



2018 spring 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 21 February

Charmy Down WW2 Airfield

Howard Burton and Richard Wynn-Jones have studied the history of this Second World War airfield near Bath and its role in the conflict.

Wednesday 21 March

Rare plants of Somerset

Helena Crouch is an active member of Somerset Rare Plants Group and will show us the many botanical treasures of our county.

Further dates to follow.

Reports on meetings

Aust Ferry

Tim Ryan brought back many memories with his talk, video and memorabilia about the Aust Ferry which ran across the River Severn to Beachley until the bridge was completed in 1966. Vintage cine film showed cars being driven on and off and Tim had many tales of loading disasters as vehicles slid on muddy surfaces into the river. Passengers also took their chances as there were only life-jackets for the crew!



Severn Princess at Aust in the 1960s

After the ferry closure one of the boats, *Severn Princess*, was sold to a firm in Ireland who used it for many years before abandoning it in a remote Connemara harbour. Later found by Tim and other enthusiasts, and funded by a generous benefactor, they patched up the many holes in the hull with concrete to refloat and return her to Chepstow by tug, almost sinking in a Force 9 gale on the way home. The *Princess* is now being restored but sadly will never sail again. She should shortly become the major attraction in a new park planned by the river near Beachley.

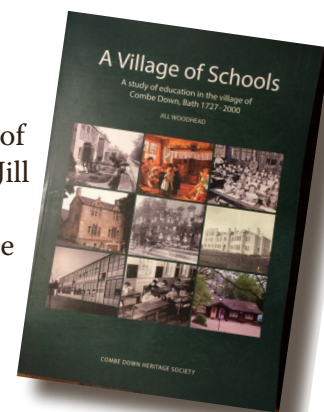
Go Swift and Far, a novel of Bath

In November Gordon Bloor gave us the background to his new book, the first in a projected trilogy of novels, tracing the development of Bath through the eyes of an orphan boy born in the Bath Blitz of WW2 through to the present time. Published under his pseudonym, Douglas Westcott, the book is partly auto-biographical and took fifteen years to come to fruition.

We heard how Gordon spent many years developing his authorship skills and used his business expertise to network contacts in the publishing world for a successful book launch. The costs and potential failure rate associated with self-publishing were underlined but *Go Swift and Far* has been very successful, not least through sales from a shed at the Bath Christmas market.

The Christmas Cracker

There was a large gathering for mulled wine and mince pies at the Christmas meeting in early December. First was the launch of a book by one of our members, Jill Woodhead, who has researched the many schools that have come and gone on Combe Down and recorded their history in *A Village of Schools*, now available at the Museum of Bath Stone and elsewhere.



Then came heroic tales about education from Richard Bullard, now retired Headteacher at Combe Down School, and Steve Rose, former Deputy Head of Ralph Allen School, who had worked there from 1980 to 2016. The history of both these schools was explored with lots of old photos covering the erection of the Combe Down Log Cabin and the brave new world of 1957 when Ralph Allen School was built.

There were many accounts of school activities and the impact of various educational curricula, some more encouraging than others, but it was apparent how risk assessment and health & safety concerns had, over the years, slowly crept into the picture. Oh for those days when pupils were sent up a roof to retrieve balls, narrowly missed the groundsman with a catapult bolt or fixed the brakes on the headmaster's car !

The tramways of Combe Down



Prior Park, Anthony Walker, 1752

We start our new series with the famous tramway built by Ralph Allen around 1730 to carry the stone away from his Combe Down quarries. Roads were then unsuitable for heavy transport and Allen needed to move large blocks of oolite over a mile and 400ft down to his wharf at Dolemeads. Tramway developments in the coalfields of Shropshire and NE England inspired him to build his own line from Combe Down to the River Avon where the stone could be lifted onto barges for building works in Bath or further afield.

The design and construction of the tramway and wagons was carried out by John Padmore, a Bristol engineer, who also designed the cranes used at Dolemeads and Combe Down for lifting the stone blocks. The tramway wagons were 13 feet long and each carried up to 4 tons of stone on iron wheels over 5 inch wide wooden rails

with a 3ft 9in gauge. When loaded these flat-bed carriages could be moved around by horses on level ground but descended by gravity down the 1 in 10 gradient on the hill controlled by a brakesman walking behind and slowing the rear wheels through leverage by chains and ratchets.

