



Forward programme

Meetings take place in the Combe Down School Hall in Summer Lane. Doors open at 7.00, meetings start at 7.30. Members £1, visitors £3.

Saturday 11 June

Come and see us at the Friends of Firs Field Summer Event where we will have an exhibition, trails and books. 3pm until late.

Wednesday 22 June

The Somme 1916 and its impacts on Combe Down and Monkton Combe. Where did it take place, who took part and what happened to them? Martin Coulson and Jacqueline Burrows explore the 141 days of the battle and its consequences for our parish.

July and August

There will be no monthly meetings as many people are away but we hope to arrange a Schools Workshop in July to share memories following Jill Woodhead's talk in March (see report below). We'll website/email/facebook/tweet/poster a date.

Wednesday 14 September

Where did the Romans get the stone for Aquae Sulis? Professor Maurice Tucker, Chairman of the Bath Geological Society, has been investigating whether it is possible to identify the local quarries used to build the Roman Baths.

October, November and December

Meetings will be announced soon.

Reports on meetings

February: the dark side of Bath – the city's criminal past

Local historian and author Kirsten Elliot took us to some of the darker places in Bath's (and Combe Down's) past, pointing out the dangers of the city's approach roads with highway men behind every hedge. Bath residents were, it seems, at considerable risk even from their own servants, and girls of all classes either 'fell' or were taken

advantage of by fortune hunters. Society was very clearly defined and the underclass was definitely something to climb out of! Memorable amongst the many stories was that of a woman in Bear Flat who murdered her father for money and then pinned the crime on her lover. The poor devil swung for it and she lived to a ripe old age.

March: the schools of Combe Down 1727–2000

Jill Woodhead worked hard for months researching her history of education on the Down, and it was well worth it! She gave us a thorough and interesting presentation showing the range of education offered from private governesses to commercial schools via the workhouse, Sunday and charity schools and apprenticeships. There were a lot of schools here (eight in the 19th century) but Jill's ability to place educational changes in their social context and to weave in many well-known local personalities made for an entertaining and educational evening which attracted many non-members who were educated here. School-day acquaintances were renewed, reminiscences abounded, there were even tears shed.

April: the legacy of the Somerset & Dorset Railway

Mike Beale, a director of the S&D Railway Trust, looked back to the birth of the S&D line, from the early Somerset Central and Dorset Central Railways centred around Glastonbury, through its development into the main line connecting Bath with Bournemouth and then its closure 50



years ago. Originally proposed as a freight line between Wales and the South Coast its ultimate success was from carrying holiday traffic via links from the North of England and the Midlands. The S&D's heyday was the 1950s when a fleet of trains, including the famed Pines Express, carried thousands to the coast. By the 1960s private cars and foreign holidays resulted in the S&D becoming increasingly uneconomic and the end finally came with Beeching in March 1966. After the intervening 50 years we are left with a few restored sections of line, structures such as Green Park Station, and of course many memories.

May: clay pipe-making in Bath since 1620

Marek Lewcun is an authority on what was a cottage industry based mainly in Norton St Phillip where at one time there were at least ten small factories producing tobacco pipes for the surrounding counties and for export as far as the New World via Bristol. Marek recalled spending many happy hours underground below the Hadley Arms retrieving clay tobacco pipes before the stabilisation project began. He has a vast collection of pipes, bowls and stems and can tell where, when and by whom they were made. This is important because clay tobacco pipes are one of the most accurate ways of dating accompanying archaeological finds. Marek was instrumental in ensuring the proper excavation of the Sant tobacco pipe factory at Saw Close



where Bath's new casino is being built. Thanks to his efforts the site has been fully recorded and its unique features conserved in sand under the new building. Have a look at www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk for more.

The towers of Combe Down: part 2

Continuing our series on the towers of Combe Down which were built in the 18th and 19th centuries as memorials, garden features or simply

folies, the Priory Tower is another example which still stands on private land in the north-east of the Midford Castle estate. It is a circular turret, topped by a conical roof and quatrefoil windows, and formed part of a summerhouse (now a ruin) known as the Priory which was built around 1800.



The Priory Tower

At one time it overlooked ornamental pools and small cascades along the lower reaches of Horsecombe Brook but nowadays, forgotten in the trees, the tower can really only be seen properly in winter when there is no foliage. If you can find it, perhaps you will hear Rapunzel singing for her prince!

AGM April 2016

The AGM preceded our April meeting and was well attended, with business conducted swiftly and thoroughly. Martin Coulson (Chair) reported on the activities of the Society over the past year, followed by the Hon. Treasurer Jon Wrigley's review of our finances. Tim Lunt (Membership) rounded off with a report on membership numbers. All three reports showed the society to be active and healthy and were approved by the members.

