



2017 autumn programme

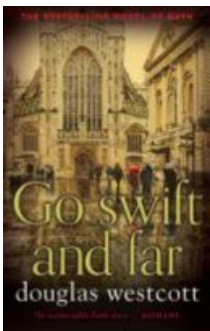
All meetings take place in the Combe Down Primary School Hall in Summer Lane. Doors open at 7pm for a prompt start at 7.30pm. Members £1, non-members £3.

Wednesday 18 October

Aust Ferry

Tim Ryan with recollections and video of crossing the Severn before the bridge was built and the extraordinary tale of how the ferry was later found and recovered.

Wednesday 15 November



Society member and local businessman Gordon Bloor (aka Douglas Westcott) will talk to us about his novel *Go Swift and Far* set in WW2 Bath. Gordon has an unusual family background and it will be interesting to hear where truth and fiction separate in this well-researched book. If you'd like to read a signed copy

for only £5 call Simon Burrows on 833966.

Wednesday 13 December

A glass of something warming, a mince pie, and our Christmas lecture

January: no meeting

Reports on meetings

Bath Abbey and the Footprint Project

Charles Curnock, Footprint Project Director, came in July to CDHS to tell us about this £20m project to protect the historic fabric of Bath Abbey and prepare it for useful service in the 21st century. More space and new facilities are urgently needed to keep up with the current uses that are made of the Abbey, let alone improve what could be offered for community activities. To do this involves stabilisation to the floor of the Abbey together with development of underground spaces around Kingston Buildings. An exciting part of the

work is to provide heating from Bath hot spring water flowing through the nearby Roman drain. A further £900k is still needed to finish the project.

Hard Times: an episode of family history, 1854

After the summer break, Stuart Burroughs, Director of the Museum of Bath at Work talked to us about the Bowler family and their rise in the late nineteenth century from poverty to the owners of a substantial business. His talk was entitled *Hard Times* but *True Grit* might have done just as well as Jonathon Burdett Bowler was clearly a determined man who, with a little patronage, built a brass manufacturing and soft drinks enterprise in Corn St, Bath. When the business closed, the contents of the premises became the core of the Museum of Bath at Work collection, and the Bowler name lives on in Avery, Knight and Bowler whose owners bought the Bowler goodwill.

Roads at Mulberry Park to honour villagers who fell in WW1

Mulberry Park is taking shape rapidly and we have already welcomed its first occupants to the village.

One of the most important things for any new development is a good choice of names for its roads. CURO had already agreed on Mulberry Way for the main avenue when they approached the Bath Chronicle to ask its readers to suggest names for the seven remaining new roads to be built on the site.

Since 2014, Jacqueline Burrows has been researching the impacts of WW1 on Combe Down, and the lives and deaths of the many Combe Downers who served their country. With the support of the CDHS she put forward the names of some of the villagers who fell in the war and who she discovered had lived closest to the site of what is now Mulberry Park – particularly in Lansdown View, Greendown Place and Greendown Cottages, and on Foxhill Farm.

CURO was delighted with the idea and chose six names from the list (having already decided on

Patch Street as Harry's name had been suggested by many of the readers of the Bath Chronicle).

Embedded in each street will be a stone carved by Bath College stonemasonry students, commemorating the name and dates of the person after whom the street is named.

In addition to Mulberry Way and Patch Street, the names will be:

Chivers Street for William George Chivers, son of the Combe Down Waterworks' Engineer, who was killed at Cambrai in 1917.

Windell Street for Herbert Charles Windell, son of the baker on the eastern corner of Lansdown View, who was killed by a shell in 1917

A future set of streets will be:

Kellaway Close for Albert Edward Kellaway, of 9 Greendown Cottages and 3 Quarry Rise who was killed in 1916 under machine gun fire while attacking a German trench.

Whitaker Road for Reginald Charles

Whitaker who grew up at the King William pub but also lived at both 3 and 11 Lansdown View; he was killed by shrapnel in the trenches in 1916. Two of his brothers also served and returned.

Morris Lane for Lionel Morris, who lived at 5 Lansdown View and who was killed at Passchendaele in 1917; one of Harry Patch's closest friends.

Please contact Susan Fletcher at CURO (susan.fletcher@curo-group.co.uk) if you would like any further information.



Goldney House

Recently opened in the centre of Combe Down is Torke Cycling at Goldney House in The Avenue, where Tony Corke offers his world-class bike fitting training service, as well as designing custom bicycles for individual clients. As Tony's wife Gillian has commented, this seems to offer a rather pleasing symmetry, as over a century ago Goldney House was closely associated with the keeping and hiring of flys, coaches and horses, including the horses used for Bath's omnibuses.

In the late 19th century, Goldney House was called 'Gouldney House' and it was occupied by one

Thomas Gould, coachman and horsekeeper. This was where villagers would come to hire coaches and flys to take them into Bath and the surrounding villages. Look closely and you can just see the last traces of the bell pull to the side of the door and the ghost of a sign which says: 'Order Here'.

