



2016 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 7.30 pm. Members £1, Non-Members £3.

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.

Wednesday 19 October

The Admiralty in Bath Karen Power has researched the Admiralty in Bath from their arrival at the start of WW2 up to the changes of the present day.

Wednesday 16 November

Building Modern Bath -the architecture of the 20th Century Dr Amy Frost, Curator of Beckford's Tower, looks at how Bath has developed over the last century and what the architectural outcomes have been.

Reports on meetings

The Somme 1916: consequences for Combe Down and Monkton Combe

In June, Jacqueline Burrows and Martin Coulson presented the second in their series of WW1 talks followed by an exhibition of their findings at the CornerStone. They have been looking back the 100 years to the morning of 1 July 1916 when thousands of Allied soldiers went "over the top" to begin the first day of the Somme, a series of battles that raged for over four months and resulted in over a million casualties on both sides. 15 men from our two villages are known to have fallen together with 10 men who were staff or former pupils from Monkton Combe School.

We heard some of the stories behind the names; where they lived, what they did before the war, where they fought and how they died.



Sgt A E Ferris ©Charles Swift

The story of Sgt Albert (Bert) Ferris of Combe Down is typical. He joined the 6th Somerset Light Infantry when war broke out and was sent to France in May 1915. After a year of trench warfare, Bert was wounded in action at the Somme on 18 August. He was sent back to England but died of his wounds on 4 October 1916, and now rests in a Commonwealth War Grave at St Michael's, Monkton Combe. His

relatives are still in Combe Down.

A report on the loss at sea, also in 1916, of Bert's brother-in-law, Stoker Ted Williams can be read elsewhere in this newsletter. If anyone would like to share any family photographs or documents with Jacqueline for including in her research, she can be contacted at 157 Church Road, Combe Down.

CDHS eShop

<https://combe-down-heritage-society.fwscheckout.com>

Although CDHS is obsessed with the past we know how important it is to keep ahead of the curve with technology in this modern age. It therefore is so exciting to announce our long-awaited move into internet retailing with the launch of the CDHS eShop! You will be familiar with www.combedownheritage.org.uk and we have now linked this to our all new, cutting edge, ecommerce platform online 24/7. <https://combe-down-heritage-society.fwscheckout.com>

With your normal internet connection it is now possible, at the tap of a tablet, to stock up on all those essential publications from the CDHS

and CornerStone catalogues or renew CDHS membership, all from the comfort of your own sofa. Our sophisticated banking facilities allow secure payment by all reputable credit, debit cards or paypal. Think how easy life will become and remember Christmas is not that far away!

The towers of Combe Down - part 3

Following visits in previous newsletters to the Priory Tower and Ralph Allen's Monument we continue our promenade to the most well-known tower in Combe Down at Holy Trinity, the Anglican parish church with its early Gothic revival style. The church with broad west tower was designed by the architect Henry Goodridge and built between 1832-35. The architectural



Combe Down Church by S Worsley

historian Nikolaus Pevsner called the result 'fanciful and crazy' and in comparison to other more conservative Gothic churches of the time such as St Mary, Bathwick and St Mark, Lyncombe, the Holy Trinity tower is more complex with four prominent square buttresses combining to support an octagonal tower and spire, all points and parapets bristling with pinnacles.

As well as Holy Trinity, Goodridge designed many significant buildings in Bath including the Corridor and Cleveland Bridge but probably his most notable brief was for another tower. He was commissioned at the age of 28 by the wealthy eccentric William Beckford to design Beckford's Tower at Lansdown, built between 1825-27. Beckford had previously built Fonthill Abbey, using the architect James Wyatt, with a colossal and unstable 330 foot tower that collapsed finally in 1825. This was the third collapse of the tower and although the Abbey is remembered as Beckford's Folly, he was shrewd enough to have

sold it three years earlier for today's equivalent of £25m! Given this background the young Goodridge was clearly courageous to take on both task and client but met with great success.

The sinking of HMS Hampshire

The latest donation to our WW1 archive comes from Mr Charlie Swift of Bradford Road, who is descended on his mother's side from the Williams and Ferris families.

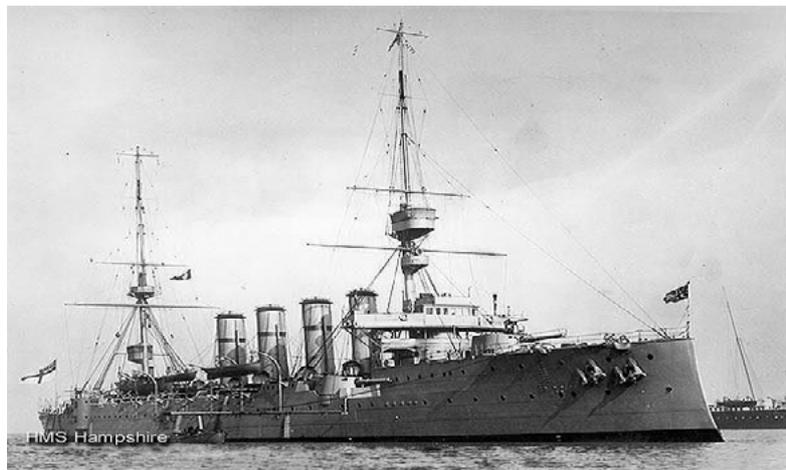
Charlie's grandfather, Chief Stoker (Petty Officer) E George Williams of 2 Hermon Cottages was lost at sea 100 years ago on 5 June 1916 aged 40, when the cruiser HMS Hampshire sank off the Orkney isles.

The Hampshire was engaged on a secret mission following the Battle of Jutland to take Lord Kitchener, Minister of War, to Archangel in Russia for diplomatic negotiations with the Tsar to ensure Russian forces stayed in the war.



