



A printed copy of this Newsletter is being delivered to every member, including all those for whom we have email addresses. Please check your details on the enclosed slip and let the Membership Secretary (Jane Briggs, Longridge, Summer Lane, Combe Down, BA2 7EU) know of any changes. If you know of members who have not received this newsletter, it might be because they have inadvertently not paid their subscription.

Dates for your diary

Wed 13 February

Marek Lewkun, the Bath archaeologist, will give us a talk on the Restoration of the 18th Century Landscape Garden at Prior Park. You may have seen some of this on 'Time Team' but get the original here.

Wed 26 March

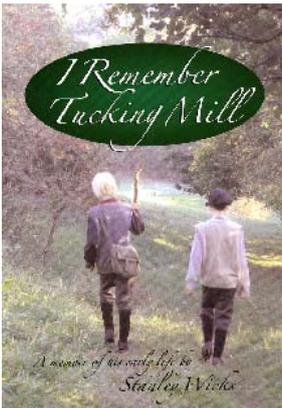
Brief AGM followed by presentations of the Society's recent research. This will include the Old Shops project, containing much of the material collected at the shops workshop in May 2006. The Oral History group continues with its work and had a stimulating talk with the renowned Harry Patch who once lived in Combe Down.

Both meetings are at 7.00 for 7.30pm at Combe Down Primary School, Summer Lane

Excursion

At least one excursion will be organised in the summer. If you have any suggestions, please let a member of the committee know.

Autumn report



We had a successful series of meetings, the highlight being the launch of our new publication, 'I Remember Tucking Mill'. By the New Year we had already sold 189 copies and they are still available from the Combe Down Newsagents and Bath bookshops. The Christmas

Quiz, hosted by Richard Read, our genial Treasurer, was a success, the raffle prizes including an expensive bottle given to us by Clifford Ellis, Estate Agents who also stock some of our books.

In October, Nick McCamley who has written several books on stone mines, particularly their use in the last war, gave us a professionally illustrated talk about many local mines.

Three guided walks were held, the usual October one in Bath Open Week, and others to take round interested groups who have asked us for a walk. The committee acts as guides but we would welcome any members who could help with this enjoyable work – there are only several a year and it keeps one on one's toes about local history!

The future of Ralph Allen Yard

The site, previously Gammon's Yard, was bought by English Partnerships, the funders of the mines stabilisation, for a work site and is in use by Hydrock, mainly as a store. They considered it a likely site for a future Interpretative Centre, the setting up of which is a Planning Condition for the stabilisation. Early in 2007, the Society's



committee produced a detailed proposal as to how they thought the site could be used. We have developed our proposal further and are at the moment involved in discussions with them and the Stabilisation Project.

Harry Patch



Interviewing Harry

Harry Patch is well known as the last surviving Tommy from the Great War. Many newspaper articles and television programmes have documented his war experiences and how he fought in the trenches at the Battle of Passchendaele. What is less well known though, is that Harry was born and brought up on Combe Down and in September last year he came to Combe Down to share his memories of his early life as his contribution to the CDHS Oral History project.

He was born on 17 June 1898 at Fonhill (now Fonhill Cottage) in Gladstone Rd. At that time water came from a well in the garden of 5 Gladstone Place and heat from the kitchen range. Harry's father William was a stone mason who worked as master mason on construction of the Empire Hotel. He was also a keen gardener and the garden kept the family well supplied with fruit and vegetables. Harry remembers a tree full of delicious pears which his father told him not to pick. Harry obeyed but got a good hiding when his father discovered a big bite had been taken out of the back of every pear.

Harry attended Combe Down School where two hundred children were taught in four classes. He remembers Mr Henry Henwood the head teacher as being a kind man but a poor disciplinarian who was not above marching the children to his garden for a spot of digging and weeding in the name of science.

