



THE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

No 6 May 2006

THE NEXT EVENT

Wednesday 17th May: Shops Workshop.
Combe Down Junior School, 7.00. for
7.30.pm. See details below.

£150 MILLION DOWN THE HOLE

When £150 million has been poured (literally!) down a large hole, what will remain to be seen of our long heritage of stone mining? Planning Conditions only demand a detailed record and the saving of artefacts. The Society, and indeed many other organisations outside the village, think we need more than this: we should at least preserve and display some surface features and make available the history locally. Even future access to part of the mine should still be considered. We understand that final decisions have not yet been reached and continue to lobby for a balanced approach.

COMMUNITY HERITAGE CENTRE.

Since January, ten representatives of local organisations have met and agreed to send an outline proposal for a Centre in Ralph Allen's Yard to the Council, our Councillors, English Heritage and English Partnerships for approval in principle.

The Centre will accommodate the history of the mines and provide space for small to medium meetings thus solving a problem for many local organisations including ourselves.

The proposal has now been sent expressing our expectation that the

Council, as owner of the property, would carry out essential restoration and let it at an affordable rent, and that the village would find setup and running costs. When this support is forthcoming, we will set about a full proposal. Your support is **very important**; if any opportunity arises please voice your support to the Council.



Ralph Allen's Yard

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our second AGM took place at the Junior School on 25th February.

The meeting approved the accounts for the year and re-elected the committee members and officers *en bloc* (there being no alternatives) with the exception of Ruth Sutcliffe who is no longer able to serve on the committee or as Education Officer. Our sincere thanks for her great efforts over the past months.

We now have vacancies for committee members and for an Education Officer and we would welcome any help with filling these roles; call Malcolm Aylett, who can also provide copies of the AGM minutes.

Following the AGM there were excellent presentations on the Building Records Project (Olive Webb), De Montalt Mill (Owen Ward), Mines Archaeology (Malcolm Aylett) and the Jewish Burial Ground (Rosemary Simmons). We also tested our local knowledge with a picture quiz – prizes kindly donated by Clifford Watts and no doubt drunk by now...

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

Membership subscriptions for this year are overdue so if you haven't renewed yet please do so – NOW. (See last page)

DIARY DATES

Wednesday 17th May: *Shops Workshop.*
Combe Down Junior School, 7.00.pm.

Ruth Sutcliffe has organised an evening for members and friends to share information about shops past and present in Combe Down. We have some information, particularly about 'The Avenue' but would like to build up a more complete and accurate picture. Please search your memory, jot down your thoughts, look through your old photographs and come along and help us understand the changing scenes of village life. Admission free.

Wednesday 27th September: *History of the Prior Park Estate* - Mike Chapman.

Wednesday 15th November: *Goodridge Architecture* - Amy Frost.

The autumn meetings will be at the Combe Down Junior School, 7.00. for 7.30.pm. All meetings are free to members.

Details are on our web site,
www.combedownheritage.org.uk

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

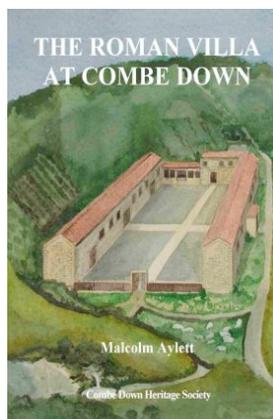
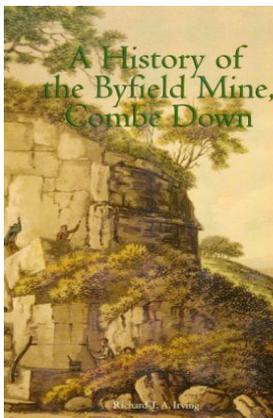
A History of the Byfield Mine by Dick Irving, £9.95.

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

Heritage Trail Leaflets £0.50.

Combe Down Past and Present. A CD of pictures from old postcards and recent photos taken from the same spot.

All publications are available at Society meetings or from the Secretary.



DRING, DRANG, DRONG, DRUNG ...

Sounds like Big Ben but in fact Society member David Boswell writes:

"I first came across the term (Drung) when my sons were at Monkton Combe School, thirty to forty years ago. They were in Hill House, which is in Shaft Lane just below the edge of the valley, so they had to walk down the various drungs to the main school buildings. One of the house punishments apparently was to run down, then up, one or other of the drungs according to the enormity of the offence, and then have a cold shower!

