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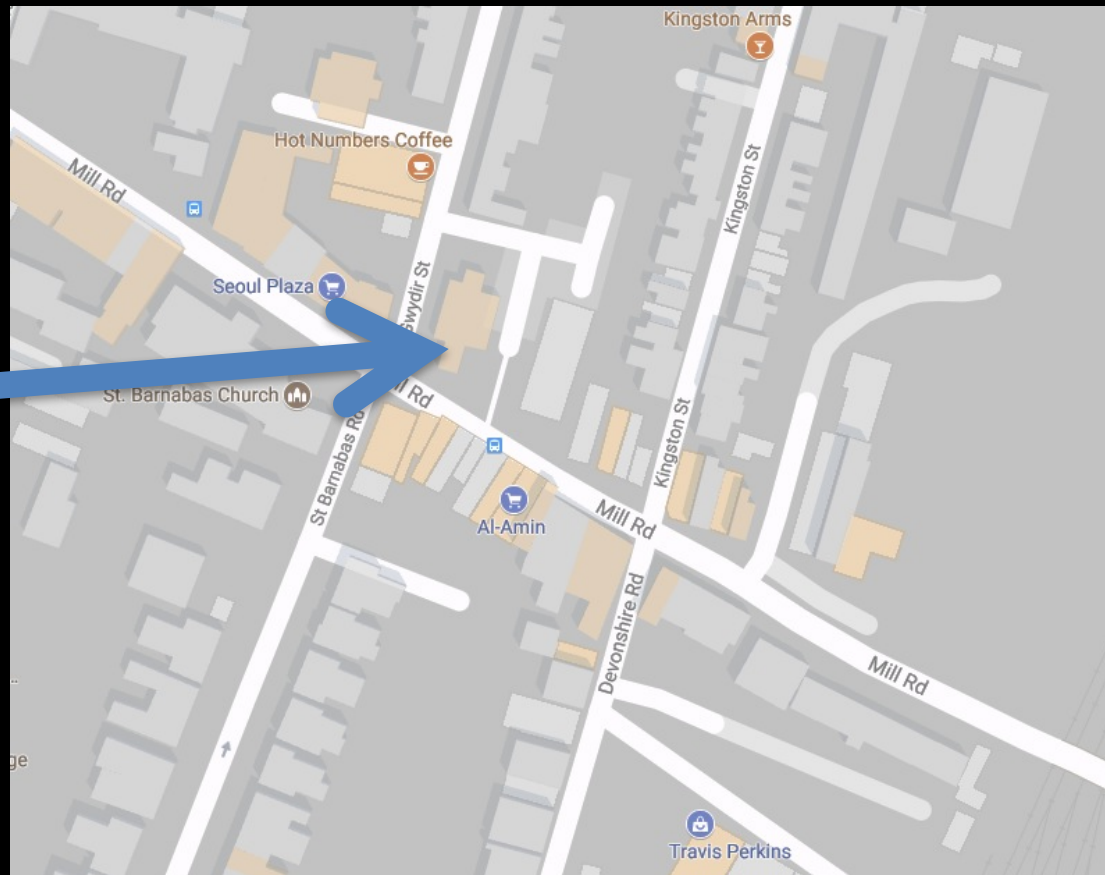


The Bath House



Where is the Bath House?

The Bath House sits on the corner of Gwydir Street and Mill Road!



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Map from Google Maps

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Was it always a Bath House?



No! Where the Bath House is now used to be someone's home.

James Naden, a draper, built a house there in 1850 for his wife, his children and his mother to live in.

The house was called Gwydir House. Can you see it on this map from 1886?

What happened to the house next?

For the next 60 years lots of different families lived in Gwydir House. This is the house in 1908 with three very cold policemen outside!



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Photo of Gwydir House
from Capturing Cambridge

FACTOID

**FIVE doctors in a row
lived in this house, so it
became known as the
Doctor's House**

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When did it become the Bath House?

The council bought the house in 1913 and soon demolished it.

They decided in 1923 to build a public baths there, where people could wash and do their laundry.

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Photo of the Bath House today, which is now used by a local charity called 'Lifecraft'

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The Entrance to the Bath House



This was the entrance to the Bath House where people would enter to go have their bath or do their washing.

Can you spot a Coat of Arms above the door?

This is the Cambridge Coat of Arms! It has seahorses and a bridge on it as these are reminders of how Cambridge used to be an important trade route from the sea to places in land.



Why did Cambridge need a public baths?



Photo of Cambridge Railway Shed from National Railways Museum Collection

Most of the people living in the Mill Road area, including lots of children, worked on the railway.

This often involved lots of shoveling coal, so the workers always came home covered in soot! They really needed a bath!!



But why couldn't they wash at home?

Photo of the Station Master and workers, from
Capturing Cambridge

FACTOID

**Even in 1923, 3/4 of
Cambridge houses
didn't have a bath!**



Most houses didn't have running water, so you couldn't just turn on a tap!
And if you don't have running water, a bathtub is no use!