Gould provided the horses that were used to pull the Bath omnibuses up to Combe Down. These



horses were often reported in the Bath Chronicle as struggling up the Wellsway several times a day with sore shoulders, pulling fully-laden passenger vehicles. On at least two occasions in the 1880s Gould was fined for ill-treating an omnibus horse by allowing it to be used in an unfit condition.

By 1901 Goldney House had been combined with a set of mews to the rear, and the occupant was Tom Chapman, a coachman/groom.

This photograph taken in The Avenue at the turn of the century clearly shows a horse-drawn coach or 'fly' waiting outside Goldney House, and a proprietorial looking chap standing off to



the side.

In the street directory of 1907, Goldney House is occupied by Robert Potts, a fly proprietor.

By 1911, all trace of the coach hire business has gone. The six-room house is occupied by a Miss Marion Drayson from Gravesend, whose occupation is plain sewing and she has a 13-

year old female boarder staying with her, whose grandmother lives round the corner at Malvern Cottage in Summer Lane. Miss Drayson died a few months after the 1911 census, so the house would have changed hands again at that point.

Gillian and Tony would be delighted to hear from anyone who has more information to offer about Goldney House and its history.

The Combe Down ski slope

The controversy recently surrounding the proposed Curo cable car from Bath to the Mulberry Park development on Combe Down reminds us of similar arguments surrounding the 1989 planning application for the Horsecombe Vale ski resort. A company called Venture One Ltd wanted to build a 300m dry ski run with an overhead ski lift from the Midford Road down to the bottom of Horsecombe Vale.

Floodlights and a public-address system were to line the slope and changing facilities, reception, shop, restaurant, coffee shop, bars, gymnasium, sauna, viewing platforms and a large car park would be nearby. It was to have been the longest ski slope in the UK operating 12 hours per day and illuminated during hours of darkness. An estimated one million visitors per year and up to 1000 vehicles per day were expected!

Although supported by various sports organisations, tourist boards, local schools and two petitions the application received over 300 letters of objection from the general public together with further opposition from the parish council and wildlife and preservation groups. Although appealed the development was refused on many grounds, not least the effect on traffic and neighbours, but principally conflicts with the Avon County Structure Plan of the time which rightly recognised Horsecombe Vale as being in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with significant landscape and wildlife value.

Firs Field quarry wall

The gentle circular hump beside a tree in the Firs Field is the last remaining evidence of Combe Down's underground quarries on public land. All the other shaft entrances or quarry walls are on private property – in back gardens or school grounds.

Older residents remember a circular wall that originally surrounded a vertical entrance into the



DoE students reveal the section of wall on Firs Field quarry (one of three in Firs Field). It had long been the wish of CDHS and the Stone Legacy Trust to excavate what remains of the wall and to consider how to present it to the public.

The challenge has been led by Val Lyon who engaged the enthusiasm of some Duke of Edinburgh's Award students to dig out a section of the hump. Val gained all the necessary permissions from the Council and the agreement of the Friends of Firs Field to excavate.

The result was the exposure of a well-preserved section of circular wall about 3m long and 70cm wide. The students then covered it up and replaced the turf and discussed the best way ahead. It was agreed that this could form the base of a Bath Stone bench which should have an explanatory inscription cut into the front. With the Councillors on board Val has now acquired quotes for the bench. Now to get the money...!

Read more about it at <https://firsfieldmineshaft.weebly.com/>

CornerStone renamed

Following two surveys taken amongst 116 villagers and many visitors, and much debate and head scratching, the trustees who run the CornerStone have decided to name it as the 'Museum of Bath Stone at the CornerStone'. It will tell the story of Combe Down, its stone and its people. Thank you to all who took part and gave feedback.

The Combe Down Stone Legacy Trust (which runs the CornerStone) is looking for more trustees. The key purpose of the trust is to manage the Museum of Bath Stone. Its contents

cover a wide range of subjects from geology and archaeology to engineering and education, from local figures (William Smith, Ralph Allen, Harry Patch) and ecology to the World Wars. In addition, the museum hosts temporary exhibitions on a variety of related subjects. The Trust needs people with an interest in the local area of Combe Down and its rich history to join the team and help make this little gem shine!



For more details, to arrange a visit or request an application form, please contact:
Jen Morgan (info@ralphallencornerstone.org.uk)

Any idea where this is from?



This stone and others like it were uncovered a few years ago in a garden in Byfield Place just off Summer Lane. So far no one has been able to work out where they came from or what they were for. One theory is that as the lane served the yard outside the entrance to the Byfield mine (which later became Gammon's Yard, where the CornerStone now stands) and quarried stone was stacked there, stonemasons working nearby created these carvings from 'left-overs' as practice pieces. These were later discarded and left where they were worked. If you have any other suggestions or better information please let us know. It would be nice to solve another of the village's many mysteries!

You can follow us on Facebook and Twitter



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 2018 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.