sen.</i> , Newton's father.
	25 December	Birth of Isaac Newton at Woolsthorpe, near Grantham, Lincs.
1646	27 January	Newton's mother marries Rev. Barnabas Smith; the boy is brought up at Woolsthorpe by grandparents.
1653	August	Death of Smith; mother returns to Woolsthorpe with Newton's half-sisters.
1655		Sent to Grantham School; an attempt to involve Newton in the management of the family estate failed; he returned to school. Earliest notebooks begun.
1661	8 July	Matriculated as sizar of Trinity College, Cambridge.
1664	28 April	Elected Scholar of Trinity. Made astronomical observations, many mathematical and scientific notes.
1665	January	Graduated BA. Extensive reading in science and mathematics, perhaps began experiments in optics.
	May	Wrote first essay on fluxions (calculus).
	? July	Plague at Cambridge; Newton returned to Woolsthorpe. Continued mathematical and scientific researches at home, reflected on falling apple and thought of gravity reaching to the Moon. Compared force holding Moon in orbit with that of gravity upon the Moon.
1666	? January	Discovery of optical dispersion.

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	20 March	Return to Cambridge.
	June	Renewed plague, returned to Woolsthorpe.
	October	Wrote new essay on fluxions.
1667	? March	Again in Cambridge; continued experiments with the prism.
	1 October	Elected Minor Fellow of Trinity College.
1668	16 March	Admitted Major Fellow
	August	First visit to London. Theory of light and colour by now far advanced; made his first reflecting telescope.
	September	N. Mercator published <i>Logarithmotechnia</i> ; soon afterwards Newton wrote <i>De Analysis per aequationes infinitas</i> .
1669	31 July	<i>De Analysis</i> sent to J. Collins in London by Isaac Barrow. Newton-Collins correspondence begun.
	29 October	Appointed Barrow's successor as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics.
1671	January	Began his Lucasian Lectures on optics.
	Autumn	Wrote <i>De Methodis fluxionum et serierum</i> . Made a second reflecting telescope.
	December	This telescope taken to Whitehall for Charles II's inspection.
		Worked on <i>Lectiones opticae</i> text for publication (unfinished).
1672	11 January	Elected FRS.
	6 February	Wrote first letter to H. Oldenburg on <i>Light and Colours</i> , quickly printed; description of Newtonian reflector printed; much criticism and correspondence followed; published edition of Bernhard Varenius, <i>Geographia universalis</i> .
		Signed a University protest.
1673	5 March	Began his Lucasian Lectures on mathematics.
	October	Attended his first meeting of the Royal Society; met Robert Hooke.
1675	18 February	
	27 April	Royal Letters Patent exempted the Lucasian professor from taking Holy Orders in order to retain his Trinity Fellowship.
	9-16 December	<i>An Hypothesis explaining the Properties of Light</i> read to the Royal Society (unpublished). Newton's

- experiments on electrical force attracted attention. At this time, and until 1696, Newton from time to time experimented in alchemy/chemistry, also making copious annotations (beginning 1669). His theological drafts also began about this time.
- 1676 20 January–
10 February
Before 13 June
October
1677 11 June
1679 20 February
June
24 November
1680 17 January
December
1681 28 February
1682 December
1684 August
October
November
December
- Discourse of Observations* read to the Royal Society (incorporated into *Opticks*).
‘First Letter’ written to G. W. Leibniz; two further mathematical essays written.
‘Later Letter’ for Leibniz sent to Oldenburg. Subscribed £40 to Wren Library at TCC.
Leibniz explained his differential calculus to Newton (who made no reply).
Letter to Robert Boyle about the aether and qualities of bodies.
Death of Newton’s mother; much time spent at Woolsthorpe (the last visit).
Hooke opened correspondence: motion in force fields debated.
Lent £100 to Wren Library.
Hooke correspondence ended with Newton’s silence.
Observed new comet.
John Flamsteed opened correspondence about the new comet, which Newton continued to observe.
Observed another comet [Halley’s].
Visited by Edmond Halley whom he assured that the inverse square law generates an elliptical orbit. Work on the tract *De motu corporum in gyrum* begun.
Starting date of ‘Lucasian Lectures’ on mechanics (a *Principia* draft more likely written some months later).
De motu tract sent to the Royal Society; Halley again visited Newton; perhaps saw *Principia* drafts. More mathematical tracts composed.
Leibniz’s first publication on calculus appeared in the *Acta Eruditorum*.

- 1685 Autumn
1686 January
28 April
2 June
Autumn
1687 1 March
4 April
11 April
21 April
5 July
1689 15 January
August
Autumn
1690 6 February
March–April
14 November
1691 January
August
September
1692
Autumn
- Newton worked on comets, tides and parameters of planetary orbits (*Principia*, Bk III).
Continued work on Book III of *Principia*.
Book I of *Principia* presented to the Royal Society. Edmond Halley undertook to publish the book at his own expense. Newton rebutted Hooke’s claim to prior knowledge of the inverse square law of gravitation.
Book II completed.
Book II sent to Halley.
Book III sent to Halley.
Newton appointed a delegate of the University in the Alban Francis affair.
He appeared with other delegates before the Ecclesiastical Commission.
The *Principia* was published.
Newton began to draft *Opticks* (Book I) in Latin (abandoned).
Elected by the University as Member of the Convention Parliament. Lived in London for a year; met John Locke. His portrait painted by Kneller.
Sought appointment as Provost of King’s College, Cambridge (in vain).
Increased friendship with N. Fatio de Duillier.
Convention Parliament dissolved; Newton returned to Cambridge.
He spent a month in London with Fatio.
Sent to Locke *Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture*.
Visited Locke at Lady Masham’s house in Essex. Much correspondence followed.
Met David Gregory in London.
Visited Fatio in London. Wrote to John Wallis about the method of fluxions (calculus).
Sought a new post in the capital.
Experimented on optical diffraction; largely completed draft of *Opticks*.
Visited in Cambridge by Fatio.