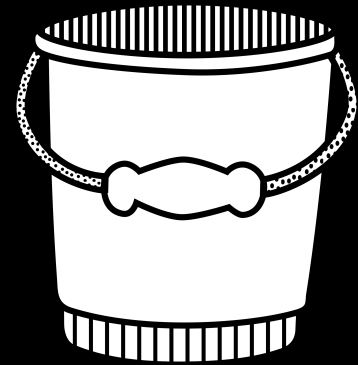
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Washing before the Bath House

Minnie Baraclough, a Cambridge resident, remembers how you washed at home in the 1920s and 30s!

“Mum used to wash you on the kitchen table. Shove you on the kitchen table with a bowl of water to rub up and down your legs like that: ‘now the other leg – put your other leg out!’”



Do you fancy a bath like this?

Why not just take a dip in the river?

At this time, the Cambridge rivers were where everyone dumped their rubbish. They were basically open sewers!

They were so bad even Queen Victoria asked why there was so much paper in them when she visited in 1843!

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Photo of Queen Victoria
from the British Library

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The Grand Opening



The Bath House opened on the 3rd February 1927.

The opening of the Bath House was a grand affair, with all the councillors of Cambridge attending. The mayor was given a golden key to unlock the building for the first time.

Here is a picture from the *Cambridge Daily News Paper* of the big opening. Can you spot the mayor?

The First Bath

Ben Benstead, who lived in Victoria Road, took the first bath.



BUT there was something wrong with the boiler, so it was FREEZING!

Ben said “Lukewarm?- Forget it! My first real bath was in stone-cold water!”

How much did it cost?

To have a bath cost 4 pennies, which included a towel and some soap.

An extra towel cost 1 penny.

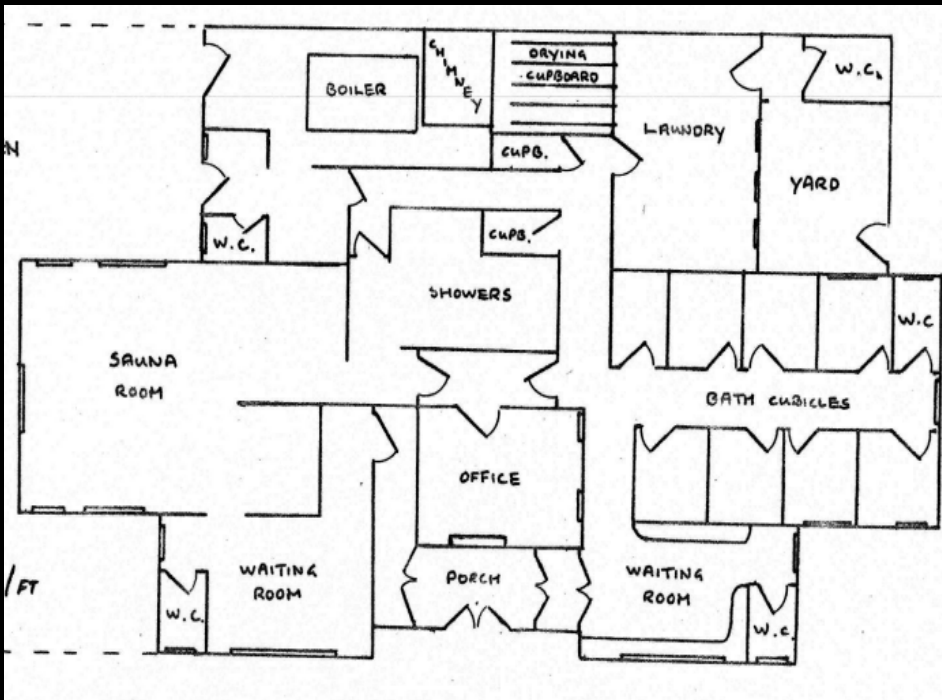
FACTOID

4 pennies in 1927 was roughly equal to £2.82 today! Would you pay that for a bath?



If a parent brought more than one child, they got a cheaper rate!

How did you use the Bath House?



Firstly, when you entered, you would pay at the office. Then men would be sent to the left and women to the right.

You would wait in the waiting room until a bath was free, then you would wash in a closed-off cubicle.

Here is a plan of the building from 1978. Where it says 'Sauna room' would have been the men's bath cubicles in 1927. Can you trace where customers would have gone?

Men to the left, women to the right!

There was a law at the time that men and women had to use different baths, in different areas. This was because upper-class Victorians were worried about the morals of the poor – it would be very improper for a man to see a woman naked!

Children generally went in the same tub as their mum or dad! Would you like to share a bath with one of your parents?



Photo from the British Library



“Cold water, please!”

The baths in the Bath House had no taps! Instead, an attendant outside turned the water on and it gushed into the bath through a pipe!

Monica Smith remembers having a bath at the Bath House:

‘So you put your foot in – ‘Ow! It’s too hot!’ – so you have to then call out [to the attendant] and say ‘Number (whatever number [cubicle] you’ve landed yourself in)’ and ask for cold water’

Dolly, the Fortune Teller



The Bath House was not just a place for cleaning; the waiting rooms were also somewhere to socialise!