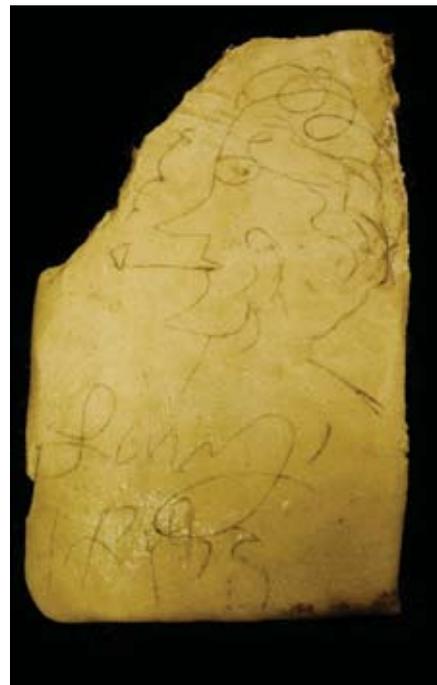
Harry often used to explore the underground quarries as a child. They were a useful place to hide if he and his friends were being chased by the local policeman. While other people easily got lost underground Harry learned to read the mason's marks on the wall which told him the way out.

Harry left school aged 14 and was apprenticed as a plumber but at the age of 17 was conscripted and did not return to live on Combe Down until after the end of the war.

Harry has co-authored a book, "The Last Fighting Tommy" which tells the story of his whole life. In it there are many memories of his life on Combe Down. If you are interested in finding out more it is well worth a read.

Graffiti from the mines

Important examples of graffiti have been seen from the pillars and are in safe keeping. Others of less significance have had just their imprint removed. Since the pictures are usually carbon



based, this has been done by painting an adhesive rubber solution onto the rock-face, peeling off an imprint of the graffiti and then transferring this imprint onto a silicon base. This method, which preserved the actual graffiti rather than an impression

of it, has been used for large pieces or pieces where physical removal from the rock-face was impossible due to health and safety or stabilisation considerations. All significant graffiti located at the mines has been photographed and sketch planned. We hold a list of them and some of the pictures, hoping they might eventually be displayed in Combe Down.

The future of Flrs Field

The 'Friends' object is to ensure that the Field in its entirety is maintained as an open green space. They defined a 'catchment area' to include all the main users of the Field and have sent out questionnaire to 890 households in order to get the views of the community. The Stone Mines Community Association with the Project team will be responsible for the reinstatement of the Field, but when this is complete, the Friends will take over.

Public art project

English Partnerships have allocated £250,000 for a Public Art Project on Combe Down to commemorate the stabilisation of the village. It is government policy to spend up to 1% of a large project fund to enhance the environment where the project takes place. There may be two or three smaller, rather than one large art work, such as working with schools, street furniture and two and three-dimensional art works. A project manager will be appointed to consult with local residents and to formulate a brief to artists which will be widely advertised. Completion will be in 2011

Tunnels under Corsham

Members may be interested in this snippet from a recent 'Current Archaeology' –

'Oxford Archaeology has been commissioned by English Heritage to carry out a large scale survey of a top-secret Ministry of Defence underground facility at Corsham, near Chippenham, in Wiltshire. The site consists of a vast labyrinth of tunnels, covering an area of 2.86 acres, connected by 26 miles of underground roadways that were first excavated in the 19th century to extract the fine-grained building stone that underlies Corsham village. Taken over by the military in the 1930s, the tunnels were used as a massive underground aircraft factory and then, in the Cold War, as the potential site of the central government bunker in the event of nuclear war.

A further huge area is occupied by an underground ammunition store, complete with its own railway station, with secret links into Brunei's box railway tunnel, which carries the Great Western Railway's main line between London and South Wales.'

The Data Protection Act

The officers of the Society hold the names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, subscriptions received and special interests of members. We do not need to register under the Act.

To improve communication between members and help to further our aims, we want to feel free to let any members know the contact details of other members. If any member would find this undesirable and not want this known to others, they should let the Secretary know.

Publications

All publications are available at Society meetings

Published by the Society

and available from the secretary

I Remember Tucking Mill
by Stanley Wicks, £6.

A History of the Byfield Mine
by Dick Irving, £9.95.

The Roman Villa at Combe
Down
by Dr Malcolm Aylett, £4.95.

Heritage Trail leaflet, 50p

Combe Down Past and Present.
A CD of pictures from old
postcards and recent photos
taken from the same spot,
price: a donation

The 'Tombstone Guide' of the Jewish Burial
Ground giving information on the lives of many
of those buried there has been published in
collaboration with the Friends of the site and
taken up by many visitors on the Open Day last
October. Available from the Secretary.

From other publishers

available from Rosemary Simmons,
01225 833301 rosyprint@care4free.net.

