





In the 17th century, a parcel of land including most of the current property was acquired by a Kentish yeoman family, who are thought likely to have built a farmhouse there. Some flint built walls may date from this period. The date for this is given as 1681, but a 1933 history of Downe parish states that in 1651 Thomas Manning sold an area of land including the property to John Know the elder for £345, a price which is unlikely to have included a house.







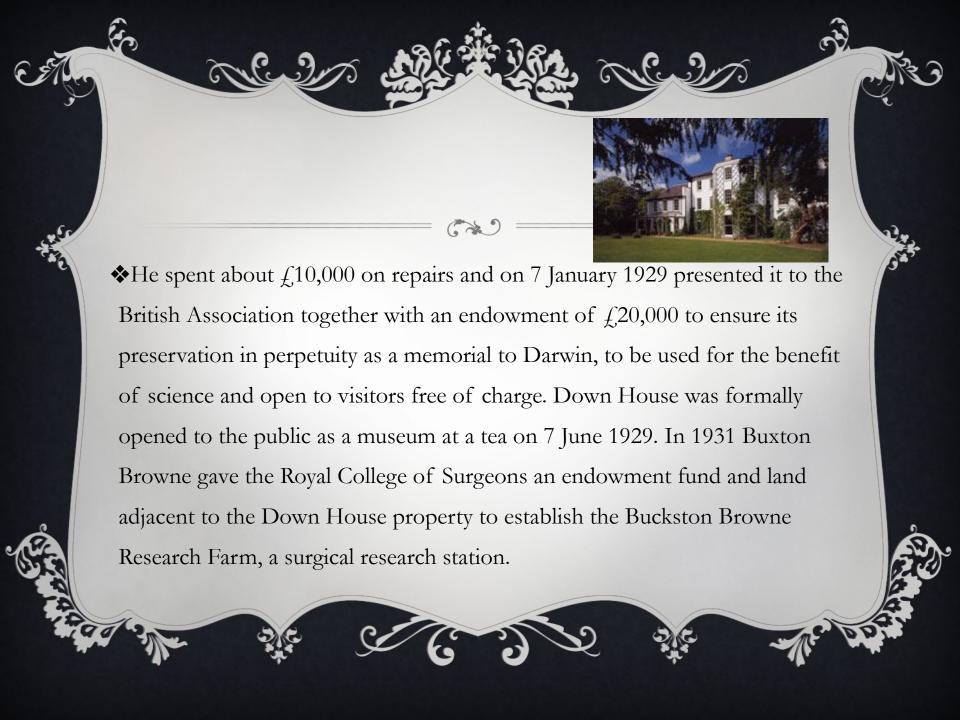




A girls' boarding school was established at the house in February 1907, co-founded by the headmistress Miss Olive Margaret Willis (1877–1964) with her friend Alice Carver. The school began with five mistresses and one girl, but was soon successful. It occupied the house until 1 April 1922, when it moved to larger premises at Hermitage Rd, Cold Ash, Newbury. One of the school's houses is named Darwin.











- ♦Down House was acquired in 1996 by English Heritage, with a grant from the Welcome Trust. It was restored with funds raised by the Natural History Museum from many trusts, and from a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and reopened to the public in April 1998.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to become a World Heritage Site. It originally went through public consultation in 2006 and a decision had been expected in the last three days of June 2007. However, ICOMOS warned the DCMS that the House might not meet the criteria for scientific sites on the register, and so in May 2007 the DCMS announced that it was withdrawing the bid with the intention of resubmitting it later. The bid was resubmitted in January 2009, with a decision expected in the summer of 2010.