A newspaper article records how Dolly, an attendant at the baths, entertained those waiting.

She would put on music and dance, give out advice to girls worried about their boyfriend and even predict people's future but looking at their tea leaves!

Discover More

You could ask your grandparents or someone else who has lived in the Mill Road area for a while. They will probably remember the Bath House, as it only closed in 1976!

Go and visit the Bath House!
Have a look for holes in the wall
where people waiting rubbed
their coins on the wall. They
wrote their names there too!
Can you see them?



Photo from Capturing
Cambridge

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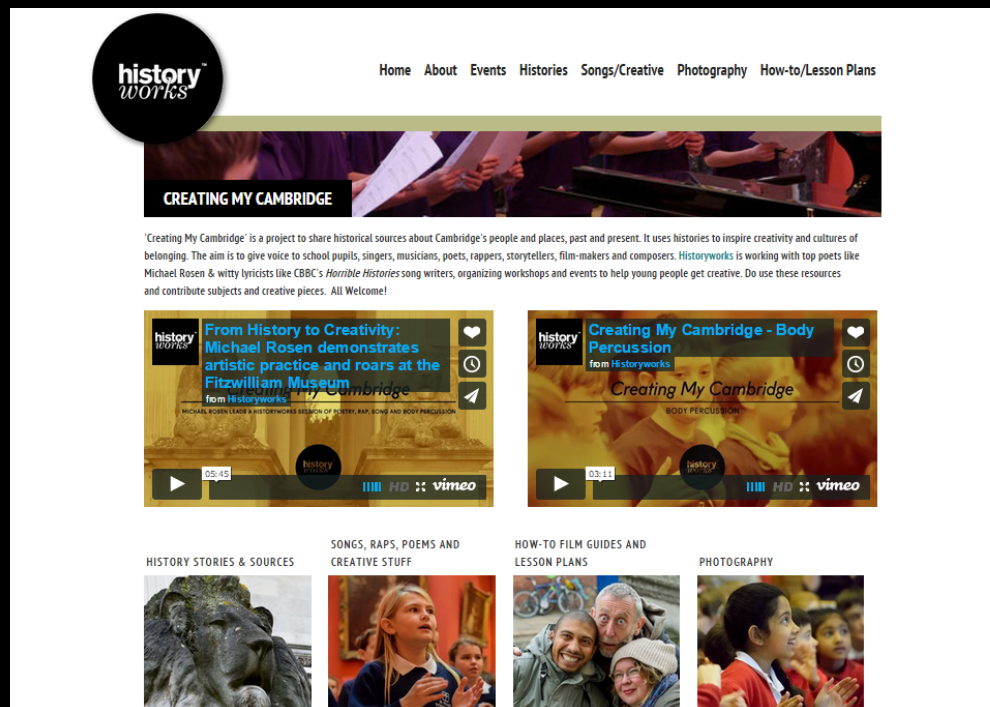
A person is shown from the chest up, holding a professional video camera with a large microphone attached. They are looking down at the camera, likely framing a shot. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting.

Discover More

- * To find out more about the Bath House visit:
<http://www.capturingcambridge.org/mill-road-area/mill-road/the-bath-house/> - It provides a comprehensive report on the building and its history, with personal accounts and lots of pictures.
- * The Bath House sits on the corner of Gwydir Street and Mill Road. To arrange a visit email:
bathhousemanager@lifecraft.org.uk

Web Resources available at:

<http://www.creatingmycambridge.com/history-stories>



The screenshot shows the 'historyworks' website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, About, Events, Histories, Songs/Creative, Photography, and How-to/Lesson Plans. The main header features the 'historyworks' logo and a large banner image of children singing into microphones, with the text 'CREATING MY CAMBRIDGE' overlaid. Below the banner, a paragraph describes the project: 'Creating My Cambridge' is a project to share historical sources about Cambridge's people and places, past and present. It uses histories to inspire creativity and cultures of belonging. The aim is to give voice to school pupils, singers, musicians, poets, rappers, storytellers, film-makers and composers. Historyworks is working with top poets like Michael Rosen & witty lyricists like CBBC's *Horrible Histories* song writers, organizing workshops and events to help young people get creative. Do use these resources and contribute subjects and creative pieces. All Welcome!

Below the text are two video thumbnails. The first is titled 'From History to Creativity: Michael Rosen demonstrates artistic practice and roars at the Fitzwilliam Museum' and has a duration of 05:45. The second is titled 'Creating My Cambridge - Body Percussion' and has a duration of 03:11. Both videos are from 'historyworks' and are available on Vimeo.

At the bottom, there are four categories with corresponding images: 'HISTORY STORIES & SOURCES' (a stone lion), 'SONGS, RAPS, POEMS AND CREATIVE STUFF' (a girl singing), 'HOW-TO FILM GUIDES AND LESSON PLANS' (a group of people), and 'PHOTOGRAPHY' (a group of children).

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