The committee and officers for the following year were appointed as follows:

- Chair: Martin Coulson
- Hon Secretary: Simon Burrows
- Hon Treasurer: Jon Wrigley
- Hon Membership Secretary: Tim Lunt
- Hon Archivist: David Bishop
- Committee Members: Sophia Pandit and Margaret Bosanquet.

The Chairman's report will appear on our website.

Phyllis Brown

We remember with great affection Phyllis who died earlier this year. She was a stalwart of the CDHS and served on the committee for many years. More about her life and the mark her family made on the village in our next issue

A social game



Dick Irving writes that Graham Barnard, landlord of the Hadley Arms, has kindly provided us with a copy of the oldest photo in his fascinating collection of historical memorabilia. It shows a large group of people standing on the forecourt of the pub when it was known as the Hadley Arms Hotel. The name and the styles of clothing suggest the photo was taken between 1900 and 1910, when the landlord was the extravagantly-named Farnham Flower. In the 1901 census he is described as 'hotel keeper and publican' on his own account, aged 42. Also resident were his wife Annie and 13-year-old son Charles. All three also appear in the 1911 census, and it is interesting to speculate whether they all appear in the photograph.

Careful study of the picture reveals that the event being celebrated is a social game of cricket which had almost certainly just taken place on Firs Field. Only two cricket bats are evident, and more tellingly, only one pair of pads – so only one pad per batsman? Even closer scrutiny also reveals the one ball that was used in the match, held in the hand of one of the players. Can you find it?

The group seems to comprise four elements. The two teams (11 a side) are arranged to the left and right. In the mid-foreground are supporters, including a group of five smartly dressed females,

one of whom is likely to be Mrs Flower. At the very back are the pub regulars, apparently turned out of their seats for the sake of posterity, but still with a grip on their jug of ale and their half-pint glasses. The game seems to have had special significance, and was perhaps the inaugural match of what was intended to become a regular event.

The various fashions on display include Boer War-era military forage caps, straw boaters and waist-jackets, bowler hats and floppy felt caps, neckscarves and neck-ties. This eclectic assemblage suggests a 'gentlemen v players' game, typical of the time. Many Combe Down residents recall 'school v village' matches played on Firs Field and perhaps this was the first in that series. The school referred to was Prior Park, and games were apparently played twice a year, on a home and away basis. If so, the photo was taken before 1904, because Prior Park Grammar School closed that year and did not reopen as a College until 1924.

We would be delighted to hear any further information about cricket games or any other organised sport played on Firs Field in the past. If you would like a more detailed look at the photo you can find it on our website, www.combedownheritage.org.uk. Perhaps, with a little more research, we will eventually begin to match a few more names to photos from this era.

Rosemary Simmons

Rosemary retired as our Chair in 2014 and has now stood down from the Committee. She moved to Combe Down from London in 1998 and together with Dick Irving set up the Combe Down Heritage Group in 2000. The group's initial impetus was to record the buildings on the Down but Rosemary was also behind a Millennium project to remember William Smith, and started the liaison group with the Stone Mines Community Association. In 2004 the CD Heritage Group became the CD Heritage Society, a charity, and Rosemary took the chair. After graduating from Chelsea School of Art Rosemary had a substantial and influential career in printmaking. She published many books on the subject, built a large personal collection, taught and exhibited. We are very grateful for all Rosemary has done for the heritage of this village and wish her very well indeed in her second attempt at retirement!



Rosemary and the William Smith Millennium Stones

Combe Down history in demand



Tim Lunt at work at Twerton

In the past few months some of our committee members have given talks on Combe Down to other local groups who may have attended our meetings or heard about us elsewhere. These are great opportunities for developing interest in the many aspects of our heritage and make a small but useful contribution to our funds! We've also exhibited twice at the Bath Industrial Heritage show at Bath City's football ground.

Please follow us



Follow us on Facebook for news, updates and meeting information: <https://www.facebook.com/CombeDownHeritageSociety>
 We're also on Twitter, posting as @cdhsoc
 Website: www.combedownheritage.org.uk

New member application form

If you are already a member, there is no need to fill this in - simply send or give your payment to Tim Lunt (see below)

First name(s) _____

Surname(s) _____

I/we apply to become a member of the Combe Down Heritage Society until 31 March 2017 and I/we agree to my details being held on computer for the duration of my membership

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Membership options - please tick as required:

Standard £5 Concession £3 Family £12

I am sending an additional £ as a donation to the society

Total amount paid

Ages of children
(if family membership)

Gift Aid declaration for this and future donations

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made by me today in the future

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the Charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Signed _____

Date _____

Payments by cheque, payable to 'Combe Down Heritage Society', or cash should be made to the Membership Secretary: Tim Lunt, 141 Church Road, Combe Down, Bath BA2 5JL Please ask for a Standing Order Form if you would rather pay direct.