



## Reports on meetings

In **April** we held the Annual General Meeting (which could not be completed due to a technical problem). Bryan Chalker, who was due to talk to us after the AGM, unfortunately fell ill on the day. Luckily, Jacqueline Burrows has been researching the story of Reverend Francis Pocock who, amongst other things, founded Monkton Combe School exactly 150 years ago in 1868. She filled the breach with her 'work in progress' and will return to talk to us again with the full story early in 2019. Despite the short notice, there were plenty of illustrations and many stories about this extraordinary man's life, including his meeting with Dr David Livingstone in Sierra Leone.

Bryan's advertised talk brought to light a wonderful photograph album of the S&P works, with pictures dating from the early 1900s through to the 1960s – most in remarkably good condition. The album was brought along to the meeting by a member who has now agreed that her family's remarkable collection be taken in by the Bath City Archives on permanent loan, where it will be safely preserved for future generations.

In **May** we completed the AGM. Slides showing our finances were explained by Jon Wrigley and passed unanimously.



## THE PACKHORSE

A full house then listened to Bob Parfitt tell of the history of South

Stoke and of the Pack Horse Inn in particular, with photos mainly by Judy Parfitt. At one time there was a Pack Horse Inn in what is now Old Midford Road but the opening of the Black Dog turnpike in 1752 (now the current Midford Road) resulted in the carriage trade switching to the Cross Keys. Eventually the old Pack Horse closed and the name settled on a beer house at its current location. This Pack Horse looks very much like an ancient Church House and we were shown several examples of buildings of this type, but Bob has concluded that it was not in fact built as one of these. We also heard about the restoration of

the Jacobean staircase, the fireplaces and other features, rustic and otherwise.

**June** was the opportunity to meet and listen to Professor Barry Gilbertson, Chairman of the City of Bath UNESCO World Heritage Site Steering Group. Barry's talk celebrated Bath's status as one of only two cities in the world recognised as a complete World Heritage Site (the other being Venice), but also pointed out the challenges the growing number of tourists create for the City infrastructure and for residents. Whilst tourists are welcome, a contribution to the cost of maintaining what they come to see would be welcome too. Suggestions include a tourist tax (as in many other cities), and a charge levied on each coachload that cruises the Circus etc. Barry is also keen to encourage visitors who want to know more about the City than just what can be seen from a bus or a from a quick visit to the Roman Baths and so his Group is considering ways to promote interest in Ralph Allen, stone quarrying and the Museum of Bath Stone here in Combe Down.

Barry also mentioned the remit of the World Heritage Enhancement Fund. This has a small budget from B&NES with which to maintain worthy items of street furniture, painted and incised street signs, boundary markers and suchlike. They manage to stretch the budget with donations, contributions and voluntary help and are always pleased to learn of likely candidates for their skills – such as the horse trough on Entry Hill which is becoming very dilapidated and is being considered for attention. We want to add the John Wood pillars on Ralph Allen Drive to the list!

## Future meetings

### Wednesday 19 September

#### *Nelson in Bath*

David Stubbs will tell us about Vice Admiral Lord Nelson's sojourns in the City and explain a mysterious link between Nelson (who died in 1805) and the King William IV pub in Combe Road (built circa 1830).

Further meetings will be held on 17 October, 21 November and 19 December.

All meetings are held in the hall at Combe Down Primary School, Summer Lane, starting at 19:30 and ending at 21:00. £1 for members, £3 for non-members on the door.

## Save the date

Gordon Bloor (aka Douglas Westcott) who gave us a talk last year on his novel about Bath, *Go Swift and Far*, is inviting Society members to the launch of his new book *An Unfolding Soul* on 20 September at the Apex Hotel in James Street West. If you would like to go, please contact Alice Beazer at [alice@douglaswestcott.com](mailto:alice@douglaswestcott.com) who will provide more details.

## Doing our bit



You may have noticed that finding your way home from the King William IV is easier now that the fingerpost outside has had a wash and brush-up, courtesy of our Chairman Martin Coulson with Simon Burrows holding the ladder. The telephone box by the Hadley Arms has also received our attentions recently, after Dave Bishop (Archivist) prompted BT to do something about its sorry state. They did: they sent several cans of paint and a paint brush and told us to get on with it! The pink undercoat led to several comments from passengers on the No 2 bus, about half of whom wanted it to stay that way! Thanks to Dave B and to Alec Crawford and Simon Burrows. For more information and photographs, see the Facebook page 'Cleaning up Combe Down.'



## Consultation on ward boundaries

We probably all remember the fuss caused by the initial consultation over proposed new Ward boundaries for Bath in 2017. The village was incensed about the plans to split Combe Down in half along the Long Drung and rose up in revolt! The Local Government Boundary Commission was apparently astonished by the strength of our response to their proposal, but more importantly, received a well-argued case based on the history, geography and sense of community of Combe Down. This made all the difference and earlier this year they re-consulted over new boundaries that only very marginally change our ward, which now includes Hansford Square and a part of the Frome Road to the west.

## Horseshoe Pub outing

As this Newsletter was being put together a photo appeared on Facebook entitled 'The Horseshoe Inn 2nd Out-



ing' and dated August 1930. The all-male group look as though they are having a good time, particularly a couple of chaps in the front row! Does anyone know anything about this picture or those who appear in it?

## Tramways of Combe Down part 2

The first tramway to be built on Combe Down was constructed by Ralph Allen in around 1730 to take cut stone from his quarries in the village down to the wharf on the River Avon at Widcombe. Some eighty years later, another quarry owner sought to achieve something similar when William Smith, the "Father of English Geology", planned to take stone from his Kingham Field quarry down a tramway on the other side of the Down to the newly-opened Somersetshire Coal Canal at Tucking Mill where it could be transported cheaply across the country.