Chief Stoker (Petty Officer) E George Williams
© Charles Swift

The ship had left Scapa Flow in a Force 9 gale with a crew of 655 and it is estimated another 80 of Kitchener's staff. At 7.40pm in the evening it struck a German mine a mile and a half off Marwick Head and



HMS Hampshire

sank by the bow 15 minutes after the explosion. A German submarine, U-75, had laid mines around the Orkney coast in late May 1916 but routine sweeping of the area had been held up due to bad weather.

During attempts to abandon the Hampshire, lifeboats were smashed against the sides of the ship by the heavy seas when they were lowered. Two life-rafts did reach land in the storm but

Down memory lane



Prior Park Gate by W Coombs, 1850

There are none today who will remember Combe Down's ancient cross which, evidence suggests, used to stand by the crossroads at the top of Ralph Allen's Drive and which was probably erected 1000 years before Ralph Allen's time. Known as St Gregory's Cross it is thought to have been of Anglo-Saxon origin and became a marker point in the boundary of the Lincuma (Lyncombe) manor estate that was granted by King Edgar to Bath Abbey in AD 970. The attribution to St Gregory is likely to indicate the first mission sent by Pope Gregory around AD 597 to establish Christianity in southern Britain.

Crosses became an important part of the landscape as Christianity established itself in the British Isles during the Saxon period and are thought to have been erected to mark a place of preaching or for commemoration of events or the dead. The few remaining examples of English Anglo-Saxon crosses show they were often

most on board these had perished from exposure. Only twelve of the crew survived. More than 100 bodies were recovered and interred in a common grave at Lyness, Orkney but Lord Kitchener's body was never found.

To mark the centenary of the disaster Kitchener's monument, a 48ft stone tower that was built on Marwick Head in 1926 overlooking the site of the disaster, was restored this year. A new semi-circular memorial wall was inaugurated around the base of the tower listing the names of all those lost.

Mrs Mary Jane Williams (nee Ferris) became a widow with three young daughters, one of whom (Ena) later married Herbert Swift of Hinton Charterhouse and became Charlie Swift's mother.

highly decorated and may continue a prehistoric tradition with standing stones and rock art. They have survived less well in this country than those in Ireland due to the excesses of the Reformation.

The boundary of the Saxon manor shown in King Edgar's grant can be seen to still largely define today's parish boundaries. The Cross is mentioned as the spot where the boundary turns from the east following the line of North Road (possibly the Wansdyke) to go north-west along what is now Blind Lane (Pope's Walk). It is shown as 'Tunnes Treow' which is thought to translate as 'the Manor's Cross' and a survey of the manor estate in 1590 also refers to a 'Crosse that parteth Coombes (Monkton Combe's) lordship and ours'

The Ralph Allen Estate Survey by Thorpe in 1741 shows the field at the south-east of the crossroads to be called 'Combe Field by ye Cross'. John Wood in his Essay of 1765 also mentions St Gregory's Cross, and it is shown on the first 1 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1817, but it was thought these later references were only to the name of the crossroads. However the Cross, or at least the top of it and probably repositioned, appears to have been still extant in 1850 when W Coombs painted it in his watercolour standing in a wall recess beside the Prior Park gate.

So unless it still remains buried within the wall, or has become someone's garden feature, St Gregory's Cross seems to have been lost and with it the link to Combe Down's early history. All there is to see now is the much less beguiling 1911 King George V Coronation 'fountain' (horse trough) and a BT telecomms cabinet !

Phyllis J Brown 1929 – 2016

Phyllis served on the CDHS committee for many years and sadly died earlier this year. She was born in Gillingham, Kent and first came to Combe Down when she was 3 years old when her father, who was a civil engineer, began work in Andover. Phyllis, with her mother and younger sister Mary, moved in with her maternal grandmother Mrs Page at Colworth in The Avenue. They stayed



for three years and Phyllis attended the primary school before the family was on the move again to London. In 1939 with war imminent it was decided to send Phyllis and Mary to their paternal Aunt Flo in California but (according to Phyllis) an evacuee ship had been sunk so a return to Colworth in July 1939 was decided as a safer option.

Phyllis joined the junior school along with other evacuees, but later, when Bath was bombed, her parents moved the children back to London where they saw out the war. 'Going to school each day was an adventure with flying bombs and similar risks but as teenagers we quite enjoyed it' said Phyllis.

After her schooldays finished in 1948 she took a teacher training course and this was followed by periods teaching in Gillingham, Canterbury and Nottingham, and a year's exchange to a school in the USA. When her father retired she was persuaded to move back to Colworth which her mother had now inherited. Phyllis found a teaching job at Southdown and began her interest in amateur dramatics joining the Argyle Players.

She was later recruited to teach services children in Changi, Singapore where she worked for six years and on returning to the UK taught at Kilmersdon before retiring in 1988.

S&D Railway exhibition

An exhibition of photos and memorabilia to commemorate the fifty years since the closure of the Somerset & Dorset Railway in 1966 is now showing at the CornerStone on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holiday Mondays. Come along to view and record your memories.

Schools memories workshop

Following Jill Woodhead's talk in March on Combe Down Schools there was so much interest that we have arranged a workshop to discuss and record everybody's memories of schooldays. It could be food, discipline, the teachers, school buildings, wartime, anything! Come along to the CornerStone on Saturday 24 September between 11am and 1pm for a cup and a chat.

Please follow us

Website : www.combedownheritage.org.uk

Follow us on Facebook for news, updates and meeting information.

<https://www.facebook.com/CombeDownHeritageSociety>

We're also on Twitter, posting as @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 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.