Around Combe Down by Peter Addison £6.99.

Crow Stone by Jenni Mills £10.

Awash with Ale, 200 years of imbibing in Bath
by Andrew Swift and Kirsten Elliott £12.99.

Ringing the Grooves of Change, Brunel and the
coming of the Railway to Bath by Andrew Swift
£12.

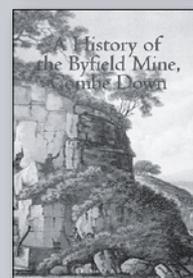
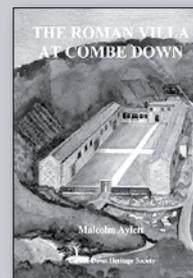
The Lost Pubs of Bath by Andrew Swift and
Kirsten Elliott £15.

Bath Pubs by Andrew Swift and Kirsten Elliott
£12.99.

All Roads Lead to France, Bath and the Great
War by Andrew Swift £30.

The Myth-Maker, John Wood 1704-1754 by
Kirsten Elliott £10.

Geraldine Simmonds has attractive hand made
cards for sale (01225 840953)



Are you a member?

Combe Down Stone Mines Community

Association continues to watch the interests of householders during the stabilisation scheme.

Friends of Firs Field which has a remit to represent the community in the restoration of the field on completion of stabilisation.

Membership of both organisations is free. Further information from the Stone Mines Information Centre, which has now moved to 199 Bradford Road (formerly 'Strands'), opposite Combe Road.

Bath's only Jewish cemetery, now disused, is in Combe Down. The **Friends of Bath Jewish Burial Ground** plan to restore the site and kept in touch with developments and receive Newsletters. Subscription £3 a year; the treasurer is Norman Marks, Tanglewood Lodge, Corston BA2 9BA. Brochures giving an outline of the site available from the Heritage Society Secretary.

Other organisations

Listed alphabetically. ☎ std 01225 unless otherwise stated.

Avon Industrial Buildings Trust ☎01228 477612

Bath Preservation Trust

1 Royal Crescent, Bath BA1 2LR ☎338727 admin@bptrust.org.uk. Museums at No 1 Royal Crescent, the Building of Bath Museum, Beckford's Tower and the Herschel Museum

Bath & Cammerton Archaeological Society

Active in many areas around Bath ☎761026

Bath Records Office Guildhall ☎477421

Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society

Gill Sheppard, 10 Teewell Hill, Staple Hill, Bristol BS16 5PA. gsandg.sheppard@btopenworld.com

Bathwick Local History Society

Meets on the second Monday of each month and welcomes non-members.

Contact Sheila Edwards ☎463902 or 460389

Bradford on Avon Museum Trust

M Wilkins, Mosel Cott, Wine St Terrace, Wilts BA15 1NP

Friends of the Survey of Bath & District

☎01373 834396

South Stoke Local History Group

Contact Sylvia Williams on ☎832921

Weston Local History Society

Welcomes visitors and charges £1 for non-members at their monthly lectures. Membership is £5 or £8.50 a couple. Contact Prue Brice

☎315342, 6 Westwood Gardens, Weston BA1 4EJ

Saltford Brass Mill ☎0117 986 2216

Widcombe and Lyncombe History Study Group

Welcomes non-members to its meetings at 7.30pm usually on Thursdays. Contact Margaret Burrows ☎480749 or Fay Briddon ☎310127.

Brenda Beeton does walks ☎317026

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the coming year will become due at the AGM on 26 March but you can renew now.

This will be your last Newsletter this financial year. Pay direct to the Membership Secretary, details below.

Membership application for new members

If you are already a member, there is no need to fill this in - simply send your payment to Jane Briggs (see below)

First name

Surname

I apply to become a member of the Combe Down Heritage Society until 31 March 2008 and I agree to my details being held on computer for the duration of my membership

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Please tick membership option required

Standard £3 Student £1 Family £7

I am sending an additional £ as a donation to the society

Total amount enclosed

Ages of children
(if family membership)

If you pay Income tax (PAYE) please sign here so we can reclaim the tax

Signed

Date

Payments (by cheque please, payable to 'Combe Down Heritage Society') should be sent to the Membership Secretary: Jane Briggs, Longridge, Summer Lane, Combe Down, BA2 7EU.

Please note any interests or skills you have which might be relevant the Society