



The Hidden History of Burrington Ham



Creative connections

The dramatic landscape of Burrington and Black Down has inspired artists, poets and writers.

Charles Hubert Sisson (1914-2003), poet

C H Sisson was brought up in Eastville, Bristol and would spend holidays at Middle Ellick Farm on Burrington Ham, from where he would explore the local landscape. He produced three volumes of verse, including poems about Burrington and Black Down.

Burrington Combe

Verses 1-5, 13

Not what I think but any land beside
Hidden from human speech, is where I go
As that dark leaf of thyme pushes its way
Into the empty world and so speak I

Blackdown and Burrington and the deep combe
Which was my land, is also what shall be
Arraigned by time, I make my way only
Backwards, where I may look indulgently

And yet the indulgent land where silence is
Is not my friend nor ever was before
The great ferns held terror as well as love
Who was lost on the heather-covered moor?

If I could climb out of this bitter combe
Into a lucid world, nothing there said
Could equal now the silence of your grief
Or the exchanges of the recorded dead

The word stands still upon the frozen lip
The eye is glazed that should have danced with love
For such days as are uneaten by the years
A nod, a commonplace will be enough.

Verse 13

But this is where I came
And where I wish to be
Burrington Combe, half in the dark
Half in the light of the moon

Violet Dickinson (1865-1948), artist

Violet Dickinson was born in Frome, and a close friend of Virginia Woolf. She created a folio of sketches and watercolours of scenes on the Mendips including Aveline's Hole at Burrington.



*Aveline's Hole Cave Entrance,
Violet Dickson, 1937.*

Reverend John Skinner (1772-1839), antiquarian

Reverend Skinner was vicar at Camerton and an amateur antiquarian. He made over 750 sketches from his digs in Somerset and included sketches of Avelines Hole and bones found there. The sketches are at the British Museum. He sketched in a number of places on the Ham and titled, Burrington Ham & Camp; Descending the hill to Burrington; A line of stones on the hill to Burrington; and Range of Mendip from Burrington Camp to Dolbury.