The tramway operated from around 1730 to 1764 and the 1750 engraving of Prior Park by Anthony Walker shows the tramway in operation when it had become an attraction for Georgian visitors to the Bagatelle Pleasure Garden and Lyncombe Spa at the foot of the hill. Ralph Allen died in 1764 and with the leasing of his quarries shortly afterwards to different owners it was dismantled. The route can be followed today from Widcombe, where the site of Dolemeads wharf and crane became the bottom lock of the K&A canal in 1810, along Prior Park Road and up Ralph Allen Drive before crossing North Road at the top of the hill to go along The Avenue.

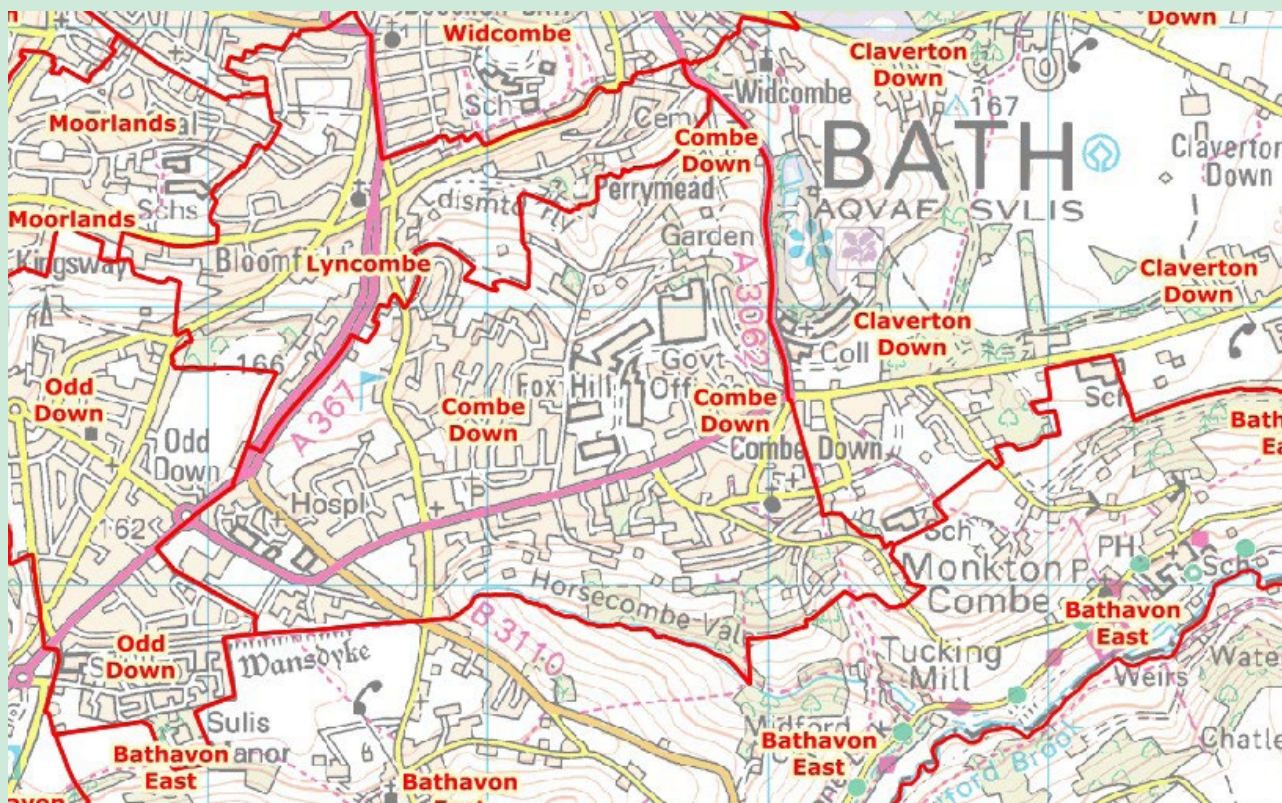
Some small branch lines took the tramway to individual quarries on the Down and near the Rock Gate of Prior Park, halfway up Ralph Allen Drive, a temporary inclined plane was built to carry stone down for the building of the Palladian Bridge in 1755. The terminus was at the end of the Avenue in Combe Down village where one of the buildings became the Carriage Inn (now Randy's bike shop) recorded as bearing an inn sign of a tramway carriage fully loaded with stone.