Smith had bought a small estate at Tucking Mill in 1798 and in 1810 had gone into partnership with Charles Conolly, of Midford Castle, who offered him land for quarrying in Kingham Field and tramway investment, all in exchange for a share of the profits. Smith sold and mortgaged land to Conolly to finance the scheme; rails were purchased and during 1811 a single-track tramway was laid from the coal canal, through Tucking Mill Wood and up across the meadows to Summer Lane.

The tramway was about 1400 yards long, with Smith owning the lower part around Tucking Mill and Conolly the upper part which was built over his land and which probably included an inclined plane at the top of the slope by Summer Lane. From there, a branch of the tramway ran down Summer Lane to Smith's quarry at Kingham Field. It is likely another branch ran the opposite way to Vinegar Down quarry. At the inclined plane,

## Memories of a Foxhill man



*The following is an extract from an article published in an internal MoD magazine 'Ship Shape' in 1976, when Patrick Driscoll had been working at Foxhill, on and off, for 25 years.*

AA men rode motorcycles with sidecars and King George VI was on the throne. The white ensign fluttered over the gatehouse and the Navy was in charge. However, visions of Admiralty Arches, Royal Marine bands and ceremonial protocol generally took a bit of a knock on going through the Foxhill entrance for the first time. This was grandeur on a different scale. Acres of grass with a few newish wartime hospital hutments on them. Apart from Foxhill farmhouse, hardly a house could be seen away from the Bradford Road. The police were there to keep the grazing flock of sheep inside the fence as much as intruders outside it.

The great man in those days was the Vice-Controller and Director of Naval Equipment who ruled the site. Naval uniforms could be worn quite often - and always when the Controller visited - but these seemed insignificant when compared with the Vice Controller's messenger's uniform which was really impressive, and which caused a bow-wave of tremble before it and a wake of anxiety behind. There were few cars; all subject to petrol rationing, all British and all with starting handles. Many people walked to work and many

cycled, which justified the two cycle sheds per block. Cyclists had to contend with tramlines still evident in several places in the City. Primitive car allowances induced railway travel for business as a rule. All were steam trains of course - some belting through the Midford Valley rumbled under Foxhill in Devonshire Tunnel.

Service pensioners formed the dignified Messenger Corps and ex-stokers dealt with the central heating. This was coke-fired and mountains of coke, ash and clinker were moved with

shovel and barrow. There was a 'contractor' - or gash man - with a horse and cart. He totted assiduously - on one awful occasion he spent two days wearing a Lieutenant's reefer complete with gilt buttons, gold lace and medal ribbons. This gave rise to a 'navy eyes only' confidential circular advising naval personnel to dispose of uniforms with more care.

Idle talk was usually about films, there being several cinemas in Bath and about which brand of cigarettes gave most satisfaction - at the time, real men smoked and drank real ale as there wasn't much else. The Theatre Royal provided serious entertainment while those with lighter tastes could visit the Regency Theatre to appreciate the music hall turns, 'Eves without Leaves' and similar static delights.

Allotments were cultivated - in some peril from the sheep. The canteen offered two faggots and peas for 9d (4p). Few strayed beyond the Foresters' for lunch. The more senior might visit the Rockery; the more junior the Horseshoe.

Standards of dress were severe - white shirts (with collar attached if really racy) and suit (double-breasted grey chalk pin stripe). In hot weather it was in order to undo the jacket - but not to take it off. Sports jackets with grey flannel trousers were permitted on Saturdays when work ceased at noon.

a double-track funicular arrangement allowed a fully-laden stone cart to be lowered by gravity, counter-balanced by an ascending empty cart, linked to it by rope carried over a drum. Once on the tramway, laden carriages would descend to the canal under braking (a drop in height of 350 ft) and be hauled back up by horse power.

In addition Smith set up water-powered saws at Tucking Mill to cut the stone mechanically. Arrays of reciprocating 9ft long saws were built into frames for cutting ashlar blocks while circular saws were used for the finer work. Using water power in this way, perhaps suggested to Smith by the large waterwheel driving the paper mill above his property, was advanced technology for the age and might have made him a wealthy man. However, despite his geological expertise, the quarried stone turned out to be flawed, while the Napoleonic Wars caused economic depression and a building slump. Profits did not materialise and in 1819 Conolly foreclosed on William Smith's debts. Conolly had Smith committed to the infamous Fleet debtors' prison and took ownership of Tucking Mill.

The tramway seems to have lasted only a few years, but its route can still be traced on the public footpath running through the wood from behind Smith's home at Tucking Mill House. Some of the old stone sleeper blocks with a single hole for the rail spike can still be seen in the path. Where

it emerges into the fields the line is uncertain because of later disturbance from the Somerset & Dorset railway cutting, but Bluebell Steps below Summer Lane is thought to be the site of the inclined plane. A stone platform at the foot of these steps and a cast-iron roller standing at the top may be relics. The archway entrance to the tunnel into Kingham Field quarry (now blocked and on private land) is in the woods opposite Lake Cottage, a hundred yards further down Summer Lane.

Further details are at <http://rtjstevens.co.uk/cdtramway.html>

### Data consent

Many of you have already given your consent to receipt of emails and/or post from Combe Down Heritage Society as required by the new GPRD data protection legislation. If you haven't yet done so, please give your consent through the website at [www.combedownheritage.org.uk/consent](http://www.combedownheritage.org.uk/consent), or email Tim Lunt at [tlunt@hotmail.com](mailto:tlunt@hotmail.com) stating 'I consent to receiving communications by email and post from Combe Down Heritage Society' otherwise we will no longer be able to contact you.

### News, updates and meeting information:

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



## 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. I/we agree to my details being held on computer for the duration of my membership and to receive communications from the Society by email and post.

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.