On seeing the interesting collection of photographs of the various drungs in Combe Down it seemed logical, having had an interest in etymology for some years, to carry out some research into the origins of the term to complement them, and the following has emerged:

Drane, drang, drangway, dreng, dring, drong, and drung all seem to be words of West Country origin, and all have the chief meaning of a narrow passage or lane between buildings, walls hedges etc.

However some seem to be able to be used as a verb, in which case the meaning becomes to crowd or press, and the noun can also mean a crowd or press. These include:

Dring: as noun, a narrow passage or entry, or, a crowd; as verb, to squeeze, crowd, press.

Dringett: a press or crowd

Drunge: a pressure or crowd

Perhaps this arose because many people going up or down a drung at the same time would have squeezed, crowded or pressed past each other."



A Dringett in the Drung

STONE CRANES

Not the sort that go with garden gnomes but cranes for lifting stone!

We previously recorded our interest in the crane at the Combe Grove Hotel and the management has generously promised it to us. Might this be a feature of a future public interpretative display on stone mining? Any suggestions as to how to go about its restoration and where to site it would be welcome.

SOCIETY PROJECTS

The following are in progress. If you would like to take part please volunteer! Names of project leaders from any Committee member.

- A record of Combe Down buildings
- Oral History of Combe Down
- Survey of old shops
- Survey of the Drung
- Historic public realm features
- Surface features of mines research

Help is needed with all the projects - please volunteer. It's interest and enthusiasm that count and you don't need special knowledge or skills. The **yellow box file** in the Information Centre has information sheets on all our projects. While you're there, ask the helpful staff about what's going on underground.

THE JEWISH BURIAL GROUND

The Society, with the 'Friends' of the site, have succeeded in getting English Heritage to give the chapel a Grade II Listing which gives it protection from further damage by a well-meaning Council and should help in our plans to restore it. We continue to work on the restoration of the whole site and to set up an exhibition there.

OTHER GROUPS AND MEETINGS

Widcombe and Lyncombe History Study Group welcomes non-members to its meetings at 7.30pm usually on Thursdays. For further information and to

join the Group, contact Margaret Burrows on 480749 or Fay Briddon on 310127.

Bathwick Local History Society has meetings on the 2nd Monday of each month and welcomes non-members. Contact Sheila Edwards on 463902.

South Stoke Local History Group welcomes new members. Contact Sylvia Williams on 832921.

Weston Local History Society welcomes visitors and charge £1 for non-members at their monthly lectures. Membership is £5 or £8.50 a couple. For further information contact Prue Brice on 315342, 6 Westwood Gardens, Weston BA1 4EJ.

The Bath & Cammerton Archaeological Society is active in many areas around Bath. Contact Ceri Lambdin on 761026.

CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

We are slowly building a file of contributions from members for publication in future Newsletters but could do with more - especially photos and other illustrations. How about scribbling something - anything (printable!) you write will be published. Suggestions on the content and style of the Newsletter would also be most welcome. Simon Burrows is currently the editor and can be reached on 833966 or simon.burrows2@virgin.net If you would like your Newsletter by email, do please let us know.

THE CHESTNUT TREE



The tree in Firs Field is now within a fence. Next to it is the remains of an old wall around a mine shaft head. If you know anything about it, let the Secretary know (833681)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Here's a view of Hope Cote Lodge when it was still a hotel and the bracing Combe Down air was considered ideal for convalescence – or even a holiday! It doesn't appear much changed from this angle. Does anybody know when this was taken?



OVERDUE SUBSCRIPTIONS

MEMBERS DON'T NEED TO FILL IN A NEW FORM.

Pay at the meeting on 17th May - or direct to the Membership Secretary, Jane Briggs, Longridge, 1 Summer Lane, Combe Down.



COMBE DOWN HERITAGE SOCIETY NEW MEMBER FORM

I apply to become a member of the Combe Down Heritage Society until 31st March 2007. I agree to my details being held on computer for the duration of my membership.

<i>First name:</i>	<i>Surname:</i>
<i>Address:</i>	<i>Phone Number:</i>
<i>Post Code</i>	<i>Email address:</i>
<i>Names of children (for our educational programme)</i>	
Subscriptions for the year to 31/3/07	
Regular: £3.00, Student: £1.00, Family: £7.00	£.....
Optional donation to the Society's funds	£.....
Total amount paid	£.....
<i>If you pay Income Tax (or PAYE) on any earnings, pension or investments, please sign here so that the Society can claim back your tax.</i>	
<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date.....</i>
Please note any interests or skills you have which might be relevant the Society. Applications (cheque or cash) may be left at the Stone Mines Information Centre or to the Membership Secretary, Jane Briggs, Longridge, 1 Summer Lane, Combe Down.	