King William IV pub token



This rare 19th century pub token issued by T Hine, Brewer of the William IV, Combe Down is from a time when public houses used tokens in a variety of ways to recompense the landlord/brewer for drink(s) or the use of facilities such as a meeting room or skittle alley. Frequently they were used by 'friendly societies', which existed to provide sickness or death benefits, meeting periodically in the pub to conduct local business followed by some social activities. The custom and practice of the day was that each person would pay for a drink by using tokens provided by the club or society rather than a rent being paid. In

Combe Down boundary changes



The Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) has recently published proposals for revising the boundaries of the Combe Down Ward. The significant change is to the eastern boundary with Claverton Down Ward which would run along the Long Drung from The Hadley Arms to the junction of Church Road and Belmont Road, then south to Summer Lane.

This would have the effect of removing the Tynning Road area, the east end of Church Road, The Brow and Shaft Road from Combe Down. It would cut out a significant part of the historic 'village' of Combe Down and introduce an inappropriate boundary through the heart of an established community.

CDHS does not usually comment on political issues but the proposed boundary

changes ignore the history of the village and its strong sense of community. The Committee would like to encourage members to object on the grounds that the proposal fails to reflect "community interests and identities and (that) boundaries should be identifiable". We do NOT want Combe Down to be split.

LGBC ask for comments on their "Have your say" link by February 19 at <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/9913>. You should respond about specifics such as evidence of Combe Down's geographic and community cohesion through communication links, facilities and local organisations and how we should be represented as a single Ward in Council.

Please give facts as LGBC will not listen to emotional pleas!

this way the landlord could be sure of getting the price of a drink from everyone attending and no one would be able to avoid contributing.

Thomas Hine is listed in the trade directories as publican at the King William IV from 1842 to 1865 and census returns in 1851 show him there, aged 32 and originally from Devon, as Landlord with wife Ann, aged 27 from Wellow, who he had married in 1845. Around that time a Bath wine and spirit merchant Henry Morrish bought some

land from the Hulonce family, Combe Down quarry owners, and formed a partnership with Hine to set up the Combe Down Brewery next to the pub with a maltings over the road at the top end of Ralph Allen's yard.

Ten years on the 1861 census records Thomas Hine as Brewer employing three men at the Combe Down Brewery. Ann is also there together with his mother Mary as the barwoman. Mary may have been economical with her age shown

as 53 making her 11 years old at Thomas' birth!

The King William IV pub is not shown separately in the census being included as part of the brewery building. There was at that time another pub nearby in Monkton Combe village also named King William IV, now long gone, so

possibly the use of the brewery name at Combe Down avoided confusion.

Hine handed over the pub to John Croker in around 1865 and died in 1868. His wife Ann died the next year and they are buried in Bath Abbey Churchyard with an infant son aged 1. The Combe Down Brewery remained in business under Henry Morrish and John Croker until 1889 when it was sold first to a brewery in Limpley Stoke and then the Bath Brewery Company who closed it down. The malthouse continued, changing hands again in 1910, and finally closing in 1923.

The King William IV continues to this day and has recently re-opened under new ownership after a major refurbishment. The malthouse is now part

of the Museum of Bath Stone at the CornerStone and the original stone bath used to steep the grain can still be seen in the basement.

Memories of Combe Down

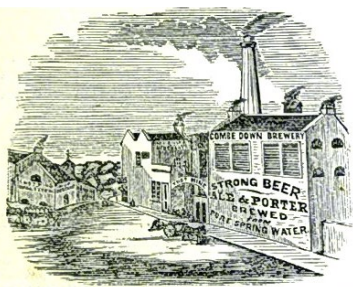
We are conducting interviews with past and present residents of Combe Down as part of our Life-History project. If you have memories of Combe Down and are willing to be interviewed about your life within the village, please email Kay Kebby-Jones at kebbyjones@aol.com or phone 07843 765910.

If you are willing to write your memories down in addition to, or instead of, having an interview, that would also be very useful. The interview can take place wherever you would be most comfortable or at the Museum of Bath Stone if you prefer.

We are conducting these interviews and storing materials (recordings, documents, photos, and other materials) to preserve historical memories of life in our village, and to create a resource for local historians.

News, updates and meeting information:

Web: www.combedownheritage.org.uk
 Facebook: [CombeDownHeritageSociety](https://www.facebook.com/CombeDownHeritageSociety)
 Twitter: [@cdhsoc](https://twitter.com/cdhsoc)



COMBE DOWN BREWERY, NEAR BATH.
THOMAS HINE,
MALTSTER & HOP MERCHANT.
 Strong Beer, Ale, Porter, and Table Beer,
 Brewed from Pure Spring Water. Recommended by the Faculty.
 Orders received by Mr. MORRISH, Wine Merchant, 9, Argyle Street, Bath.

Combe Down Brewery advert, 1862

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 2019 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.